

Romans Study
Session 6 - Romans 5:1-11

The discussion of the gospel takes a decisive turn beginning in this section of Scripture. Up until now, the focus has been on the power of the gospel to put people, who are under sin's dominion and thus rightly under the sentence of God's wrath, into a right relationship with God. Now the Scripture turns to what comes next after a person is justified through faith in Christ. When you think about it, this is actually a very common question among people who wrestle with what they are to do next after they get saved.

Chapters 5-8 go together in one unit. Their focus is on two things: 1) Our justification leads us to have complete certainty in our final salvation & 2) Our new power God gives us in our struggle against sin and the law.

Our passage tonight is only 11 verses long. The main theme is the assurance Christians possess in obtaining their final salvation. By final salvation I mean the salvation we will be given when Jesus returns on the day of judgment. The world will experience God's fierce wrath and we will experience deliverance from not only God's wrath but deliverance into God's eternal kingdom. This section also opens the door to an important discussion on the life of the person after receiving God's grace. It will describe the new world or the new life of the believer in terms that contrast the old world we all lived in as sinners.

I. Being justified means we have peace and hope.

[Romans 5:1-4]

The "therefore" at the beginning of v.1 means that everything Paul has said about the gospel up to this point is being taken into consideration for what he's just about to say next. There are three benefits of being justified by faith in Christ that Paul brings out here.

Q: What does it mean to be justified through faith? (*That you have trusted the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pay for your sins by repenting of your sins. Thus, God has declared you "not guilty".*)

1) The first benefit of being justified is peace with God. Most Bibles translate the second half of the verse, "we have peace with God". A more accurate translation is "Let us have peace with God" or "Let us enjoy peace with God". In other words, peace is a state of existence for a believer. It is not something we pass in and out of but rather it is a perpetual blessing we enjoy once we have been justified.

Q: When you think of peace, how do you define it?

[Isaiah 32:17-18] - classic passage on Hebrew concept of peace

The Hebrew concept of peace is a little different than our usual "absence of conflict" way of thinking. It is harmonious well-being, inner contentment or satisfaction with life. The word

also implies that it is a blessing that comes from God and God alone.

[I Samuel 1:17]

[Numbers 6:26]

Notice how in both of these passages, it is God who ultimately gives the peace. Now let's look at it from the old world/new world perspective. In the new world, believers exist in a state of peace with God. This peace is based upon the work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection from the dead and our belief and acceptance of those truths. As such we can no longer fail to have peace with God.

Q: So why do so many people today lack peace? *(It is because they seek for it apart from God. If a person misses out on being justified with God, they miss out on His peace, which is the only lasting peace there is.)*

Q: Do you ever feel like God is angry with you? Do you ever feel like God is hostile towards you or that you have somehow ended up on God's "naughty-list"? *(While it is certainly possible to feel this way, you exist in a state of perpetual peace with God.)*

2) The second benefit Paul discussed about being justified by faith was that we have access to God's grace (v.2). The word "access" can be rendered "introduction" or "admission". It's the picture of being granted access to walking through a door into another room. It's the giving of your ticket so you can get into the movie.

Q: What does v.2 say about this grace? *(We stand in it.)*

"We stand" means it is a constant state of being. It is in the present tense. Once we have access to grace, we always have access to grace. We were given grace upon salvation but that was only the initial or introduction to grace. It is a constant and eternal way of life whereby God meets our needs through His grace. We were given access to it when we came to Christ for justification and now we still have it forever as we walk with Him through this life into the next one.

The word "exult" (NASB) shows up a few times in this passage. It means to glory, to rejoice, or even boast.

Q: What are believers supposed to exult in according to v. 2? *(We exult in the hope of the glory of God.)*

3) This brings us to the third benefit of being justified by faith in Christ. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The "hope of the glory of God" refers to our final salvation - what we will receive from God upon Christ's return. This truth gives us hope. Hope is not only that we will be saved on judgment day but almost as importantly is that we actually know for certain that we will be saved on that day. We don't live life not knowing our eternal fate.

