

The LPG

Always and Forever

March 7, 2021

Welcome to where we're learning how to overflow with hope by the Spirit of the God of Hope.

Does your faith dry up when you're drained?

Well, we're called to customize the com'parables in the **Lord's Prayer Guide**, in order to begin each day **adoring our Dad** with a relational greeting; **revering our Creator** with respectful worship; **honoring our Holy God** by recommitting to trusting; **kneeling to our King** by planning *our* advancing of *His* kingdom; **yielding our will to our Lord** by including Him in our decisions; **looking to our Provider** to supply our temporal *and* eternal needs; **confessing to our Judge** to wipe *our* slate clean; while **modeling our Mentor** by forgiving *our* debtors; and then **following our Shepherd** by preparing to avoid or endure our temptations; and **clinging to our Savior** for deliverance from the evil that's drowning us, inside and out. And we **seal our day** with a word of praise, affirming **His Kingdom**, appreciating **His Power**, and exalting **His glory**. For ...



Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory FOREVER. – Matthew 6:13 NKJ



We need to examine *this* word all by itself, because it's a modifier that applies profound power and eternal glory to each line before it. The Lord uses words like "always" and "forever" because "**always**" speaks to availability, and "**forever**" speaks to durability. Jesus didn't just say, "**I am with you.**" but, "**I am with you always.**" Because the Lord isn't *just* our Redeemer or *just* our Father, but:



Our Redeemer from Everlasting – Isaiah 63:16 NKJ



Our Father, forever and ever. – 1 Chronicles 29:10 – NKJ



Your love stands firm forever ... *in heaven* – Psalm 89:2 NIV



Praise *His holy name* for ever and ever. – Psalm 145:21 NIV



Your kingdom shall be established forever – 2 Samuel 7:16 NKJ



For the Lord *will be* your everlasting Light, – Isaiah 60:20 NKJ



Maker of *heaven and earth* ... faithful forever. – Psalm 146:5-6 NIV

Whoever eats this *Bread* will live forever." – John 6:51 NIV

Length of *days* forever and ever. – Psalm 21:4 NKJ

I trust in the *mercy* of God forever and ever. – Psalm 52:8 NKJ

For His *mercy* endures forever. – 1 Chronicles 16:34 NKJ



If there be any wicked way in me ... *lead me* in the way everlasting. – Psalm 139:24 KJV



deliver us and forgive our sins ... Then we Your people, the sheep of Your pasture, will praise You forever; – Psalm 79:9-13 NIV



Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, – Psalm 145:13 NKJ



The Lord sits as King forever. – Psalm 29:10 NKJ

He rules by *His power* forever; – Psalm 66:7 NKJ

To our God and Father be *glory for ever and ever*. – Philippians 4:20 NIV

This is hope at its source. From Romans 14:1 to 15:13, Paul makes the point that what unites us in, to, and through Christ is infinitely stronger and more steadfast than anything that could ever attempt to separate us. And he closes by praying that we would do what it takes to come to the fullness of joy and peace that overflows with Spirit empowered hope. Writing:

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. - Romans 15:13 NIV

Notice Paul calls Him “the God of hope”. **He doesn’t say, “May the God of joy (or peace) fill you with hope.”** Nope. He’s our God of hope. Some Bibles say, “May God, the *source* of hope fill you”.



Faith is comparable to two old villages: **the water supply for one was from a wide and shallow stream.** But, when needed most, during the dry seasons or a drought, it would run short, dwindle to a trickle, and dry up; till a fresh shower of rain renewed it. Now **the other got its water from a small but deep artesian well.** And that faithful old fountain would bubble up from below and overflow come rain or shine above. So **which of these supplies typifies your faith?** Well? Well? I *hope* all is *well*. Because anyone can have *great* faith and *great* hope when everything’s goin’ ... well, *great*. Because that’s when joy and peace *naturally* run at high levels. But **the droughts display the faithfulness of our source.**

Our faith is the lesser half of the equation; **what matters most is the object of our faith.** Paul’s prayer isn’t that everything will just go *great* so you can naturally have great joy and peace – that’s unrealistic in the *real* world.

Paul’s prayer is that our One and only Source will fill us up as we trust in Him, and thereby dwell within, to overflow with joy when happiness dries up, and peace-that-passes-understanding when understanding fails. *That’s* Paul’s prayer. And it’s *very* conditional:

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. - Romans 15:13 NIV



There are two types of funerals: inspiring and depressing. At the inspiring, ***grief is comforted with hope beyond the grave.*** At the depressing, ***grief is compounded with nothing but the grave.*** Something very soothing occurs when mourners share an odd mix of sorrow and celebration. Tears flow with grief *and* gratefulness for the promise of life *after* death *and* the hope of reuniting.

