



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
June 19, 2016

## ROMANS 15:4-6

Romans Series: How God Changes People

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I thank you for children like Christian who's growing, who needs you. I thank you that he can have a positive experience at church and learn about greeting people. Lord, we also pray for each of us, that we would have a positive experience at church, learn how to greet people, and that you would grow us to be the people you want us to be. We pray for those dads that are here and the awesome responsibility and challenge that they face. We pray that you'd bless them, encourage them today. Lord, we are grateful for what you've done for us by sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. It's something that's always at the forefront of our minds and we're grateful for that. Although we're in the world, you've allowed us to not have our minds set on the world, but we have our hopes set on you. We're grateful for that. As we come together each week we do so because you've designed the church to be this place where we can find encouragement and hope. We come here today expecting you to speak to us. So we're going to open your word now and as we do, Lord, I ask that you would touch each of us in a special way. That as we leave here we will leave here different people, inspired, encouraged, hopeful, ready to endure the challenges that we face this week. Teach us today, Lord. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

As you look at the Bible, what is your favorite Bible character? I was asking some of the folks that question today as we were setting up. I think that I really like Abraham because Abraham had to leave his land, go 3,000 miles away (that's further than the distance from the east coast to the west coast) to a new place where God was establishing him. He fell and had a vision to leave the past and go forward. I'm just amazed by Abraham.

I'm amazed by David who persevered under the pressure of King Saul. When he was running for his life, he knew that God had something for him. So he stayed on track with that. I really like that.

I'm impressed with Noah. He had the ability to get his sons and their wives on the ark. There were competing influences of the world and there's the righteousness that he had. He had such a relationship with his kids that they responded to him and they go to the ark with their wives.

I think about Jonah. He's a warning for me. Jonah was a guy who was negative. When God wanted him to do something, he had an excuse. He wanted to do something else. He was afraid or didn't want to do what God wanted. In the end this fig tree grows up and he's grateful for it, but then it goes away and he's complaining about it. He's a negative guy. We can learn a lot from Jonah.

Now as I think about them, all those characters in the Bible remind me about the power that the Bible has. It reminds me of this next verse that we're going to look at. As we look at this verse, I think it's a verse that's going to guide our thinking today through this passage of scripture. You get it. I know you get it. You get this idea that God has created for us this opportunity for us to enjoy Him. His word helps us to make that happen. So we're going to spend our time today on this scripture in Romans 15:4-6.

In verse 4 it says this: *For everything that was written in the past (I just talked about Bible characters and what God was doing) was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.* We can have hope. So that's where we're headed. That's verse 4.

Now I was working with a young lady this week. Actually she contacted me. I met her a couple weeks ago, maybe three weeks ago. She's just graduating from college. We started talking and she said she wanted to meet with me. I told her it cost \$90 to meet with me, so I thought that would be the end of it. But I found out this week that she was on my schedule. So she had set up an appointment and she was ready to meet with me.

When she came in, I sat with her and I asked her the question, "What can I do for you?" She described how she's graduating from college, she's in the helping profession, and she feels like she doesn't have the answers that people need. She wants to give people answers, but she often comes up short. She doesn't have what she wants to share with people. She feels weak in that regard. She really wants hope in her life. That's basically her thought that she's asking. Now she's a Christian, she grew up in a Christian home, but she's looking for more than what she got at college, and that's a challenge for her.

I said, "Where do you get your ideas that you share with people in order to give them the answers that they're looking for?"

She says, "I read books."

I said, "Let me tell you, I understand what you're saying. Because when I was twenty-one, I became a pastor and I would often find myself in that same situation. Someone would ask me a question or I would say something and I would find myself saying, 'That was not a good answer.' I really feel sorry for the first parishioners that I was a pastor of because they had to learn a lot through my mistakes. But I would go away from those experiences and I would say to myself, 'Okay. What is the answer I wish I could have shared in that situation? What could I have done differently?'" I would study it and I would even kind of role-play the right response in those situations. I spend a lot of my time studying the Bible."

