

XXVI. Romans in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of God
“The Gospel Blessings of Justification by Faith Alone”
Romans 5:1–5
Dr. Harry L. Reeder, III
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This is the Word of God that is infallible, inerrant and sufficient for all the matters of life in Christ. Romans 5:1–5 says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

As a preacher and teacher of the Word of God you have to be careful about what you say and how you say it because it will be repeated, sometimes not accurately and perhaps it was because I wasn't careful enough with the way I said it. I had that experience early on in my ministry at a church in Chattanooga where I served the Lord as a student pastor for a couple of years. I learned so much in the short time I was there and I was so blessed by it. Some of the things you learn by people who model and mentor and some you learn by making your own mistakes. One mistake I made there early on when the church was being started, I will never forget.

I had finished my degree at Covenant College and was going to seminary part time while I was helping out with this church until I went on to Westminster Seminary. I stood to preach one morning from Philippians 4. One of the things that bothered me was the way the chapter division fell so I had planned to remind the congregation that chapter and divisions were not in the original manuscript and was done many years later. When chapters and divisions were eventually put in, they were trying to create addresses so that people could go back and look up Scripture. Some of the chapters and verses make perfect sense, but some divisions caused me to scratch my head and think, why here?

Romans 5 is one of those places, but I want to be careful how I say it because that morning from the pulpit at that church in Chattanooga, I said ‘I’m going to read from Philippians 4 but I am going to start a little earlier because you know that Philippians 4 is not inspired.’ You can probably imagine the phone calls I received that afternoon from elders in the church. I was asked what I meant by what I had said and I responded ‘I meant the chapter heading’ and of course they said ‘but that’s not what you said.’ Then I heard something I had heard before when an elder then said to me ‘nobody leaves with what you meant to say, they leave with what they heard you say so you have to be careful about what they hear you say.’

So, I want to be abundantly clear here. Romans 5 is inspired and I love this text for we are in a treasure text (Romans 5:1–11). You have no idea how I have longed to get to this part in the book of Romans. In this study we are going to start to dig into this but one of the things I have consternation with is, why a division was made here in the book of Romans. ‘Therefore’ is the very first word that is printed in Romans 5 and I’m sure you learned in Sunday school that

every time you see that word you ask ‘what is it therefore?’ Whenever you see a ‘therefore’ it means that what you are about to read cannot make full sense without understanding what went before it. What follows the ‘therefore’ is a consequence of what has been previously stated. So, we need to take a look back at what was said before this ‘therefore.’

Before we do that, I just want to give a short recap as to where we have been. Paul is eager to preach the Gospel to those in Rome but God has not allowed Paul to go to Rome to do that so the next best thing he thinks of is to write them a letter and this Gospel he is unashamed to preach has two big deals about it – it is the power of God and the righteousness of God. Then from the rest of Romans 1, then chapter 2 and chapter 3, Paul brings us into the Divine courtroom as we anticipate the day of the great Judgment where all must appear before Him. Those who are not in the Book of Life will hear the verdict that they are undone but we are all born into this world as sinners and as sinners we are all indicted. Our indictment is that we are under sin therefore we are under the wrath of God with the condition of being helpless, hopeless, spiritually dead, cannot save ourselves, are sinfully guilty and condemned before God. Now we see why there are many dimensions of the Gospel that are glorious and why Paul pulls out the big two for the power of God can save the helpless/hopeless and what is impossible with man is more than possible with God for it is achieved by God through His Son Jesus as He sends the Spirit of God so that we can be born again. And we who stand guilty can have the guilt and shame wiped away in order that the righteousness of God can be put in its place – we have been cleansed by His blood and clothed with His righteousness.

That begs the question – if I’m guilty how can I get unguilty, uncondemned and undead? That’s when we get to Romans 4 where we have nothing to boast about for this is all of grace through faith and the faith was a gift of grace in Christ who is God’s Son, who was given by the Father and He gave Himself for you. The law has no power to convert for it is there to show you first that you’re a sinner, secondly that you are sinful and thirdly that you need a Savior (evangelistic use of the law). Then the law can be used for discipleship as it shows us how to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and how we love others who are also made in the image of God which is the lawful use of the law for discipleship.

