

UNASHAMED

A study of the book of Romans

I am not ashamed of the **GOSPEL**, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

April 11, 2021
Romans 5:1-11

⁵ 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.

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. 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.

COMMENTARY

5:1. When Paul used the term therefore, he was summarizing in a word the totality of his previous arguments made in 1:18–4:25. The only reasonable conclusion to make (and what God had revealed to Paul) was that believers are declared righteous by faith. Righteousness cannot be earned by any amount or duration of good works; it is received only as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. For Paul, being declared right with God by faith opens a floodgate of divine grace in believers' lives.

First of all is the gift of peace with God. Peace through Christ brings an end to the divine wrath we faced because of our sins. Apart from this peace we would have no recourse and no hope standing before God in the judgment. Second, peace through Christ refers to the effective restoration of a loving relationship with our Creator. Our sinfulness broke that relationship. With the removal of sin's curse through Christ's atoning sacrifice, believers are reunited in purpose, favor, and fellowship with our God. Third, peace through Christ enables a new relationship among believers. Our alienation from God because of our sins also alienated us from one another. In Christ, all barriers to unity and fellowship are effectively removed (see Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:12-14). Fourth, peace through Christ empowers believers to become agents of genuine peace in a strife-filled world (Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14; Jas. 3:18).

Paul declared that peace with God comes to believers through our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus is the Agent through whom we receive this amazing, multifaceted benefit. The name Lord connects Jesus with God's revelation of Himself as "Yahweh" in the Old Testament era (see for example, Ex. 3:13-15). Jesus is the Divine Sovereign. The names Jesus and Christ emphasize that the Lord is the Savior and the Promised Messiah. The pronoun our emphasizes the personal relationship believers have with God.

5:2. In addition to receiving peace with God through Christ, believers gain genuine hope that can withstand even the darkest times of trouble and affliction. God's grace is not just a one-time experience that comes and goes at conversion. Rather, in Christ we have obtained access into this grace in which we stand.

Paul wrote the Greek verb rendered we stand in a tense that communicates a completed (that is, perfected) action, the results of which continue in full force. Thus Paul declared that believers receive a complete supply of God's grace at conversion, yet its benefits keep on working in full force throughout our lives and in whatever situations we find ourselves. In particular, God's grace continually helps us stand strong in faith when we face life's trials (see 2 Cor. 12:8-9). Moreover, God's grace is sufficient to help us stand without fear before our Lord when He returns to claim His people (see 1 Pet. 1:13).

God's continuing grace thus gives us cause to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Because His loving grace is permanent—not fleeting like the morning dew—the

promises of redemption and glory cause us to rejoice. This kind of rejoicing has nothing to do with the boasting of the self-righteous. Rather, it is akin to boasting in the Lord and is an aspect of a believer's true worship (see Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:31; Gal. 6:14).

5:3-4. Christian joy runs deep and endures because its source is the ever-flowing stream of God's grace. This is why Paul could state that we as believers also rejoice in our afflictions. Paul's statement doesn't imply that we somehow enjoy suffering. Rather, it means that we have confidence God will use even our afflictions to bring about His good purposes in our lives. For this confidence we need look no further than the example of our Lord Jesus. He willingly bore the most horrendous pain and suffering with a view that His death and resurrection would open the way to our salvation (see Heb. 2:10; 12:2). Endurance is self-authenticating; we grow in endurance by staying the course of faith and not being swayed by trials (see Jas. 1:2-4). Proven character follows naturally from the believer who has remained faithful through trials. Enduring trials causes us to grow in faith, and such growth is a testimony of faith's authenticity.

5:5. Christian hope that emerges from the nourishing flow of God's grace in our lives will not disappoint us. It goes without saying that many a person's self-generated hope has been dashed by the brutal realities of life. Hope in God, however, is hope that endures forever. We can trust that God will fulfill His promises to the end. A Christian also can live with enduring hope because of the Holy Spirit who was given to us. The Holy Spirit is our indwelling Witness who testifies that God loves us. Paul further explained the work of the Holy Spirit in believers in chapter eight. Suffice it to say here that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is a pledge, guaranteeing what will be ours as believers in the fullest measure in the age to come.

5:6. Paul introduced a third benefit of salvation—that of having God's love—in 5:5. In 5:6-11, the apostle developed this theme further with stirring language and comparisons. In particular, he described the vast gulf between divine love and human love. Paul set the stage for illustrating the radical difference of God's love by first stating it as a basic fact of the gospel. Paul wanted his readers to clearly understand the nature of God's love.

First, God loved us when we were helpless. This means that apart from Christ we were completely unable to make any positive move toward God. Second, Christ died for us when we were ungodly. We could claim no moral goodness so as to make the case that we might be worthy of His death. If anything, we were the opposite! Third, Christ gave His life for us at the appointed time. The Scriptures teach us that God had salvation by the cross and resurrection in mind even before the foundation of the world (see Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).

