

Jot & Tittle

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Romans 5 (Part 3)

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Romans chapter five is pivotal in Paul's epistle and in Christian theology. Romans 5:1-11, the first section of this chapter, points out the results of justification through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Verses one through five focus on justification, the divine declaration that believers are rightly aligned with God's moral requirements through Jesus Christ. Verses six through eight focus on redemption, the payment Jesus made for sin on the cross. Verses nine through eleven focus on reconciliation. Reconciliation refers to the restoration of the believer's relationship with God and is one significant result of justification. By justification we are declared righteous in God's sight. Through reconciliation we have been restored to a position of friendship and fellowship with God. Romans 5:9-11, therefore, can be summarized with the statement, "Reconciliation: we have been fully restored to a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ."

Reconciliation removes us from the place of God's wrath (5:9).

Paul again uses the exact same word and verb form for "justified" as he did in Romans 5:1, returning to his original thought.

Having been justified "by his blood" means that we are saved by faith based on Jesus' sacrificial death. His blood formed the sacrifice necessary for our salvation. "Blood" stands for life, the irretrievable pouring out of Jesus' life as a substitute payment for human sin. "His 'blood', as in 3:25, denotes his sacrificial death; 'by his blood' here is parallel to 'by the death of his Son' in verse 10."¹ Because we are now justified we have assurance of our salvation. We are saved from God's righteous wrath, His future judgment for our sins. Prior to our conversion we stood as enemies of God, at war with Him. We stood in the direct line of His wrath. But now that we have been justified we stand in the direct line of His love and blessing.

Paul expresses this transfer of the believer from a position of enmity to a position safety by use of an argument from the lesser to the greater. (Moo suggests that this is actually an argument "from the 'major' to the 'minor.'")² The phrase "how much more" points to the comprehensive nature of Jesus' sacrificial work. Since Jesus gave His blood to secure our justification in God's sight, "how much more" will He guarantee our deliverance from God's wrath and judgment! Reconciliation removes us from the place of God's wrath to a place of His favor.

Reconciliation moves us to the place of God's favor (5:10).

Paul goes on to explain in greater detail the salvation God has promised those who trust in Jesus. We were God's enemies before we accepted Jesus Christ. But by Jesus' death we were "reconciled" to God. Reconciliation as a result of justification simply means that believers have been restored to a position of friendship with God. Our whole relationship with God changed from one of enmity to one of close communion. We are now friends with Jesus Christ and God our Father (John 15:15).

"Justification language is legal, law-court language, picturing the believer being declared innocent by the judge. Reconciliation language, on the other hand, comes from the world of personal relationships. 'To reconcile' means to

bring together, or make peace between, two estranged or hostile parties (cf. 1 Cor. 7:11).”³

Christ’s death is the basis of our reconciliation. Now that our relationship with God is restored, we are assured of our eternal salvation based on Christ’s resurrection life. Christ’s death paid the penalty for our sins. His life guarantees our eternal life with Him.

Once again Paul uses the phrase “how much more” in order to point out the certainty of salvation for those who have been reconciled to God through faith-based justification. Having been reconciled through Jesus’ death, believers can be certain that they will be saved through His life. Because Jesus rose from the dead He has the authority to grant His followers eternal life.

Reconciliation motivates us to rejoice in God’s Son (5:11).

With all these benefits of justification in mind, it only makes sense to end this passage in praise to God. Believers can rejoice (boast) in God through Jesus Christ. The word “boast” does not here carry any sense of personal pride but rather means to participate in confident rejoicing over the work of God in our lives. We boast about God and His love expressed through Jesus Christ. “Christian exultation in God begins with the shamefaced recognition that we have no claim on him at all, continues with wondering worship that while we were still sinners and enemies Christ died for us, and ends with the humble confidence that he will complete the work he has begun. So to exult in God is to rejoice not in our privileges but in his mercies, not in our possession of him but in his of us.”⁴

It’s through Jesus that we have been reconciled to God. What a change! We are no longer enemies of God. We are no longer under His wrath. Instead, we are now friends of God who reside under His love. We have received reconciliation with God as a benefit of our justification. Second Corinthians 5:18-20 presents another description of this great work of reconciliation. Since God reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, we have a ministry of reconciliation. This means that we as believers are responsible to

share the gospel message with others. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ we are to show others how they, too, can be reconciled to God. Romans 5:1-11 links our justification, redemption, and reconciliation. Because of these works of God in our lives we have peace. Through faith in Jesus Christ we are forever at peace with God.

¹ F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 128.

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 310.

³ Moo, 311.

⁴ John R. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 147-148.