The end of Romans 3 and the beginning of Romans 4 is what the Reformers used to come up with the five solas. There was so much corruption in the 1600 century where people had a hard time believing that they could have assurance of their salvation. They knew you were saved by faith but then believed you had to add some merit. That’s where purgatory came into play so that when one died if they hadn’t been good enough they would go to purgatory to get purged for whatever time is necessary or if someone had enough money to get you out. Then maybe one could get to heaven. The Reformers saw in this passage that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone and the Scripture is our only rule of faith and practice. Because that is how you are saved there is no room for boasting.

We boast in the Lord who came from heaven and did the work on the cross to save us, then ascended back to heaven and He is working on us that He may now work through us, until He finishes the work and comes for us. We boast in the Lord and that’s where we boast. How can God pull this off? God did this accounting deal. God came into this world by sending His Son who goes to the cross and takes our record/our account upon Himself. First God gets you unguilty by taking your sin record and places it on Jesus at the cross. At the cross Jesus receives the wrath that you were under as it is poured out upon Him. If you now not under wrath then you are now under grace because of what Christ did for you on the cross. Praise God that shuts the

gates of hell for God is just and He will not demand two payments for one sin. Jesus has set you free from sin's torments because He bore the wrath of God and declared it finished on the cross.

How do I get to heaven for it's not for the forgiven but the righteous? When Christ took away your sins on the cross He gave you His account, His perfect righteousness. There are three things Jesus did for you. One is He lived a perfect life in thought, word and deed and you get His perfections – the righteousness of God. Two, He died an atoning death to take away your sins from you and thirdly, is how get to the 'therefore' in Romans 5. So let's go back to the end of Romans 4 and pretend that just the division between chapters 4 and 5 is not there.

Romans 4:23–25 to Romans 5:1–5 says [23] *But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, [24] but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. [5:1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

The One who had lived a perfectly righteous life, who didn't deserve to die this death on the cross went to die this death in our place. How do the guilty it unguilty? Christ takes away their sin. How do the unrighteous get righteous? Christ gives us His righteousness. How do the condemned get innocent? Because Christ has made us vindicated, innocent – not condemnation but justification.

I remember when I first saw this for it was like I got saved all over again. When I share the Gospel with someone, I will always ask this question this way, 'Is there any reason why you shouldn't receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior?' I never use the phrase 'would you like to accept Jesus?' I'm not against using this phrase but I want to explain why I don't use it. I like to use the John 1:12 text which says [12] *But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.* For if they surrender and by faith and repentance put their faith in Christ alone, I love to show them Ephesians 1:6 which says [6] *To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us **accepted in the beloved*** (KJV). II Corinthians 5:21 says [21] *For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him **we might become the righteousness of God.*** You are wrapped in the robe of Christ's righteousness and every time God looks at you He sees the perfect righteousness of His Son – you are accepted in the beloved.

I'm going to get a little bit technical but it will be a blessing to you if you hang with me on this explanation. Jesus came in obedience to the Father to save us from our sins. There are two kinds of obedience that Jesus has to save us – He has active obedience and passive obedience. What is His passive obedience? He obeys the Father to go to the cross to take upon Himself all of our sins so He can now receive upon Himself in our place God's wrath so that sins have been atoned for in Christ alone – the wrath of God was satisfied, sins have been paid. God is both just and justifier of the lost. Then He has an active obedience which means in thought, word and deed He never sinned. Hebrews 4:15 says [15] *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One (Jesus) who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Where does that lead us to? That leads us to great assurance for I'm not only forgiven but I am accepted. I am not only pardoned but I am now innocent in the righteousness of Christ. I have just finished reading J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir by Ned Stonehouse. Machen was a warrior for the faith. He was standing against all the onslaughts of liberal Christianity and was indefatigable in terms of his desire to serve the Lord. In 1936 he received a letter to come out to North Dakota in January 1937 to preach. His seminary brothers at Westminster Seminary begged him not to go but he said 'I must go.' He wasn't in good health but insisted and took the train out there but on the way he caught pneumonia and on January 1, 1937 J. Gresham Machen passed away, went to be with the Lord.

We know Machen's last written words. He wrote out a message to a dear colleague back at Westminster Seminary, Dr. John Murray who had just written this marvelous treatise on the passive obedience of Jesus that removes all of our sin and the active obedience of Jesus that brings us in triumph into heaven. Machen wrote; 'John, thanks be to God for Christ's active obedience for without there is no hope, but with it, is victory.' In Machen's last breath see his assurance, see his peace in life and death, in Christ. Now you're ready to read Romans 5:1.

