

It's All About Grace
September 25, 2011
Allen Power

Romans 5:1-21

- "Do you know what you have here?" "Do you know what this is WORTH to you?"
- Ever watch ANTIQUE ROADSHOW? What's the concept of the show?
- Sometimes people don't fully understand the VALUE of the TREASURE they have.
- In Romans chapter 5 today, I want every believer in this room to walk out REJOICING and CELEBRATING the BENEFITS we have because of God's GRACE.
- Whenever someone is considering a new job, after learning about the particulars of the job, we THEN ask about what? The pay and benefits...in other words, what we GET for what we earn.
- Even if someone gives us something as a GIFT, we still want to know how we BENEFIT from it. In business we call those the FEATURES and BENEFITS.
- Paul continues his letter to the Romans by pointing out all the PERSONAL BENEFITS of being a Christian.
- Let's review the "Cliff's Notes" of this letter so far. Paul has told them and US:
 - All people are SINNERS and deserve God's WRATH
 - But God offered His Son Jesus as a SUBSTITUTE, a SACRIFICE for SINNERS
 - He PAID our DEBT of SIN and if we BELIEVE in Him we have God's RIGHTEOUSNESS "CREDITED" to our account
 - In Chapter 4 he illustrated this with the life of Abraham who was made right with God NOT BY HIS WORKS but by FAITH
- Now in Chapter 5, Paul outlines the BENEFITS of a life in Christ

Romans 5

Peace and Hope

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we[b] boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

- Let's stop right here and consider these first five verses
- Verse 1: Paul connects the following information to what he has said before with the words: "Therefore, since...we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God."
- Question: There's having peace and then there's being AT peace...what is the difference? One is a feeling the other is the opposite of being AT WAR.

- In this case, Paul is saying "since we have been justified through faith" we are no longer AT WAR with God.
- Someone might say, "I didn't know I had a problem with God...I didn't know He and I were at WAR." We were BORN at war...because of the sin of Adam.
- We were born with a hereditary disease called SIN. And because God is completely HOLY, He cannot tolerate SIN. Therefore we were born enemies with God.
- But in his GRACE, God took the initiative to provide the CURE for our sin.
- And when we BELIEVE and RECEIVE His free gift of salvation, we are now CLOTHED in the "asbestos suit" of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of Christ and the WAR is over!
- Question: When something EXPLODES where does the DEBRIS go? In all directions.
- When God gives us PEACE with Him it EXPLODES into every direction of our lives.
- Think of this, if I had a jar of water and a drop of blue food coloring and just put one, small drop into the clear water what would happen? It PERMEATES, it SPREADS and COLORS the whole jar of water.
- Our commentary says: "being declared right with God by faith opens a floodgate of divine grace in believers' lives."
- First, as we just said, there's an end to the "divine wrath" because of our sins.
- Secondly, peace through Christ RESTORES OUR RELATIONSHIP with God.
- Not only are we not at WAR...now we are IN LOVE with God! In RELATIONSHIP, in STEP with Him.
- In a third way, peace with God impacts our RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS.
- Because we're right with God it enables us to be "right" with others. (Eph 2:14 "He is our peace...made the two one, destroyed barriers" ; Col 3:12-14 "bear with each other and forgive")
- Fourth, peace through Christ "EMPOWERS us to become AGENTS of peace in a STRIFE-FILLED world." We become PEACEMAKERS between other people.
- (Matt 5:9.."peacemakers"; Heb. 12:14.."life at peace"; James 3:18 "sow in peace..harvest of righteousness.")
- We gain A LOT when we are given PEACE WITH GOD!
- That's all just verse 1...GREAT we'll be here all day!!! No, we'll be on time.
- Verse two tells us: we have ACCESS "into this GRACE in which we now stand."
- As believers we're given a "lifetime supply" of God's GRACE and we "stand" in it.
- Think of it this way: We used to stand in a dark corner in the shadow of sin...now we're always standing as the hymn says, in the "light of His glory and grace."
- And (verse two says) we can REJOICE in the HOPE of His Glory.
- That word REJOICE really means we can BOAST in His Glory...we can BRAG on what God has done in our lives! Every day we can have a TESTIMONY MEETING!
- It's one thing to REJOICE when things are going WELL...what about tough times?
- Verse 3: Not only can we REJOICE in the Hope we have...we can REJOICE in our sufferings. What? Why would we REJOICE in sufferings? Paul, are you sick?
- This doesn't mean we ENJOY our sufferings, it does mean we can still HAVE JOY in the midst of them. The JOY that God is going to use them for our good.
- (Romans 8:28 - Alistair Begg story of losing his Mom when she was 46 years old)

