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Romans 5:1-4, 11 "The Blessed Results of Justification"

Intro. In our last few messages in Romans, I have shared with you that a person is justified by faith, and not by our works. We are made right with God by trusting in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Now in Romans 5:1-11 Paul shares with us the blessings or benefits of becoming right with God by faith. In listing these blessings, Paul tells us how wonderful it is to be a Christian. Our justification is not simply a guarantee of heaven, as thrilling as that is, but it is also the source of tremendous blessings that we enjoy here and now.

J. Vernon McGee told the story of the time he witnessed to a hippie in San Francisco, back in the days of the hippie movement. The hippie didn't want to hear about Christianity. He said, "That's 'pie in the sky by and by' religion, and I don't care for that." And so McGee said to this young fellow, "Then you believe in getting your pie here and now and not by and by?" He said, "That's right." McGee told him that it didn't look to him like he was getting very much pie in the here and now, and he admitted that he wasn't. So he said, "Well, it is tragic indeed to miss the pie here and now, and miss it hereafter also."

Well I have good news for you. When you follow Christ & trust in Him, you not only get heaven, but you also get many blessings in this life as well. Most of you have already placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Do you know about the benefits that you already have in Christ? Are you enjoying these blessings? And what about you here today who have not yet been made right with God by faith? I want you to know what blessings you are missing by not being a Christian.

So let's look at the first part of this chapter and see 3 of the blessings that we have as a result of our justification:

I. WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

Paul says in v.1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God...." "Peace with God" expresses, not a state of mind, but a change in our relationship to God. It is not the tranquility of our minds and hearts that he speaks of in Phil. 4:7, where he talks about the "peace of God." Rather, here Paul is talking about the status of peace flowing from our reconciliation to God. For example in v.11 Paul says, "...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." We enjoy peace with God because our sins have been forgiven, and the guilt is gone. The blessing of peace of heart and mind should *follow* our state of being at peace with God.

Now I want us to consider two main thoughts regarding this theme of peace with God. First:

A. Our Need for Peace with God – One definition of peace is: "Freedom from, or cessation of, war or hostilities." We don't like to admit it, but every soul has been at war with God. A lot of people would like to believe they are no worse than being neutral toward God. But what does the Bible say? Down in v.10 Paul clearly implies that we were once enemies of God. Romans 8:7 says "...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." In our natural state we are at war with God because we have a clear tendency to reject God's law & live our own way. All have sinned, and sin is an expression of hostility against a holy God.

Colossians 1:21 says of the former state of Christians, “and you, who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works....” Because of our sin & rebellion, God declares in Isa. 48:22, “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (KJV). Every soul will be in turmoil until they find peace with God. They know that something is not right, and they often try different ways to quiet the voice of conscience & find peace. Popularity, possessions, power, & pleasure will not give peace with God.

Do you realize that there is something wrong in your relationship with God? Do you feel some barrier? There are a great many people who pillow their heads at night, not knowing what it is to have peace in their hearts. Oh, how many weary souls today are laboring with a guilt complex and would love to go somewhere to have that guilt removed from their souls! Well the first step in finding peace with God is to admit that enmity exists between you and God. Then, after you admit that, you should seek peace with God. Are you at peace with God? Is there peace in your heart? Wouldn't you like to have peace with God? You can! So the next thing I want to share with you is:

B. How to Obtain Peace with God: Trust in the Saving Work of Christ - Notice in the last of v.1 that we have peace with God “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is only through Christ that you will find peace with God. What did Christ do to bring peace with God? Well Paul says in v.10, “when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son....” Likewise, he says in Col. 1:20 that Christ made peace “through the blood of His cross.” All God's fury against sin was fully absorbed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Christ has dealt with sin, which creates enmity with God. My friend, God is reconciled through the blood of the cross. You don't have to do something to reconcile Him. No other sacrifice is necessary.

However, just because Christ died to make peace doesn't mean that you are automatically forgiven & reconciled to God. That is because we must do something *to receive* this blessing. Notice in v.1 that it is those who have “been justified by faith” that “have peace with God.” That wonderful statement begins with the word “therefore,” which indicates that an inference is being drawn from the doctrine that had been unfolded and demonstrated in the preceding chapters (3:21-4:25). The reconciliation is something which God has already accomplished through the death of Christ, and men are called upon to accept it by faith. The correct translation of v.1 is not, as in the King James Version, “being justified.” Since it is the aorist participle, the New King James is correct, “having been justified by faith.” Being made right with God is not a process. It is something that happens the moment one truly believes.

