

Romans 5:1-21
Justification Part 3 – Peace with God

Introduction

1. We've been studying through the book of Romans and are at the end of the second major section of Paul's letter
2. In the first section, chapters 1-2, and part of 3, Paul addressed the issue of God's wrath and judgment; we might summarize that section as this: every person, whether Jew or Gentile, faces the wrath of God as a consequence of sin
3. In the second section, Paul has been addressing justification; so far we have learned:
 - a. Justification, whether Jew or Gentile, is by faith in Jesus Christ alone as a gift of God's grace
 - b. Justification by faith alone has ALWAYS been the means of salvation
4. Today Paul finishes this section on justification by describing our peace with God

A. Our justification leads to peace with God (5:1-11)

1. Our justification resulted in peace with God (1): **"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"**
 - a. As we discussed in prior weeks, justification is a legal term and it refers to being declared right or righteous before God
 - b. I think the fact that Paul speaks of justification as a past act is not of little importance:
 - 1) First, it indicates that it was a singular decision by God, a one-time thing
 - 2) Second, it was a legally binding and permanent decision (think "eternal security")
 - c. This act of justification brought about **"peace with God"**:
 - 1) When we think about peace we generally think of an internal sense of well-being; however that would be better described as the "peace **of** God" (e.g. Phil 4:7)
 - 2) Here Paul talks about peace **"with"** God which addresses the state of the relationship between God and man
 - 3) In 5:10 Paul states that we were once **"enemies"** of God which means that prior to our justification there was enmity or hostility between us and God
 - 4) Since our justification, however, that enmity has been replaced with peace and we have been **"reconciled to God"** as Paul writes a few verses later (5:10)
 - d. One last note on this verse is that this peace comes **"through our Lord Jesus Christ"**:
 - 1) This is critical because our justification, and resulting peace with God, is ONLY available through Jesus Christ
 - 2) In fact, the phrase **"in"** or **"through"** Jesus occurs five times in this chapter alone
 - 3) It serves to show that everything Paul addresses in this critical chapter has it's basis in a relationship with Jesus Christ, and is not possible apart from such a relationship
2. Paul now mentions three things this new found peace affords us (2-11):
 - a. First is the position of grace in which we now find ourselves (2a): **"through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand;"**

- 1) Did you notice that Paul doesn't simply state here that we've received grace from God—that is true and oft repeated in the Bible
 - 2) Here, however, he is referring to the position we now have before God: **"this grace in which we stand"**
 - 3) Prior to our justification we operated according to the principles of the flesh, law and sin and had no standing before God
 - 4) After our justification, however, we entered into God's grace and now have standing before Him based on that grace
 - 5) Whereby once we were under law, now we are under grace, and grace now governs every aspect of our relationship with God (Romans 6:14-18)
- b. The second thing Paul mentions that is afforded to us as a result of the peace we have with God is the hope that we now have (2b-8): **"and we exult in hope of the glory of God."**
- 1) The Greek word for **"exalt"** here is difficult; it can mean to express a high degree of confidence in something, to rejoice over something, and even to boast about something
 - 2) So, what exactly is the **"hope of the glory of God"**?
 - a) According to Romans 8:17, we will be glorified with Christ
 - b) Two verses later (19) Paul states that all of creation is waiting for the **"revealing of God's sons"** and will be set free **"into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"**
 - c) In v. 23 he writes of our own eagerness in waiting for **"the redemption of our body"**
 - d) In 8:29-30 he reminds us that we are being conformed to the image of Jesus and this process will be completed perfectly with our glorification
 - e) We find a similar phrase by Paul in Colossians 1:27 where he wrote that the mystery among the gentiles **"is Christ in you, the hope of glory."**
 - 3) This hope does not mean we will not face trials, however (3-8): **"and not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations"**
 - a) James 1 teaches us that trials are a normal part of the Christian life, but that trials are an opportunity for joy because they build perseverance in our faith, and perseverance ultimately causes maturity, making us "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4)
 - b) Paul repeats a similar principle here (3-4):
 - Tribulation brings about perseverance
 - Perseverance brings about proven character
 - Proven character brings about hope
 - 4) Ultimately, this hope will not disappoint us (5-8): **"and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."**
 - a) It won't disappoint because God has already poured out His love to us (5) : **"because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."**
 - **"poured out"** is in perfect tense (stressing the present reality from a past act)
 - **"within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us"**—see Galatians 4:6; Titus 3:5-7
 - b) God demonstrated this to us by what He has done for us when we didn't deserved anything from Him (6-8): **"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ**

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

- c. The third thing Paul mentions that is afforded to us as a result of the peace we now with God is that we are saved from God’s wrath (9-11):
- 1) Since we have been justified (declared right with God), we no longer face His wrath (9): **“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”**
 - a) **“by His blood”**—What makes our justification possible is the atoning sacrifice of Jesus
 - b) It is only **“through Him”** that we avoid the wrath of God (see also 1 Thessalonians 1:10)
 - 2) Since God justified us while we were His enemies, He will certainly save us from His wrath now that we have been reconciled to Him (10-11): **“For 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. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”**
 - a) Notice that Paul uses the word reconciliation here, rather than justification
 - b) We should not make the mistake here of thinking they are simply synonyms
 - c) Justification refers to the legal pronouncement that we have been declared right before God
 - d) Reconciliation refers to the mending of the personal relationship between us and our Creator God
 - e) They are tied together, but one emphasizes our legal position before God while the other emphasizes our relationship to Him