- Back to verse 3: suffering produces perseverance...what is perseverance? The Greek word Paul used means to REMAIN UNDER...as in to ENDURE UNDER pressure.
- Jesse Aldridge's cycling - pushing through builds endurance!
- Endurance is built by STAYING THE COURSE in FAITH and not being sidelined by trials. James 1:2-4.
- Verse 4: Perseverance produces CHARACTER
- Question: When a Christian goes through trials with God's GRACE how does it impact OTHER PEOPLE? That's the EXTERNAL, what about the INTERNAL? When we ENDURE through trials with God's GRACE how does it impact US?
- Suffering leads to endurance which leads to character which leads to HOPE
- Verse 5 (read) Hope does not disappoint. It's ALWAYS a good decision to follow Christ! He will never disappoint us.
- Question: We normally use HOPE as a VERB...what does it mean when we HOPE for something? It may or may not happen but we HOPE it will. This is different.
- This is a NOUN. This HOPE is the ASSURANCE that God is who He says He is and will DO what He promised. How can a Christian persevere in tough times? We have this ASSURANCE that God is who He says He is and will DO what He promised.
- When a believer receives this HOPE there is a change in our demeanor and our attitudes. Sometimes when someone starts acting differently we will ask: "What has gotten _____(into you)? Last sentence of verse five answers that:
- "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who he has given us."
- A Christian has the Spirit of God living inside us...that's our "secret ingredient"!
- We have PEACE. We have HOPE. And we have it all because of God's LOVE for us.

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. (And here's one to highlight; underline; and put a star by) 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- Verse 6: We were POWERLESS. We could do NOTHING to fix our relationship with God. So, HE took the initiative.
- Think of a parent showing love and care to a baby. That baby can do NOTHING for his/her self or for that parent. That child is POWERLESS but the parent loves it and cares for it REGARDLESS of the fact that it can do NOTHING for them.
- Verse 7: Paul makes an argument about how MUCH God loves us.
- Question: We know that sometimes someone will sacrifice their life for someone else. Who would you die for? It's rare, but YES...for a good person, especially someone you love, you might sacrifice your life.
- Question: Would you sacrifice your life for someone who hates you? Be honest!

- Verse 8: While we were STILL SINNERS Christ died for us
- He didn't say "Clean up your act and we'll see about saving you!" Or, "If you were a little nicer to me and other people I might let you into Heaven for eternity."
- No, while we were STILL His enemy...against all that He is for...He died for us.
- If that isn't LOVE, then WHAT IS?

As Dottie Rambo wrote in a song: "He left the splendor of Heaven, Knowing His destiny, Was the lonely hill of Golgotha, To lay down His life for me. If that isn't love...the ocean is dry, There's no stars in the sky, And the sparrow can't fly. If that isn't love, then Heaven's a myth, There's no feeling like this, If that isn't LOVE."

While we were STILL SINNERS, Christ died for us PERSONALLY.

Spurgeon makes an important point...

It is a great mistake into which some fall, to suppose that Christ died for the race in general, and not for each one in particular. By this mistake, the Gospel is likely to lose much of its practical power on our hearts. We need to apprehend it is Paul did, who said of Jesus Christ, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." We need to make this personal application of Christ's death...regard Jesus as having loved us personally and individually.

- Did you get that? Christ died for ME, PERSONALLY...for YOU, PERSONALLY.
- Verses 9 and 10 tell us if verse 8 is true, then we KNOW He's saved us from God's WRATH and RECONCILED our relationship with God.
- And in verse 11 we REJOICE in that RECONCILIATION through Christ.
- In verses 12-14 Paul compares Adam and Jesus. We could do a whole lesson...or several on these three verses! But there isn't time.
- The short version is this: One man, Adam, brought sin into the world and he INFECTED US ALL with his sin!

Warren Wiersbe writes

You cannot help being "in Adam," for this came by your first birth over which you had no control. But you can help staying "in Adam," for you can experience a second birth—a new birth from above—that will put you "in Christ." This is why Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

My thought:

The illness of sin is hereditary, but the cure of salvation is given and must be received. We inherited the illness but we must take advantage of the cure.

- On the other hand...verse 15:

15 But the gift (salvation) is not like the trespass (sin). For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! (Jump to verse 18)

18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Verse 20: The law (the 10 Commandments) came in as a "measuring stick" to show us how sinful we are. Once you have a "measurement" or a "standard" then it seems that SIN pops up everywhere you look! (Texting while driving example)
- But here's the fabulous truth of verse 20: "...where sin increased, grace increased all the more."
- Question: what do you think that means?
- It's like an UNLIMITED OVERDRAFT ACCOUNT...every time I OVERDRAFT my account...every time I sin...the GRACE OF GOD comes in and COVERS my overdraft! And it's not a LOAN...it's a GIFT!
- As we grow to be more Christ-like we'll not be as likely to OVERDRAFT in SIN.
- But, when we STUMBLE...his GRACE covers us!

So, What's The Takeaway?

- We need to leave here REJOICING (Praising God and BRAGGING on God) because of the BENEFITS we have through a life with Christ:
- PEACE with God...HOPE even in the midst of our worst troubles...the incredible LOVE of God IN SPITE OF OUR SIN...and best of all ETERNAL LIFE!