So if you want to have peace with God, you must come to Christ. Trust in what He did at the cross, and you will be forgiven, and you will have peace with God.

Next, Paul mentions another blessing that you will obtain if you trust in Christ as Savior:

II. WE HAVE ACCESS TO GOD

Paul says in v.2, “through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand....” Likewise, Eph. 2:18 says, “For through Him we both [Jew & Gentile] have access by one Spirit to the Father.” In a real sense this only amplifies the blessing of our peace with God. The Greek word translated “with” in the phrase “peace with God” [*pros*] carries the idea of “face to face with” someone. If you have peace face to face with God, then you must also have access to God. The former rebels are not merely forgiven, but they are brought into a place of high favor and fellowship with God.

A. The Meaning of Access - “Access” has a root meaning of “leading” to someone (*prosagoge*). It denotes the privilege of approaching or being introduced into the presence of someone in high position. You know you can’t go to the White House and walk right in to see President Bush. There is only one way you will ever get in to see the President. It is if you know someone who can give you access to him.

How much more do we sinners need someone to grant us access to the God of the universe! There is the erroneous belief today that man has some innate right to approach God. They think that a person can live in sin, reject God’s Son, and then when they get into some trouble, they are supposed to be able to enter God’s presence in prayer, and demand action. Well, the Jews of Paul’s day knew better. They would have considered access to God to be a shocking, incomprehensible concept. They had been taught that God was holy and unapproachable. For example in Exodus 19 we read of the time God revealed Himself to Moses at Mt. Sinai. But not just anyone could go up the mountain and approach God. In fact, the Lord said in Exodus 19:12, “Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death....” Furthermore, the Jew was kept from God’s presence by the veil in the temple; and the Gentile was kept out by a wall in the temple with a warning on it that any Gentile who went beyond would be killed.

How to reach God has been the preoccupation of the minds of men through countless generations. We know we are sinners, so most people have understood that we need to offer sacrifice, or we need a priest to serve as a mediator, or many feel we can approach God if we live in obedience to God, and follow the rituals of religion.

But what does the Bible teach? How can sinful man gain access and acceptance with God?

B. The Means of Access - Notice in v.2 that Paul says “through whom also we have access....” Of course he is talking about Christ, who is our introducer to God the Father. Christ’s death changed the Old Testament view of access to God. As Jesus stretched out His hands on the cross, it is as if He took our hand, and took the hand of God, and brought us together. Matthew 27:51 says that at the moment Christ died, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom—a symbol that access to God was now possible.

During the civil war a confederate soldier was severely wounded and captured. He finally recovered to the point where the Union authorities decided to let him go, since he would never be able to fight again. After his release he went to the White House in Washington to see President Lincoln. He wanted to plead for the release of his only brother who was in another prison camp. His brother was the only one who was able to work and support their widowed mother. But the guards at the gate would not grant him access to President Lincoln, especially since he was a Confederate. But later, little Tad Lincoln saw him weeping at a bench nearby and asked him what was wrong. The soldier explained his problem. Then Tad Lincoln escorted the man right past the guards and introduced him to President Lincoln. Why? It was because the son had free access to the father, the President.

Even so, Christ is the One who can provide access to God, especially since He also removed the enmity between us & God. However, access is not granted to everyone, but only to those who trust in Christ. Notice in v.2 that “we have access by faith....” Here again Paul emphasizes that our role in gaining access to God is simply a matter of faith in Christ. Without faith, you do not have access. Eph. 3:12 says, “in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” Faith is the key that opens the door to God.

Once you have gained access to God by faith in Christ, consider with me also:

C. The Benefits of Access - Once we are made right with God, we can freely come into the presence of God by prayer. We do not need to approach God through an earthly priest. We have access to God and all His divine resources. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (cf. Hebrews 10:19-22).

Paul mentions one particular blessing of God that we have access to by faith in Christ. In v.2 we see that we have "access by faith into this grace in which we stand." The grace to which we have access is the state of justification. We stand before God in an ongoing state of righteousness. It is referred to as a "grace", for we are made right with God by His grace, and not by our works (Romans 3:24). Furthermore, notice the words, "in which we stand." Here the verb is in the perfect tense, which means "we stand with abiding results." This is an abiding and unchanging status. Thus, Paul teaches that this is a permanent relationship with God. We can never lose our salvation. When you place your faith in Jesus Christ, you have access to the grace of God by which you have a permanent standing of being right with God.

