

Justification through Faith

Bible Background • ROMANS 5:1–11

Printed Text • ROMANS 5:1–11 | Devotional Reading • ISAIAH 53:1–12

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will IDENTIFY the relationship between faith in Christ and justification in the sight of God, REPENT of personal failures to obtain the peace that God gives, and CELEBRATE our justification through faith in Christ.

In Focus

Jawanda prayed for guidance about the meeting after church with her pastor. A member of her church since she learned to read, her devotion left her refreshed. But this morning Jawanda felt she was on the wrong side of God's love..

When she reached the pastor's office, a thin veil of anger clouded her thoughts. The pastor had asked her to step down as chairperson of the Community Day Committee and serve as co-chair under Sadie, who had been a member for only six months. Her eyes were moist as she relayed her anxiety. "I have tithed and served faithfully in our church my entire adult life. Never have I been asked to step down from a leadership role. Why now?" The pastor's lips turned down as he began to speak. "Jawanda, this is not about you. This is about Sadie and her Christian walk."

Jawanda spoke in a muffled voice. "Please, Pastor, don't ask me to serve under this young girl. Less than a year ago by her own testimony, she was using heavy drugs and living wildly. How do you expect me to respect her decisions?" "Listen to me," the pastor said. "This is not a demotion; it is a promotion. If you stand as co-chair, your humility and support will be an instrument of deliverance for God's salvation plan for this young woman. Remember, Jawanda, all Christians have been delivered from sin." It was the pastor's last words that released her anger as she recalled the redeeming grace Christ had given her.

In today's lesson, the apostle Paul explains the blessing that comes from God to all those who have been justified by faith. What happens when we forget about those blessings?

Keep in Mind

"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us" (Romans 5:1, NLT)

Words You Should Know

A. Peace (Romans 5:1) *eirene* (Gk.)—The absence of war and hostilities; the tranquility of mind that arises from reconciliation with God

B. Access (v. 2) *prosagoge* (Gk.)—The audience or right of approach granted to someone by high officials or kings

Say It Correctly

Commendeth. kuh-MEN-dith.

Peradventure. pur-ad-VIN-ture.

KJV

Romans 5:1 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.

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.

NLT

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.

11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

The People, Places, and Times

Reconciliation. Reconciliation is at the heart of Pauline theology. The word reconciliation was not used in a religious sense by the other religions of Paul's time. Reconciliation is roughly the same as justification, but is broader and includes the aspect of forgiveness. The same God who judges also reconciles, so through reconciliation the sinner's guilt is removed. Reconciliation comes from God's initiative. Christians are brand-new people (2 Corinthians 5:17-19). The Holy Spirit gives us new life, and we are not the same anymore. We are recreated and live in union with Christ (Colossians 2:6). God brings us back to Himself by blotting out our sins and declaring us righteous. Because we have been reconciled to God, we have the privilege of leading others to do the same. This is our ministry of reconciliation.

Apostle Paul. Apostles were literally "the sent out ones." God called them, equipped them, and then sent them to establish His Word among His people. The Apostle Paul was, as he said, an apostle "born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:8) meaning he was late to be called one of the apostles. He was, in fact, an enemy to the early church until God plucked him out from among his Pharisaical brothers. However, Paul showed the same zeal in serving Christ that he had shown in persecuting Him and His people. He was radically changed, completely taken with his Master. His loyalty to Jesus was unimpeachable, and he was driven to get others to follow with the same zeal. He was completely convinced of salvation by grace. In these verses, he shows that this salvation gives a new perspective, one that carries us through even the toughest times.

Background

Before Jesus came, no one could ever be intimate with God. In presenting his case, Paul has proved that all humanity stands guilty before God. He has clearly shown that no one can ever be saved through deeds such as circumcision or obedience to the law. He has used Abraham as an example of how anyone can achieve right standing with God through faith. If Paul's readers stopped reading at this point, they would know that they needed salvation and it was available to them.

In chapter 4, the apostle Paul established that Abraham is the father of the family of faith, not just of the Hebrews. All who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and receive Him as

Lord and Savior are Abraham's spiritual seed. In verse 25, Paul makes a transitional statement concerning Christ being raised for our justification. Paul is now finished with his discussion of Abraham. Justification is the first blessing of the Christian life and carries with it many other blessings. When believers are justified, they receive everything God has to give. In chapter 5, Paul explains the blessing of our salvation: justification brings us peace with God and access to Him by faith, and Christ is the basis of our justification. Paul almost sings with the joy of his confidence in God. Accepting God at His Word has accomplished what human effort could not; it has given believers peace with God.

