

# PEACE WITH GOD: Romans 5: 1-2

(Part 2)

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Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom indeed we have gained access into this grace in which we stand, and exult in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:1).

Whether we realise it or not, the very first thing every man, woman, boy and girl needs, is peace with God. The Bible traces all our troubles to mankind's alienation from our Creator ... **Our iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you (Isaiah 59: 2)**. Of course, most people have no idea that their first need is to be reconciled to God, to come back into His loving arms, and thus to find peace with their Maker. This is Bible 101.

In Part 1 of this series we identified this primary need by looking at Jesus' story of the self-righteous Pharisee who stood in the Temple thinking he was praying to God. Instead, Jesus said he was deluded, just praying to *himself and congratulating himself*.

On the other hand, the tax collector kept pleading from the depths of his heart, "God, be merciful to me the sinner". We noted that this man really prayed, "God be propitiated to me the sinner". That is, be merciful to me on the basis of the sacrificial blood covering the ark of the covenant in the Temple. Jesus declared he went down to his house acquitted of his guilt --- justified by faith --- and in right standing with the God of Israel (Luke 18: 10-14).

This tax collector demonstrated he was a son of Abraham, who is the father of all the children of God: That is, God's people are not "justified by works" but are "reckoned as righteous" because they hope alone in God (Rom. 4: 1--5). All who come to God with nothing but a plea for His mercy, find **"the blessedness of those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered, and whose sin the LORD will not take into account"** (Rom. 4: 7-8)!

The apostle Paul's commentary on this theme is that every single self-confessed sinner who so hopes in God is,

**Justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24).**

God declares us righteous, as a gift of His grace through the precious blood of Jesus Messiah! There is nothing we can do to earn or merit or deserve a **gift**. We come empty-handed and go home as children of our Heavenly Father! And it all comes to us because of what God's love has done for us in Christ Jesus.

Thus, the sinner who is justified by grace apart from works has nothing to boast about, apart from the goodness and mercy of God. This in itself is a good test to see if we have grasped the glory of "being justified by faith" --- is my soul filled with praise to God for the glory of His mercy? Is my glory and boast in God's grace alone? (Rom 3: 27-28).

## OBJECTION!

Many will object here. What kind of a God are we dealing with, if we say He accepts us only on the basis of the blood sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah? Why must we come through a *crucified* man?

The Jew will point out that nowhere under the Law did God ever demand human sacrifice for sin. True.

And I will be honest here, and admit to struggling with the usual interpretation that God seems to need *payment* of a sin-sacrifice before He is free to forgive. The message we hear commonly today runs like this: God forgives sinners because Jesus paid the debt of sin we owe. Because Jesus bore our sin and its penalty, the debt has been paid in full with the result that God is satisfied with Jesus on our behalf. Thus, all who trust in Christ's death on the cross for them, can now be forgiven. Our debt is paid in full.

But doesn't there appear to be a logical flaw in this interpretation? If I may express it in the words of another,

Forgiveness is, literally, the cancellation of an *unpaid* debt. Which is to say that *forgiveness is the alternative to demanding payment of a debt*. One can demand payment of a debt and, subsequently, cancel the debt upon payment, *or* one can cancel the debt without payment. One cannot do both. Forgiveness can only be the latter.

The evangelical rhetoric of the cross asserts that God forgives sinners *because* Jesus paid their debt of sin. Which is to say that God cancelled *not* an unpaid debt but a debt which was paid in full. But the *payment* of the debt logically eliminates the need, or the possibility, of the *forgiveness* of the debt ...

*A debt that has been paid can no longer be forgiven ... This is forgiveness: the debt goes unpaid and is deliberately forgotten ... The ideas of forgiveness and payment are mutually exclusive ... for forgiveness can have nothing to do with earning or paying in that it can only be freely forgiven ... one cannot demand and accept payment of a debt and then cancel the debt as if it had not been paid.* <sup>1</sup>

If God required payment by Jesus on the cross, before He would accept us, then surely forgiveness is not free grace, but a debt God now owes? What can be said in answer to this objection?

