

XXIX. Romans in Biblical Perspective  
*The Gospel of God*  
“Five Legacy Gospel Blessings, Part 4—Rejoice in Suffering”  
Romans 5:1–5  
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November 14, 2021 • Sunday Morning Sermon

This is the Word of God, inspired, inerrant, and infallible. 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.

There is a small book in the Bible that probably hasn't been preached from much and therefore its little nuggets of blessings have been missed by many. It's in the Old Testament and it's the book of Esther. It contains an interesting statement that people have seized upon throughout the ages. I want to draw your attention to it and what happens in light of it. Esther who was queen at the time is really queen over all the concubines which is what it amounts to. She was a Jewish woman in captivity that had risen to this position and in the midst of all of this a plan had been concocted only to kill particular Jewish leaders but really to bring a genocide against the Jews. Esther's adopted father is a man by the name of Mordecai, who is actually her cousin, but is the one who took care of her after the death of her father and raised her. Mordecai came to Esther with a very clear statement and it basically had to do with her being in a very unique position and it was crucial in this moment and time. He says to her 'Your people are in danger; you can at least approach the king as the queen.' This is a dangerous thing because as you approach, even as the queen the king will either present the sword and you will lose your life or he will present the scepter and draw you in. So Esther stands in this precarious position as Mordecai challenges her. His statement to her is, 'Have you not been placed here for such a time as this?'

Some time ago, my son, because of his academic and spiritual work, introduced me to another whole level of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien that I had never seen. One of the things that really takes hold of me out of Tolkien's book *The Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring* is that moment after Frodo has undergone adversity after adversity – he's been wounded, left for dead, abandonment and leaving all behind – he says to Gandalf, 'I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened.' Gandalf says "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." I have often wondered if Tolkien had thought of Esther when he wrote this.

When Mordecai told her that statement, he was telling her to prepare herself for the moment of time she was in and Esther prayed and consecrated herself as she anticipated her approach to the king would bring her death. She knelt outside the door, sent in the request in which the decision would be made and when the door opened, not the sword, but the golden scepter was extended to her. That is what I love about this Romans text for this text is the golden scepter from King Jesus extended to us.

In the days of the Reformation the church was corrupted in its leadership, its doctrine, its mission and its use of resources. Corruption had reigned and God raised up Reformers. The three passages of Scriptures that laid hold of them was Romans 3, 4 and 5. I will just give you a distillation of what we have studied from these passages. Romans 1 tells us we are in need of God which is the Gospel of God and the righteousness of God. All the pagan unbelievers are lost. In Romans 2 we see that religious pagans are lost. In Romans 2 and 3 the Jewish people are lost. Jew and Gentile are lost without Christ therefore the Gospel is glorious and Paul is eager to preach it because it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. When Paul gets near the end of Romans 3 he says in verse 23, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Now as we see that very first word in Romans 5:1, therefore, it leads us back to Romans 4 which explains that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone and the Scripture alone is our only rule of faith and practice. All the Reformers grabbed hold of that text from Romans 4:3a that says [3a], *For what does the Scripture say?* They saw that it is by the Scripture alone we live our life. My mind is captive to the Word of God. I cannot violate the Word of God for it captivates our conscience. “Here I stand” Luther says, “and I can do no other.” The Scripture alone informs us the only way we can be saved is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. So let’s go back to the end of Romans 4 to see what that word ‘therefore’ is referring to.

Romans 4:24b–25 says [24b] *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.* In other words, God’s Son becomes a Man, humbles Himself and goes to the cross to die not a model death or martyr’s death or revolutionary death, but an atoning death. It had already been taught through the Old Testament that sinners need a sacrificial offering but the blood of animals can’t do it so they were back year after year after year. On this day, the Lamb of God, goes to the cross to take all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity upon Himself, pays for it and then says “It is finished!” Then He is laid in a grave, and on the third day in fulfilment of the Scriptures He is raised which is God’s shout that He is satisfied. He was delivered up to pay for our sins. He was raised as a declaration that we’re justified.