Therefore because of what Christ has done – because He is raised you are right with God. On this earth Christ had a righteous life, an atoning death and an affirming, attesting resurrection – all of His people are saved and He loses not one. That is the reason for the 'therefore' in Romans 5:1 – [5:1] ***Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, Romans 5:1–5.***

They jumped on Paul about this basically telling him he would lose control of Christians if he tells them they are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul says 'away with you' who think you have to do something to get to heaven. Paul tells them the Scriptures say and he takes them all the way back to Abraham to show them. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. His circumcision was a sign and seal, not a converting act for he was already converted by the Spirit of God who brought him to the promises of God and he believed God. Abraham received the righteousness of Christ just like we do. He is cleared by Jesus' atoning death just like we are.

Therefore, what is the blessing? We have peace with God through Christ. When I was in Chattanooga my dad called and wanted me to come to Charlotte because he wanted to talk with me about something. He wanted to discuss his last will and testament in which he was naming me as executor. I didn't want to talk about it but we did and he proceeded to tell me how he wanted everything to be distributed. Romans 5:1–11 is Paul the lawyer as he gives you the legacies and the inheritance of God's people through the death and resurrection of Christ. There are five blessings but I will only be able to give you the first one in this study so join me in the next study to find out the remaining four. These blessings build on each other.

As I was reading the Romans 5:1–5 I was reminded of another text of Scripture in Ephesians 1:3–14 which is known as the doxological blessing. It's made up of 228 Greek words and it's only one sentence arranged in a Trinitarian doxology. It begins with a doxological praise to the Father in Ephesians 1:3–6, praise to the Son in Ephesians 1:7–11 and praise to the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:12–13. The doxological praise begins this way in Ephesians 1:3 which says

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. How many blessings are there? My problem is not whether I have every spiritual blessing, for my problem is do I know them and am I using them. This is my heart pastorally for you.

I came close preaching a sermon just on Ephesians 1:3–10 being one sermon and me have five points of the legacy blessings but I could not pastorally bring myself to it. It reminded me of what a friend told me about going to heaven and Peter takes him on a tour of this warehouse filled with all these boxes. He said ‘what’s in these boxes?’ Peter said ‘you don’t want to know.’ He said ‘I do what to know.’ Peter said ‘These were blessings from God for His people that were never opened.’ He said ‘Do I have any boxes up here that were unopened?’ Peter said ‘you don’t want to know.’ These are not all the blessings that come to you through the death and resurrection of Christ but there are five crucial ones listed in Romans 5:1–5.

The first one is peace with God. It’s not just peace but it’s peace with God. Do you know where you were before you were converted? You were at war with God. It wasn’t that it was just an empty life. No, our sin were declarations of acts of war against God. We were His enemies, His adversaries. Our sin showed us guilty of cosmic treason against a Thrice holy God to usurp His position as the only One worthy of praise, glory and adoration. We were in the cult of self with all of its insanity, absurdity, and immorality. God may have shown you that you needed Christ by showing you the emptiness and idolatry in your life but what you are saved from being at war with God which would not have turned out good if you had stayed there, because there is a day called Judgment coming. Now you are in the Lamb’s Book and you are no longer at war with God but you are still at war.

Now you are at war against what you used to use in war against God. Now our war is against the sin that remains in us and anything that would raise itself against God. Now we are at war to rescue the souls of those who are lost in their sins. We are now at peace with God putting on the armor of Christ and walking with the weapons of the Spirit. We want to kill every thought that raises itself against the majesty of God. We want to rescue the perishing and bring them to Christ that they may have everlasting life.

Now that we are at peace with God means we get something else and that’s the peace of God. Before I go into this let me put it this way. We have this extensive time in the Gospel of John from John 11 to John 17 where Jesus takes His Disciples to the Upper Room. He takes the Lord’s Supper with them, gives them the new commandment, washes their feet and all these things but one of the things He is doing is preparing them that He is going to leave and they are upset about this. He tells them not worry and that He must go away but that He will send them the Helper, the Holy Spirit.

