

# Ministry of Grace Church

## Romans 5:1-11 - Sermon Notes



### Background

In the previous chapters the Apostle Paul has shown us a number of things with regard to our legal standing before God. He has shown us:

- 1) That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;
- 2) That because of this sin, there is no one who is righteous. No, not a single, solitary one of us.
- 3) That this applies to both Jews and Gentiles;
- 4) That there was no way to obtain righteousness (become justified) except by pardon. We can neither obtain it by personal merit nor by personal effort, but by grace alone, through faith;
- 5) That this was also the manner in which Abraham and David were accepted before God.

Now, we're about to learn that salvation by faith, our justification, produces peace with God. And, not only do we have peace with Him, we have access to God's grace and look forward to being in His presence. Here's how the Apostle Paul said it.

### Romans 5:1-2

**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we boast in hope of the glory of God.**

Paul now tells us that, because we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God**. The word translated "peace" is *eirēnē*, which does, in fact, mean "peace." However, this is not so much an expression of contentment, satisfaction, and quiet, as it is "a state of reconciliation with God." Let's not rush over this fact too quickly. Because God has declared us to be completely innocent and without guilt, we can stand in His personal presence without fear!

Those who try to work for their salvation can never have peace because they never know whether they have done enough (which they never can) and so are always worried about it. In contrast to

that, Paul says that because our salvation is given to us as a result of our faith by a loving God who will never take it away, we have peace - and - assurance.

Think about this! You have a relationship of peace with the God of all creation and the Judge of the world. This is a marvelous thing! This peace is through Jesus Christ who is now our Lord, that is to say, our master, our owner. We belong to Him because He has purchased us with His blood.

Most people in the world today very much value freedom and don't like to think about being owned by anyone or anything. We want to be our own lord, and we don't want to bow to anyone else. God's lordship over us, however, has some amazing benefits, one of which is identified in the current verse. Because Jesus Christ is our Lord, this verse says that we "... **have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace ...**"

The word translated "**introduction**" is *prosagōgē*, which means "to bring near" or "to have access." The concept of access has two aspects to it. The first is the *ability* to get somewhere or to have something and the other is the *authority* or right to get somewhere or to have something. This Greek word means both, but the emphasis is on the latter, the authority.

**We now have access to God's presence** bestowed upon us: this free gift of salvation. And, although we didn't (and still don't) deserve it, salvation is freely given to us. It is ours to keep. And - as a result - Paul says that we have bragging rights! That's what he says. We boast, or brag, in the hope of the glory of God. This word "**hope**" is from a form of *elpis*, meaning "the desire of obtaining something good *with the full expectation of obtaining it.*" It is the type of hope that Christians have of being resurrected to eternal life. We certainly desire it, and we have full expectation that it will happen because God has promised it to us.

We can boast, and rejoice, because we are confident that we will be bathed in God's glory as a result of our being in His presence, knowing that **He is our Lord, not our Judge!**

### **Romans 5:3-5**

**And not only this, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

Paul now tells us that not only do we rejoice in our confident expectation of standing in the glory of God one day, but he is also saying that we rejoice in tribulation, distress, or affliction. But that doesn't make sense, does it? When we are in the midst of tribulation, do we feel like rejoicing? No! But Paul says that we should. Why? Because when we are undergoing trials and tribulations and we realize that Jesus went through even greater trials and tribulation (leading up to and while on the cross), we can identify with Him and gain some comfort in the fact that He knows what we are going through. This, then, helps us endure the tribulation, and by enduring it we learn to persevere.

The word translated "**perseverance**" is *hupomonē*, which is made up of *hupo* (or *hypo*), meaning "under or beneath" and a form of *menō*, which means "to stay or to remain." It is a picture of a beast of burden who, when loaded with a heavy burden, remains under the load. That is, he perseveres under the load with patience.

Perseverance, or patience, is one of those things that everyone wants to have without having to earn it. Unfortunately, though, perseverance can only be learned and fully developed under trying circumstances, and even then, only by trusting in God to carry us through. James teaches us a very similar thing regarding trials which test our faith:

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance. (James 1:2-3)

Paul now tells us that the perseverance we develop in times of tribulation, as it gets reinforced over and over again, produces character. Patiently enduring tribulation is a proof to us that the righteousness that God has bestowed on us is genuine.

This character, or proof of genuineness, then creates hope in us. Therefore, the patient enduring of tribulation produces a proof of the genuineness of our faith (our righteousness) and knowing that this is genuine, we have a confident expectation that what God has promised He will certainly do.

If you think about it, believing His promise is what we did initially that resulted in God declaring us righteous. So, patiently enduring tribulation strengthens our faith. That's why we can rejoice in tribulation! It is through tribulation and trials that our faith grows, and we are being made more Christ-like.

