

The background is a warm, orange-toned photograph of lavender flowers. Several stems with clusters of small purple blossoms are visible, some in sharp focus and others blurred. Teal-colored geometric shapes, including a large triangle in the top right and a smaller one in the bottom left, are layered over the image. The text is centered and reads:

Hope

MAKES EVERYTHING

beautiful

REV. IN KEE KIM

Scripture Passage

Romans 5:1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we[d] also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

NRSV

Sermon

Hope Makes Everything Beautiful

I want to talk about hope today. Hope is a beautiful thing. When everything is pitch dark around us we see a little ray of light. That is hope. When all the doors are closed, we see this small opening. That is hope. When the shadow of death surrounds you, you hear a small whispering voice, "Do not fear. I am always with you." That is hope. Hope produces dreams and we live on dreams. And these dreams get us going. The reason we can sing praises, dance, and rejoice, even in our suffering, is because we have hope. Hope is a beautiful thing. Hope makes everything beautiful and meaningful. Hope sees the possibility, the better future, the better self, and the better world. Hope opens the door for our future. Hope for tomorrow gives us strength to struggle for today. Our struggle for today becomes meaningful when we have hope for tomorrow. Even our suffering becomes meaningful when we have hope. We know that suffering will not end in suffering. Our suffering will prepare a good soil for the better future to bloom. We need to hear this

message. Suffering is all around us. There is too much suffering in the world. Suffering brings out sometimes, the worst of us. It creates tension, conflicts, anger, broken relationships, sometimes violence, and division. And suffering is not easy. No one wants to go through it. No one welcomes it, but it always comes to us as an uninvited guest. We can never avoid suffering. We can not run away from suffering. Our question is not how we can avoid suffering. Our question is whether we have the strength to deal with our suffering. Is suffering all bad? Does it make our life worse? Does it make us a worse person? Today Saint Paul gives us a fresh perspective about suffering. He said, ***“We boast in our sufferings” (Romans 5:3).*** Another translation says, ***“We rejoice in our sufferings” (Romans 5:3).*** He said because, ***“Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Romans 5:3,4).*** He said suffering produces hope. Suffering does not have to make us a worse person. Suffering can make us a better person. It produces hope within us. We start with suffering but we end with hope. Suffering and hope are intimately connected together. They are in a symbiotic relationship. Suffering produces hope and with that hope we can overcome and endure our suffering. And

then that suffering produces a little bigger hope and then with the bigger hope, we can deal with bigger suffering. So they work together intimately. Suffering and hope. Hope in that sense is not just a beautiful thing. Hope is a powerful thing. Hope makes everything different.

Hope Gives Meaning

When we have hope, we see the world differently, we see each other differently, we see life differently. When we have hope, even death changes its effect on us.

That's why Saint Paul said, ***"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)***. He saw the power of hope, and in that power of hope, death loses its sting, death loses its victory, death loses its power. The cross with hope is no longer the symbol of death, but the symbol of salvation. Hope gives us power to move on through our suffering. Hope gives us this perspective that the present suffering is nothing compared to the glory we will see in the future. It breaks the barrier and clears the path to a brighter future. Suffering is not what blocks us, seeing the suffering without hope is what blocks us. So many people try to tackle their life

challenges without hope on their own. With only their own strength and their own brain, it is too hard. You will break down, you will become bitter, unhappy and frustrated. You will be tired, overburdened and completely drained. You see no purpose of keeping on. That's what suffering does, it takes away the meaning and the reason to go on. Hope gives us meaning.

Hope, The Anchor Of Our Soul

I enjoy Psalms of Devotion every week, and I thank Josh and Jonathan for putting up that reflection every week. This week Joshua said, "As I continue to read the passage over and over again, I was suddenly overcome with the feeling of hope." That's right, hope is not what you make up, hope is not what you acquire, hope comes from God. Hope is a gift from God. As we meditate on Him and His Word over and over again, God fills our heart with hope. Even if you want to have it you cannot have it, but God gives us hope because we need it, because without it, we can't survive, God gives it to us. Wait for God, God will give you hope, Psalms said, ***"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more***

than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning" (Psalms 130:5,6).

Wait for the Lord, He will come to you, and our hope will not disappoint us, Saint Paul said. We are the people of hope, the core of our Christian belief is based on the hope of resurrection. Let us hope in

God. Hebrews writer said this about hope, ***"We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul"***

(Hebrews 6:19). That's what hope is! Hope is the anchor of our soul, when we have the anchor of our soul then you will have peace. We don't know about tomorrow, but we can have hope for tomorrow. Let hope be the anchor of your soul.