Artesian faith defeats the droughts of despair. Now obviously a life “overflowing in hope” is not pain free. We’re not told to *weep* not, or *grieve* not, but to *fear* not. In fact, the only verse where I found a command to “sorrow not” says:

Sorrow not ... as others which have no hope. – 1 Thessalonians 4:13 KJV

And the only time Jesus tells someone who’s grieving to “weep not” is just before He restores the life of a son; (Lk 7:13) and then again just before He restores the life of daughter. (Lk 8:52) ***It’s not a pain-free life; no, it’s a vain-free life.*** For outside of our hope in Christ:

All is vanity and a chasing after wind. – Ecclesiastes 2:17 NRS

But inside, we can see the purpose of pain; Paul was in prison when he wrote:

Rejoice in the Lord always. – Philippians 4:4 NKJ



Paul’s not talking about conjuring up some baseless Pollyannish positivity. He’s not describing wishful thinking. It’s first and foremost ***an awareness of God’s promises,*** which is then coupled with ***a conviction of God’s reliability.*** Paul was obviously none too “happy” in that cold, damp, prison; and yet he had the reserves to rejoice in the midst of that pit of despair. You think Paul’s rejoice-in-the-Lord-always conviction came from a shallow seasonal stream? It’s beyond *artesian*; it’s Paul’nesian! ***Far from a fickle trickle, it’s Old Faithful itself!*** If we rely on circumstance to keep joy and peace flowing, our hope will fluctuate with life’s natural ups and downs. But if it’s source is deeply grounded in God’s Word, and firmly rooted in the reliability of our Father-Creator, Holy God and King, Lord and Provider, Judge and Mentor, Shepherd and Savior, then ***our hope can’t fail because our Father is Old Faithful himself!***

O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You; I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. ... He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces ... It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” For the Hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain ***[called Golgotha and Calvary]*** ... And He will spread out His hands in the midst of it ***[“this mountain” where “the Lord will rest”]*** as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim, – Isaiah 25:1, 8-11 ESV

And how does a swimmer spread out his hands to swim from on top of a mountain? Well cliff diving is certainly nothing new. It's been around since before the days of the prophet Isaiah.



So, what causes one to “overflow with hope”? According to Paul, being “filled” with “Joy” and “Peace”. And, what allows the Lord to fill us with joy and peace? “Trust in Him”. Now **joy** and peace are both listed as fruits of the Spirit, (Gal. 5:22) which means they need to be planted, and cultivated, and will only grow as we cooperate with the Spirit. And that means two things: 1) **We can't produce 'em on our own;** but 2) **We can sure kill 'em on our own.**

All it takes is neglect.

My soul longs for You like a thirsty land. – Psalm 143:6 NKJ

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, – Psalm 42:1 NIV

My soul thirsts for You ... in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. – Psalm 63:1 NKJ

Their soul fainted in them. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them ... for He satisfies the longing soul, – Psalm 107:5-9 NKJ

Blessed are those who ... thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. – Matthew 5:6 NIV

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and ... the lame leap like a deer ... Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. – Isaiah 35:5-7 NIV

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” – John 7:37-39 NIV

So where are you getting your water? If you don't have a deeply established source, you're gonna need to dig in His Word. Because, **you can't trust a promise you haven't heard.** But once you partner with the Spirit to irrigate your orchard, you'll be overflowing with His promises.

For He himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” – Hebrews 13:5 NKJ

Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. ... I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; – Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV

[God] is not a human, that He should change His mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through? – Numbers 23:19 NLT

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. – Hebrews 13:8 NKJ

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. – Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV

“For I the Lord do not change;” – Malachi 3:6 ESV

“Is anything too hard for Me?” – Jeremiah 32:27 NIV

When we partner up and allow the Spirit to empower us by filling us with eternal truth, we become like that tree in Psalm 1:1-3, that “yields its fruit in season and whose leaf doesn’t wither.”



Because the Spirit will see to it that, **in life’s most draining and discouraging moments**, when my soul is dehydrated and distressed due to death, divorce, or whatever drought or dry spell, **hope will come bubbling up from deep within**. And though I may be isolated, abandoned, deserted, or lonely ... I’ll be far and away from alone. I mean:

What will separate us from the love of Christ? – Romans 8:35 NAB

For this is God, Our God forever and ever; – Psalm 48:14 NKJ

All my springs are in You. – Psalm 87:7 NKJ

Faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, – Titus 1:2 NIV

Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. – Isaiah 12:3 NKJ

Spring up, O well! – Numbers 21:17-18 NKJ

Trust in the Lord forever, – Isaiah 26:4 NKJ

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. – 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 NIV

Hope is not optimism. Optimism blindly believes all will be happy and pain-free. Hope looks far beyond and beholds **everlasting reasons for droughts and dry seasons, and eternal gain from short-lived pain**; and firmly believes that everything will be perfectly clear ... *just not down here*.

Now let’s memorize together what we’ll personalize alone.

Our father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,¹ but deliver us from the evil.² For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory FOREVER. Amen. – Matthew 6:9-13 NKJ

¹ This line is from the KJV rather than the NKJ which reads: “Do not lead us into temptation”

² This line is from the YLT rather than the NKJ which reads: “Deliver us from the evil one”