

LESSON 112: PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS



Chapter 5

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of God's glory.

The “therefore” bridges this chapter with chapter 4, where Paul explained that when we believe on Jesus Christ, we are declared righteous (justified) by God apart from any works we have done. Paul now is going to take us from the deep theological truths about justification by faith alone, to what this means to us in our daily lives. Theology is important, because if you understand the depth of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ it will have a huge impact on your daily life.

Remember that Paul is writing to Christians here, to all of us who have trusted Christ for salvation. He's saying, “Since God, through no help from us, is now considering us to be righteous (because of our faith in Christ),” and then he goes on and lists the blessings this brings to us.

ELEVEN BENEFITS OF OUR JUSTIFICATION WITH GOD

1. **Peace with God** (verse 1) – notice this is not the peace **of** God, but peace **with** God. It is not a *feeling* of peace, but a *state* of peace. In our natural state, we are enemies of God, at war with Him (Isaiah 48:22, Colossians 1:21, James 4:4). Our war with God is not like two nations at war, but as between a king and rebellious and guilty subjects. Through our justification, we now have a peace treaty with God – the war is over. Jesus Christ is the mediator between us and God (1 Timothy 2:5-6). He is the One who made the peace treaty and the One who keeps the peace. Not only that He actually IS our peace with God (Ephesians 2:13-18).

“This peace with (or towards) God must not be confused with the “peace of God” of Philippians 4:7, which is a subjective state; whereas peace with God is an objective fact—outside of ourselves. Thousands strive for inward peace, never once resting where God is resting—in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. The difference may be brought out by asking ourselves two questions: First, Have I peace with God? Yes; because Christ died for me. Second, Have I the peace of God in quietness from the anxieties and worries of life in my heart? We see at once that being at peace with God must depend on what was done for us by Christ on the cross. It is not a matter of experience, but of revelation. On the contrary, the peace of God “sets a garrison around our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus,” when we refuse to be anxious about circumstances, and “in everything (even the most ‘trifling’ affairs) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God.” Every ‘believer is at peace with God, because of Christ’s shed blood. Not every believer has this “peace of God” within him; for not all have consented to judge anxious care and worry as unbelief in God’s Fatherly kindness and care.” William Newell

2. **Access to God** (verse 2) – the Greek word translated “access” is only used three times in the NT, all by Paul. It means that now we can approach God (Ephesians 2:18, 3:12). When I turn

on my computer, I'm asked for a password. If I don't have that password, I can't go any further. That's the way it is with God. If you want to approach the holy, sovereign, righteous God, you need to know the password. That password is Jesus Christ.

3. **Standing before God** (verse 2) – Through our justification with God, we have a place to stand. This may not seem like a big deal, but it was a constant issue in the Old Testament (Psalm 130:3, 76:7, Nahum 1:6, Job 41:10, Malachi 3:2). We don't have a leg to stand on when it comes to defending our actions before a holy God. Jesus Christ is our place to stand. We can only stand before God dressed in the righteousness of Christ. He is the ONLY place that is acceptable to God.
4. **Hope of Glory** (verse 2) – notice it is the hope of God's glory, not our glory. We have nothing to boast of or rejoice in ourselves. But we rejoice in the sure expectation that God will be glorified in everything, and personally, that we will one day be like Christ (Romans 8:29, 1 John 3:2-3). And this isn't just to see God's glory, but to enter into it (Colossians 3:4, John 17:22). That is what we rejoice in!

Romans 5:3-4 Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance, character, and character, hope.

5. **Exulting in our Troubles** (verse 3) – This one may seem crazy to us. But think about it – If we have the sure promise of heaven and being like Christ, why would we worry about our present troubles? They're only temporary and will soon go away forever. But it's more than that – suffering is actually GOOD for us! Oh, man, we wish that we could stop at verse 2, don't we? We don't like suffering – can't we just do without it? No, Paul says that it is good for us, notice he says we should KNOW it produces endurance. The Greek word for "suffering" in this verse literally means "pressure". And we sure do feel pressure sometimes, don't we? Endurance gives us character, and character produces hope. And we're to be happy about suffering – the Greek word translated "rejoice" here means get excited, jump up and down about it! It isn't rejoicing despite our suffering, but rejoicing because we are suffering, because we know it is producing good in our lives. It has a good purpose.