At-A-Glance

1. The Blessings of Justification (Romans 5:1-5)
2. The Beauty of Justification (vv. 6-8)
3. The Reconciliation of God Leads to Our Joy (vv. 9-11)

In Depth

1. The Blessings of Justification (Romans 5:1-5) We have peace with God because we are justified. Trusting faith has given us what working to keep the law could never give us— peace with God. Christ paid the price for our rebellion and brought about the end of hostilities between the creature and the Creator. Everyone who rejects God's offer of reconciliation through Christ chooses to remain God's enemy.

Because we are justified, we have "access by faith" (Romans 5:2). In the Jewish tabernacle was an inner room called the Holy of Holies, which symbolized the presence of God. The High Priest was the only person ever allowed into the Most Holy Place, and he could only enter once a year on the Day of Atonement. When Christ died on Calvary, the curtain separating the Most Holy Place from the rest of the Temple was split, signifying the acceptance by God of all God's faithful to the throne of grace.

Because we are justified, we have a new standing with God (v. 2). No one could stand the scrutiny of God if and when He begins to pick out the iniquities of the sinful. Thank God that our justification gives us a right standing before Him. The only way this is ever accomplished is through union with Christ. Being in Christ means that we are identified with His death, burial, and Resurrection (Romans 6:1-8). Because of our identification with Christ, we now stand in the place of highest privilege. Not only has God declared us not guilty, but He has also drawn us nearer to Himself.

What enables believers to rejoice in good times or bad? How can one really be happy when facing difficult trials or tragedies? Does our rejoicing mean that we never feel sad or lonely?

2. The Beauty of Justification (vv. 6-8) After discussing the blessing that results from justification, Paul moves on to discuss the depths of God's love. The apostle highlights the absolute inability of humans to deliver themselves from the grip of sin. We needed a rescuer, and our God sent one from heaven. "Ungodly" refers to those who live impious, wicked, and sinful lives—people with little regard for God in their minds and hearts. Christ offered Himself up as a sacrifice on the Cross to do for weak, sinful people what they could never do for themselves. What a thought: the godly dying for the ungodly!

Now Paul pens one of the most beloved sentences ever written: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Christ's death is a clear demonstration of divine love in action. This is what Christ means when He commands us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Humanity was in flat-out rebellion against God. We were servants of the evil one and demonstrated our contempt for God by our lifestyles. Yet God loved us so much that He sent His Son from the glories of heaven to the filth of earth. God clothed holiness in sinful flesh and sent Christ to the Cross on our behalf. No greater expression of love has ever, or will ever, be made.

How can we harmonize God's love and His wrath (vv. 8-9)?

3. The Reconciliation of God Leads to Our Joy (vv. 9-11) In these final verses of our text, Paul continues to expound on the benefits of our justification. We are justified and therefore saved from wrath. We have atonement with God which gives us joy. We have been reconciled to God and therefore saved by the life of Christ. In verse 9, Paul uses the phrase "much more," and again in verse 10. Then in verse 11 he adds, "And not only so." He piles one benefit upon another. He is overcome with the positive nature of our standing in Christ. Our justification through Jesus' blood has moved us from helplessness to being reconciled, no longer under His wrath but now sharing His life, which leads to our joy.

Here Paul makes an extraordinary statement: God's love reconciled us through Christ. This contrasts with false theologies stating that only Jesus is loving while the Father is vengeful. Instead, Paul explains the truth: God's love brought about our salvation through His Son.

How can we clearly see those who need hope and then share His hope with them?

Search the Scriptures

1. What result does our justification have on our relationship with God (Romans 5:1)?
2. Since we have peace with God, what should our emotional response be in times of difficulty and sorrow (vv. 2-3)?
3. How did God demonstrate His love for us beyond any doubt (v. 8)?
4. Because of sin we were separated from God and considered His enemies. How are we reconciled back to the Father (v. 10)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Why does Paul emphasize humanity's weakness and our inability to change ourselves? Do you believe that all unsaved people are God's enemies? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. The world can

suck up our hope, but it has always been this way. As followers of Christ, we will need to understand how to allow His hope into our lives. How can we connect our redemption to a daily hopeful outlook?

