

Being Justified, We Have ...

Romans 5:1-2

Thus far in Romans, Paul has spent considerable time detailing man's need for salvation. We have learned that man is a sinner and that he is under the wrath of God. We have learned that nothing associated with religion, works, the Law, or with rituals can ever provide salvation to humanity. We have seen that we are totally dependent upon faith to bring us into a right relationship with the Lord. We are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross and in His resurrection from the dead.

Now as we come to chapter 5, justification is viewed from an even broader perspective. The first verses of 1-11 look at justification as the basis and the beginning of all of God's blessings for the believer. Verses 12-21 then look at justification as God's means of reversing the curse of sin and death brought about by Adam and overturned by Jesus Christ.

Today, I want to begin by reading Romans 5:1-11 so we can get the flow of the whole passage. In the original, these 11 verses are all one long sentence or paragraph. It is all about what justification by faith means in our daily lives. Follow along in your Bible as I read:

- 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**
- 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;**
- 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.**
- 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**
- 6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**
- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.**
- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**
- 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**
- 10 For if when 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.**
- 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

Today we can only look at 5:1-2, where Paul sets forth three blessings that come from justification.

The NKJV translates this first phrase, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith”**. The “therefore” connects Chapter 5 with what Paul has just written. The NIV translates it, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith.” The verb tense indicates a one-for-all action at a specific point in time.

Remember what we have learned about justification in the last two chapters. To be justified means to be acquitted, our sins are not counted against us. Justification frees the guilty man from paying the just penalty of his sin. Not only are the charges dropped against us, but the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account. We have a right standing with God. Those who have placed their trust in Christ can rest assured that through faith righteousness has been credited to you. The basis of your confidence is on the fact that Christ was put to death for your sins and raised to life that you may receive His righteousness.

The issue that then comes up in many of our minds is this, “If I don’t do anything to get saved, if my works and religious rituals don’t save me, how do I stay saved? What keeps me right with God?” Put another way, “But will this salvation by grace through faith last, Paul? How can we be sure? Is it sufficient for all the problems of life? What happens when trouble and persecution come? Are we still justified? Will God change His mind and ‘unjustify’ us? Even if faith saves us at the beginning, will it still save us at the end?”

This whole section here in chapter 5 answers those questions. When God saves, He saves forever. When God justifies, He justifies forever. When God declares a person righteous, He never comes back and says, “Oops! I changed my mind.” Justification by faith is the permanent possession of every believer. Verse one again says, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith.”** Justified, past tense. It is done one and for all.

MacArthur writes “what you have in the first 11 verses of chapter 5 is a chain, an unbreakable chain that links us eternally to God. And there are six links in the chain. Any one of them would be enough to hold us, but God, in his magnanimity, has made a six-link chain that holds us eternally to God.”

So therefore, based on what Paul has just taught about – justification by faith alone and the crediting of righteousness to our lives, there are assurances or benefits of your having believed in Jesus Christ. We won’t have time to look at all 11 verses today, we will just get through verses 1-2. One of those benefits of justification is:

Having been justified by faith:

I. WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD (5:1)

Peace with God is the most wonderful gift that anyone can possess! This does not refer to the feeling of inner peace, but rather to the objective fact of peace. This word peace comes from a word that means to join together, like glue. Have you ever tried to glue something to a surface that was dirty?

The other day one of my kids got a new protective cover for her phone. The first thing the instructions tell you to do is clean the surface you before you try to adhere the new surface, because if you have any debris, any irritant, of any kind on that surface, it will not adhere. They will not join together. Therefore, you have to make sure it is clean. You see, the word peace means when two things come together and there is nothing in between them. Once they are glued together, they are one, never to be separated.

"Do you mean to tell me that when I surrender, when I put my faith into Jesus Christ, I have a peace with God that is a 'glued together' peace and it will never come apart?" Yes! That is my relationship with Jesus Christ. It happens when I put my faith into Him. Peace with God. Two things glued together.

To have peace with God means to be in a relationship with God in which all the hostility caused by sin has been removed. It's to exist no longer under the wrath of God. Peace means we have a union with God. We have a new relationship with God. We are no longer hostile toward God or enemies of God. Rather we are one with God in spirit and we are at peace with God.

This peace with God comes **"through our Lord Jesus Christ."** Peace with God is not due to any merits or efforts on our part, but rather through what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross. All God's blessings come through Jesus. He is the great Peacemaker. He is the mediator between God and man.

Louis Talbot tells about a dying Christian who was visited by a friend who asked him, "Have you made your peace with God?" "No, I haven't." "What? Oh, you must make peace with God." "I'm sorry. I can't do that." "But you must. Don't you know that it's dangerous to die without making peace with God?" To which the Christian replied, "How can I make peace with God? My Lord made peace with me 2000 years ago when he died on the cross, and I accepted it. I have had peace ever since." That man understood the meaning of Romans 5:1.

The Bible says that Jesus "made peace by the blood of his cross." (Colossians 1:20) If Jesus "made peace" when he died on the cross, then all that is left to us is to accept by faith the peace he has already made. We don't "make peace" with God; he "made peace" with us when Jesus died at Calvary.

