

Romans: Foundations – “Declared” (Romans 5:1-11)

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:1-5)

Paul begins this section of Romans calling us back to all that he has previously shared since Romans 3:21, setting in place the truths of justification by grace through faith alone. Beginning in chapter 3, Paul states the truths of justification by faith. He then illustrates these truths in chapter 4, and now in chapter 5 he begins to explain these truths, beginning with the results of justification.

First, we have peace (Gr. *eirēnē*) with God. This is not simply a quiet frame of mind... the peace of God. Peace *with* God is actually the opposite of war and dissension. We don’t consider ourselves to be *at war* with God, but unregenerate man opposes God and God opposes him. The unconverted are not on God’s good side. As seen in Romans 1, God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And we saw in Romans 3 that no man is righteous, not one. Rather than having a tranquil attitude, here peace with God is about a reconciled relationship with God. Though once our enemy, now we call Him Savior, Lord, Father, Friend. And this reconciliation comes through Jesus alone. We have no white flag to wave that God hasn’t first given us. The war is over for the believer only because of the sacrifice of Christ. “It is the peace of reconciliation that we’re talking about. Our sin paid for in full on the cross by Jesus Christ propitiates or satisfies the justice of God on our behalf and God in His great mercy accepts Christ as our substitute, treating Him as if He lived our lives and treating us as if we lived His by imputing His perfect righteousness to us... Having been declared righteous we are therefore reconciled to God. This peace then is the definition of the new reality of a person being made right with God... God’s justice being satisfied, Christ’s righteousness being granted to us, we entered into peace with God.”¹

Secondly, we have access (Gr. *prosaōgē*) into “this grace in which we stand”. This “introduction” or access is on the basis of faith. This was a term that was commonly used for someone being granted an audience before someone in a high position. We don’t just waltz into the oval office. We certainly couldn’t just waltz into the throne room of God without first being granted the privilege. Jesus is our access into all that God is and has for us. We stand in grace because we are in Christ. Apart from Him, we have no right of access to God.

Thirdly, we rejoice (Gr. *kauchaomai*) or exult in hope of the glory of God. The word “rejoice” means to “boast or glory in.” We could say we “glory in the hope of the glory of God.” It is a confident joy. We not only have a future hope of sharing in God’s glory in heaven, but we rejoice that we are being conformed to His image now. 1 Peter gives us a clearer picture of our hope. We have an imperishable, undefiled, unfading inheritance reserved for us in heaven and we are being protected by the power of God through faith until He is revealed. Colossians 1:27 tells us that Christ in us is our hope of glory. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says we all (now) are beholding the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. In this we have confident, emboldened joy.

And not only this... we also rejoice in sufferings (Gr. *thlipsis*). *Thlipsis* is defined as affliction that presses in on us. It literally means “narrowness of room”. “Christians are not exempt from tribulation, but rather they are especially subject to it. Their tribulation consists largely of persecution and the opposition their testimony meets in an unfriendly world... Tribulation, then, to the early Christians meant not so much ill health, poverty or loss of friends, but the sacrifices they had to make and the perils they had to meet from their proclamation or profession of Christ.”² (See Paul’s testimony 2 Cor. 12:9-10.) But this word encompasses all kinds of trials as well. “...Keep in mind that they are any tests to your faith. They could be tribulations from loss of health, or tribulations in broken or strained relationships, or tribulations in vocational hardships and disappointments, or tribulations in accidents or natural disasters, or tribulations in verbal or physical assaults, or simply everyday inconveniences

¹ MacArthur, John. “Links in the Chain of Security: Peace and Grace”. Website: www.gty.org .

http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/90-185_Links-in-the-Chain-of-Security-Peace-and-Grace

² Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers. 1992.

from traffic jams to plumbing problems. Anything that makes life harder and threatens your faith in the goodness and power and wisdom of God is tribulation.”³

It is that very type of suffering, though, that invites us into the cycle mentioned here. Suffering produces endurance (Gr. *hupomonē*). Endurance is bearing up under suffering. It refers to someone who doesn't surrender under trial. That endurance brings about character (Gr. *dokimē*) – proven character – character that proves us to be genuine believers. And this proven character leads to hope. “The Divine process is as follows: God brings us into tribulations, and that of all sorts; graciously supplying therewith a rejoicing expectation of deliverance in due time; and the knowledge that, as the winds buffeting some great oak on a hillside cause the tree to thrust its roots deeper into the ground, so these tribulations will result in steadfastness, in faith and patient endurance; and our consciousness of steadfastness – of having been brought by grace through the trials, - gives us a sense of Divine approval, or approvedness, we did not before have; and which is only found in those who have been brought through trials, by God's all-sufficient grace. This sense of God's approval arouses within us abounding 'hope' – we might almost say, hopefulness, a hopeful, happy state of soul.”⁴ A similar progression can be found in two other passages of scripture: James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:5-8.