Liberating Lesson

It is interesting that the Scripture never presents living in faith and being hopeful as requests but as commands. We should keep in mind that the Lord is aware of our weaknesses even more than we are. He also knows our enemies and challenges but still requires our victorious outlook. When we are fearful and unsettled, then it shows we are not focused on His assurances.

Our believing brothers and sisters need to see our hope in the Lord. Our hopeless world needs to see our hope as well. When we correct our relationship with Christ—when our daily walk is firm—we will grow in the ability to share this hope.

Application for Activation

Share the eternal truths of today’s lesson with at least two people this week. Explain how Christ’s death not only reconciles us to God but also empowers us to live godly lives. Record the reactions of the people you share this Good News with and be prepared to share your experiences with the class next week.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Romans 5:1-11 **1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:** With the close of the fourth chapter, Paul completes his teaching on how God justifies a person. Justification is the initial blessing of salvation, but it carries with it all the other blessings of Christian life. In chapter 5, Paul launches into an explanation of eight attendant blessings of justification by faith. Because we are justified by faith, we have “peace with God” (v. 1); “access” to God’s presence and standing in grace, joy, and “hope” (v. 2); “the love of God” and “the Holy Ghost” (v. 5); we are “saved from wrath” (v. 9); and “saved by his life” (v. 10).

A literal translation of verse 1 is: "Since we have been justified by faith, let us have peace with God." "Justified" is in the Greek past tense and points to an accomplished fact. This illustrates that justification is not a process, but rather an instantaneous act that takes place at the moment a sinner receives Christ as Lord.

The phrase "we have peace with God" could also be translated as "let us have peace with God." The "let us" is from the Greek present tense verb *echomen*, which means to keep on having or enjoying our peace with God. It is the privilege of those who are justified to "have peace with God," and Paul is encouraging believers to both realize this privilege and to enjoy it. As believers, we must never allow doubt or fear to rob us of what is rightfully ours. This "peace," translated from the Greek word *eirene*, is first a change in God's relationship to us. Then, as the natural consequence of God's changed relationship to us, we change in our relationship toward Him. Because of our fallen nature, humanity is in a state of hostility with God. In other words, sinners are God's enemies (see v. 10). When we are justified, that hostility is removed and we have "peace with God." Awareness of our peace with God brings a sense of peace to our souls.

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: Not only does Christ remove the hostility that existed between God and sinners, but He also gives us "access" (Gk. *prosagoge*, *pro-sahgo*- GAY, a bringing to) into His very presence. In the Hebrew Temple, the presence of God was in a room called the Holy of Holies. A thick veil separated this room from the rest of the Temple, and only the high priest was allowed past the veil once a year to purify the altar which has been made unclean by the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:16). This curtain represented the separation of sinful humanity from God.

When Christ died on the Cross, the veil that led to the Holy of Holies ripped down the middle (Matthew 27:51). Ripping the veil represented the elimination of the separation so that all believers now have access to God. Christ's eternal sacrifice on our behalf brings us into the presence of God and allows us to have continuous access to Him.

Being justified by faith also brings us into a new permanent standing with God where we enjoy His divine favor. The basis of our new standing is obtained by grace. No one can stand before God by his own deeds, character, or righteousness. Our new standing is totally the result of God's undeserved favor. Therefore, we rejoice "in hope of the glory of God." The glory spoken of here is twofold. First, we hope to experience the Divine Presence in heaven. Second and more immediate, we hope to bring glory to God through and in our tribulations.

Paul says we glory or rejoice in tribulation because we realize it is heaven's way of teaching us patience or longsuffering. Patience is the confident endurance of things hoped for or difficulties we wish removed. The spiritual fruit of patience (cf. Galatians 5:22) is seen in the humble endurance of ill because of the realization that nothing comes against us that has not been allowed by God.

This patience then brings about “experience” (Gk. dokime, doe-kee-MAY), a word also translated as “proof” (2 Corinthians 2:9, 13:3; Philippians 2:22). Proof is the experimental evidence that we have believed through grace. Believers enter periods of tribulation and patiently endure. Our patient endurance is rewarded with eventual victory over our circumstance, and our victorious experience proves the faithfulness to God to deliver us from future trials. Another meaning for dokime is “character.” Testings prove or establish our character because it is made evident through patient endurance. Then, experience brings us back to “hope.”