I said, "Let me show you." I handed her my iPad and I said, "Let's go to Romans 15. Read verse 1."

She opens it up and she says, "*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*"

I said, "I think that could be your life verse because if that were your life verse then it describes you being strong. You want to pass on, you want to help other people in the process. That's what you're trying to do."

I said, “Read the second verse.” She’s holding my iPad. I’m not reading this. We’ve talked through this. These are our passages from the last several weeks. Verse 2 – *Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.* “Notice that what you want to do is think about the other person that you’re working with for his good. So you have to think about that other person. Your goal is to build them up. You have to think of something you’re going to say.”

Now after I shared with her the first verse, she goes, “Wow.” After I shared with her the second verse, her eyes lit up. I love that look on people’s face when I’m working with them. Their eyes light up like that aha moment. I get it.

So I said, “I bet you want to know where you’re going to get this from, these ideas that you’re going to share. Well that’s in verse 4.” This is the passage I’m going to take you through today. It doesn’t cost you \$90. You get it for free and I’m going to take you through this today and I want to share with you the same things I shared with her.

It says this – *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

There are two things you want to pass on to other people, *encouragement* and *endurance*, that come from the scriptures. Where are you going to learn those? You’re going to learn those from the Bible. The Bible is powerful and it changes your life. Here’s what you’re going to do. You’re going to get the hope that you want (that’s where you’re going – the hope), and then you have the endurance and the encouragement. Those are the two things that are mentioned in that passage.

Now notice they’re mentioned again in verse 5. *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.* So that’s something you’re passing on to others. *So that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That’s what he’s saying.

Now at this point, remember we already got a “wow” from her. Her eyes lit up. At this point, she takes her head, puts it down into her hands, and says, “My head is about to explode with the possibilities.” It is so fun to watch that happen in people’s lives when they get connected to the Bible in a significant way. This is young lady who’s been attached to the Bible for a long time. She grew up in a Christian home. She needs this. This is an important thing for her and it was valuable for her to understand all of this.

Today I hope that you’re going to get this idea. You’re going to get this idea that the Bible is powerful, it’s amazing, it changes our lives, and it provides us with very important things that we need inside of our hearts.

So let’s go to our verse. *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that* (and notice the last word *hope*; we’re coming to that) *through the endurance taught in the*

*Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.* That's where we're headed. That's what we want. It's this aha moment that I think we need to have.

My goal every Sunday as I teach is to look at the scripture passage for that week, put it into my life, and just watch it work through my life and then package it in a way, present it in a way that might provide the aha moments for you. That's partly why I create slides because I think the slides sometimes give us a little more insight into what is going on.

Now let's look at the verse, verse 4, and see what it says. I want to take it apart a little bit. *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

The first word we want to look at is this word *endurance*. It is the word *hupomoné*, which means to remain under or to persevere under pressure.

You need to understand what we believe about God's word. We believe that the Bible is verbally inspired. When we say verbal inspiration we mean that the actual words written on the page are inspired by God. That's what we mean when we say verbal inspiration. That means every word was chosen for a purpose.

So that's why I want to look at this specific word, and this word contains a lot of meaning. I want to take it and I want to show you how it's used in other passages so that it will enrich your understanding of your ability to endure or remain under in the midst of your life. When you go out I think there's a lot of people who are tired today. They are just weary of life experiences. This word, *hupomoné*, is something that will help you to have the energy to move forward.

Let me show you in Hebrews 12:1-2 it says this – *Let us run with endurance (the same word hupomoné) the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.*

We are in a race. It's hard to keep running, putting one foot in front of the other over and over again in that race when we're tired. So we need to recognize that God has given us this *hupomoné* to remain under. And where does it come from? It comes from this understanding of God's word and the power that it has to inspire us, to challenge us, to give us the hope that He wants us to have.