This was a revolutionary thought for the ancient Jew. They believed that no one could know their eternal fate until judgment day. They had no idea what awaited them: God's wrath or eternal blessings. But into this Paul is telling them that they can know for sure that they are going to be saved on that day from God's wrath. Their justification leads people to be certain in their security in Christ. What God promised He would do, He will do. This is why Paul is going to spend so much time on assurance - this entire passage - so that we can know that we are justified and that this justification will lead to salvation.

Q: How would you live differently if you believed that you could not know what your fate was until the last day?

[I John 5:13]

We are those who have a true hope in God. Our ultimate hope is that God will keep His promise that we will be saved on the last day and spend eternity with Him afterwards.

Q: How would you define hope?

The New Testament defines it as a fact in future time. It is to anticipate with pleasure what has been promised. Hope is only as solid as those who made the promises upon which the hope is built. Since our hope is upon God who cannot lie and cannot break His promises, our hope is eternally secure. While the realization of what we anticipate hasn't happened yet, we know without any doubt that it will because God promised it.

Q: What is the other thing in which Christians are to exult according to v.3? (*Tribulations*)

Q: Why can we rejoice in tribulations/sufferings? (*v.4 - Because they lead to perseverance, proven character and hope.*)

While Christians may continue to suffer, these sufferings do not contradict what has been said about the wonderful blessings. We rejoice while in our tribulations, not because we are in tribulations. There is a big difference there. Christians are never to praise God for evil things. However, even when faced with tribulations and sufferings, we understand from this that God uses these things to build perseverance within us. With the right perspective on suffering, it can actually lead us to greater hope. Think of a muscle that is exposed to resistance. It grows stronger, just as a Christian exposed to challenges grows stronger in their faith. How many times has God NOT answered one of your prayers on the first time you brought it up to Him? Probably more often than those He answered immediately.

It is important to note four truths which pertain to the suffering of Christians.

- 1) suffering is part of the normal Christian experience. Once saved, there is no magic shield or bed of roses awaiting the believer in this life.
- 2) God uses suffering to accomplish His purposes.
 - a. **[James 1:2-4]**
 - b. **[I Peter 1:6-7]**
- 3) We rejoice in the midst of suffering, not in the suffering itself. God will someday wipe out

sin, suffering and evil. They are not eternal so don't praise those things. Rejoice that God has a purpose for the suffering, whether you understand it fully now or not and that He is still in control and will not let you go through the hardship.

4) The sufferings or tribulations Paul speaks of include all the difficulties of this life.

II. We hope because God loves us.

[Romans 5:5-8]

Q: Why does hope not disappoint? (*v.5 - Because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts*)

Q: Does the love of God always get rid of the tribulations and sufferings of our lives? (*No*)

The word "poured out" is the same word used in Acts when referring to the Holy Spirit being poured out upon believers at Pentecost. This is Paul giving us a preview of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. He isn't really going to discuss the Spirit directly until chapter 8 but this Paul sneaking the Spirit in a little early. The important thing about the context here is that the love of God is greater than the sufferings we will face. God's love is not negated or neutralized by tribulation rather it can lead us to greater hope in God as He works things out in our lives. The cycle Paul describes in vv. 3-4 is one of joyful revelation. As we progress through the tribulation in faith, we gain proven character which shows us that we belong to Him and that we are growing in Him. His greatest purposes for our lives (being more Christlike) are coming about in us through our cooperation with Him in the patient suffering. This in turn feeds hope. Just as Christ is working in our lives for His purposes we know He will continue to do so until one day He shows up and we will be made to be like Him. We just have to keep the right mindset during the tribulation in order to get that result. Like everything else, it's a matter of faith.

This section deals with the question: How can we be sure that God will vindicate us from the wrath to come? Paul gives us two answers in these verses. The first is God's love for us in Christ and the second is God's work for us through Christ.

Q: In v.6, who is Paul talking to? (*We - the church, believers*)

In v.6 Paul says that we were "helpless". This word means without strength. We were spiritually weak and without the strength necessary to save ourselves. Yet at the right time, Christ died.

