

Trinity Sunday: Romans 5:1-5

(S) (~~hold up~~ coat of arms) – what’s this? And whose is it? (Trendall (S) – ‘azure, with stag argent trippant on a mount vert’)

Reminder that your family has a history – mine blacksmiths South London 19th century (granddads printer and gas fitter)

ASK NEIGHBOUR IF THEY KNOW HOW FAR THEIR FAMILY GOES BACK

Family trees important – example of royal family: William (S) – who dad? Mum? Dad? (S) George / Put together: (S) Queen / Charles / William

Bible – family trees important too – long lists – (S) e.g. Genesis 5 – Abraham – Isaac – Jacob and Esau – 12 kids = 12 tribes – bible in a year and got to first 9 chs of Chronicles, or 3 long lists in Ezra. Not just that family important – tracing faithfulness of God and also waiting for anointed one, ‘Messiah’.

Another sort of family tree – meet my friend HOPE (S) – name means something – **do you know what your name means? (Matthew – gift of God)**

(S) ‘The confident expectation that things will be better than they are now’

Hope has a grandma – Faith (S). Grandma Faith gave birth to something else – Peace (S), READ v1-2a – faith produces peace

Peace then produces Hope (S), READ v2b.

So life in God’s family starts with faith – that trust in God gives us peace. And the peace we feel now gives us confidence that the future will be OK – that’s called hope. A good family.

Hope has two parents – first came from a good family. The other family came from the wrong side of the tracks. Let’s look at other great-grandad:

READ v3a – Suffering (S) – that sounds bad, doesn’t it? But look at what this side of the family produces (S), READ v3b.

Hope really important, isn't it? For everyone, but especially for Christians. Hope works two ways. **(S)** Perhaps your life is really good at the moment – school/job good, family life good, health good. You have peace – and hope tells you that no matter how good it is now, heaven will be even better. Hope points us to the future and says – it's gonna be great, even better.

But hope works another way too **(S)** – maybe your life is not so good. School/job tough, friendships not good, home life difficult, health fragile. You're on the suffering side. That's where the other family line comes in. Because with God's help even suffering can produce hope as well. It reminds us that things won't always be this bad. Hope is something for this life – good to want this life to be better. But it also reminds us that heaven will be better again.

We need hope – hope makes us strong. Strong enough not to rely on the good times. Strong enough not to be beaten by the bad times. Hope's family tree helps us with both, doesn't it?

One more thing we learn from passage – hope doesn't stop there – hope meets someone. **(S)** Holy Spirit. Hope and Holy Spirit produce something – LOVE **(S)** READ v5. If we combine our hope with God's Spirit, we get the power to keep loving. Loving God and loving others. And so God's family tree goes on, and we keep on living for him.

Today celebrate another family: Tom & Jennifer brought Brody for baptism. Welcomed Brody into family of God. Passage reminds us about another family – my prayer is that Tom, Jennifer and esp Brody will get to know God's family tree too, and his hope in the good times and the bad.

And/So let's pray that God's family tree is true for us too. Let's all pray for hope – hope that carries us through the good times and the bad. And let's pray that *that* hope produces love in our hearts.

(As I close) Have you met my friend hope? Would you like to?