In a sense, the trials that continually come our way are a confirmation that our salvation is real. And, as we encounter trials, we turn to our Heavenly Father for strength and wisdom, thus drawing us closer to Him. God does not isolate His children from difficulties; He graciously allows trials to help us grow.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul tells us that God will continue His work on us until the day He comes back:

*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)*

We have been learning from Paul some of the wonderful benefits of salvation by faith: peace, access to God's grace, patience in trials, assurance of God's trustworthiness, and confident expectation. He now tells us that this hope (this confident expectation) does not make us ashamed.

Some day every single person will stand before the Creator of the universe. Those who have rejected Christ, who have not believed the promises of God, and have not humbled themselves before Him to receive his gracious gift of salvation, will stand before the **Judge** of the Universe. They will be ashamed of what they have done and of what they have believed. Then they will be cast into the lake of fire where they will experience eternal torment! We who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, however, will stand before our **Lord**, and we will receive rewards for all that we have done on His behalf. We will not be ashamed. We will then be ushered into heaven to be eternally in His presence and to experience the wonders He has created for us!

And Paul says the reason that we will not be ashamed is because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts. This is not the love that we have for God, rather it is the love that God has for us. Do you see? God did not simply give us a sip or a taste of his love; He poured it out in abundance directly from His heart to ours. And He has done this through the Holy Spirit whom he has given to us as a guarantee and a seal of our salvation, never to be taken away.

Without this unimaginable love we are lost forever.

### **Romans 5:6-8**

**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

Previously, Paul has shown us that it is not through works that we are justified before God, rather it is through faith. Because we believe the promise of God, He chose to declare us righteous (even though we aren't righteous, He chose to declare us so). Paul ended the last chapter with the statement that Christ was delivered because of our offenses, and He was raised again to provide for our justification.

He now goes back to the subject of Christ's death so that we can understand better why Christ died for us. He sets this up by pointing out that we couldn't do it ourselves. Because of our own lack of righteousness (remember, there is none righteous, not even one) we were without strength. Because of our sinfulness we were unable to stand in the presence of a sinless God, and we did not possess the ability to make ourselves righteous. As a result, because God is a righteous God and must punish the guilty sinner (that means you and me), we would have stood condemned in His presence unless someone who is righteous was willing to pay our penalty for us.

Which is exactly what Paul says happened. He says that Christ (the sinless, righteous one) died for the ungodly. We were irreverent sinners who would stand condemned before God when Christ gave Himself for us.

It's easy to imagine a wealthy benefactor giving money to a poor child who does nice things for others in spite of his or her own poverty. However, it's hard to imagine that this same wealthy benefactor would give money to an obnoxious, mean, spiteful young child no matter how poor. What Paul is saying is that in spite of our being obnoxious, mean, and spiteful (a.k.a. sinful) and without the ability to change ourselves, Jesus the Christ (the anointed one) died for us so that we can stand as sinless and righteous before our Holy God.

I like the way Matthew Henry put it in his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*:

He died for the ungodly; not only helpless creatures, and therefore likely to perish, but guilty sinful creatures, and therefore deserving to perish

Paul is now telling us why it is so amazing that Christ would die for us. The Jews made a three-fold division of mankind around the notions of goodness and righteousness:

- A righteous person was one who adhered strictly to the Law of Moses and always did what was demanded of him or her; a person who was respected and looked up to.
- A good person was someone who went beyond a strict adherence to the Law. In addition to being righteous, this person gave liberally to others, being full of love and compassion. This type of person was not only respected but admired by all.
- A sinner was one who was selfish, ungodly, and wicked; one who had no regard for godliness or for the well-being of others.

Paul tells us that it is unlikely that anyone would be willing to give up his own life for someone else, even though that person might be outwardly religious. He goes on to say that it is possible that someone would be willing to give up his life for a good person; someone who was not only outwardly religious but kind, benevolent, and generous. But the implication is that it is highly unlikely that anyone would be willing to die for sinful scumbags like you and me. Fortunately for us, that's not how God's love operates.

God, with His agape love, is willing to sacrifice for us. No one else would be willing to die for sinners like you and me. But God demonstrates how marvelous his self-sacrificing love for us is; even though we are still sinners, Christ died for us! He didn't wait for us to become righteous by ourselves because we are without the ability to do so! And though we may have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, we are still sinners. However, because of our faith, as we learned previously,

God has declared us to be righteous. We didn't actually stop being sinners when we got saved, but God stopped seeing us as sinners. He now sees us as having the righteousness of Jesus Christ because the death of His Son paid the penalty for our sins, and He credited that righteousness to us in His record book.