When you come to Christ you are headed to a Judgment Seat but you already have your verdict for that Day – innocent. Your sins have been removed. His righteousness clothes you. You are justified and that’s not just forgiven or pardoned but that is innocent. 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.* When you come to this King He points to you not the sword of judgment, because He has already taken it, but the golden scepter and all of these blessings that come with it. I love 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.*

Romans 5 doesn’t give us all those blessings but it gives us the golden scepter of five legacy blessings for those who have been justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, which is foundational for our life in Christ and for Christ so that we would understand it. The very first legacy blessing given in this text is that we have peace with God.

Romans 5:1 says [1] *Therefore, (in light of His death and resurrection) since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Notice this doesn’t say we have peace with God if we do good but because of what Jesus did on the cross we are justified and because we are justified through the work of Christ, we have peace with God.

Why do we have this? It is because Jesus is the Prince of Peace. What is the Gospel? It is the Gospel of peace and that is only meaningful when you understand Romans 1 through 3 that tells us we are not at peace with God because we are an enemy of God and sin is what we use to assault the glory of God. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). But at the right time Christ died for the ungodly, His enemies (Romans 5:6).

When you are justified by Christ you not only have a legal peace with God but you have a subjective 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 Prince of Peace who has made peace with God in life and all of its turmoil gets you the peace of God. Do you see how Jesus gives us this? He gives it to us in John 14 and 16. In John 14:27 we hear that inheritance language He uses; *[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.* Jesus also says 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.* This is the glorious promise He gives us which is peace with God but that leads us to the second legacy blessing.

The second blessing is that now we have access and standing. Before you come to Christ you don't have access or standing and you have no rights. You are outside the door. All we need to do is go back to the Garden for when Adam and Eve sinned the sword came at the hand of the angels and we're told they have no standing and no access but Christ has come and made a way, has opened the way. Now there is no door when you come to Christ who is the way, the truth, the life and the door. When you come to Christ you now have access to God and standing with God. Romans 5:2 says *[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.*

When those challenges in life come, you can go right to Him because the way has been opened and sprinkled clean by the blood of Jesus. You don't have to go through a preacher, through rites or anyone or anything to get to Him for you can go directly to Him in the name of Christ. When you get there, you have standing for you are in Christ and Christ is in you. On the Lord's Day you can not only gather with God's people and He not only comes to indwell us but He then ushers our praise into the presence of God. So we worship the Father through the Son in the Spirit and we have standing and access just as the angels that surround the throne.

The third blessing is also found in Romans 5:2 and that is we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We sing it when we sing 'blessed assurance Jesus is mine' and right now we have foretaste but what is coming is gloriously divine. There is where we rejoice in the hope of glory. This leads us to a fourth legacy blessing and throughout this passage in Romans 5:1–5 we see the connecting language Paul uses in giving us these blessings. Let's look the next verse which gives us the fourth blessing with the connecting language in bold.

Romans 5:3a says *[3a] **Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings**...* Those who are rejoicing in their sufferings are those justified by grace through faith in Christ, those who have peace with God, those who have access and standing with God for the 'we' consistently works throughout the text. Notice they don't rejoice in the sufferings of others but they are found rejoicing in their sufferings. Why do we do that? Let's go further in the verse.