Peace with God is the first great permanent possession that comes to the believer as a result of justification. Verse 2 introduces us to the second great blessing.

Therefore since we have been justified by faith, ...

II. WE HAVE ACCESS TO GRACE (5:2a)

Verse 2, **"through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand."**

Paul is saying that through Jesus Christ we may now enter the very presence of God. Hebrews 4 says, **"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens ... Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

Paul says we have access to the very throne of God by grace, this was revolutionary—especially for his Jewish readers. They were accustomed to a system that kept a respectful distance between God and man. For instance, Gentiles were restricted to the outer courts of the Temple. If a Gentile went beyond that court, he could be put to death. Then there was the "Court of the Women" that restricted female worshippers. Finally, there was the "Holy Place" where only the priests could minister and behind it the "Holy of Holies," separated by a thick curtain. Entrance into the "Holy of Holies" was restricted to the High Priest—and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The message was clear: "Keep your distance!"

The late Donald Grey Barnhouse (Epistle to the Romans [Bible Study Hour], Part 19, p. 1007) told a story about Abraham Lincoln that illustrates this point. A Southern soldier

who had been freed from a prison camp because he was too wounded to return to active duty was seeking access to the President to intercede for his brother in a prison camp who was the sole support of their mother. But the White House guards would not let him in to talk to President Lincoln. He had no access.

One day the President's young son, Tad Lincoln, was walking near the White House and saw the wounded veteran crying as he sat on a bench. The boy went up and asked him what the matter was. The soldier explained that he wanted to get in to see Mr. Lincoln to tell him about his brother, but the guards would not let him in. The President's son took the man by the hand, led him past the guards, who all saluted, and brought the man into the presence of his father.

Barnhouse says that the story may be apocryphal, but it illustrates what the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, has done for us. We were desolate and alone, wounded by our sin. We had no way to come into God's holy presence. On the cross, Jesus tore the veil into the holy of holies. When we come in faith to Him, He clothes us with His righteousness. Now He takes us by the hand and leads us again and again, at any time we have need, into the presence of His Father. What a wonderful blessing to have access to God!

That's the second great permanent benefit of justification by faith. We find the third benefit in the same verse.

Therefore since we have been justified by faith, ...

III. WE HAVE HOPE IN GOD'S GLORY (5:2b)

The last part of verse 2 reads, **"and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."**

The NIV translates this phrase, **"we exult in hope of the glory of God."** In 5:1-11, the verb to rejoice or to glory occurs three times. It means to exult, to joyfully boast in what God has done. Paul exults in the hope of glory (5:2); he exults in his tribulations (5:3); and he exults in God (5:11).

To Exult or rejoice here could be translated boast, so that in contrast to what the world would boast in – its accomplishments and sin, or to what the Jews boast in, that is their obedience to the law – the believer boast in God alone. The believer rejoices in the hope of God's glory. Now hope is confident expectation, not wishful thinking. We saw Abraham exhibit that hope in God's promise in the last chapter. He had the confident expectation that God would keep His promise.

Now Paul says we rejoice in this confident expectation this hope of the glory of God. What is glory? It is that of which we all fall short (Romans 3:23). It's what Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden. It's the shining radiance of God's presence. It's what we shall be like when we see Jesus face to face (1 John 3:1-13). It's what we were meant to be, it's what we aren't any more, it's what we want more than any-thing else in the world. "Glory" is also another word for paradise or heaven. In short, the "hope of glory" is the confident expectation that one day God will fulfill all his promises to us.

To exult in hope of the glory of God is not just an intellectual truth to affirm. It's also worship response that we should have even, as verse 3 shows, in the face of trials. In my case, as perhaps you will admit for yourself, I just don't spend enough time meditating on the hope of seeing and sharing in the glory of God.

Dr. Barnhouse (ibid., Part 20, pp. 1037-1038) illustrated the joys of heaven by picturing a soldier in a cold foxhole, eating K-rations. He has to stay there day and night to hold his unit's position against the enemy. Then one night he hears a voice call out his name

and serial number. It's another soldier telling him, "I have orders to replace you. You are to go out on the next Red Cross flight. An order has come for you to go home. You have to go back to your mother's house. They're going to give you a hot shower and clean clothes. You have to go home and eat your mother's Southern fried chicken with mashed potatoes and gravy, with apple pie and ice cream for dessert." And the soldier replies, "Oh! You don't mean that I'm going to have to leave this nice foxhole and give up my K-rations, do you?"

Barnhouse says, "We smile at the absurdity of the idea, and yet there are some believers, perhaps some of you ... who are unwilling to leave your foxhole in this life to go to the Heavenly home to sit down at the banquet table of our God and to fellowship with Him in [the] joys of Heaven"

I heard someone put it this way: "I'm as sure of heaven as if I'd already been there 10,000 years." Can you say that? Do you know for certain that if you died today, that you would go to heaven? Do you have the "happy certainty" that heaven is your eventual destination?

You can have that certainty by trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That's the third permanent benefit of justification: the hope of glory.