### **Romans 5:9-11**

**Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

Paul has just shown us the greatness of God's love for us. Though we are sinners and not good or righteous people, Christ died for us. Paul continues with, "Much more then ..." In other words, the statement to follow is of even greater significance.

He says, "having now been justified by His blood." At first appearance this may seem contradictory to what Paul has just taught us in the previous chapter, that we are justified by grace, through faith. Actually, these are fully in agreement with each other because the shedding of blood is what fulfills God's law of justice making it possible for Him to mark us as righteous in His record book. As it says in **Hebrews 9:22**, "... without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"

Even though God is all powerful, He can only do what is consistent with His own righteousness and law of justice. That law requires that sin must be paid for with the shedding of blood. Therefore, it is the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross, the giving of His perfect life as substitutionary payment for our sins, that permits God to declare us righteous.

But Paul doesn't stop there. The "Much more then" comment doesn't refer to the shedding of Christ's blood but to the fact that, "we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Remember, while we were still sinners Christ died for us. But much greater than the fact that He died for us while we were still sinners is the fact that because of His blood we will be saved!

Once again this appears a little confusing since we refer to ourselves as having already been saved. You see, there are two aspects of our salvation. As a past and completed action we have already been marked in God's book as righteous, and legally we have already been saved from the penalty of our sins. As a result, in the future we will be saved from the wrath of the Almighty Judge who will judge all men. That is to say, we will appear at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ where we will be rewarded for the things we have done for Him, not at the Great White Throne Judgment where unsaved sinners will suffer the result of the wrath of God in the lake of fire.

These verses represent one of the pinnacles of great theological truth found in the book of Romans. We just learned that we were justified by the shedding of His (God the Son's) blood and, as a result, we will be saved from His (God, the Father's) wrath at the judgment. Now we see that it was through the death of Jesus Christ that this reconciliation took place. And now that we have been reconciled, of even greater importance is the fact that we shall be saved (from the wrath to come) by His life.

There is a subtle statement here that we don't want to read past without recognizing. Yes, we will be saved from the wrath of God (from the Great White Throne Judgment and the lake of fire), and this is a particular point that Paul wants us to understand. And - the previous verse said that we will be saved from the wrath through Him. However, the current verse amplifies that statement by saying that we will be saved through "His life." Do you see that? It is the blood that satisfies God's

justice, but it is Jesus' resurrected life, the fact that he lives to intercede for us, that guarantees we will be saved and live eternally. That is the essence of the gospel which we must believe to be saved; Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, and He was raised from the dead (given life) so that we might be saved from the Wrath of God. His eternal life is the guarantee that we, too, will be given eternal life. We must believe in both the death and the resurrection, for according to Paul, it is this resurrection and the life that He now possesses by which we will be saved.

Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty of our sins, and God the Father gave that life back to Him so that we might be saved from the wrath of our sins, if we believe in it.

My friends, Christians should be the most joy-filled and rejoicing people on the face of the earth! Why? Because we have been justified (declared righteous) by God and have been promised that we will not suffer His wrath in the future. This justification allows us to fellowship with Almighty God right now, and the promise allows us to patiently endure the trials of this life knowing that we will not see His wrath.

Finally, Paul says that it is through Jesus Christ that we have received the reconciliation. Don't miss this, now! The Greek verb *lambanō*, translated "received," is in the aorist tense. In Greek that means action that was completed at a point in time in the past. Paul says that now, at the present time, we have already received the reconciliation (completed at a point in time in the past). That's why we can boast about Him, because we are now, and always will be, reconciled with, and at peace with, our Heavenly Father. And since we are reconciled with Him and will never have to know His wrath, we brag about Him as the greatest there ever was or ever could be!

### **So What?**

Let us rejoice! Not only do we no longer fear the wrath of a righteous God, we actually look forward to being in His presence as our Lord! How great is God's grace through which righteousness is imputed to us when we believe His promise!

The next time you go through a difficult situation (perhaps it's right now), be patient. Give thanks to God that He loves you and wants you to grow stronger, becoming more like Christ. And, when these trials come, rejoice!

It's easy to get cavalier about our salvation until we realize how much God did for us, how ungodly we are without Him, how powerless we are to save ourselves, and how undeserving we are. In spite of all this, while we were ungodly and unable to do anything about it, Christ died for us. Hallelujah!

We were, in fact, neither good nor righteous. Do you realize how worthless, helpless, and condemned we are without Christ? Let's all take a moment to thank God for His great love with which He loves us!

The next time you sing a song of praise to God, remember that we have eternal bragging rights. We can brag about our Father and rejoice because we have been completely reconciled to Him, forever and ever!

God did it all for you!

Let's pray.