

Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church
Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 5, Verses 1-11
Notes from Tuesday September 21, 2010
Last Revised on September 26, 2010

Songs

Opening Prayer

Introduction

In this class, for those of you who are new, we are studying the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Last week our reading took us to the end of Chapter 4.

Please look with me now at the first verse of Chapter 5.

It reads, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

The word "therefore" looks **back**,

probably to all of what Paul has written between the middle of verse 16 of Chapter 1 through the end of Chapter 4,

which I believe constitutes the second major section of the letter following the introductory material which comprises the first 15 1/2 verses of Chapter 1.

This little clause that follows the word "therefore" is probably Paul's own summary of all of that material.

In other words, the central theme and overall summary of everything we have read and studied so far in this class, by Paul's own assessment, is that "**we have been justified by faith.**"

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith," Paul says in Verse 1, ***"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."***

"Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," is the central theme of Chapter 5,

and this, then, introduces a larger section, consisting of Chapters 5-8, which has generally to do with what life is like, now that we have such ***"peace with God."***

So that is what we will begin studying tonight and continue studying for the next several weeks or months.

 Tonight I plan to cover just the first 11 verses of Chapter 5, as written on the white board.

 But before we go there...

 please look back once again at the first part of Verse 1 of Chapter 5.

 If I am right that we have here, in some sense, Paul's own summary of everything we have studied so far in this class, in the first four chapters of this letter, then that means we really should understand by now what Paul means when he says, "***we have been justified by faith.***"

 Q. So, let me ask: What **does** Paul mean...when he says "**we have been justified by faith?**"

A1. Clearly when Paul says "***we***" he must mean to include **himself**,

 and also those to whom he is writing,

 who are (as we have often noted) **believers** in Christ,

 and an eclectic assortment, probably, including Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, etc.

 The thoughts Paul is expressing, then, may be understood to apply equally to **all** who believe in in Christ, including you and me.

 It is people of faith, we who believe in Christ, who are justified.

A2. Here in the first part of Verse 1, the grammar itself tells us that, for all who believe, this process, of justification, has already been perfectly completed.

 we "***have been justified,***" Paul says.

 I understand justification as the process whereby one is granted a right standing before God.

 Therefore Paul means to say that, because of our faith, we believers have already been counted by God as being **righteous in his sight**.

A3. Even though we have **already** been counted by God as **being** righteous, this is clearly not because of anything that we ourselves ever have **done**, or possibly ever could have done, nor is our righteousness even now very evident in our present behavior.

 There is, in fact, absolutely nothing that anyone ever **can** do to justify themselves.

 Paul works hard in the first four chapters of this letter to make this **particular** point very clear.

 Not even the most law-abiding Jew, ever managed to justify **himself** before God.

 The whole point of the law...the whole point of Judaism...was and is to demonstrate this fact: that men are **incapable** of justifying themselves and, therefore, that everyone **needs** a savior.

A4. Justification is something that only **God** our savior can do.... and it is something that God now already has done for us in and through Jesus Christ.

 God has put Jesus forward, to die, as a propitiation for our sin, justifying us.

 We hear this good news proclaimed, and believe it, and are counted righteous, Period.

 The only thing we contribute to this process is our belief (Acceptance, Assent, Affirmation, Surrender). God supplies all of the content.

 And while it is **we** who believe [remembering Soyoung's point from last week...that faith is our part] there is nevertheless no merit in this for us.

 Even our belief, the fact that we are **able** to believe, is itself a free gift from God!

 We can no more create faith within our self than we can create our self.

A.5 The faith by which we are saved is, in other words, a divine creative miracle worked in us. That is why we can trust it! Because it does not depend on us at all.

 This divine miracle, this faith created in us, is literally life from death, because the salvation which it brings and in which we believe is **actual**.

 And it is worked in us by the proclamation of the gospel, which Paul, you will remember from Chapter 1, verse 16, calls the **power** of God unto salvation, for everyone who believes.

 The **proclamation** of the gospel, kindles the faith in us which brings life from death.

A.6. It is also right to understand this “regeneration” as the work of the Holy Spirit.

 Paul has not mentioned the Holy Spirit so far in his Letter to the Romans; but he will mention the Holy Spirit in Verse 5 of Chapter 5 and several more times thereafter.