Another verse that uses the same word, translated differently, but uses the same word, *hupomoné*, is *perseverance* in James 1:2-4. It says – *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.* It produces *hupomoné*. That means the trials that you're involved in or the trials of your life every day are something that's producing this *hupomoné* inside of you and me. So we can rejoice in that. That's why the word *rejoice* is there. *Consider it pure joy.* Because in the last part of the verse – *Let perseverance (or hupomoné) finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* So we hang in there even when things are tough. When the struggles of life are present we're eager to hang in there because we know that God is working.

Now follow Paul's logic in our verse that we're looking at today. Look at the verse again. He's saying that these things that are written in God's word, whatever Bible character you want to draw attention to at the moment, they're there to teach us. They're teaching us and equipping us so that through the endurance taught in the scriptures and the encouragement they provide, we might have hope. The teaching that produces the endurance that's taught in those passages provides us with encouragement so that we can have the hope that God wants us to have. It's just a beautiful thing that God has designed.

Now you could become a better person by attending church. But that doesn't equip you with spiritual growth necessarily. It's when you get connected to the Bible that spiritual growth takes place. We need the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, we need the power of the Bible in our lives to grow us spiritually, and that growth is very important. God's word is truth. So it should be of no surprise to us that reading and studying the Bible are still the activities that provide spiritual vitality in our lives. That's what we need. It's a basic. I won't grow unless I have Christ, unless I have the Bible working and understanding what it means and applying it to my heart. That's what God wants for me.

Bible reading won't make you a Christian. It's accepting Jesus Christ in your life that makes you a Christian. But after you become a Christian you want to grow and you want to be fed, and we're living in the world, but we want our heads and our hearts following Christ. We want our hope to be in God. That's what we want. And that happens when we meditate on what God has for us in His word.

The letters TNT we use for dynamite, but I saw recently the words TNT tied into the letters, The New Testament. I like that. TNT, The New Testament, because of the power that's there. God wants to empower us. I can have hope. I can have real hope. I can be encouraged because of what? Because I can look at what God is doing in His word. I can have a positive, productive, happy life if I am connected to the source.

Now there are a lot of people who are not engaged with the Bible. Let's use the word engaged to refer to picking up the Bible, reading it, and applying it to our lives. What we try to do here regularly, and our motto is "take Jesus home" because what we want to do is take the scriptures and apply them to our lives.

The American Bible Society has put out what's called a State of the Bible. It's put out every year. In this study done through the Barna Research Foundation, they report these things about Americans and the Bible.

There are 17% who are engaged with the Bible. I would consider that most of you people who are engaged with the Bible. That's why you come to or choose a Calvary Chapel because Calvary Chapels teach the Bible verse by verse. You want to be engaged with the Bible. That's why some of you attend small groups here or home fellowships at Calvary Chapel Living Hope because you want to be engaged with the Bible. In those groups that's what's taking place. So I would suggest that most of you would find yourself in this 17% that are engaged with the Bible.

There are 37% of Americans who are Bible friendly. That means they think that the Bible is a good book, they're just not really engaged with it.

There are 24% who are Bible neutral. They could take it or leave it. They don't really have a strong opinion about whether the Bible is good or not, especially for them.

And there are 22% who are Bible skeptics. They question the value of the Bible and even sometimes think it's a bad thing that the Bible exists.

I find that fascinating. I want to be in that 17% that's engaged with the Bible.

But let's look at nonbelievers for just a moment and what they think of the Bible. Because nonbelievers, according to this study, the top three ways non-Christians perceive the Bible – 37% of them believe the Bible is a useful book of moral teachings; 27% believe the Bible is a dangerous book of religious dogma used for centuries to oppose and oppress people. Wow. Twenty-seven percent of nonbelievers believe that the Bible is dangerous today. Nineteen percent believe that the Bible is an outdated book with no relevance for today.

Now that's very different than what I believe. I believe that the Bible is the word of God and that the purpose of God's word is to help me understand God, to understand myself better, and to understand God's plan for me, and that God speaks to me through the Bible. The word of God is a living tool that He uses to influence my life and to change me.

