

LESSON 12

May 19, 2024

Unit III: Standing in the Faith Remaining Strong

DEVOTIONAL READING: Acts 2:37-47

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:1-11

PRINT PASSAGE: Romans 5:1-11

KEY VERSE

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Romans 5:1, KJV)

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Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Be inspired by Paul's faith especially in the face of weaknesses, challenges, and failures.
- Acknowledge how faith builds endurance for adversity and tough times.
- Express gratitude for God's love and the help of the Holy Spirit.

*Key Terms

Hope (of the glory of God) (verse 2)—Greek: *elpis* (el-pece'): anticipation; expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence; faith.

Reconciled (verse 10)—Greek: *katallassó* (kat-al-las'-so): changed; exchanged; properly, decisively changed, as when two parties reconcile when coming ("changing") to the same position.

Tribulations (verse 3)—Greek: *thlipsis* (thlip'-sis): persecutions; afflictions; distress; "sufferings" (NIV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

Perfectionism is a personality trait of people who strive for flawlessness in their personal lives by setting high-performance standards, making overly critical self-evaluations, and being unusually preoccupied with how others' evaluate them. Perfectionist tendencies typically include leaving no room for mistakes, being rigid and inflexible about the specific manner in which things should



The Biblical Context

The book of Romans' theme is "The Righteousness of God." Paul's initial task was proving humanity's total depravity before God and desperate need for righteousness. His second task was establishing how one may receive righteous standing before God. Paul accomplished this in Romans 3–4. In Romans 3, Paul argues that salvation comes only on the basis of God's grace through faith. Paul maintains that every single person is guilty of sin (see Romans 3:23) and is undeserving of God's forgiveness. It is only faith in Christ that saves humanity from God's judgment against their sin. The sinner's only part is to receive forgiveness by faith. Because his audience was comprised of Jews and Gentiles, Paul specifically addressed the Jews who argued that Abraham was declared righteous by being circumcised. Therefore, in chapter 4, Paul uses Abraham as the supreme example of justification by faith prior to circumcision and the giving of the Mosaic Law. In chapter 5, Paul examined the benefits or security of being declared righteous by God through faith in Christ.

be done, being extremely hard on oneself, feeling overwhelmed with despair when missing goals, a nagging obsession with other people's mistakes, and spending an unreasonable amount of time trying to perfect a task. The truth is that because we live in a world corrupted by sin, no one can reasonably attain physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual perfection. Perfectionists are more vulnerable to experiencing feelings of guilt when they inevitably experience failure. Limitations and shortcomings are common aspects of the human condition even for sincere followers of Christ. The reality is that the Christian life is a paradox. On the one hand, we are complete in Christ and eternally secure (see John 10:27-29). On the other hand, we are undergoing continuous transformation into Christ's image. At the same time, every believer is both a part of God's royal priesthood and a servant of God. Along with Christ's abiding presence, believers also wrestle with sin's power and struggle to do what is right. Those who fall short in their efforts to please God perfectly often have feelings of guilt or failure. Fortunately, because we are in Christ, we can remain strong and confident in our faith when we experience spiritual weakness and failure. In Romans 5, Paul notes that justification brought peace or reconciliation with

God. Now, Christ's presence and power help to dispel discouragement in the moments when we miss the mark of God's perfection.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Justification's Blessings (*Romans 5:1-8*)

KJV

THEREFORE BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

NIV

THEREFORE, SINCE we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Paul begins Romans 5 by exploring the awesome benefits of being declared righteous by God through having faith in Christ Jesus. The first benefit is peace with God (**verse 1**). Those who were once in a state of rebellion against God have been reconciled to Him by Christ's death. This peace, or reconciliation with God, carries with it free access to God, bringing believers God's favor and giving them access to the hope of sharing God's glory (**verse 2**). Earlier, Paul wrote that no one should boast because all are sinners (see Romans 3:23). Now, being justified by faith, the believer can boast in God's righteousness and glory. Justified believers can also rejoice in suffering because nothing can separate them from God's love, and their suffering is purposeful and beneficial for spiritual growth (**verses 3-4**; see Romans 8:35-39). Paul concludes this chain of benefits by declaring that the believer's hope will be fully confirmed because God has poured His love into the believer's heart through the indwelling Holy Spirit (**verse 5**). The justified find assurance that their confidence in God will not be frustrated because God is faithful to His promises. Believers' hope in God and His promise of ultimate glory is not misplaced and will never fail. In **verses 6-8**, Paul elaborates on the character of the love of God that guarantees justification. God's love is the divine response to humanity's