Romans 5:3 says *[3] **Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings**... **knowing that suffering produces endurance.*** I want to stop at knowing for just a moment. Christianity is not an invented religion for it's a revealed religion declaring our relationship with God through the

grace of God that is found in Christ. We are not people who write the Book, we are people of the Book. We know. I John 5:13 says [13] *I write these things (or these things are written) to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know** that you have eternal life.* Romans 8:28 says [28] *And **we know** that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

How do we know? It's not because we have invented a philosophy of Christianity, we know it because God has revealed the truth of who we are in Christ by creation, redemption and providence. God's Word is true. Romans 3:4 says [4] *By no means! Let God be true though everyone (or every man) were a liar.* This isn't something a preacher came up with or Briarwood came up with or the PCA came up with or a counsel came up with but this is His church, His counsels, His confessions distilling what is inerrantly, infallibly and sufficiently true – God's Word. Because God's Word says this we know. God's Word tells us that suffering is purposed in the sovereign hand of God. I am not moving from accident to accident and how will I stoically deal with it. No, I know something for I can trace the rainbow through the rain. We have a Biblical world view that is rooted in the truth of who God is and has revealed His truth to us in His Word.

What does His Word tell us about *our* suffering? This is not for those outside of Christ. This is for those who have been justified by faith in Christ. Our suffering is productive and this is repeated time and again in His Word. Romans 5:3–4 says [3] ***Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings... knowing** that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.* This is not an accident but it's the sovereign hand of God that is working therefore we rejoice.

I want to look at the word rejoice here. We see it used twice in Romans 5:2b–3a which says [2b] *we **rejoice** in hope of the glory of God. [3a] Not only that, but we **rejoice** in our sufferings...* I want to show you the other two times that led up to this. Romans 3:27a says [27a] *Then what becomes of our **boasting**?* This word boasting is the same Greek word used in Romans 5:2–3 translated rejoice. The second place is in Romans 4:2a which says [2a] *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to **boast** about.* I would have rather that rejoice in Romans 5 been translated boast to keep the thread moving but the translators decided to use rejoice in Romans 5. I understand there is something different in the usage of Romans 5 than the usage in Romans 3 and 4, but here I think the New American Standard comes to our rescue. Romans 5:2b–3a says in the NAS 1995, [2b] *and we **exult** in hope of the glory of God. [3a] And not only this, but we also **exult** in our tribulations...* not in sufferings but in *our* sufferings which have purpose and are productive for they come from the hand of God.

The next time you hear 'when you have problems, come to Jesus for He will alleviate your problems...' cut that thing off and run as fast as you can away from it. The problems that Jesus takes away from us are the problems we have produced by our sins. Jesus saves us from the penalty of sin, the power of sin and increasingly saving us from the practice of sin and when He brings us home, He will save us from the presence of sin. When I came to Jesus, I had no idea how many problems He was about to give me. I have a problem in my life that I had already made peace with, now I'm convicted why? Because there is sin. I have to think about how I live my life to properly present the Gospel to others and not just live my life for myself. I live my life for Jesus and that means I have a mission to be a missionary. How do we do that? How do we connect with other people? How do we deal with sins? How do we flee temptations? How do we pursue holiness, literally setting a trap for holiness?

What happens when you become a believer? You have an old man living within in you that is going to rebel inside of you and then there is Satan and the world that will come after you. Jesus says 'I'm sovereignly using all of it for your benefit. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:4, 29 says [4] *Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.* [29] *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake.*

Peter says in I Peter 2:19–21 [19] *For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.* [20] *For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.* [21] *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

Everyone who knows Him will suffer for Him. Every true believer in some way to some extent in some manner will suffer for Christ. As we saw earlier Jesus says 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 also said in John 15:20, [20] *Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours.* Jesus promises to deliver us from our sins but He also promises us that the world will be coming after us as it did to Him. Satan is coming after us but we are to take courage because Jesus has overcome them all. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ.

In fact, Jesus gives us the promise of the suffering we will face. Then He gives it to us as a benediction in Matthew 5:11–12 which says [11] *Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account.* [12] **Rejoice and be glad**, *for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* You know God is working in your life through suffering.