John 14:1–6 says [1] *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. [4] And you know the way to where I am going.” [5] Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” [6] Jesus said to him (Thomas), “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

After Jesus says this, He calls His Disciples together and says ‘let me give you some of the last will and testament’ which is what my daddy did with me. Jesus says to them in John 14:27–29, [27] ***Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*** [28] *You heard Me say to*

you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [29] And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. The legacy Jesus leaves with them is His peace. Then He says to them in John 16:33, [33] "I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Jesus doesn't tell them life will be peaceful. No, we are going to be in a war, but the one we were at war against we are now reconciled to. You are not only right with God but He is right within you so we not only have the peace with God but the peace of God. Philippians 4:6–7 says [6] *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And **the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus**.* The peace with God is displayed as you live before humanity with the peace of God.

Do not let the world, left and right, take you from the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension. Don't let what the world uses to create the fears, unrest and chaos so that you and I live like the world, instead of living like Christ in Christ, because we don't simply have peace with God, Christ Himself is in us and He is our peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) who comforts His people. The Christ that is in you is the One who can convert Nebuchadnezzars and is the One who will never leave you nor forsake you. We are to take courage because He has overcome the world so we do not live as the world does.

I beg you to find your comfort, courage and confidence in Christ alone and have the peace of God, the peace with God and the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace—by His grace and for His glory. Because of Christ's death we have this peace now and we don't have to wait till we die to get this. This is your legacy. When He died and rose again, it's ours. Therefore, having been justified by faith we have the peace of God. We have Christ Himself who is our peace standing guard over our heart so that we have the peace of God.

Here is your takeaway. For all who have been justified in grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, we are no longer at war against God using our sin, but now we have both the peace with God and the peace of God yet with the weapons of the Spirit and the armor of Christ we now war against Satan, our sin and we got to war in evangelism for the salvation of the souls who are yet under the dominion of sin. We have peace like a river flowing when Christ fills our heart. This is your legacy that you have right now – peace with God through the atoning death of the attesting resurrection of Christ and because you have Christ you also have the peace of God.

William Randolph Hearst pretty much invented the newspaper industry, especially the way some of us older folks remember it, long before social media. Therefore, he made a lot of money. Because he was an art collector Hearst hired a man to find this one piece of art he didn't have and basically told him to go find it and buy it for whatever you can get it at. After about an 18 month period the man wrote Hearst from Italy and said 'Mr. Hearst I have good news and bade news. The good news is the piece you sent me out to find, I found it and we don't have to buy it because you already own it. The bad news is that you have had it for a very long time and it is sitting in your warehouse in Rome, Italy underneath a box.'

Some of you are searching everywhere for peace right now and every place you have been searching for in this world will not give you peace but if you come to Christ, surrender and put your trust in Him alone, you can have peace with God. Then the Prince of Peace dwells

within you by His Spirit who will produce the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace... and will lead you in a life that is amazing.

One day I sat down at a dinner table at a Youth Camp and in front of me was a place mat. On that mat was a picture of waterfalls with massive amounts of water coming over a cliff and in the middle of that waterfall was a rock. The water was diverting around that rock and coming out of the rock was a little tree that was growing that had a fork in the tree. In that fork was a nest with three baby birds and one mother feeding them. Just inches away from those birds were the torrents of destruction yet they fed and lived in peace. In the world you have tribulation, in Me you have peace with God and the peace of God for I, Christ, purchased it at the cross for you. Open the box, use the blessing and walk in and for Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. I pray that You would speak to the hearts of Your people gloriously, powerfully and personally. May those who came to this study searching may they know that they saw what they were searching for – that peace that is not found in recreational drugs, sex or activities, achievements, acclaim, applause, in influence, power or possessions but it's found in Christ alone. Please come to Him. If you would like to pray with someone, please call us at Briarwood at (205)776-5200 for we'd love to pray and talk with you about this peace personally and confidentially. Father, may Your people in the midst of a world that is in turmoil may they see Your people who know they have peace with God and who walk in the peace of God through Christ who is their peace, standing guard over their hearts, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Justification by Faith Alone

Legacy Blessing #1– Peace with God

Life Takeaway

For all who have been justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, we are no longer at war against God with our sin, but now have both “peace with God” and the “peace of God.” Yet with the weapons of the Spirit and the armor of Christ, we now war against Satan, our sin, and for the salvation of those yet under the dominion of sin.