"This is the cycle of life for the Christian. We begin with hope, that concrete knowledge that we are declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, the glory of God. From there we pass through tribulations: spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial difficulties. But, sustained by God's grace, those difficulties only cause us to be steadfast. We find fortitude, a proven character we never would have discovered without these tribulations. And this endurance proves that we are indeed children of God, which in turn encourages us in the hope of the glory of God. What a perfect circle." Woodrow Kroll

We need to take a lesson from the martyrs of the faith, who took these verses to heart. There are so many stories that could be told, but here's one from Communist Russia:

A letter that lately came out of Northern Siberia, signed "Mary," reads: "The best thing to report is, that I feel so happy here. It would be so easy to grow bitter if one lost the spiritual viewpoint and began to look at circumstances. I am learning to thank God for literally everything that comes. I experienced so many things that looked terrible, but which finally brought me closer to Him. Each time circumstances became lighter, I was tempted to break fellowship with the Lord. How can I do otherwise than thank Him for additional hardships? They only help me to what I always longed for—a continuous, unbroken

abiding in Him. Every so-called hard experience is just another step higher and closer to Him.”

Another recent letter from “Mary” reads, “I am still in the same place of exile. There is a Godless Society here; one of the members became especially attached to me. She said, “I cannot understand what sort of a person you are; so many here insult and abuse you, but you love them all” . . . She caused me much suffering, but I prayed for her earnestly. Another time she asked me whether I could love her. Somehow I stretched out my hands toward her, we embraced each other, and began to cry. Now we pray together. My dear friends, please pray for her. Her name is Barbara”.

In a letter a month later, “Mary” writes; “I wrote you concerning my sister in Christ, Barbara. She accepted Christ as her personal Savior, and testified before all about it. We both, for the last time, went to the meeting of the Godless. I tried to reason with her not to go there, but nothing could prevail. She went to the front of the hall, and boldly testified before all concerning Christ. When she finished she started to sing in her wonderful voice a well-known hymn, ‘I am not ashamed to testify of Christ, who died for me, His commandments to follow, and depend upon His cross!’

The very air seemed charged! She was taken hold of and led away.”

Two months later, another letter came from “Mary”: “Yesterday, for the first time, I saw our dear Barbara in prison. She looked very thin, pale, and with marks of beatings. The only bright thing about her were her eyes, bright, and filled with heavenly peace and even joy. How happy are those who have it! It comes through suffering. Hence we must not be afraid of any sufferings or privations. I asked her, through the bars, ‘Barbara, are you not sorry for what you have done?’ ‘No,’ she firmly responded, ‘If they would free me, I would go again and tell my comrades about the marvelous love of Christ. I am very glad that the Lord loves me so much and counts me worthy to suffer for Him.”

Romans 5:5 **And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

6. **Encouraging Hope** (verse 5) – we have a hope that cannot be frustrated. As we’ve discussed before, “hope” in the Bible is not some nebulous, faint optimism of the future. In fact it’s not even something we do. It is something we have, a concrete anticipation of something sure to happen. All of God’s promises to us are sure, we can count on them. But this is the result of what suffering does for us – it produces this sure anticipation of what God will do. I don’t understand it, but I have experienced it first hand in my life. The trials and sufferings in my life have produced more endurance in me, and made my faith even stronger, my anticipation of the fulfillment of His promises all the more sure. And through these trials, as Paul says here, the love of God has been poured out in my heart through the Holy Spirit, more and more. We exult in a hope that can never disappoint.