I fell in love with the Bible at an early age as a result of my parents' input. They often were encouraging me. My dad would take us on mystery trips and he would say, "Hey, get your shoes and your bathing suit. We're going on a trip."

"Where are we going, Dad?"

"Can't tell you."

He'd take us out somewhere and he'd share something, like he would share a passage from Psalm 1:1-3. This is what the verse says and it talks about the value of scripture in my life. I memorized this when I was a kid. I just fell in love with this because this is our key to success in living in the world but not being of it. It says – *Blessed is the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord. Delight* is a key word there. My delight, the thing I want, the thing I look forward to. I look forward to spending time in God's word.

This young lady I met with this week is looking forward to spending time with God's word because now she has the sense that God is going to teach her and give her what she needs to pass on to other people. She's looking forward to that.

The *delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on that day and night*. That's partly why in the book of Romans here we've taken one or two verse at a time. Because my brain doesn't take more than that. I can't absorb more than that. I'm meditating on these verses all week. Verses 4-6, I just want to meditate on those verses. What is God going to do? How is He going to change me? How do these verses impact other people? How can I use these verses to help other people?

*Meditates on them day and night.* That person who does that, who values God's word and uses God's word as the standard for their life, *that person is like a tree planted by streams of water.* So you've got your bathing suit and your shoes. We hike out here, we jump in the water, but we're thinking about the tree while we're swinging on a rope that's hanging from the tree. That tree is by the water. It's close to the water with its roots eagerly finding the substance it needs for its life. That's what I want to be.

How am I going to do that? I need to be close to God's word, allowing God's word to speak to me because God's word is powerful. It's not just a book of moral teachings. It's not just a book of good ideas. It's a book that's powerful because it changes who I am. It changes the way I live. *It yields fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.* That's where the success principles come. Being tied into the root, tied into God's word. Wow. That is powerful.

If you engorge or enmesh yourself with God's word, good things happen. Powerful things happen. Like trees that are next to the stream. They've got the leaves, they've got the fruit because they've got the nourishment that they need. And then when you're feeling tired, weary with life, you have that energy source, that truth that God wants each one of us to have.

We looked at the word *endurance*. Let's look at the next word there, the word *encouragement*. Encouragement, where does it come from? It comes from the scriptures. I'm thinking, "Wow. If Job, experiencing all the things that he experiences, can experience encouragement, I can too." Or if David can be forgiven for his sin and still be used by God, I'm encouraged because God can do that in my life too. God wants that encouragement to grow inside of us, to be growing continually so that we have something to give others.

That provides for us this last word, this word *hope* that we need. Because this is what our world needs. If you just look at our world, we live in a world today that is in trouble. Terrorism is increasing. The political situation is a mess. Radical Islam is on the increase. The national debt is staggering. You're not going to find a lot of hope by looking around in the world. It just isn't there. There's a lot of problems. Therefore you're not going to find a lot of hope by opening the newspaper.

I believe that as Christians we need to know what's going on in the news. But that's not where we're going to find our hope. We find our hope in the Bible. We find our hope in what God wants to do.

There are people in our world today that are looking for hope. So they're trying to find hope. It's really hopeful that Fallujah is being retaken and maybe ISIS is receding in that part of the world. That's hopeful. Some people are finding hope in that particular situation. Or the economy, we got some news on the economy this week. Some of it good. So there's this hope that people have in the economy. Or maybe the hope that you're going to get well from whatever sickness that you have, so there's this sense that there's hope there. Some people run from here to there looking for different things for hope. They're looking for a different doctor, or a better location

to live in. Or they're looking for when their kids grow up, or they get out of the house. They're looking for something else that provides hope so that they can enjoy life better.

I'm telling you, hope is something that we find in God that helps us *hupomoné*, which means to remain under in the situation that we're in right now. Right where you are now you can experience hope. It's provided by God. He wants to give us that. It's a beautiful thing that He has empowered us with and He wants us to understand it and to enjoy it.

