

KEEP PRESSING ON TOGETHER —

Sharing Hope in a World of Hurt

I had the privilege recently of preaching at First Southern Baptist Church in Hurt, VA, as they celebrated more than 20 years of ministry. The church was started in the early years of the SBCV. It is always a blessing to worship with God's people and see how He is at work through His churches. That Sunday, as I pulled into the church parking lot, I was struck by the sight of the town's water tower. Obviously, I have seen a water tower before. What got my attention was the tower boldly proclaiming that I was in Hurt, Virginia.

Hurt is a town of approximately 1,300 people across the railroad tracks from Altavista, about 30 miles south of Lynchburg. The town bears the last name of early resident Colonel John R. Hurt. I looked it up because I was curious how the town was named. But that Sunday morning, it occurred to me once again that those folks are not the only ones who live in Hurt. As I got up to preach, I decided to point out to this dear congregation that I was glad there is a church right in the middle of Hurt. The fact is, we all live in a world of hurt. Praise the Lord there are churches in this world of hurt! Praise our Lord Jesus Christ for coming into a world of hurt, for living a perfect life, dying a sacrificial death, being resurrected, and empowering his missionary Church to proclaim His Gospel of hope in this world of hurt!

The mission of our SBCV Great Commission coalition of churches is to *come alongside local churches, advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach our neighbors and the nations.* We must keep pressing on together, sharing hope in a world of hurt. The Apostle Paul prayed, ***“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”*** (Romans 15:13, CSB).

Keep pressing on together with an enduring hope. God is the one true source of our hope. As the Apostle Paul prayed, he was reminding the Christians in Rome that God is the source of our joy and peace. As Tom Schreiner puts it, “Hope ultimately cannot be produced by human beings.”¹ We must keep pressing on TOGETHER, encouraging one another with the enduring hope that is from God.

Keep pressing on together with an overflowing hope. As we overflow (or “abound,” NKJV/ESV) in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, we then have the privilege to serve those in need, send out laborers, and share the Good News of Jesus with a hurting world. You do this as you send relief where disasters strike, as your churches plant churches, as you help revitalize churches, and as you equip the next generation.

Keep pressing on together with an empowered hope. Robert Mounce reminds us, “Clearly, the Christian life is God’s empowering presence in the midst of life’s uncertainties. It is not up to us to conjure up hope or any other spiritual quality. Our only access to empowerment is to believe. Then God steps in and does the rest. The Christian life is a supernatural life in the fullest sense of that term: ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’” (Colossians 1:27; cf. Philippians 1:21).²

Keep pressing on together, sharing hope in a world of hurt!

Your brother in Christ,
Brian Autry

¹Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans (Baker)*, 759.

²Robert H. Mounce, *Romans (NAC)*, 262.



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