7. **Experiencing the Love of God** (verses 5-8) - The Holy Spirit floods our hearts with a love for God. This is certainly true in my case. The trials that I have been through have produced a greater love for God in my heart. Humanly this doesn’t make sense, but it happens through the work of the Holy Spirit. The boundless love that God has demonstrated for us through the sacrifice of His Son and declaring us righteous produces a love for God in us. But even then that love does not come from us, but from God through the Holy Spirit. Even as regenerated, justified believers we are not capable of understanding the depth of the love of God, or of loving God ourselves without the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

8. **The Gift of the Holy Spirit** (verse 5) – The Holy Spirit is given to us when we’re justified through faith in Jesus Christ. Titus 3:5-6 tells us that the Holy Spirit Himself is “poured out” upon us – this is part of the love of God. It’s important to notice that all of these things are an immediate part of the package we receive when we are justified by faith in Christ. We don’t have to wait for them or do anything to receive them. We don’t have to wait for some time in the future when we’ll receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to us immediately – He is not a “second blessing”, but part of the “First blessing”! (Also 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 John 3:24, 4:13)

Romans 5:6-7 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) (For rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person perhaps someone might possibly dare to die.) (9) But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Paul repeats what he said in chapter 4, that Jesus died for the ungodly, not the godly. And He came at the right time. God is in charge of history. He knew exactly the right moment in time to come. This is part of the awareness of the love of God that the Holy Spirit puts in us when He is poured into our hearts upon our justification.

Now Paul switches from what has already been given to us as believers upon our justification, to things we will receive in the future.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, because we have now been declared righteous by his blood, we will be saved through him from God's wrath.

9. **Being Saved From God’s Wrath** (verse 9) – We don’t like to hear this, but all people are by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) and under God’s wrath (John 3:36). So, this is a tremendous comfort to believers, that, at the point we were justified by the blood of Jesus, God removed His entire wrath from our permanent record, from our present lives, and from our future. Jesus’ death on the cross appeased God’s wrath, paid our debt of sin, and satisfied God’s holy demands against us (Isaiah 53:10, Romans 5:8, 6:23). This includes all future expressions of God’s wrath. So, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will never be condemned to hell (John 5:24, Romans 8:1), and we will not be subject to God’s wrath against the world during the coming Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9).

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, since we have been reconciled, will we be saved by his life?

Always remember that we were reconciled to God when we were enemies of His. So, if He did that for us while we were His enemies, how much more will He do for us now that we are His friends? We will share His risen life!

10. **Being Saved by Christ’s Life** (verse 10) – This is confusing to some. We’re saved by Christ’s death, not His life, aren’t we? Actually we’re saved by both. We’re saved through His blood by His death on the cross (Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:22). But we’re also saved by His life – not His earthly life, but His heavenly, resurrection life. Today He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25). He is our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). He is our

Great High Priest, representing our interests before God. And when Satan accuses us, Jesus is there to save us (Revelation 12:10). The gift of Christ's atonement just keeps on giving! We will continue to be saved (future tense) by His life.

Romans 5:11 Not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

11. **Continued Rejoicing** (verse 11) – People who do not know Jesus have no real joy. Oh, they try to fill that emptiness with things, all kinds of things that bring temporary happiness. They buy things, they travel, they network with people, collect things, they “hook up”, but they have no real joy. C.S. Lewis once said, “Joy is not a substitute for sex; sex is very often a substitute for joy. I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for joy.” Jesus prayed that we might have His joy (John 17:13). Paul speaks later of the “joy of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). We not only have joy when we first are saved, but we continue to have joy because we will continue to be reconciled to God. We will forever enjoy and rejoice in that reconciliation (Psalm 70:4).

Reconciliation is the key word, here and in the last verse. We are no longer at war with God. We're no longer separated from Him. Christ's death has reunited us with God. The benefits package we receive when we are saved starts with peace, and ends with joy (compare verse 1 with verse 11). Isn't that fantastic?

So far in Romans Paul has described in detail two great theological opposites. Now, in the rest of the chapter Paul draws some contrasts that help us understand even more what God has done for us:

Romans 5:12-13 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned — (13) for before the law was given, sin was in the world, but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law.