We have hope in two distinct ways and at two successive stages of the Christian life. First, immediately upon believing, along with the sense of peace and abiding access to God, we have hope in our new relationship. Next, hope grows after the reality of our faith has been proven by the patient endurance of trials sent to test it. Our hope comes from looking away from ourselves to the Cross of Christ, then looking into ourselves as being transformed into the image of Christ. In the first case, our hope is based on faith and in the second by experience.

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. Our hope of heaven, which presupposes faith, is the confident expectation of future good. Our faith assures us that heaven will be ours, and our hope expectantly anticipates it. This hope in the glory of God will never make us ashamed (like empty hopes do) because it is based on “the love of God”—not our love of God, but His love of us which is “shed abroad” (Gk. ekkheo, ek-KHE-oh, “poured forth,” used literally of blood or wine, and figuratively of love or the Holy Spirit itself). God’s love for us is seen in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. At the appointed time, Christ offered Himself as our eternal sacrifice “when we were yet without strength”—that is, when we were powerless to deliver ourselves and therefore ready to perish. Christ’s death reveals three properties of God’s love. First, “the ungodly” are those whose character and sinful nature are repulsive in the eyes of God. Second, He did this when they were “without strength”—nothing stood between humanity and damnation but divine compassion. Third, He did this “in due time” when it was most appropriate that it should take place.

The phrase “in due time” shows that God has always been involved in human history. Nothing catches Him by surprise. The good Lord had always planned to send Christ to die for us; He made the initial announcement after humanity’s fall from grace (Genesis 3:15). Then, at just the right time, He sent His only begotten Son to teach, minister, and die for the sinful. Whenever we think things in our lives are running out of control, we can remember that God always moves “in due time.”

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. The apostle now proceeded to illustrate God’s compassion. Few, if any people, would be willing to sacrifice their lives for a “righteous man” of exceptional character. A few more might be willing to die for a man who, besides being exceptional, is also distinguished for goodness or a benefactor to society. But God, in glorious contrast to what men

might do for each other, displayed His love, “while we were yet sinners”—that is, in a state in of absolute rebellion—“Christ died for us.”

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. Having been “justified by his blood,” we shall be saved from wrath through the sacrifice of Christ. Christ’s death restored our relationship with God while we were in open rebellion against Him. Since we are now reconciled, “we shall be saved by his life.” If Christ’s sacrifice was offered for people incapable of the least appreciation for God’s love or Christ’s labors on their behalf, how much more will He do all that remains to be done? “For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.” (v. 10, NLT). To be “saved from wrath through him” refers to the entire work of salvation— from the moment of justification to the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11–15), when the wrath of God shall be revealed to all who ignore the Gospel of Jesus. The Apostle Jude best described Christ’s continuing work of salvation when he said that He “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. “And not only so” refers back to the blessing Paul mentioned previously. We not only find joy in our newfound peace, access, standing, hope, love, indwelling, and salvation, but we rejoice in God Himself. We find joy in our God for what He has done and for who He is. Our joy proceeds from our union with Christ who brought about our atonement.

“Atonement” (Gk. *katallage*, kah-tahlah- GAY) is the noun form of the verb for reconciling in v. 10. It indicates a shift from a negative relationship to a positive one or from a broken relationship to a healthy one. Paul moves beyond the sacrificial language here to focus on the restored relationship that Christ’s atoning death provides. This restored relationship with God brings about joy, or more literally boasting (see v. 2).

Atonement is the gracious act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and believers. The word contains parts that express this great truth in simple but profound terms: “at-one.” Through God’s atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of being “at one” with God.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Blessed Are Persecuted Believers
(Matthew 5:9-12)

TUESDAY

Jesus, Not Suffering, Matters
(Philippians 1:12-20)

WEDNESDAY

Suffering for Christ and the Church
(2 Corinthians 11:21-30)

THURSDAY

In Hope Our Salvation Is Secure
(Romans 8:18-25)

FRIDAY

Free Gift of Jesus Brings Justification
(Romans 5:12-17)

SATURDAY

Grace Leads to Eternal Life
(Romans 5:18-21)

SUNDAY

Justified through Faith in Jesus Christ
(Romans 5:1-11)