 OK, then, that is all the review I plan to do tonight of Chapters 1-4

 Do any of you have any comments or questions before we read on?

(n.b. there were few comments at this point)

The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 1-5

Will someone please read verses Verses 1-5 of Chapter 5 in Japanese

Thank you. Now will someone please read these verses in English.

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 More than that, 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.

Thank you.

Once again, Verse 1 reads:

(Verse 1)

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

By faith in God and what he has already accomplished on our behalf, in and through Jesus Christ our Lord, we know that our sins are forgiven, that God counts us as being righteous, for Jesus' sake, and that we are no longer dead in our sin but alive eternally in the Kingdom ruled by Christ.

“Therefore,” Verse 1 tells us, *“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

What is meant here by *“peace?”*

The meaning certainly includes the fact that God's wrath, which has been revealed from heaven and poured out on Jesus (**c.f. 1:18**) no longer remains to be poured out on us.

This in turn, certainly includes the simple human ideas of God being so longer mad at us, no longer hostile towards us, or potentially harmful to us, and etc.

as we have often discussed, whenever we describe God using the same words we use to describe human emotions, we are employing a figure of speech (anthropomorphism) which is

likely to mislead us a bit.

Human anger at its most righteous is invariably mixed with sin, and no such sinful anger could ever be attributed to God!

Sin is, by definition, that which is contrary to the will of God, so God's wrath could only ever be directed against that which is sinful and in defense of all things godly and righteous,

which now includes **us**!

which is to say that God's wrath is a "good thing."

Without Christ we correctly perceived God as our enemy and are in danger of his wrath breaking out against us, and we understandably flee from him.

But since we have been justified by faith, and God counts us as godly and righteous for Jesus' sake, and aims to sanctify us and make us like Jesus in the end, we have peace with God or are, in other words, reconciled with him.

That is the peace we have, as it were, objectively, from God's side.

God is only good to us and for us.

But this surely brings with it peaceful feelings within us.

God is not our enemy and neither are we his.

On the contrary, we love him as he first loved us!

This is not the false peace of the Pharisees, who supposes that they have earned God's approbation through legal obedience.

Neither is this the peace of unregenerate sinners who know nothing of God's righteousness, their own sin, or God's righteous wrath.

Rather ours is the peace of the those who are increasingly aware of our own total corruption, and who are truly grieved by it, but who are nevertheless at peace with God because of our faith in what Christ has already accomplished on our behalf, and what the Spirit of Christ will accomplish fully in us in the end!

There is, then, peace from both sides: from God's and from ours, a cessation of hostilities, reconciliation.

And there is peace not only without but within.

We have found rest!

Verse 2 reads

(Verse 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.

Here, "*him*," of course is "*Our Lord Jesus Christ*."

It is "*through him*" that we "*have peace with God*," as was said in Verse 1.

God is no longer our enemy, nor are we his, neither do we fear him, nor is he offended by us.

We are reconciled with God through Christ, but there is more!

In verse 2 we read that it is through him, i.e. through Christ, that we have **also** "*obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand*"

Grace is more than peace --- or perhaps peace in all its fullness --- it is **blessing** beyond merit.

Grace is the Kingdom of God into which we have obtained access by faith through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We not only have peace with God and his kingdom, we "*stand in it*"

We are **part of it**

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul will say: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (**Ephesians 2:19**)

In his letter to the Philippians, he says: But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Philippians 3:20**)

Through Christ we have entered into the very presence of God, where grace abounds, eternally, toward us, for Jesus sake.

This is the grace in which we stand.

But there is more!

We now "*rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*."

The coming of the glory of God, the consummation of his eternal kingdom on earth is not

something that God's enemies hope for or rejoice in; rather they fear it. It is their undoing.

But we who have been reconciled with God and stand already by faith among those who will inherit eternal life in the the Kingdom to come, we **do** hope for it and rejoice in it, and do **not** fear it!

But there is more: our "*hope of the glory of God*" includes not only the hope that we will **see** God's glory fully revealed, but also the hope and promise that his glory will be reflected **in us**

which is the very purpose for which we were created.

