

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 5.

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today about the ABC's / the fundamentals of Christianity.

What is the Gospel of grace?

Why do we need Jesus?

How are we justified?

Why does it have to be by grace, through faith, in Christ alone?

It is a free gift of God!

As I was doing my sermon yesterday morning – I was thinking – “I could have saved this text for next Sunday for our Christmas Eve service”

Because that is what Christmas is all about

God's love being poured among us

And that is the title of my sermon

**Let's pray...**

## Read Text

When we began our study in the book of Romans 5 months ago –

Paul began his letter by providing the black velvet backdrop / the problem of sin – that we are all condemned to judgment – apart from Jesus Christ.

It doesn't matter if we are the worst sinner, or if we are the most self-righteous individual or the most religious person in the world – apart from Jesus Christ, we are all condemned.

And the reason we are condemned is because God's standard for righteousness is perfection.

And therefore – we all fall short of the glory of God.

That is the summary of the first two and a half chapters of Romans.

In Chapter three – Paul began to reveal God's solution.

The Gospel of Grace

But God!!!!!!

Justification by faith - justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Not of work or of deeds.

If we have to work for our justification – it is no longer a free gift – it is a debt.

And Paul – gives us an illustration of justification by faith – using Abraham as an example.

But Paul, as he is writing this letter to us –

He doesn't simply want to provide for us some type of theological explanation of what justification by faith is –

If that was the case – Paul's letter would have ended after ch 4

This is pretty much what we are going to be looking at over the next several months as we go from chapter 5 to chapter 8

These are all building blocks that Paul is going to be building on as we continue in our study through Romans –

I would say that Romans 8 is arguably one of the greatest chapters in the new testament.

So Paul wants to let us know that there is so much more than justification by faith

Paul wants us to grasp, that the moment that we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ – there is a transformation that takes place as we begin to understand the blessings that are in store for the believer.

What it means to know God and be loved by God and be reconciled by God – is only found in Jesus Christ.

And we receive the benefits of blessing in our lives by faith.

We have peace with God

We have access to God

We have access to an amazing abundant grace

And because of grace we have hope

This is the result of our justification by faith

Let's look at our text.

**[Rom 5:1-5 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Apart from Christ, man is at war with God

Man is in rebellion and revolt

This war began in the Garden of Eden and it continues to this day.

God as declared the terms for peace – believe in Christ.

So the openly rebellious sinner

The self-righteous individual

The religious individual

All can find peace with God – if they accept God's terms for peace.

The problem is that there are people that think that they can simply be neutral towards God.

But to ignore Him is to despise Him –

It is to reject God's terms for peace – so those individuals remain at war with God.

There is no middle ground.

**[Jas 4:4 NKJV] 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Jesus to the Pharisees -

**"He who is not with Me is against Me.**

Now, I had you make a note – Paul writes, having been justified by faith – past tense.

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, - present tense.

We don't have to go looking for peace, we don't have to try to work to appease God – in Christ, we already have it. Because we have been justified by faith.

You see church, man can only justify one type of person – the innocent.

But God justifies the guilty man.

Man justifies on the basis of what we do for ourselves.

But God justifies on the basis of what Jesus has done.

So Paul, exhorts us – that we can enjoy the peace with God and the peace of God that had been given to us – on the basis of the reality that our sins have been forgiven and our sins have been forgotten.

So real peace rules our lives when Christ rules our hearts.

Turn with me to Colossians 1

**[Col 1:20 NKJV] 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.**

It is trusting in the transaction as Jesus died in our place. That is where peace is found.

But it is also in a person – Jesus Christ Himself.

**[Eph 2:14 NKJV] 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,**

Peace with God is not just living a life that is void of any conflict or tragedy.

Peace with God is having His presence in our lives and His favor upon our lives as well.

It is a gift

It is not made by us

It is made for us by Jesus who made peace by the blood of His cross.

And so the most important peace that we can ever have is the peace that we have to have with God.

And the requirement of peace is unconditional surrender.

**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.**

So not only does our justification by faith gives us peace with God

It also gives us access to God

Let me explain –

Remember, the reason that man is at war with God is because of sin.

Sin says that we have no right to go to God – because God is holy and just.

Justification by faith says that the believer can go to God through Christ,

we have access by faith into grace.

Turn to John 10

**[Jhn 10:7-9 NKJV] 7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 “All who [ever] came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

Jesus is the door –

In order to have a right standing before God, we must go through the door.

We must go through Jesus

It is only through Him that salvation is possible.

So this access allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace.

The Christian is not only saved by grace, he/she also STANDS by grace

we don't start with grace and then go on to human endeavor

That is why Paul rebukes the churches in Galatia –

Grace isn't merely the starting point in the Christian life, it is also the means of the Christian life.

we stand by grace— And "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."



So, not only do we begin in grace, and stand in grace,

We also will be completed through grace

**[Phi 1:6 NKJV] 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ;**

And one day – because we have been justified by faith, we will be able to stand before God.

We shall be transformed, and we will see Him face to face.

Think about it – the very splendor of the glory of God as we enter His presence transforms us - forever

We have good reason to rejoice in hope.

