

Romans 5

As a result of our faith, what is our position/standing before God (v. 1)? We have been justified -- a legal term signifying acquittal, i.e. not guilty. Acquittal in religion is the process whereby a person is declared to be right before God. Prior to our salvation, we were guilty before the court of God's law and sentenced to condemnation. Now however because of our faith in what Jesus did, the righteousness of God is given to all who believe and our guilty sentence is transformed into a sentence of justified, i.e. righteous, before God which is a one-time action.

What is the first reality that justification brings to the believer's life (v. 1)? Peace with God which comes only through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because the ransom has been paid in full by the work of Jesus on the cross, God's justice towards us is eternally satisfied. The war is over. Hostilities have ceased. We have been changed from foes to friends.

This is not the peace of God, i.e. a sense of tranquility in the midst of difficulties (Philippians 4:7). That kind of peace is focused on the cares of this world and is *subjective*. Paul is talking about peace with God. The battle between God and our self is *finished* – and He won, winning us. This is *objective* peace and has nothing to do with how I feel.

What is another reality of justification (v. 2)? Access to the presence of God. The curtain has been torn (Matthew 27:51). Access is the privilege to approach the King through the favor of another (Ephesians 2:18; 3:12) for the purpose of establishing a relationship. Christ's redeeming work on the Cross is the basis for this access.

What is the third reality (v. 2)? We are able to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Rejoice is the word normally translated *boast*. It means "a triumphant, rejoicing confidence." We joyfully look forward to the time when we will stand in the Lord's presence and share Christ's glory in contrast with falling short of it now. Hope for believers is a joyful confidence and a certainty not mere wishful thinking.

What attitude are believers able to have in the midst of sufferings/tribulation (v. 3)? Joy (rejoice). Paul isn't just spinning out spiritual platitudes here. First, he uses strong words. Sufferings is a strong term. It does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. Secondly, Paul lived a life full of sufferings. He knew the truth of suffering better than most anyone. Paul walked the talk.

How would you explain the progression from sufferings/tribulation to hope (vv. 3-5)? Starting with our bags packed with peace and grace (vv. 1-2) and an attitude of joy (vv. 2-3), we can go through this sequence ending with hope.

Peace with God (v. 1) does not always result in peace with other people but it enables us to view today's trials with joy because God has revealed that He uses them to produce a chain reaction of perseverance, character and hope in us (James 1:2-4). We can flourish in the midst of trials because of the promise of Romans 8:35-39 that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of Christ.

This is more than a Stoic endurance of our troubles. It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian faith that joy can coexist with affliction. We could never develop perseverance if our lives were trouble-free.

Why does hope not disappoint us (v. 5)? Our hope is founded upon the certain love of God. And the proof of that love is the gift of the Holy Spirit given by God and living in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the One who has sealed us and is the guarantee of our inheritance i.e. eternal life (Ephesians 1:13-14). With that kind of assurance, how could we possibly be disappointed?

For whom did Christ die? How are we described (v. 6-10)? Powerless (v. 6) -- incapable of working out any righteousness for ourselves. Ungodly (v. 6) -- neglecting and rebelling against God. Sinners (v. 8). Enemies (v. 10). Though a few people might possibly be willing to die for a good person, Christ went well beyond that. He died for us, His enemies, the ones who rebelled and rejected Him, the disinterested, the helpless.

When did He die for us (v. 6)? At just the right time – as determined by God. At the appointed moment in God's redemptive plan.

What is the message of vv. 9-10? Since He saved us from God's wrath when we were sinners, how much more will he keep us saved now that we have been reconciled and are His friends. If His death had such power to save us, His life will have even more power to keep us (v. 10). He has grabbed ahold of our hearts and is not letting go.

How would you define "reconcile" (v. 10)? Make a friend out of an enemy. Put an end to hostility.

Why did we need to be reconciled to God? Because we were God's enemy. We were hostile and quite content right where we were. Left to ourselves we felt no need to be reconciled to Him. But God was not content with our state. He intervened in a display of pure grace. The substitutionary death of Christ on the Cross removed the cause of our hostility toward God, namely our sins, which in turn enabled us to be reconciled to God.

How did we become alienated from Him? We were born that way thanks to Adam and the imputing/crediting of original sin to us. Sin was reckoned to our account and we could not remove it in and of ourselves. The good news is that the righteousness of Christ was also credited to our account and it overrules all our sins.

What is one result of reconciliation (v. 11)? Joy floods our souls because we are now right with God for all eternity.

What two "men" are contrasted in vv. 12-21? The first Adam and the second Adam -- Adam and Jesus. **How did sin come into the world (v. 12)?** Through Adam. **What were the consequences of Adam's sin?** Death was charged to the account of all men because all men sinned.

What is the sequence of v. 12? Sin entered the world through one man - Adam. Next, death entered the world because of sin, as a penalty for sin. Lastly death spread to all men because all sinned.

What was the relationship between sin, law and death before "the law" was given (vv. 13-14)? Between the time of Adam and Moses the law had not yet been given. Sin had not yet been formally defined. Man had not been told plainly the distinction between right and wrong and therefore sin was not charged against him (4:15). (If there is no law, there can be no breaking of the law.)

However, people physically died -- which was the penalty for sin. The people may not have been breaking explicit commands, but they were still sinners because they had the law of God written on their hearts (2:12-15) and thus there is real, inescapable guilt. The bad news is that the guilt of Adam was charged to their account. However, the good news is that the righteousness of Christ is charged to the account of all believers which trumps/undoes the guilt of Adam. Before the law was given, people were charged on the basis of their conscience and how they reacted to the knowledge they had. God ultimately evaluates the spiritual condition of all by the condition of their heart.

Adam's offense is contrasted with Christ's free gift. How is the gift not like the trespass (v. 15-20)?

- v. 15 One man's trespass resulted in death. BUT the gift was greater than the sin and resulted in life for many.
- v. 16 A single sin brought condemnation – an act of justice. BUT one act of obedience (the Cross) followed and brought the solution – justification – an act of grace.
- v. 17 One man's sin brought the reign of death. BUT the gift brought the reign of righteousness.
- v. 18 One trespass on the part of Adam led to condemnation. BUT one righteous act of the part of Christ led to justification.
- v. 19 Through one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. BUT through one man's obedience, many were made righteous.

The power of Christ's act of obedience to overcome Adam's act of disobedience is the great theme of this passage.¹

What effect did the law have (v. 20)? It made sin even more sinful by revealing what sin is.....in stark contrast to God's holiness. It identified/defined sin in order that we would recognize the futility of trying to obey the law which in turn would drive us to the Cross in search of redemption. **Yet what abounded even more (v. 21)?** Grace reigns over sin and death. At the Cross, grace overwhelmed sin and life triumphed over death.

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Romans, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 78