The Essentials: Hope

Session 3: 2 Kings 21: 1-9 *and* Romans 5: 1-8

Opening Collect

> *Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: 2 Kings 21: 1-9 and Romans 5:1-8

Opening Thought:

Why do we need hope? Because everything that isn't the glory of God will disappoint.

Discussion:

1. How would you describe an idol? Share with your group.
2. Within the context of 2 Kings, the young ruler, Manasseh, takes the throne just after Babylon destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. With this in mind, why do you think he would pursue idols? Why do *we* pursue idols?
3. What are things we hope for in an idolatrous way?
4. In our passage from Romans, Paul describes how suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope (vv. 3-5). How does suffering end up producing those things? Discuss each step.
5. In what ways could the avoidance of difficulty and suffering keep us from genuine Christian hope?

Check in and Closing Prayer

2 Kings 21:1–9

[1] Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. [2] And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. [3] For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. [4] And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem will I put my name." [5] And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. [6] And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. [7] And the carved image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever. [8] And I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander anymore out of the land that I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the Law that my servant Moses commanded them." [9] But they did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

Romans 5: 1-8

[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

[6] For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.