

Monday, November 27

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:9-13

Text for Today: Romans 12:11-12 *Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*

In his new book entitled *The Audacity of Hope*, Illinois Senator Barack Obama reminds Americans that despite the discord and struggles found in our nation's history, we have always been guided in the past by a dogged optimism for the future – something the senator calls the “audacity of hope.”

Senator Obama speaks of the need to move beyond our current differences and to return to the common hopes and dreams we share – finding common ground and keeping our ideals and hopes before us.

The scripture I have selected from Paul's letter to the Romans gives somewhat similar but more religious advice regarding hope to all Christians today. Paul instructs us to “rejoice in (our) hope, be patient in tribulation and be constant in prayer.”

How much better our world would be today if all people followed Paul's advice to “hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good and love one another with brotherly affection.”

As we get caught up in the busy holiday season, let us take time to ponder once again the joy and hope the Christmas message brings. Despite our problems and distractions, we can accomplish a lot of good if we can keep our focus on our values.

Prayer: We pray, God, that the hope and joy of the Christmas season will carry through the coming year and will empower us to make our lives count in service to you and to the other people who share the earth with us today. Amen.

Neil Baird