## GRACE REIGNS THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS

I think the answer runs something like this: There are two parts to it. First, God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. He cannot tolerate sin because of His infinite love for us. He hates that which ruins us. But the God Who seeks us cannot deny His own righteous character, so He must judge sin. Otherwise the God of the Universe is lawless. (The universal cry by mankind for justice testifies to our being made in God's moral likeness!)

Thus, our sins will not, cannot, be just dismissed by winking at them, turning a blind eye as though they did not matter. God has declared He hates sin and will punish it. **"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"** (Rom. 1:18). Our sins and crimes must pass through His holy judgment. Justice cries out. But so does God's heart cry out in pity towards us.

The apostle Paul anticipated this 'dilemma' when he penned this statement, **"grace reigns through righteousness"** (Romans 5:21). Grace never reigns by itself. Grace must come to us through the righteousness of God, otherwise it would be just sickly indulgence and we would continue on our self-destructive ways.

God cannot have a lawless universe, much less indulged children, where forgiveness is dished out without thought of the need for behavioural change nor consequences for actions. Any decent parents want their children to know they are loved unconditionally, but not indulgently. God is no less decent to say the very least!

Thus, God's grace comes to us through the cross of Christ where sin is condemned in the most horrible demonstration of Heaven's abhorrence of evil of all time for,

**Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed ... the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon him (Isaiah 53: 4-6).**

**God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not counting their trespasses against them ... [for] He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him ( I Cor. 5: 19, 21; Gal. 3:13)?**

Look, I don't fully understand it. But God declares to me that Jesus is **"the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"** (John 1:29). A transaction happened at Calvary. Jesus' crucifixion was, **"a propitiatory sacrifice by his blood ... for the demonstration of His [i.e. God's] righteousness that He might be just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus"** (Romans 3:25). <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Hach, *The Passion and Persuasion: A Biblical Deconstruction of the Evangelical Rhetoric of the Cross*. Xlibris Corp., USA, 2011. p 11-13 (Emphasis original).

<sup>2</sup> For a full discussion of the translation and significance of the expression "faith in Jesus" in this verse and the earlier v. 22, see my article *Did Jesus Really Live By Faith?* God declares right the one who believes and obeys the word of Jesus.

Dare I say it, forgiveness is not an easy thing for God! In forgiving us, God must first be just. Through the cross of Christ, God has for all time demonstrated that He will judge sin. Calvary vindicates His righteous character. God atones as a gift of His grace all the while upholding His inviolate holiness! Grace reigns through righteousness.

## A NEW COVENANT

Second, the blood of Jesus is the blood of the new covenant.<sup>3</sup> To understand the implications of this we need to know what a covenant is. A covenant is a legally binding contract between two parties. Certain obligations and stipulations are undertaken in the solemn agreement.

So why would God initiate a covenant with man? Aren't His promises certain and faithful enough? How can a covenant that He puts Himself under, therefore be any more sure? Well, of course, ultimately, whether God simply makes a promise or whether He puts Himself under oath in a legally ratified covenant, the outcome in both instances is no less certain. Promise and covenant are equally certain for both are grounded in God's character.

However, the reason God ties Himself to a legal covenant is *to strengthen our faith*. God's covenanted agreements are *legally* sure, and this is cause for enormous confidence and rejoicing on our behalf. Our salvation is grounded in God's sure promises, which are undergirded by legal obligations which God has tied Himself to. What love.

Think of this staggering fact. The Sovereign God of Heaven and earth has graciously tied Himself to be legally bound to the obligations 'signed and sealed' by the blood of the new covenant. The blood of Christ has become the sealing foundation by which God's covenanted obligations to the believer in Christ must be fulfilled.

One of God's covenanted obligations is that, "I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8: 12 quoting Jeremiah 31: 34). Through the shed blood of Christ on the cross, we may approach God on legally sure grounds that God *must* keep His covenanted agreement ... mercy to self-confessed sinners, and forgiveness of our sins. We pray, "O Father, the blood of the new covenant testifies my sins are forgiven because You are the God who keeps covenant."

