

The Bible: Not just for sermons anymore

By [Tripp Hudgins](#)

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Welcome

one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name';

and again he says,

'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people';

and again,

'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,

and let all the peoples praise him';

and again Isaiah says,

'The root of Jesse shall come,

the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;

in him the Gentiles shall hope.'

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Romans 5

Sometimes I'm a little slow. It's true. I don't always read the Bible as if it were for me. Lately I most often read scripture in search of a sermon for the congregation. Now, I realize that most of these sermons are *also* for me, but, yeah. I forget just to read for God's leading for my own life, for a deeper understanding of my own place with

the People of God. It's a slippery slope.

God is present in my life (our lives, if I may be bold) so that we may rejoice, so that we may have hope, so that we may find a deep sense of belonging to the universe and one another. We are enveloped in a covenant that God first made when the first Word was spoken out over the Deep. God addresses the Deep and a promise was made. We are all recipients of that promise. So often I forget that I too am a recipient of that promise.

Anxiety. Fear. Despair. These are great temptations for me. I'm a nihilist at heart and I have to be careful lest my own propensities cause me to forget the truth of God. I will lead myself astray. It's a quick trip into darkness.

So, I hold these words of Paul tightly. I take him seriously. Chapter five begins:

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It continues with the quotation at the top of this entry. God created this world. It has been God's desire from the beginning of all things to reach into each and every human heart and remind us of that first word that was spoken to the Cosmos. God reaches out to us in Creation. God reaches out to us as community...and solitude (Yes, both. We are called together and to be alone with God. See: Jesus.). God redeems all creation. This is God's simple reminder from where it is that we all began..."and God saw that it was good." Steadfastness. Encouragement.

I am not one of the strong. Well, not always. I think we take turns. We take turns at the oars, holding one another up as needed. God is generous in this way. Steadfastness. Encouragement.

So, today I must remember that original impulse and that first Word spoken into the void. I must remember that first Word was also spoken to me. I am God's creation, an echo of the first Word spoken.

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