5:7-8. Paul could imagine a rare scenario in which someone might be willing to die on behalf of a just person or a good person. However, the greatest imaginable case of

human love cannot begin to compare to divine love in which while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

5:9-10. Paul continued his discussion by making two greater-to-lesser arguments. The argument is that if a greater premise is true, then a lesser premise can be held to be certain with equal confidence if not more. Paul had stated his “greater” premise in verse 8: God showed His love by saving sinners when we were at our worst, helpless and ungodly. Since this amazing display of divine love is true, how much more can we trust the promise that we will be saved through Him from wrath. That is, we as believers have nothing to fear about the end-time judgment because we no longer are under God’s wrath. Our sin-debt has been paid in full by a loving God who gave His only Son to die in our place (see 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9).

Moreover, because God loves us so amazingly, we can trust the promise that we will be saved by His life. This wraps the totality of Christian hope in a life-changing package. The justified not only escape God’s wrath in the judgment but also are saved to experience the fullness of life as God intends. Here Paul had in mind not only a superior quality of life—life in Christ—but also longevity of life—that is, eternal life.

5:11. Paul captured the totality of the believers’ benefit as having been obtained on the basis of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. From one point of view, Christ’s sacrifice was an atonement that averted God’s wrath from those who deserved His judgment because of their sins. In this section, however, Paul emphasized that Christ’s sacrifice was the demonstration of nothing less than divine love for sinners.

MAIN POINT

Because of Jesus’ work on the cross, Christians now enjoy freedom from God’s wrath and are reconciled to Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most intense fight, physical or non-physical, that you have ever been in with a friend or family member?

How did you reconcile your relationship with that person?

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

We all get into confrontations and fights that lead to a need for reconciliation, and that reconciliation always costs something. In Romans 5, Paul pointed out that spiritual reconciliation involves a change and an exchange that redeems a person back to God at great cost. From this reconciliatory work we receive the benefits of belief in Christ.

- **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 5:1-5.**

Paul began this section of his letter by focusing on the present benefits of peace, hope, and love from God. God doesn't save us by grace only to make us then try to live for Him in our own power. Sustaining grace is given to help us stand today, tomorrow, and on that future day when we will stand before His throne.

How do we become righteous before God? What is the result of standing righteous before Him?

What two things did Paul say we can rejoice in because of God's grace?

Which of Paul's stated reasons for rejoicing is a little tougher for you to swallow? Why?

How can a believer's Christlike endurance of suffering offer a testimony of hope to others?

What has helped you see God's hand and feel His love during times of affliction in your life?

Out of the areas of suffering, perseverance, character, and hope, where is God working in your life right now? How is He working?

What incident in your life can you look back on and see the truth of verses 3-5?

- **HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 5:6-11.**

Is there someone you would die for? If so, who and why?

What does logic say someone will die for? How was Christ different?

Paul continued by demonstrating how great God's grace is. God redeemed us when we were at our worst. We were utterly helpless to earn our righteousness. He showed His

unmatched love for us in Christ's death. Paul described the timing of Christ's death as "while we were still helpless" and "at the right time." Christ did not die for us when we were worthy of being saved, He died when we were wicked. Paul focused on the greatness of grace by pointing to the fact that it is illogical for someone to die for another person, especially an unrighteous person.

Why did we need to be reconciled to God? What separated us from Him?

What verse from our study can you recall that expresses this?

How did Jesus accomplish this ministry of reconciliation? What impact does this have on our relationship with God? With others?

In light of the great work that Jesus did, Christians are called to rejoice in God and praise Him for the grace they received. Paul emphasized that Christ's sacrifice was the demonstration of nothing less than divine love for sinners. God's plan of redemption was a demonstration of grace through and through.

NEXT STEPS

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

From this passage, what are the benefits that come to a Christian? Which one do you need the most right now?

How has this passage helped you more fully appreciate the benefits that are yours because of God's grace? What are some ways we can celebrate these benefits?

What can you do this week to keep the reality of your reconciliation present in your thoughts? How might your week look differently if you do?

What do you think would happen in our community if our group reacted to the truth we've looked at today without reservation? What is the first step toward reacting that way?

How can our group hold each other accountable to both focus on the gospel and entrust it to someone else this week?

PRAYER

As you close your small group time together, praise God for His reconciling work through Christ that brought you to Him at the right time when you were hostile and

helpless. Pray that the people in your group would understand their need for a Savior and trust fully in Christ because of the price He paid for them. Pray for our church, that believers will encourage one another in their walks and that they would share the good news of reconciliation with non-believers. Pray that as a group you will cling to the benefits of faith in Christ.