

ROMANS 5 – PART ONE

HOPE FOR FINAL SALVATION

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in chapter 5 Paul changes his focus. Up to this point Paul's focus has been on the power of the gospel to put sinful people into a right relationship with God. God invites all people – Jew and Gentile alike – to believe in Jesus Christ and enter into a new relationship with God. Now Paul turns his attention to what comes after a person is justified by faith. Chapters 5-8 focus on two things:

1. The certainty we can have that our relationship with Jesus Christ will lead to salvation from the wrath of God when He returns.
2. And the new power God gives us in our ongoing struggle against sin.

The focus of our text today is on the hope we have for salvation from the wrath of God.

Romans 5

1Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have been justified by faith. We studied the word justified. It means that when we receive by faith the death of Jesus as payment for our sin God declares us not guilty. And because we are not guilty before God, we no longer face his wrath and punishment. If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior God is not at war with you. You are at peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Have you ever done something wrong and hoped that no one would find out.

STORY – WOOPS, HE'S BEHIND ME

When I was in 4th grade I remember saying some unflattering things about my teacher. He left the room to copy some papers. And I was really hamming it up making all kinds of insulting remarks about him to the rest of the class. Suddenly the class grew quiet. And much to my surprise the teacher was standing right behind me. Apparently he had been standing there for several minutes observing my rude behavior.

In those days a teacher could get away with giving a student a well deserved thump on the back of the head, and this was an appropriate occasion for him for exercise that option.

The moment I realized my teacher was in the room I experienced a great deal of fear. I offended my teacher and he had the power to get me back for what I had done.

Many people think of God as an angry teacher who is going to thump them on the back of the head when he returns. They know that they have really messed up and they know God found out about it and they are afraid God is going to pay them back. But God's Word makes it clear that God is not at war with us. We are in good standing with God when we trust Jesus Christ for salvation.

The term peace is a contrast with the term wrath. If you have not trusted Christ to pay for your sin, then you are God's enemy. But if you have trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, you have signed a peace treaty with God. You are now on the same side.

THE PEACE TREATY

I remember watching War documentaries about the conflict involving The United States and Japan. We were at war with Japan. But after winning the war the United States signed a peace treaty with Japan. And now if Japan were attacked, the United States would stand along side her and defend her.

So also, we can know with certainty that God is for us. We have a peace treaty with God and we know that we can go to Him without fear at anytime.

2through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Being justified by Jesus Christ means that God has declared us innocent. We are at peace with God. And being declared innocent before God and having peace with God is the hope that we hold on to. When the winds of life blow we can stand steady in our faith. When we face circumstances that might cause us to lose hope, we have hope through the promises God has given to the people of faith. We have peace with God therefore God will take care of us. God is not at war with you; He is looking out for you.

3And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

Suffering was a normal experience for the 1st century Christians. Paul and Barnabas preached in several cities and many people became believers. But there was an immediate backlash of persecution against believers. Paul said in *Acts 14:21-22*, “*We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.*”

The key was that Paul learned to rejoice in his hardships because he knew that suffering produces the ability to face difficulties without giving in. If we suffer for the name of Jesus we learn to love Him for better or worse. Anyone can love Jesus when the times are good. The difficult times you go through are a test to see if you love Jesus in both the good times and in the bad times.

ILLUSTRATION – HUSBAND AND WIFE CLOSER THROUGH
STICKING OUT THE STRUGGLES

When Shelly and I were first married we faced many difficulties. Sometimes we got a little ornery with one another, but overall we stuck it out and decided to face our difficult times as a team. When difficult times arise many couples turn against one another blaming one another and taking their frustrations out on each other. But couples that make it through the difficult times know that they really love one another. They were willing to stick it out in bad times. And now, they know that together they can make it through anything life can throw their way.

So also, when we are persecuted for our faith and we do not move away from God but hold onto to him even stronger our faith will grow. And God will make a way out for us. As a result our faith will grow because we learn that no matter how bleak the present circumstances, God will make a way. Therefore hardships are a gift from God that makes us stronger in the end.

4and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

When we are willing to love Jesus even when times are difficult we prove that we have character that is part of us no matter what circumstances we face. And when we are blessed with the faith to make it all the way through difficulties and walk into the sunshine of blessings we have hope that cannot be stolen no matter what happens. We have been through it before and this too will pass. God will get us through.

Hope looks toward the future. It does not look at the problems of the past. It does not look at our immediate circumstances. Through eyes of faith hope looks to the future at what we believe Jesus Christ can do for us. If you are stuck in the mud of life, think about the future when Jesus will pull you out. If you face the loss of a loved one, think about the time when you will see them again in heaven. If you are flat broke, think about the time when

Jesus will move someone's heart to be generous with you and get you out of the bind you are in. That is the kind of hope we have in Jesus.

Let's take a look at other passages that explain the hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:18

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

First of all we know that the hope spoken of in this passage is a miracle. The moment you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior the Holy Spirit moves into your heart. And from that moment forward the Holy Spirit is constantly telling you in your heart that all the promises of God are true. This is not positive thinking, this is a miracle of the Holy Spirit continually reminding you that you belong to Jesus and you will be with Him forever. And Jesus is looking out for you even now.

Titus 2

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

We learn from this passage that the ultimate hope is found in the next life. No matter what is taken from you. No matter what you have lost. No matter what mess you have made of your life. No matter what physical or emotional problems you face, the ultimate hope is that Jesus Christ will return one day, and He will be glad to see you and welcome you into his presence. And you will be healed and given eternal life with joy and peace.

Hebrews 11

By Faith

¹Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for.

We learn from this passage that hope is about the future. It is about knowing that there will be a brighter day. Hope knows for certain that no matter what is going on today we can focus on the fact that God cannot lie. And God has promised us that he will supply our needs and that in the end we will be in paradise with Him.

If you are moping and complaining around about your present circumstances turn your eyes to the future and to God's promises. Whatever difficulties you are going through are a test. If you are bogged down now, look to the future, because in Christ the future is very bright.

⁶For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Even before we did anything-right Jesus Christ died for us. Therefore we can take hope that it is the work of Jesus Christ that saves us. We don't have to impress God; he already thought you were worthwhile to die for.

⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

We shall be saved from the wrath of God. This is future tense. If Jesus lived after his death, we too will live after our death. Notice the contrast. If

Jesus cared about us enough to save us when we were in our sin. We can be certain that God will save us now that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ?

11And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Reconciliation in this context is like a peace treaty. God is not going to take us prisoner and then kill us. We signed a peace treaty with God when we received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. God is not at war with you. When you go to see him you will not be treated like a POW. You will be welcomed home like a loved son or daughter who has returned home.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Do you wonder if God will be angry with you when you see him face to face? If so, will you receive the truth that God is not at war with you? Will you receive the peace that God is willing to give you?
2. Do often get bogged down in your present circumstances losing all hope? If so, will you ask The Holy Spirit to help you look to the future and hold on to the promises of God?
3. Do you need to sign a peace treaty with God today? If you do, pray and ask Jesus to forgive your sins. Turn your life over to His control. There is nothing worth more to a person than peace with God because that is the only thing we can hang onto forever.