When we finally see Jesus (John tells us) we will be like him.

We ourselves will finally actually be perfected, and live eternally in the presence of God....perfect beings....incapable of sin!!

Of course we rejoice in all of those marvelous things, the actual basis of which lies in the Kingdom to come, but which is known to us even now by faith and in hope.

In this present life, of course, things are not so easy, **nevertheless** we rejoice.

Verse 3 reads:

(Verse 3)

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

There are two points to be made here.

First, suffering is suffering.

We should never suppose that people of faith do not really suffer, or that they suffer less, or that their suffering is different than that which is suffered by people who do not have faith in God.

The very things that will cause a godless man to curse God are also suffered by people of faith, but with a different result.

Remember Job's wife, who advised him to "curse God and die," but Job would not, and finally he found meaning in his suffering. And that is the point.

The result of being reconciled with God through faith, Paul says in Verse 3, is that rather than cursing God for our suffering, we believers finally come to **rejoice** in our sufferings.

The second thing that needs to be said here, is that Paul is **NOT** merely saying that people of faith are able to rejoice “amidst” their sufferings, although this is also true.

Here Paul is making the stronger statement, that when we who have been justified by faith suffer, we actually rejoice in (i.e. **because of**) our sufferings.

This is not, of course, because believers actually enjoy suffering. That would be perverse.

Rather this is because believers understand that suffering is ultimately beneficial.

Because when the faithful suffer, their faith grows stronger.

And they are able to endure more suffering.

And where is the benefit in that?

Verse 4 tells us

(Verse 4)

endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

Those who have endured much suffering in faith, develop a certain type of “**character**,” which can also be translated as “provedness”

Their faith has been tested and tested again and proved adequate to the task of their suffering, their faith has been refined like gold or silver passed through the fire.

It is **by** enduring suffering in faith that we learn **to** endure suffering in faith and therefore come to trust in the one in whom our faith resides, namely God, and so we come to have **hope** no matter what our circumstances may be.

The life of Abraham is a good example of this. His long-suffering faithful wait for the birth of Isaac produced the character that was later willing to sacrifice Isaac.

So too was the life and ministry of Paul, and Peter. We read in Acts how they were rescued from pain and suffering many times, with each round of faithful suffering building the character to endure the next round, leading finally (according to tradition) to martyrs’ deaths.

Suffering comes to all men and women, but how we suffer is important. People of faith are seen to rejoice in it because they come to see the benefit in it. Suffering solidifies our trust in God, and we know that this is not a groundless trust, not a futile hope, no matter what the world might say of it.

Verse 5 reads

(Verse 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 hope we have --- we who endure much suffering and even rejoice in it, --- does not put us to shame Paul says,

Q. Why?

Q. Because people of faith always emerge victorious?!

Q. Because the suffering we endure finally comes to an end and is compensated with a great reward?!

A. Well yes, but not in the way some might suppose.

We should not expect the scales of earthly suffering to be balanced with earthly rewards. (For, "my kingdom is not of this world.")

The scales are balanced by God, in the Heavenly Kingdom, which is to come,

and also in this life, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us, as the seal and token of the Kingdom to come,

and through Whom "*God's love has been poured into our hearts.*"

This may include the idea of the Holy Spirit pouring into us love **toward** God.

It certainly means that He pours into us a sense of God's love for us.

And this outpouring of love comes in **present** fulfillment of our hope.

In sum, the Holy Spirit helps us to come into an eternal loving relationship with God, and very often does so in and through our sufferings in this world.

This loving relationship is also, and perhaps primarily, communicated and mediated by the proclamation of the gospel itself ...

... by God's good news concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the peculiar faith it creates in us.

The gospel is not primarily about what we "get out of it."

The gospel is not primarily about what we "get out of."

The gospel is not primarily about us at all.

It is about our perfect, loving God, who came to die for us, and who we should, at the very least, be ready and willing and happy to die for!

That, I think, is where Paul's heart is moving now.

The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 6-11

Will someone please read verses Verses 6-11 of Chapter 5 in Japanese

Thank you. Now will someone please read these verses in English.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person---though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die---

8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Thank you.