B. Paul explains how this peace with God could come through one man, Jesus Christ (5:12-21)

1. This section is a bit cumbersome because Paul begins a thought in v. 12, but then goes on a bit of a rabbit trail until he picks up the thought again in v. 18
2. The crux of Paul’s argument in these verses is that death and condemnation came to all men through the one (first) man Adam, while justification and life is available to all men through the one God-Man, Jesus Christ
 - a. Sin, death and condemnation entered the world and spread to all men through the transgression of one man, Adam (12): **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all men sinned—”**
 - 1) The **“one man”** mentioned here is clearly Adam because Paul names him in v. 14—he is also referencing the Fall in Genesis 3:
 - a) In Genesis 3 it is the woman who sinned first so why does Paul say that sin entered through Adam rather than through Eve?
 - b) First, God gave His commands to Adam first, before Eve was even created
 - c) Second, as the Head, Adam was the responsible figure over God’s creation, including Eve

- d) Third, we can't forget that Eve chose to sin after being deceived, while Adam sinned with eyes wide open (so to speak)
- 2) Sin and death spread to all men:
- a) The consequences of sin is death—both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:17)
 - b) There is quite a bit of debate over the phrase translated as “**because all men sinned**” because it is an unusual phrase (used only six times in the NT with varying renderings; Mat 26:50; Mar 2:4; 2CO 5:4; Phi 3:12; 4:10)
 - c) Most English translations treat it the way the NAU does, indicating that all men die because all men sin (or sinned depending on how one treats the aorist)—in other words, we are condemned because of our own sin
 - d) However, others believe that every man is condemned because of Adam's sin (e.g. the concept of original sin) : “death spread to all people in whom [Adam] all sinned”
 - e) V. 19 seems to support the first option above--that all die because all sin, but it's because they were all made sinners by Adam
 - f) And because we all sin, we all face death, both physical and spiritual
- 3) Vs. 13 and 14 are a challenge grammatically, but they were written to support Paul's claim that death came/comes to all men because all men sin—whether they have the Law or not:
- a) Sin existed prior to the Law: “**for until the Law sin was in the world...**”
 - b) But, “**sin is not imputed where there is no Law**” (charged to one's account)
 - c) Yet, the fact that death reigned prior to the Law indicates that sin had been imputed, meaning there must have been law, just not THE LAW: “**Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam,**”
 - d) As Paul has already demonstrated, they sinned against God by rejecting what He revealed about Himself in Creation (Romans 1:18ff) and that law (if you will) is enough to bring judgement and death
- b. In a similar way, justification and life come through one Man Jesus Christ for those who accept and receive it (15-17):
- 1) What is the “free gift” here?
 - a) Paul says in 6:23 that the gift of God is eternal life, but taking gift in this section as eternal life doesn't fit the grammar or context
 - b) He writes in 5:16 that the gift results in justification so the gift can't be justification itself
 - c) The two biggest clues come in 5:18 and 5:19 where “one act of righteousness” and “obedience of the one” take the place of “gift” from the previous verses
 - d) So, the free gift is the one obedient act of Jesus Christ: His death in our place as an act of God's grace
 - 2) Paul discusses two ways that this free gift is different than Adam's transgression:
 - a) Adam's one act (transgression) resulted in death to mankind, while Jesus's one act (his sacrificial death) resulted in grace abounding to mankind (15): “**But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.**”

- i. “The many” here is somewhat stylistic and simply refers to a large number
 - ii. Context must determine who is included in “the many”
 - iii. Paul has already established above and below this verse that all men sin and death has therefore spread to all men—therefore, first use of “the many” here is a reference to all men
 - iv. The second use of “the many” (at the end of the verse), however, is a bit more difficult because consistency would dictate that it also refers to all men. Some have a problem with this because not all men are saved (e.g. have received God’s gift). However, that doesn’t mean that God’s grace did not abound to all men because it is available to all. V. 17 clarifies that in order to truly experience that grace, one must accept it.
- b) Adam’s one act resulted in judgment and condemnation, while Jesus’ one act resulted in justification(16-17): **“The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”**
- i. Adam’s sin resulted in judgment and condemnation for all men
 - ii. Jesus’ atonement resulted in the gift of righteousness and life for those who **“receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness”**

Conclusion

1. Paul’s main point in our passage today is that peace with God is possible because of the justification available through faith, and faith alone, in Jesus Christ
2. In vs. 18-21 he summarizes how this is possible:
 - a) Adam’s sin resulted in condemnation for all men, but Jesus’ sacrifice resulted in justification (18)
 - b) Adam’s disobedience resulted in all men becoming sinners, while Jesus’ obedience results in many being made righteous (19)
 - c) God gave the Law to identify and establish each man as a sinner (see 3:20; 4:15; 7:5, 7-13; GAL 3:19, but where sin increased God’s grace abounded even more (20)
 - d) So, as sin reigned in death, grace now reigns through God’s righteousness and results in eternal life through Jesus Christ (21)