Of course, there is no doubt that the “one man” is Adam. This is important. Adam was more than just a man and a husband, he was the first human being, and the ruler over creation – he was the “King of the world”. And he was the representative of the human race. Paul is speaking of the fall, when Adam & Eve sinned, and because of that death came into the world and permeated the whole human race. Sin and death cannot be separated (Genesis 2:17, 3:17-19, Romans 1:32, 1 Corinthians 15:22). Wherever you find one you will find the other. Adam died spiritually the moment he sinned, and his body began to decay and eventually died. We don't like it, many reject it, but the truth is that one sin, by one man, our representative, made the entire human race guilty. Through procreation and heredity sin spread to all people that descended from Adam. A sinful mother and father can only produce sinful children. This is not something we have a choice about. We are all born into Adam's family. And all of Adam's children face destruction and hell.

It's like when we send a representative to Congress. When they vote, theoretically it is our vote they are casting. One votes for all. When Adam sinned, he cast a vote on our behalf against God and joined Satan's rebellion. That vote was our vote. It's that simple.

The world today thinks that when a person is born they're like a blank slate, or blank piece of paper. Then, as they grow and go through life they do good things or bad things, and become a good person or a bad person, depending on environmental factors like poverty or parental abuse, etc. So if we could just do away with poverty and make sure everyone's needs are met, then there would be no sin

and no bad people.

This is completely opposite of what the Bible says about humanity. That's not to say that environment doesn't make a difference in a person, obviously it does. But Paul says that's not the problem with people. The problem is that sin entered the world through Adam, and ever since then we are all born as sinners, there is no one innocent and no one good. Paul made that very clear in the previous chapters of Romans. And we're not just cursed because Adam sinned, but because we as the descendants of Adam also sin. All humans are under God's judgment, in fact all of creation. Death spread to all people because all sinned. We are all responsible. But this psychology-saturated culture doesn't want to hear about sin.

In verse 13 Paul is reminding us that sin didn't start with the giving of the Law. It was around long before the Law, but there was nothing to condemn it yet. The Law points out how far we are fallen short. Notice that "accounting" term. Paul is saying that before the Law, individual sin was not charged to anyone's account. There were no direct commands for people to break. But Adam's sin condemned everyone.

Romans 5:14 Yet death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam (who is a type of the coming one) transgressed.

So death was around before the Law. Adam disobeyed a specific command of God. The rest of humanity up to the giving of the Law didn't sin like Adam, but was still cursed because all of creation was cursed because of his sin. Adam brought condemnation on the whole race of mankind.

Paul says that Adam is a type of the coming one, who is Jesus. What does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean they are the same. They are opposite types. Adam brought judgment to the human race; Christ brings life to those who trust Him. Adam is the founder of humanity and we are all part of his family. Jesus Christ is the founder of a new race of humanity, a new creation, a new family. **This is why we must be born again, to die to Adam's family and be born into Christ's family.** By this new birth experience, we pass from our old relationship to Adam into a new and living relationship with Jesus Christ.

Paul mentioning Adam and Moses together is further proof that Adam was a real person. Only the most extreme skeptic would ever argue that Moses didn't really exist.

Romans 5:15 But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if the many died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many!

The grace of God is much greater than the sin of Adam. In Adam we received what we deserved – condemnation. In Christ we have received so much more that we did not deserve – mercy and grace.

Romans 5:16 And the gift is not like the one who sinned. For judgment, resulting from the one transgression, led to condemnation, but the gracious gift from the many failures led to justification.

Adam's one sin brought judgment on all humanity. But the gift of Christ's sacrifice covers not only that one sin, but all sins that have been committed by Adam and all of his descendants (the many failures), and leads to justification for those who accept that gift.

Romans 5:17-18 For if, by the transgression of the one man, death reigned through the one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ! (18) Consequently, just as condemnation for all people came through one transgression, so too through the one righteous act came righteousness leading to life for all people.

This is a wonderful verse for us. The one man, of course, is Adam. Adam got us into the mess we're into, and Christ, the last Adam, got us out of it. We have received ABUNDANT grace and the GIFT of righteousness through Christ. And because of this we can reign in this life, no matter what our circumstances are. We reign because we are already IN Christ, in His resurrection life!