Finally, the day is coming when our faith in Christ will provide access to God in heaven. The gates of heaven will open to us, and Jesus will say, "Enter into the joy of your lord" (Mt. 25:21). I'm glad that Jesus provides full and complete access to God for us!

Are you sure that the enmity of your sin has been removed, and that you have access to God? Have you been saved by God's grace, so that you stand in a right relationship before Him? Do you have access to God in prayer? Are you sure that the gates of heaven will open for you? If not, I invite you to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Then you will enjoy all the privileges of this access of which Paul speaks.

Last of all, not only do we have the blessing of peace with God, and access to God, but Paul goes on to add one more blessing of being right with God:

III. WE HAVE CONFIDENT REJOICING

3 times in this text Paul says we rejoice. In v.2 Paul says that we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Paul says in v.3, "we also glory in tribulations" [or rejoice—same Gk. word *kauchometha*]. Then in v.11 he says, "we also rejoice in God." It is God's will that you have a life of rejoicing, no matter what circumstances you face. The person who has been made right with God should not be sad and somber. You should not wear a sad face. Furthermore, the original word denotes not only the emotion of joy, but also the confident expression of it in speech. It even can carry the idea of boasting. We ought to talk about why we have such joy.

What is it that we Christians can rejoice about? First, we rejoice:

A. In Our Hope of the Glory of God – Oh what a future we have as Christians. Paul says in the last of v.2 that we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The glory of God may mean that glory which God gives, or that glory which He possesses. Here, in some sense, it must refer to His glory that we will have a share in. Someday God in the fullest and purest way will reflect His eternal character through us.

God has indeed promised us future glory. 1 John 3:2 says that when Jesus comes again & is revealed, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Romans 8:29 says that we will "be conformed to the image of his Son." When that day comes, we will share in the glory of Christ.

That is one reason why Titus 2:13 says that we are “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Oh, what glory that will be! We will be like Jesus! Romans 8:30 says, “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Our glorification is so sure Paul spoke of it in the past tense, as if it were already accomplished. Likewise, Colossians 3:4 says, “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 1:27 says, “Christ in you (is) the hope of glory.” Is there any wonder that we rejoice in such a hope as this? I look forward to the day when I and other believers share in the glory of God.

Do you have this hope of the glory of God? Do you know what it is to rejoice or even boast about this wonderful hope? If not, you can experience the joy of such hope by faith in Jesus Christ.

That we should rejoice in the hope of the glory of God is no surprise. What may be surprising is the fact that Paul says we also rejoice:

B. In Our Present Tribulations – He said in v.3, “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations....” Paul was a realist; he was not so absorbed in the glory of the future that he closed his eyes to the realities of the present. You need to understand that justification is no escape from the trials of life. Jesus warned His disciples, “In this world you shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). The apostles warned their converts that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). But the amazing thing is that Paul says that we can and do rejoice in our tribulations!

The Greek word translated “tribulations” (*thlipsis*) originally conveyed the idea of “pressing together, pressure.” Sickness, a significant loss, excessive demands, or persecution can put us under stress. When most people are squeezed by such things, what is on the inside will come out. They may spew out profanity, complaints, or blame. But when the Christian is put under the pressure of adversity or persecution or peer pressure, our joy can run out like wine or oil. Oil and wine are biblical symbols of joy. Ps. 45:7 says, “God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” Ps. 104:15 says, “wine that makes glad the heart of man” and God has given “oil to make his face shine.”

What is significant about these symbols of joy is how they are created. The olives and grapes must be crushed to make wine & oil. Even so, when the Christian experiences pressure from the circumstances of life, he does not respond with sadness & despair. Rather, we can respond with joy & gladness. When the apostles were persecuted & beaten, Acts 5:41 says that “they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” It is evident that this type of living is miraculous, for it is not natural for us to undergo suffering and endure it patiently with joy. It is natural to whine and sigh and cry in adversity.