We shall be glorified in Christ.

**3 And not only [that], but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;**

The truth is – we usually tend to not glory in tribulations.

When hardships come our ways

When someone we love goes to be with the Lord

When our loved one are hurting or ill

It's easy to rejoice in the hope of heaven, but how can we glory in tribulations?

Frankly, we can't—unless we understand that the God who loves us is in control of all things.

Paul sees tribulations in the life of the believer as a means of being made into the image of Christ.

You see, God isn't content to just save us and then put our lives on hold until we die and go to heaven.

God relentlessly works in us to transform us into new people.

Turn to 2 Cor 4

**[2Co 4:7-10 NKJV] 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 [We are] hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.**

And then go down to verse 17

**[2Co 4:17 NKJV] 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory,**

You see, the word "tribulations" in v. 3 means to be put under pressure

It was a word used to describe the process of getting oil out of olives and juice out of grapes.

We are put under pressure, not to destroy us, but to extract the qualities of life God would build in us

That is what Paul is saying here in 2 Corinthians 4

The truly justified Christian –

The one who is justified by faith

The one who has peace with God

The one who has access to God

This believer is not going to be defeated by trials and by circumstances

In what sense?

They are not going to throw in the towel when trials come their way.

They are not going to quit.

And the reason that they are not going to quit is because they have been justified by God, still have peace with God, they still have access to God and this can never be taken away.

#### **4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.**

Trials and tribulations will reveal the best of people and the worst of people.

And the reason is that trials and tribulations will cause what is really inside of us to come to the surface.

What are we made of –

They reveal where we stand in our faith.

And quite frankly, it can be pretty surprising.

We may be surprised by the ugliness that surfaces

Or we may be surprised to see how the Lord has worked real virtue into our character

Trials and tribulations make strong Christians

God allows trials and hardships not to impair us but to improve us.

It is God saying –

*“I am not going to let you stay selfish”*

*“I am not going to let you stay self-centered”*

*“I am not going to let you stay self-absorbed”*

*"I am not going to let you remain in the place where you started with because you have been justified by faith, you have access to God, your sins have been forgiven and you will be changed."*

The result is a character that has been tried and found true.

And when we see this proven character, it gives us even more hope as we see the faithfulness of God.

Hope is a settled confidence that God is the one who sits at the potter's wheel as the circumstances of life spin us.

Hope is the assurance that it is His hand which shapes us

Hope is the certainty that even when we are in the oven, His hand is on the thermostat, and we are only being fired to become a vessel fit for a special and holy work

Loved ones,

God is at work

God is changing us

God will increase our vision

God will inspire our ambition

He will transform our character

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Why?

Because He wants us to persevere

He wants us to finish well

And so Paul writes in verse 5

**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.**

The world will put hope in so many things, but they end up getting disappointed.

Paul here reminds us that we have hope – it is not a wishful thinking kind of hope like world has.

It is the kind of hope that is based on the authority of God and the integrity of God and the Word of God.

It is the hope that is based not on the circumstances that we find ourselves in but rather on the faithfulness of God and that the love of God in our hearts is the pledge of God in our heart.

Our hope in Christ will never be disappointed.

God will keep His word.

As a down payment on His promise, He has given us the Holy Spirit

And along with the Holy Spirit, He has poured out His love.

We're not disappointed by having hope in God because of what the Holy Spirit does – pouring out the love of God.

His love is not measured in drops.

He overfills us and floods our heart with His love

So how do we know that the love of God is in our hearts?

Because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts.

And how do we know that the Holy Spirit is in our hearts?

Paul writes – because we have the pledge of His love

Now, I had you make a note of Holy Spirit.

This is the first time that the Holy Spirit is mentioned in Paul's letter to the believers in Rome.

And there is a reason why he brings up the Holy Spirit now –

Remember, he is providing for us the blessings that are the result of being justified by faith, of having peace with God, having access to God, standing on His grace, being transformed by His glory, being changed by God – and that change is made manifest by the presence of God by the power of the Holy Spirit pouring into our hearts overflowing love.

Paul implies that the continuous experience of love in our lives and the work of God's love in our lives through the presence of the Holy Spirit is overflowing our hearts and overflowing our love – so as a result of this – we don't have to throw in the towel

We don't have to quit.

And the reason is because we are growing and we are maturing and His presence ministers to us and the love of Jesus matures us and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives sustains us and He helps us to draw closer to Him by pointing us more and more to Jesus.

You see – Paul wants us to grasp that the Holy Spirit makes us conscious and aware of God's love and then gives us a deep and intimate sense of God's love so that we are fully aware of what He is doing in our lives.

And so what Paul is stressing here is the intimacy that one has with God who is justified by faith.

And everything that God has given to us in Christ – will never be taken away.

Only the person who is justified by faith – truly experiences the love of God

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:



Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

How great are the benefits of being justified by faith in Christ!

- We have sufficient grace to make us stand
- We have peace with God
- We have a living hope
- We have the promise of glory

- Even tribulation has a purpose
- God's love overflows our hearts
- And the Holy Spirit lives in us
- Therefore – we count our blessings!

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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