The root word of suffering, is an interesting word for it literally means to be pressured. I want to try and illustrate this for you. My second car to drive was my dad's '65 cherry red impala and the deal was I had to put gas in it and wax it once a month in order to drive it. So he was going to show me how to wax it. My dad's version of waxing was using elbow grease and to this day I'm not even sure what that is but when my dad said it, it had something to do with rubbing hard and applying pressure. Then I said 'how is that Dad?' He said 'It's not there yet. Son, you need some spizerinkdom.' I have no idea what that is but I knew it had to do with elbow grease on steroids, where you really need to rub it and rub it hard. Then I asked my dad how that was because it looked shiny to me and he said 'do you see yourself in it?' I said 'no' and he said 'then keep rubbing.'

That's our test and Peter picks up on this when he calls our suffering 'refiner's fire.' I Peter 4:12–13 says [12] *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.* [13] *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.* A refiner melts the gold into liquid and the dross comes to the surface. Then he sweeps the dross away to purify it. So, refiner is not only polishing but he is purifying and he keeps doing that until he can see his face in the liquid gold. The face we're looking for is not ours, but it is Jesus' face – that we display Jesus.

Back to our text in Romans 5:3–4 which says [3] **Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings ... knowing that suffering produces endurance,** [4] *and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.* The key to endurance is found in the fact that suffering is plural – our sufferings – because there is more than one and it's continuous. It means that

suffering is a test that is continually applied with multiple sufferings to get the job done of sanctification in our life. This goes along with James 1:2–4 which says [2] *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* Peter also affirms this as we see that Paul and James do as well.

This is not a flight of oratorical pick-me-up or coach Paul getting us through the game of adversity. This affirms what Paul says in II Corinthians 17–30 which says [17] *What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. [18] Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. [19] For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! [20] For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. [21] To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!*

*But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. [22] Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. [23] Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. [24] Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; [26] on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; [27] in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. [28] And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. [29] Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?*

**[30] If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness (my sufferings).** Paul isn't going to boast about how many churches he has planted or how many he has led to Jesus or how many epistles he wrote in the New Testament, but he boasts in his sufferings. By doing this Paul tells us this is a legacy blessing – to exult in your sufferings that produces endurance.

What does a test do? Sufferings are tests and trials in our life. A test does three things for it shows you one, what you know, two what you don't know and three what you need to know. So, I will rejoice not only in the test of suffering but the sufferings for as they keep coming it demonstrates endurance. I'm sure many of you have flown on a plane but what if you found out that the plane you were getting ready to fly on had not been tested, what would you say? I'd say 'I want my money back.' I'm not going to go on something that hasn't been tested. I want to know that everything is okay. What if they said the plane had only been tested once? You want something to be test time and time again so that you're not apart of the shakedown cruise for you want that all done.

I recently went to my heart doctor and they gave me a stress test. It wasn't something that was easy for I had to keep moving this thing until my heart got up to a 140 bpm. I got to 110 bpm and the lady giving me the test said 'you have to go faster' and I said 'I can't go any faster.' She said 'you have to go faster because we need to get this up to double your heartrate, it has to get between 140 to 145bpm.' I said 'My heartrate is 55 and I am doubled at 110 for if I get to 145 you will need to call an ambulance.' I was a stress test to found out if there were any weaknesses that had to do with my heart.

God brings and orchestrates the test for your good and His glory for He is amplifying you and making you an amplifier of His grace and mercy. He keeps bringing it as He brings endurance and endurance brings character. Character is simply this; circumstances of adversity do not dictate your character. You are not a victim. Circumstances do not dictate your character; they reveal it and refine it. When the light is cut off, what you do next tells everyone who you are. It's when no one is looking that who you really are is revealed. This tells you who you are. Who am I? What do I know? What do I need to know? What don't I know?

Praise the Lord that as character produces hope we have come full circle for now we are rejoicing in hope again (Romans 5:4). Now the hope keeps getting secured in our life as the Anchor holds in Jesus Christ. Why do we have hope? Romans 5:5 says *[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.*

Most of us think that if God loved us, He would keep the suffering away from us. Hebrews 12:6 says *[6] For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.* This is the same phrase found in Ephesians 6:4 which says *[4] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* Therefore, what we see in our suffering as He is always with us and holds us fast, that He is forming us, purifying us, preparing us and what we see and feel is His love for us. Hebrews 12:11 says *[11] For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.* Suffering produces fruit.