desperate need for God's righteousness (**verse 6**). Christ died to secure salvation while the world was lost in sin and fully incapable of earning salvation. Paul further describes this undeserved act of grace in **verse 7**. Most people would be unwilling to die for an upright person, although some might consider doing so for an especially good person. Jesus' selfless act at Calvary expressed the highest form of human love and devotion—dying in the place of unrepentant sinners who fully deserved judgment for their transgressions. **Verse 8** summarizes Paul's point. Christ's substitutionary death on the Cross was the irrevocable proof of God's love for us. God gave His Son to die for us while we were still sinners without hope of avoiding the judgment that Christ endured in our place. Because of Christ, we have access to God—"Hallelujah to the King!"

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is the church's best response to God's undeserved blessings?

Justification's Security (*Romans 5:9-11*)

KJV

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

NIV

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Paul often repeated words and ideas for spiritual emphasis. **Verses 9-11** repeat and clarify similar principles previously stated in the epistle. Paul connects verses 6-8 to **verse 9**. God proved His love for humanity by allowing Christ's substitutionary death for sinners. His death guarantees that the justified are saved from God's wrath. All whom God has declared righteous through faith in Christ's redemptive work are exempt from suffering God's wrath for their sin. Paul continues this repetitive pattern in **verse 10**. If, or since, the justified were reconciled with God through Christ's death, the believer's personal relationship with God prevents future separation from Him. Our union with God is effectively secured through Christ's present

ministry as our intercessor and advocate. **Verse 11** is Paul's summary of his preceding discourse on the blessings and security of justification. Since the transaction of justification is complete, those who are in Christ by faith are eternally reconciled with God. Their righteous standing with God is secure because of His grace and unconditional love. Therefore, the justified can celebrate Him and His glory. Paul listed the incredible benefits of being justified by faith in Christ: we are His friends, we stand in His grace, we are destined to spend eternity with Him, through suffering we grow to find greater hope in Him, we have salvation from God's wrath, and we are eternally reconciled to Him.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What specific wording or phrasing enables you to celebrate your salvation without appearing self-righteous?

A Closing Thought

Paul describes the amazing benefits and eternal security we find in Christ's substitutionary death for sin. The justified find peace with God and enjoy a new, intimate relationship with Him. Through a generous act of grace, God proved and validated His love for the world, sending His only Son to pay the penalty for undeserving sinners. Now, the justified can rejoice in the privilege of suffering for the sake of Christ, celebrate His give of love, and possess the ultimate hope of spending eternity with Him.

Your Life

God loved You enough to make provisions for your justification while you were still a sinner. How does this fact challenge the level of your spiritual maturity and your Christian witness? Paul presented the benefits and the security of being justified by faith before God. Because justification is a free gift from God, consider how you can demonstrate your appreciation for this marvelous grace in practical ways that honor and glorify Him.

Your World!

Paul offered his explanations of justification's blessings and benefits to correct the erroneous belief that right standing with God results from human effort. This week, consider how your testimony and witness for Christ can touch the life of a family member or someone else in your sphere of influence who needs to receive salvation.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank You for the assurance that we are eternally reconciled with You through justification by faith in Christ. As we have received grace that looked beyond our faults, make us agents of Your redeeming love to those who need salvation's message. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week’s Lesson)

Salvation—does it come by following the Law or by faith? Paul will continue the response to this question in next week’s lesson. Read Romans 10:1-17.

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, May 20	“Call On God and Be Saved”	(Joel 2:28-32)
TUESDAY, May 21	“Striving on the Basis of Faith”	(Romans 9:14-16, 25-33)
WEDNESDAY, May 22	“All Israel Will Be Saved”	(Romans 11:1-4, 17-27)
THURSDAY, May 23	“God’s Word Is Very Near”	(Deuteronomy 30:11-20)
FRIDAY, May 24	“Do Not Fear, Only Believe”	(Mark 5:35-43)
SATURDAY, May 25	“A Beautiful Announcement of Salvation”	(Isaiah 52)
SUNDAY, May 26	“Confession and Belief Lead to Salvation”	(Romans 10:1-17)

Notes