I was looking this week, thinking about this. When people are at bus stops they are continuing to look left. Why are they looking left? Why do they keep looking left? They're looking left because they're hopeful that a bus is going to come. Because that's going to rescue them from their requirement to walk to get somewhere else. So they keep looking left every few seconds. If you watch people at bus stops, every few seconds they're looking left.

I think every few seconds we need to be looking at God's word. We need to be saying, "How can I find hope today? How is God going to move me in this direction that He wants me to be in? Where can I go? What does God want us to do?" Once we understand that's what's going on in verse 4, we can go to verse 5, which says, *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.*

God wants to give us something that we can share with each other and it comes from that understanding of God's word. If you're looking at God's word everyday, you have something to share. And being transparent by saying to someone, even someone who isn't a believer, "Wow, can I share with you something I learned today?"

This young lady I was working with this week doesn't work with Christians; she works with nonbelievers. So she's going to take the things she's learning from God's word and share them with these people, but not tell them where they come from, unless asked. So she can share biblical truths, which are success principles, with those people. It's just a great way to pass on God's love and what He wants. We exchange those things together as a part of God's church.

Notice verse 6 – *so that* (and this is the result) *with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now when we talk about this *one mind and one voice*, we have to realize that we're all different people and differences tend to result in sometimes misunderstandings. Differences in a family often result in conflict, tension because we're different people. Sometimes we would say, "I wish they would just be like me." But if everybody were just like you then life wouldn't be that fun, it wouldn't be that enjoyable. You'd get bored being with yourself all the time. It's the differences that we have that are enjoyable. We like the differences, most of the time. But sometimes they create problems.

But what this passage is talking about is that we can now have, even in a church as diverse as this one is, we can have this one mind and we can have this unity because we have God as our Father and the Bible as our source, and good things happen, amazing things happen in our lives. God wants to do some good things.



As part of the Gallup Survey I was reading this week, it described that there is a group of people in the world today, 12% of America's population where there's this people group that are happier, they have stronger families, they're more tolerant of people in different races and religions, and are more community-minded than others. This 12% is characterized by this: They're highly spiritually committed. People who are highly spiritual committed. That 12%.

I'm in that 12%. I enjoy being in that 12%. I'm sure you're in that 12%. In fact much of what I'm saying here isn't for you, it's for you to pass on to other people or for people who might listen to the audio session of this. It's refreshing. I would suggest that if you're here today and you're not part of the 12%, you want to jump in. Get committed. Being committed to what God has for us is important. What it will do is it will empower you in some new ways. It's a beautiful thing that God wants to do.

I like swimming, but I don't like getting in the water. In fact I find it hard to just get in the water. I'll stick my feet in first and then slowly get in the water. But as I'm doing that and watching what's happening with other people, I see that there are other people that get committed to swimming.

Some people put their toe in the water and then they complain to everyone else about it as they're trying to get wet. And there are people like that. They want everyone else to know how difficult it is, what they're doing.

And then there's the people who like to do a cannonball. They're the people who jump in, they're definitely committed, but they're the people who because they're going to get cold and wet, they want to make sure everyone else experiences the pain as well.

I admire the people who do swan dives, who just jump in and they go right in and they're just refreshed by that. That's commitment. I want to be that kind of person.

I want to encourage you if you aren't committed to the Bible, get committed. How are you going to be at the end of the summer than you are now. Might God do something with you this summer as you're enmeshing yourself with God's word, spending time in God's word. It's easy to do this, to be engaged in God's word today with technology. Or getting a book like *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and just reading it, or *Jesus Today*, or some of those different devotional books that are helpful. Those are great, but there are apps that pop up on your phone that give you the verse of the day that are helpful.

The Bible is relevant. The Bible is practical. The message today is we need to be connected to it. It needs to be part of who we are. We can't forget that. We need to be tied into God's word. The crucial test, whether or not the word of God remains lodged in your heart is what happens when you're sitting at your desk tomorrow, or when you're shopping, or when you're in the classroom, or when you're driving, or whatever it is. That's the crucial test. Can we take God's word and take Jesus home?