Q: Who did Christ die for according to v. 6? (*the ungodly*)

Q: Just as a matter of review, who were the ungodly? (*everyone in the world before they were justified*)

Q: What were the ungodly doing?

It's important to see the case Paul is building here concerning the love of God. Christ died for people who didn't worship Him or care about knowing Him.

V.7 gives us a picture of the natural way of mankind when it comes to self-sacrifice. The righteous man is the man we respect. The good man is the man we love.

Q: Which type of man might someone dare to die in place of? (*the good man*)

The good man may be the soldier in our unit, our buddy in combat who we choose to sacrifice ourselves for him. The good man may be the child that a parent chooses to save from physical peril at the cost of their own lives. The key is that love, even in these pure and honest moments, in human terms, is not sufficient for us to sacrifice ourselves consistently for others. The love we, sinful humans in general, have for one another is sorely limited, inconsistent and weak. However, then comes Paul's bomb.

Q: How does God show His love for mankind? (*v.8 - Christ died for us while we were still sinners*)

While our nature, our core guiding self was sin - selfish rebellion against God - Christ died in our place. The awesome quality of God's love is that even while we still hated God and were in active rebellion against Him, He died for us. No human ever has the right to question God's love based on this verse. No circumstance or hardship can ever disprove the fact of God's love for every single person. It was shown to us on the cross and cannot be dismissed as true, though it can be rejected and ignored.

So how do we know God will vindicate our faith in His Son Jesus Christ? He proved His love for us on the cross.

[Titus 3:3-7]

III. We hope because God acted for us in Christ.

[Romans 5:9-11]

Verses 9-10 are parallel in that they say the same thing.

Q: If we are justified by Jesus' blood, what are we saved from? (*v.9 - God's wrath*)

Q: At what state were people in when they were reconciled to God? (*v. 10 - they were enemies of God*)

Q: Think to a time when you were reconciled to another person? How did it make you feel? (*lots of answers but whatever the feeling true reconciliation leads to a peace and freedom within the relationship*)

The word "enemies" means one who hates another, an adversary. Notice that we were reconciled to God, God was not reconciled to us. This is important. God is holy and does not

change ever. He would never reconcile Himself to sinful mankind. However, when we are convicted of our sins and wake up to the fact that through His great love for us, He has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him, we can take grace. Thus, it is implied by the term “reconciliation” that believers have been brought together with God - we gave up our sin and right to our lives so that we could come to know God.

While Paul uses justified and reconciled in the same sense in this passage, they mean different things. They both describe what happened to us when God accepted us. By justifying us - He declares us innocent and absolves us from punishment for our sins. He also removes the hostility between us and Himself because of that sin. The former is judicial and the latter is relational.

Another note here is on the use of the word “saved”. When we use the word “saved” we typically mean the day we accepted God’s grace. While it is not wrong to use the word that way, it is a short-cut of what actually happened and it’s not the way Paul uses it. When Paul uses the word saved, he generally means being saved from God’s wrath on judgment day. Thus, in terms of history, salvation comes after justification and reconciliation. In Paul’s way of using the word, salvation is in the future. It will certainly happen for the soul that has been justified and reconciled.

Q: What do you think is the hardest thing God ever did? (*Justify and reconcile a sinner*)

The hardest thing God has ever done was bring sinners to a right relationship with Himself. In order to do this, God had to sacrifice His only Son. He had to reveal this love to mankind who didn’t care about Him at all. Also, He gave free will to man so that even once grace was offered, man, as an individual, had to accept this offer from God by faith. However, once a person “gets over that hump” and is justified, Paul’s argument is that since God could do the “harder” thing, He can certainly do the much “easier” deal which is to bring those who accepted Him into glory and deliver them from His wrath.

Q: In v.11 - what are believers to exult? (*vv. 10-11 - being saved through the life of Christ and also the reconciliation we have received*)

These things, the reconciliation to God and the certainty of salvation bring us hope and continue assurance that God will keep His promise to us.

[II Timothy 1:12]

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?