Again, I have to stress that this whole line of reasoning by Paul would be meaningless if Adam were not a real person, and literally the first human being on earth. Paul speaks more of this contrast between Adam and Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

“Now do not question either God’s right or His wisdom here, or His love. He had the right to have a judgment day of our whole race in Eden, in our head, Adam; and He did so. He always does right. Furthermore, He knew that creatures would ever fail,—there is no sufficiency in the creature, but only in the Creator. You and I would fail, as did Adam! and God desired that believers should be secure forever, by Christ’s work. It was in love He held that judgment day in Eden. In love He judged us, condemned us, in our federal head, Adam, that He might justify us in the work and Person of the other federal Head, Christ!” Newell

Romans 5:19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.

Now Paul shows the contrast between obedience and disobedience. Adam willfully disobeyed God’s one command, and that brought condemnation on the whole human race. Jesus willfully obeyed God and went to the cross (John 17:4), and because of that we are declared legally righteous when we believe on Him. If he had not obeyed God, we would all still be lost.

Notice the principle of “one” throughout these verses. It was not the many sins of Adam’s life that condemned the human race, but the one, that first act of rebellion. And, it was not the many good deeds that Christ did during His life that justified us. It was the one act of obedience where He willingly went to the cross and took all the sins of the whole world on Himself. And He only did it once. He will not be crucified again for our sins, we can’t “put Him back up on the cross”. He did it once and for all. It is finished. He kept the Law in our place, and now we have His righteousness (“made righteous”).

I might point out here that Paul says “many” will be made righteous. Not everyone. This blows away “universalism”, the idea that everyone will ultimately be saved. Many will be, but most will not accept this gift.

“Christ Himself, Risen, is our righteousness. His earthly life under the Law is not our righteousness. We have no connection with a Christ on earth and under the Law. We are expressly told in Rom. 7:1-6, that even Jewish believers who have been under law were made dead to the Law by the Body of Christ, that they might be joined to Another, even to Him who was raised from the dead. One has beautifully said, “Christianity begins with the resurrection.” Newell

Romans 5:20-21 Now the law came in so that the transgression may increase, but where sin increased, grace multiplied all the more, (21) so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God's Law is like a billboard – it amplifies and broadcasts the problem of sin. When the Law was given, it showed sin for what it really was, in all of its ugliness. But this amplifies the grace of God even more. As we look back from heaven in one billion years, sin and death will seem miniscule compared to what we have received through the grace of God through Christ.

I want to mention something else I think is important in verses 12-21. Paul does not treat Genesis like a myth that we just use as an example to gain truth from. Paul, like Jesus in the gospels, treats it as fact – that Adam was a real person, and he was the first human, and the Fall was a real event, just as the Bible says. If you consider Genesis to be a book of myths and would rather believe in the religion of evolution, then you can't stop with Genesis. You've also got to throw out all the gospels and all of Paul's writings. Henry Morris says it well:

“The entire argument of Romans 5:12-21 becomes irrelevant if the Genesis record of the creation and fall of Adam did not happen just as recorded in Genesis 1–3, and this would mean there is no reality in the saving work of Christ either. Destroying or distorting the plain Genesis record undermines and eventually destroys the gospel of salvation.” Henry Morris

Let's close with a great poem by Robert Murray McCheyne, a Scottish preacher in 1834. “Jehovah Tsidkenu” is Hebrew for “The Lord is Our Righteousness”. It is pronounced (yeh-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'-noo), and is used in Jeremiah 23:6 and Jeremiah 33:16.

Jehovah Tsidkenu

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

“I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah's wild measure, and John's simple page;
But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu seemed nothing to me.

“Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul;
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu—'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me, with light from on high
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see,—
Jehovah Tsidkenu my Savior must he.

“My terrors all vanished before the sweet Name;

My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free—
Jehovah Tsidk nu is all things to me.

“Jehovah Tsidk nu! my treasure and boast;
Jehovah Tsidk nu! I ne'er can be lost;
In Thee I shall conquer, by flood and by field—
My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield!”

In chapter 6 Paul begins to get real practical about this. He's told us in detail about why the human race has a problem, he's told us clearly that we can be freely made righteous by God by faith, and he's explained that Christ's obedient sacrifice is what has solved the problem that the human race has. Now Paul will discuss our daily walk, our sanctification.