I read this true story about a kid who loved insects and he particularly loved caterpillars. He loved to see the caterpillar weave the cocoon, crawl into the cocoon and come out as a beautiful butterfly. This process is known as metamorphosis and we get the word transformed from this. Romans 12:2 says *[2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (metamorphized) by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* It pained this kid to watch the struggle of the butterfly coming out of the small opening of the cocoon and out of his declaration of love this kid knows about the time the butterfly is about to come out so he cuts open the cocoon so the butterfly can come out with no struggle, but when it comes out it falls dead to the floor unable to fly. It was actually the struggle that gave the strength to the wings to fly.

God loves us and He doesn't cut the end of the cocoon. He tightens it. I Corinthians 10:13 says *[13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* So, we rejoice at what He is doing in our life even though what we are experiencing is not joyful at the time.

Here is the takeaway. Because Christians have peace with God, we rejoice in our sufferings because the sufferings that we encounter under a sovereign God do not destroy our life in Christ for they develop and display our life for Christ. For some of us this is tough. If you are a young Christian today, learn this thing and grow because when you get a little older 'the clay ain't wet' and it's hard to mold hard clay so He starts chiseling on us. I want to say something to parents – don't bubble wrap your children, let them face adversity for it's how they grow so they can leave you. Coaches, teachers, counselors, disciplers – let these people come into your children's lives. Don't try to make everything perfect.

Jesus doesn't bubble wrap you, but the sufferings that He sovereignly allows that the world will bring against you, He is using to hold you, form you, frame you, sustain you and He is

your anchor which always holds. Jesus is developing you, not destroying you. He is giving you a platform for your life to bring glory to Christ.

I read this story from a New York magazine about this man who lived right between Virginia and West Virginia up in the mountains. He was just a plain ole' Appalachian mountaineer. He made these beautiful oak carvings of stallions. Everything about this carving looked so real that you could almost see the breath coming out of the horse's nostrils. They became more and more expensive so this other man comes down from an art magazine in New York to interview him and says to him 'Sir, tell me what your secret is?' The carver said 'I don't have one.' The interviewer said 'Tell us what you are doing as you carve the horses – how do you do this?' The carver said 'I don't know.' The interviewer said 'There has to be something for people are waiting to find out.' The carver said 'All I can tell you is that I get a block of wood, my knife and I carve everything out of that wood that ain't horse.'

That's what Jesus is doing. He will hold you fast. He is carving everything of out your life that isn't Jesus and that's why we know He holds us fast. I wish I could sing and if I could I would sing this song right now one of my favorite hymns, *My Anchor Holds*;

*Tho' the angry surges roll  
On my tempest-driven soul,  
I am peaceful, for I know,  
Wildly though the winds may blow,  
I've an anchor safe and sure,  
That can evermore endure.*

*Refrain:*

*And it holds, my anchor holds:  
Blow your wildest, then, O gale,  
On my bark so small and frail;  
By His grace I shall not fail,  
For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.*

Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the Lord Jesus who is perfecting us, who is purifying us and who is preparing us so we rejoice in our sufferings that You have designed under pressure to produce endurance – endurance, character and character, hope – because the love of God has not removed the sufferings but holds us fast, forms us, frames us, polishes us and is preparing us. Do Your work O Lord and we will rejoice because You are holding us fast, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Five Legacy Blessings

I. Peace with God...

II. Access to God and Standing before God

III. Rejoice in Hope

IV. Rejoice in our Sufferings



Rejoice in Suffering  
Not only that...

Life Takeaway

*Because Christians have peace with God, access to and standing before God, we not only rejoice in Hope, we also rejoice in our Sufferings because they do not destroy our life in Christ they develop and display our life for Christ.*

*Preparing – Perfecting – Purifying*