Hope, then, does not disappoint. The word is “*kataischunō*”. A better rendering of this phrase might be “and hope does not put us to shame.” The picture is of someone who experiences shame because something or someone they trusted failed them. When our hope is Christ, when we experience His power in trial, when our faith is genuine and we are at peace with God, exulting in the hope of the glory of God and standing in the grace of Jesus, we will never ever be ashamed. We will never be disappointed. Why? Because “the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” “The Holy Spirit is the down payment, the Holy Spirit is the *arrabon*, the engagement ring, the first installment, the promise, the guarantee. This isn't talking about our love for God, this is talking about God's love for us. The reason our hope doesn't disappoint is because God's love is eternal...How has God poured out love in our hearts? By giving us the Holy Spirit, simply stating another way, by God Himself in His Spirit taking up residence in us.”⁵

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” Romans 5:6-11

After spinning our heads in awe from the blessings that are ours through justification by faith, we are reminded from where we come. Paul describes us before we became believers in four different ways.

1. Weak: (Gr. *asthenēs*) Helpless, without strength, powerless. Without physical ability; impotence. The same word is used in Hebrews in the context of needing Jesus as our high priest. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our *weaknesses*, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Not only are we impotent to do anything of eternal significance, Christ sympathizes with our impotence, and has provided bold access to His throne. At just the right time, Christ died for us... for the...

2. Ungodly: (Gr. *asebēs*) Godless; without fear and reverence for God; “It does not mean irreligious, but one who actively practices the opposite of what the fear of God demands. Asebēs is one characterized by immoral and impious behavior.”⁶

“The fact of man's total moral inability is stated here in the gentlest possible terms. It is a bankruptcy of all moral and spiritual inclination toward God and holiness, as well as of power to be or do good. Yet into a scene of helplessness like this, God sends His Son – for what? To die for the ‘ungodly.’ No return or response is demanded: it is absolute grace – for the *ungodly*.”⁷

The point of verse 7 is to show us that if you take the most righteous, just, moral person you know, the likelihood of dying for that person is still minimal with only our carnal love to stand upon. We might die for those

³ Piper, John. “*We Exult in Our Tribulations*”. Website: www.desiringgod.org .

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/10/1098_We_Exult_in_Our_Tribulations/

⁴ Newell, William R. “*Romans Verse-by-Verse*”. Website: www.ccel.org . <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/newell/romans.vi.html>

⁵ MacArthur, John. “*The Divine Guarantee of an Eternal Salvation – Part 2*”. Website: www.gracetoyou.org .

http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-351_The-Divine-Guarantee-Of-An-Eternal-Salvation-Part-2

⁶ Zodhiates, *ibid*.

⁷ Newell, *ibid*.

“we love”, but the stats go pretty low. Knowing that, what would be the chances of our dying for the worst of the worst, the lowest of the low? And yet, God demonstrates – He “shows off” – His own love toward us in that while we were...

3. Sinners... Christ died for us. Enslaved by our own immorality, characterized by ungodliness, evil in nature... and Christ died for us.

4. Enemies: (Gr. *echthros*) hostile, inimical, adversarial. This brings us full circle to verse 1, reminding us that we are at war with God and in need of peace.

God’s love was totally unmotivated by anything that is in us.

Verses 9 and 10 seem to be saying similar things. Paul continues to announce our “much more” salvation in Christ. Having now been justified by Jesus’ blood, made right before God, we shall be saved from His wrath. We were reconciled to God through Jesus’ death (the shedding of His blood) and shall be saved by His life. This reconciliation not only saves us, but gives us reason to rejoice (boast) in God through our Lord Jesus Christ... for it is Christ alone that justifies us and reconciles us.

John Piper has a wonderful synopsis of this passage. It is as follows:

“Here the sequence goes like this... Christ died for our sins and fulfilled a perfect righteousness; we saw it and believed; we were justified by this faith; the righteousness of Christ was imputed to us; the enmity between God and us was taken away and there was peace; we entered through that peace into a sphere and reign of grace where the infinite power of God no longer works against us, but for us, so that the promise is guaranteed – grace will reign unto eternal life (Romans 5:21), the justified will be glorified (Romans 8:30) and therefore ‘we exult in the hope of the glory of God.’”⁸

⁸ Piper, John. “Let Us Exult In The Hope of the Glory of God”. Website: www.desiringgod.org .
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/10/1096_Let_Us_Exult_In_The_Hope_Of_The_Glory_Of_God/