



Scripture Theme 2025-2026

“May the God of all 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 15:13

Overview

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul blesses this diverse community of Jews and Gentiles with a prayer of hope. The Roman Christians were a mix of urban classes — including well-to-do and poor, free and enslaved people — who gathered in house churches for worship, fellowship, and studying scripture. They were often viewed with suspicion because they refused to worship Roman gods or the emperor, which was a mark of disloyalty and subversion.

To dare to follow Jesus' new way of life against Imperial Rome took courage. The same is true for each of us. Our beloved community of fellow students, faculty, and staff at BSM are invited to join the work of changing our world for good.

Father Gregory Boyle, in his book *Tattoos on the Heart*, writes, “Jesus says, ‘You are the light of the world.’ I like even more what Jesus doesn't say. He does not say, ‘One day, if you are more perfect and try hard, you'll be light.’ He doesn't say, ‘If you play by the rules, cross your T's and

dot your I's, then maybe you'll become light.’ No. He says, straight out, ‘You are light.’ It is the truth of who you are, waiting only for you to discover it. So, for God's sake, don't move. No need to contort yourself to be anything other than who you are.”

Throughout this academic year, let's keep this prayer of Paul's in mind. **The Christian icon for the virtue of hope is the anchor.** Our community, built on hope, becomes a source of stability and security, particularly in challenging times. Hope brings joy. Let's be that for each other in the year ahead.

Questions for Reflection

- Think of a time in your life when you were filled with great joy, peace, and hope. Who was present? How did you feel? What was God's role in this moment?
- How might I meet my challenges and those of our community by being fearless in naming them and being filled with hope in seeking a path of strength and possibility?
- How might I be a source of light and hope to students, faculty, staff, and guests?