Now I'm going to zip ahead in the passage. Even though this isn't part of our passage today, it's part of our passage, but I'm not really looking at this in depth. I want you to see the importance of hope mentioned in Romans 15. Verse 13 is the end of our passage, verses 1-13. Verse 13 says, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

This is when I shared this verse with this young lady this week it just started to overflow in her life. It's fun. When the aha moments happen, the lights come on, I go, "Lord, thanks for allowing me to have the privilege of sitting here watching this happen in a person's life." I know this is going to change her as she goes out and does what she's going to do. The Bible is relevant, the Bible is important for every one of our lives.

There was a street preacher who was out doing his street-preaching thing out on the sidewalk. As he was, there was a man following him around. So he turned and said to the man, "Do you want Jesus?"

The man said, "No."

He said, "What do you want?"

"I want your Bible."

"Why do you want my Bible?"

"Because I see the pages are really thin and I can use them to roll my joints to smoke my weed."

That's what he wants to do. The pages are thin.

Now you might imagine the preacher saying, "Forget you. I'm getting out of here." But he didn't. He had the presence of mind and the creativity to say, "I'll tell you what. I'm going to give you my Bible. As you use it to smoke the weed, just do this. All I want to ask you is you read the page before you smoke it." And the guy said he would. So he gave him his Bible, knowing he could easily get another Bible. So he goes off and didn't hear back from the guy.

Four months later the guy shows up on the street. Meets the same guy. Didn't recognize him. He's all cleaned up, looks nice. The guy says to him, "Do you recognize who I am?"

"I have no idea. I don't think I've ever seen you before."

"Well, I'm the guy you gave the Bible to four months ago."

The street preacher's eyes get big. "What happened?"

He says, "Here's what happened. I smoked Matthew, then I smoked Mark, then I smoked Luke, then John smoked me."

Life changes when you read the Bible! I'm not telling you go out and smoke it. I'm just saying let the Bible smoke you. That's the idea. God wants to change our lives. John is a great book of the Bible to read. God wants to do some things that will change who we are.

Two days later after I met with this young lady I got an email from her. I'm going to read her email. I told her at the session when I was with her, "I'm telling your story on Sunday because this is the passage I'm preaching on Sunday. I won't use your name. I won't give details to know who you are, but I'm going to share your story."

She sends me an email two days later and she says this:

“Hey, Pastor Scott. Thank you again for meeting with me. These two crazy awesome things have happened since. Last night I was talking with a girlfriend of mine who was sharing the problems she was having with her boss. This situation she was describing sounded extremely similar to the problems I’m experiencing. She asked what I thought about it all and I shared with her the fruit of the Spirit, the same way you did with me. Her eyes got so big and she was like, ‘Oh my goodness, you’re so right!’ (That’s what happened. That aha moment when people get it. It’s really fun.) How cool is that that the conversation happened the day after we talked! Today’s verse (this is number two) of the day on YouVersion is none other than Romans 15:5-6.” So this is contained in her email, which is the Bible verse from our passage today.

God is doing some good things in her life. God wants to do some great things in each one of our lives. What’s going to happen this week? I don’t know, but I can hardly wait to find out what God is going to do because He’s going to take His word and apply it in some exciting ways. Aha moments are going to happen in my heart this week, I hope in your heart this week, and in the hearts of the people that you touch. God wants to do some amazing things and He uses His word to do it. It’s powerful. Let’s let the Lord change us as we connect with His word and get engaged with His word this week.

Stand with me and let’s pray.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you that you’ve given us your word that’s sharper than any double-edged sword penetrating the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Lord, we know that when you hide your word in our hearts that it changes us so that we don’t sin against you. Lord, we recognize that your word is powerful and I pray that you would help us to overcome the excuses that we don’t have enough time or are too busy, and allow us to experience your grace in powerful ways this week. Lord, allow me to connect to your word this week. I look forward to what you’re going to do in my heart and life this week, and I ask that you would do the same with my brothers and sisters here. In Jesus’ name, amen.