You may say, “That doesn’t describe me. When I experience stress from adversity, I usually respond with sadness. I get upset. I get in a bad mood.” If that is the case, that doesn’t necessarily mean that you are not a Christian. It may simply mean that you have failed to learn why you can & should rejoice in tribulation. You see, the words “we rejoice in the tribulations” do not mean simply that we glory in the midst of afflictions, but *on account* of them. Christians do not glory in suffering, as such, or for its own sake, but we glory in what suffering and affliction can do in our lives. Paul says in v.3, “we also glory in tribulations, knowing....” And so Paul lists 3 reasons why we can rejoice in our tribulations:

1. Tribulation Produces Perseverance – Paul says in v.3, “we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance....” Paul is not just talking about “patience” (KJV). He is talking about endurance and brave persistence. Through tribulation we

learn to trust God. We develop patient endurance. In other words, it takes trouble to bring out the best in the believer's life.

The key to building muscle is resistance, pressure. Even so, tribulation is like spiritual weight-lifting—it builds our spiritual muscles. It builds perseverance in our lives. That's what we need to keep from quitting & giving up.

We have one of the finest youth groups of any church. They demonstrated perseverance yesterday at the annual Youth vs. Adult softball game. Our adult team showed little mercy, and the adult score was more like a high scoring football game. But the youth did not quit. They persevered!

Another benefit of tribulation is:

2. It Produces Proven Character – That's what Paul indicates in v.4. The word translated "character" (*dokime*) refers to character that has been put to the test and approved. Tribulation tests a person, and if he bears the trouble with patient endurance, he passes the test and is approved. Patient perseverance thus works approval, or proof of the man's Christianity. It helps us to have greater confidence that we are truly saved. Others can see more clearly that we are Christians. More importantly, it proves the reality and power of Christ. People are like tea bags—you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are. The way we respond to tribulation is a great witness for Christ. Furthermore, the true test of our character is not how we act, but how we react!

How do you react to tribulation and adversity? What does your reaction say about your character? Have you allowed God to use tribulation in your life to produce the character quality of patient endurance? Or do you give up easily? Do you respond to adversity with complaining?

I want to make another application to parents. Don't be overprotective of your children. Don't shield them from the trials and adversity. That is one way they develop strength of character. So don't make life easy for them.

Yet another benefit of tribulation is:

3. It Exercises Hope - Paul indicates that in v.4 as well. Who is it that values hope the most: the person who has it easy, or the person who is going through a great trial? Obviously, it is the person who is suffering that values hope the most. Even so, tribulation produces the kind of character that has a greater capacity to rejoice about the future. Why? Because no matter how severe or devastating our trials are, they can never take away our promised glory. Also, there rises in that heart that has stood the test a calm hope that the future will be as the past. Having fought through six troubles, by God's help the seventh will be vanquished also. Then we maintain the hope that at last troubles will end and heaven be gained. In Romans 8:18 Paul expresses our hope in the face of tribulation: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." When things get difficult, remember that Christ gives us hope of a glorious future. Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:9, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Finally, the Christian can also rejoice:

C. In God Himself – Paul says in v.11, "And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." We should echo the words of the psalmist: "God my exceeding joy" (Ps. 43:4). We rejoice in all of the blessings that we have in Christ. We rejoice in our future hope of heaven and our marvelous inheritance. But most of all, we rejoice in God Himself. Do you boast about God to others? Do you delight in Him? Is He the joy of your heart?

Suppose a teenage boy is given a brand new car by his father. The boy would no doubt rejoice in his new car. He might take it out and show it off to his friends. But wouldn't it be tragic if he went around bragging on his new car, and said nothing about how wonderful his father is, who gave him the car?

Oh, let us rejoice in the gift of peace. Let us rejoice in the gift of access to God & His blessings. Let us rejoice in the joy we have as Christians, even in the midst of tribulation. But let us rejoice most of all in God Himself.

Conclusion: Do you have peace with God? Are you sure you have gained access to God, and all His blessings? Do you know the joy of the Lord? Are you able to rejoice even in tribulation? If not, then I invite you to receive these blessings by putting your faith in Jesus Christ. Or perhaps you have already done so, but you haven't known of these blessings, and you haven't been taking advantage of them. Then I invite you to make a commitment to appropriate these blessings in your life beginning today.

Sources: Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Bruce Corley & Curtis Vaughan, *Romans: A Study Guide Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint); John MacArthur, Jr., *Eternal Security: Study Notes on Romans 5:1-11* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace Communications, 1989); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 5 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1983); John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Right: Romans* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1977). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).