Verse 6 reads:

(Verse 6)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

The word “**for**” looks back, I think, to verse 5 and the love which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts as we faithfully and hopefully and even joyfully endure our present sufferings.

We come to remember and to understand with greater and greater clarity that God stands on the side of the weak and the sinful and the suffering --- and not on the side of the strong and healthy!

 When Christ died for us, we had no strength to apply toward our own salvation, and there was nothing good about us, and we didn't even love him!

 No! We spat on him and cursed him!

 And we must understand how strange and wonderful this is! ...

 i.e. that God should have endured all of this, much less forgiven it!

 Paul help us to understand.

 We read in verse 7

(Verse 7)

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person---though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die---

It is not unheard of among men, that a person would give up his life for a friend, or a benefactor, or a sovereign lord, or even for a person who was simply good and decent.

 This is part of the glory of the human race and, I dare say, proof that we are made in God's image and likeness.

 Self-sacrificial behavior is hard (for me at least) to reconcile with a Godless universe!

 But even among the most noble of men, it is very rare to see someone sacrifice himself in order to save an enemy, and even more rare to see him truly forgive his enemy as he gives up his life.

 And when we see this happen, very rarely, we rightly describe such an act as "Christ-like"

 Christ is the archetype of such love among humans.

 But Christ is also God.

 So what we comprehend in Christ, although incomparably great, is just a parable of something unimaginably great in heaven

 something which choirs of angels sing about eternally.

 Verse 8 reads:

(Verse 8)

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

That Jesus could actually **forgive** those who cursed him, spat on him, and nailed him to a tree is barely conceivable, and a very rare example in human history, but I can conceive of it.

That God could forgive those who did this to Jesus, is beyond my comprehension.

It seems to me that this is when the righteous wrath of God should have finally broken forth and consumed the world and erased any memory of it, including you and me. We do not deserve to live!

But what God did was eternally surprising, breathtaking, something into which even angels long to peer!

He counted this insult, the horrible death of his perfect son, as an atonement for our sin

and he said to us....

“**Nevertheless** I love you.”

This is how **much** I love you.

And this is the God in whom I believe and who I am willing to die for (or at least I hope so).

And this love which God pours into our hearts, particularly into the hearts of those who are weak and sinful and suffering is what saves us.

It is life from death.

We are reborn.

Verse 9 reads

(Verse 9)

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

This again looks back to everything that has been said,

but it pushes the implications forward into the future.

Christ came and died to take away the sins of the world, and to give life to all who believe in him.

This was not a momentary salvation.

Indeed, had it been momentary, it would not have been salvation.

The protection which Christ offers is permanent and everlasting.

He didn't come to save us for a day, or a season, but for all eternity.

Anything less would be an insult to the cross!

The price God paid was more than big enough to pay for all!!

This is an important point, so Paul repeats and amplifies it in the following verse, 10, which reads:

(Verse 10)

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

When God in Christ went to the cross on Calvary, he went to save those who hated him enough to pound nails through his hands, and blaspheme his name.

Nevertheless, God counted the death of Christ as sufficient payment for the sins of man, and raised Christ from the dead, Christ who now sits at God's right hand interceding for us.

Furthermore the Spirit of God has been given to and lives in all who have heard this gospel and are being saved by it.

We are very far from perfect, but the Spirit of God now dwells in us, he pours God's love into our hearts, and this is changing us.

And because this is God's work in us, and not our own work, it will certainly be successful.

We are now God's friends, because of Christ, by God's decree,

And God Himself, the Holy Spirit, is engaged in perfecting us.

Our salvation is 100% guaranteed.

This brings Paul's thoughts to a crescendo

Verse 11 reads:

(Verse 11)

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Paul has already spoken of our salvation from the dead and our assurance of eternal life.

But there is so much more than that!

God! Himself!

Every blessing. All things good, and beautiful, and worthy, and true emanate from and ultimately are found only in God, in infinite purity, and to an unimaginable degree.

By our sin, by our choice, we stepped away from Him all that he is, and we could not come back.

But because of the reconciliation which God accomplished for us in Christ, we are home again, back with God, where we belong, and we rejoice in Him!

Christ is the beginning, the source, of our blessed eternal life with God.

Closing Prayer