

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

February 15, 2023

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

Text – Romans 5 – *The Blessings of Justification*

Introduction

Chapter five continues the discussion of justification, which began in Romans 3:21. Before Paul begins teaching about sanctification in chapter 6, he wants to put an exclamation point on what it really means to be saved. Sometimes we think of salvation as just a fire insurance plan for when we die, but there is so much more to it. This chapter will show us the many blessings and benefits that come with justification. It is like the fringe benefit package that you get in addition to a salary on the job.

I. The Benefits of our Relationship with Christ (vs. 1 – 5)

A. Peace

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (Romans 5:1)

The word "peace" is used in a variety of different ways in the Bible, but here it means that we are no longer enemies of God, and He no longer has a charge against us. Verse 10 plainly teaches that before we were reconciled, we were enemies of God. The gospel is called "the gospel of peace" (Romans 10:15 and Ephesians 6:15). Faith in the gospel reconciles two warring parties.

B. Access

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:2)

Access to God was extremely limited in the Old Testament. Only the High Priest could enter in behind the veil of the Temple, and that only one day per year. When Christ shed his blood on the Cross of Calvary, the veil of the Temple was cut from the top to the bottom, meaning that God intended, through Christ, to allow many to enter His presence. (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38)

The temple also contained a partition that prevented Gentiles from getting close to God's presence, but through justification by faith, Gentiles as well as Jews have access:

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Ephesians 2:14-18)

You will notice that it is because we are at peace with God that we have access.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

C. Hope

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" (Romans 5:3-4)

While peace declared our past enmity with God to be over, and our access to God is in the present, hope speaks of the future. We now can anticipate (hope) the glory of God. Remember, chapter 3 told us that we all fell short of God's glory, but now through Christ we can look forward to it again. Chapter eight will expand on this subject, but this hope has everything to do with our wonderful future with God. The lost man has no hope, but the saved man has everything to live for. Paul's letter to Titus tells us that hope should change the way we live:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" (Titus 2:11-13)

Verses 3 and 4 tell us that God develops this hope through trials. The lost man sees a trial as a hopeless, judgment of God, but the believer knows that the trial has a purpose. Tribulation develops endurance (patience), and endurance develops character (experience). Character keeps our hope alive and well. When we see God bring us through the trials of life, it strengthens our faith, and makes our anticipation for heaven more acute.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:3-9)

J. Vernon McGee made these comments regarding these verses:

In other words, we *joy* in troubles, knowing that trouble works patience—patience doesn't come automatically—and patience, experience, and experience, hope.

It is quite interesting to see the three words that are associated with trouble. One is joy, another is hope, and the third is patience. God must work that into us although it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. In other words, it takes trouble to bring out the best in the believer's life. The only way God can get fruit out of the life of the believer is by pruning the branches. The world does it differently. If you, as an unbeliever, are in a nice, comfortable situation and have no troubles, then you can have fun, you can also be patient, and you may have a little hope as you go along.

But that is not the way it is with the child of God. Trouble produces these fruits in our lives.¹

D. The Holy Ghost

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5)

Notice the phrase "And hope maketh not ashamed" – meaning we will not be sorry or ashamed of this hope. God will come through for us.

This almost seems like something we take for granted, but it is through justification that we receive the Holy Ghost of God:

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Corinthians 1:22)

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13)

Notice the phrase "shed abroad (ἐκχέω - ekcheō) in our hearts by the Holy Ghost". This means that God pours out or distributes generously the love of God in our hearts. In other words, when we are going through the difficulties of life, The Holy Ghost reminds us of God's love for us, and that the trial we are going through is not a punishment designed to hurt us, but an exercise designed to better us and glorify Him.

II. Our Boasting of His Love (vs. 6 – 11)

Verse eleven tells us that we can joy (rejoice or boast) in God, but verses 6 – 10 help us to understand why.

A. He Loved Us Through His Death

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

A lot of people throw the word "love" around casually. We end our phone conversations by saying, "I love you" before we hang up. We sometimes say it too easily, without really

¹ McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 1-8)* (electronic ed., Vol. 42, pp. 90–91). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

giving it much thought. I am certainly for people stating their love for others in words, but I think we need to put our money where our mouths are. Jesus, however, didn't just speak of His love for us - He demonstrated it. Christ's death was the demonstration of His love for us. His love was proven by His action. Our actions will also prove or demonstrate our love:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:7-8)

We need to get hold of the fact that Christ loved the unlovely. He loved people who were his bitter enemies.

Preaching Point – How are we at loving our enemies?

Most people, including the lost, can love people in return for the love they have received, but there are very few who can love the people who are their enemies.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"
(Matthew 5:43-44)

Think about it. What better opportunity do we have to display the love of Christ than when we love people who hate us?

B. He Loves Us Still Through His Life

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5:9)

"By his blood" is referring to His death. "Through him" refers to His life. We serve a risen Saviour!

Notice – "saved from wrath" – Because He is a risen Saviour, He has proven His power over death and Hell. Because we have been justified by faith, Christ will save us from the wrath that we deserved because of our sin.

J. Vernon McGee believes that the word "wrath" here specifically refers to the Tribulation Period:

The “wrath” mentioned here is what the prophets spoke of: “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Zephaniah 1:15). What is the great day of wrath? It is what the Lord Jesus called the Great Tribulation. And Paul tells believers that we shall be “saved from wrath.” We have been saved from the penalty of sin; He is constantly saving us today from the power of sin; and He is going to save us in the future from the presence of sin. That means that every believer will leave this earth at the Rapture. We will escape that day of wrath, not because we are worthy, but because we have been saved by the grace of God. We have been saved by grace; we live by the grace of God; and ten billion years from today we will still be in heaven by the grace of God. We are saved from wrath through Him—through Christ.²

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Romans 5:10)

We were enemies, but Christ reconciled us. He keeps us reconciled and preserves us blameless through the power of His life.

"But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:24-25)

"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:22-25)

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Romans 5:11)

The word “joy” means to glory and is sometimes translated “boast”. We have absolutely nothing to boast about in ourselves, but we will never run out of things to boast about concerning what Christ has done for us.

² McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 1-8)* (electronic ed., Vol. 42, p. 94). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Notice the word “atonement” (καταλλαγή - *katallagē*). This word appears dozens of times in the Old Testament, but only once here in the New Testament. It means reconciliation (see v. 10) or restoration to favor or fellowship with God. The Greek word is translated three other times in the Bible to the English word “reconciling or reconciliation” (Romans 11:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18 & 19).

According to Romans 1:18 – 32, man declared war on God through his sin, but God sent His Son Jesus Christ Who provided the atonement for our sins because He loved us, and what is more amazing is that He still loves us. Now that’s something to rejoice about.

Conclusion

The future looks good for us, but with all the present benefits of Justification, we also can have a blessed time as we serve Him here on the earth. As we will see in the next section of chapter five, mankind lost so much when Adam sinned, Christ gives us back what we had lost, and has given us much more besides.