

FPFWC Christian Development



Standing in the Faith

May 2024

Spring Quarter

May 18, 2024

Lesson #3 – Reconciled to God

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Romans 5:1-11

ICE BREAKERS-

1. What does Justification mean?
2. Why must a believer's hope be based on the Lord's Faithfulness?

Key Verse: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."— Romans 5:1

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Romans 5 depends entirely on Paul's previous discussion of the human response to the gospel found in Romans 4. Paul has argued, based on the experience of Abraham, that the true basis for a relationship with God is trust in His promises, that is, faith (see lesson 11). Chapter 5 extends the argument.

Our text today makes an important argument about why followers of Jesus both build their lives based on trust in God's promises yet still experience hardship. Those suffering might wonder whether the new era of God's mercy had dawned or not. In the past, prophets had revealed certain hardships to be God's judgment on sin (examples: Numbers 14:20–23; Jeremiah 21:4–14). Is a Christian's suffering also God's judgment?

Elsewhere, Paul boasted about his own suffering as evidence of God's work in his life (2 Corinthians 4:7–12; 11:23–30). Paul would go on to be executed in Rome in AD 67 or 68. In his estimation, this surely was another opportunity to imitate Christ (Philippians 1:21; 3:7–11). The transformation to be like Christ has several parts, including a new understanding of suffering, reconciliation, growing friendship with God, and ultimately rescue from the power of sin and death. Paul explores each dimension of these implications in today's text.

LESSON COMMENTARY

Christians Can Boast in God (5:1–11)

Paul's theme from 5:1–8:39 relates to the benefits that accrue to the believer who has been justified. This section fits with his overall purpose of seeking to motivate the believers in Rome to support his mission to Spain. Unbelievers possess none of these privileges, and the Roman believers should assist Paul in proclaiming them.

5:1–2. Therefore (v. 1) introduces an inference from 3:21–4:25 that the believer has **peace with God**. There is a textual problem related to the verb **have** (whether it is an indicative "we have" or a hortatory [commanding] subjunctive "let

us have”), but it is probably indicative. Paul begins giving commands in Romans only in chap. 6 (for hortatory subjunctives applicable to believers, see Rm 13:13; 14:13, 19; there are 22 imperative verbs from chap. 6 onward), but none before (except the hortatory subjunctive in 3:8, which is put on the lips of one in error, and the imperative in 3:4, which is purely rhetorical). Rather than encouraging the believer to strive for **peace with God**, Paul continues his statement of doctrinal facts so prominent in the first half of Romans. God Himself has established peace with those He **justified**. For **the glory of God** (v. 2), cf. the comments on 3:23.

5:3–5. It is possible that Paul presupposes the need to have faith for this chain (perseverance, character, hope) to be complete, but he does not mention it here, and it should not be read into the text. His point seems to be that through **tribulations** God will produce in the Christian **perseverance, proven character** (v. 4) and **hope**, similar to Rm 8:29–30.

5:6–10. For (v. 6) introduces an explanation regarding how God poured out His love, through Christ’s death. The difference between the **righteous man** and the **good man** (v. 7) is that the **good man** has done something tangibly beneficial for another. I might die for someone who has been good to me, but I probably would not die for one who I considered to be righteous, but who had done nothing for me. If God has done the “major” thing (sinners being **justified by His blood**, v. 9, parallel to **enemies** being **reconciled to God**, v. 10), the believer can count on Him to do the “minor” thing (save sinners **from His wrath**, v. 9, parallel to being **saved by His life**, v. 10).

5:11. Believers boast not only in the “hope of the glory of God” (v. 2) and in tribulations (v. 3), but **in God** Himself.

LESSON NUGGET – Reconciliation – We are at peace with God and need not be afraid. If He did so much for us when we were enemies, think what He will do for us now that we are His children.

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word for Today Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*