What a gracious position we find ourselves in! God will never break His covenant, otherwise the Throne on which the Universe exists, would disintegrate. To think that the God of our salvation has *bound Himself* to this legal contract ratified by the blood of Jesus. Can you imagine God ever breaking covenant with Christ? What faith this fact should stir in our hearts! What blessed assurance. What peace. Grace reigns through righteousness, for God must uphold His side of the contract.<sup>4</sup>

So, the Gospel is God's gracious declaration that His Kingdom is open to everybody on the basis of His covenant gift through His Son's atoning death, burial and resurrection. As has often been noted, the difference between all other religious faiths and Christianity, is the difference between do and done. Other religions are always trying to find favour, trying to do, trying to arrive, trying to be good enough.

In contrast, the Christian is one who comes to God on the basis of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ's perfect character and his finished work. Has not our Saviour triumphantly cried from the cross, "It is finished!" D-O-N-E! We now have the full assurance that God has justified us by the grace His own righteousness has provided.

Our forgiveness and salvation is sealed by the blood of Jesus, "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith to demonstrate His righteousness ... (Rom. 3:25). And so we discover the first of the mighty results of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Therefore ... we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ".

## MODERN MAN MOCKS

Certainly the modern man mocks at this idea. He dismisses it, laughs it off; he feels no need of peace with God. After all, atheistic evolution tells us we are not designed by a Creator, so do not need to answer to a figment of the imagination in the sky. There is no God to have peace with! And so, the 'enlightened' modern man insists he has no

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 8: 8-16; Jeremiah 31:31,34; Hebrews 13:20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Observe in Revelation 4: 3 "there is a rainbow around the throne" of God. The bow speaks of the covenant-keeping God (Gen. 9:16-17).

need of any peace with God talk. Indeed, it is the boast of modern man that he answers to nobody, and certainly not to the “cranky” and “petty” God of the Bible.

Very well then. What will the modern man do to get his peace with “the universe” as I have often heard it put? How does the “scientific man” reconcile with his deep-seated fears, insecurities, emptiness, anxiety about his mortality and feelings of lostness in the vastness of the cosmos?

Well, the atheistic evolutionary answer takes on many guises. I have no intention of listing the suggestions of the philosophers and thinkers of the ages on how man must live in his perceived friendless world. One of the more novel approaches is to try humour. Evolutionary theory posits that humans have developed humour as a coping mechanism for the horrors of life and death.

Just look at the baby that is shocked when being tossed aloft by a playful parent. Within a split second the baby discovers it is not being abandoned to fall, and that all is well for dad’s strong arms underneath for the catch means it will survive. That lungful of air about to explode in a fearful scream, turns instead to an explosive release of tension into a gleeful giggle. As the panic passes, the grimace of terror is transformed into joyful relief. <sup>5</sup>

Likewise, by the mechanism of laughing at our predicament we may turn our screams into laughter. The cruel practical joke that is our existence, may in the interim at least provide some softening as our momentary panic passes into the oblivion that is death! Thus the atheistic evolutionist believes the antidote to mankind’s interminable ills is found in the momentary relief of laughter,

There is an implicit acknowledgement in humour that, finally, we’re all stuffed, whereas religion tries to persuade us that life isn’t meaningless, and against all the evidence, that we’re cherished and protected by a deity who will allow us to survive death to rise from our graves like so many missiles from their silos. To allow people the pleasure of laughter would be to offer them another method of dealing with the darkness. <sup>6</sup>

But does this ‘laughing head in the sand’ approach really answer man’s cry for universal peace? Will “the pleasure of laughter” really dispel the darkness? I think this approach is akin to that famous *Bulletin* cartoon showing a couple of builders’ labourers dangling over an abyss. One clings to the girder, the other to his mate’s trousers which are slowly slipping from his hips. “Stop laughing,” says one to the other, “this is serious.” <sup>7</sup>

Any number of atheistic philosophers might be cited whose recipe for coping with man’s inevitable hopeless doom and gloom existence is summed up in the famous last acts and words of the Aussie bushranger Ned Kelly. Like Ned at Glenrowan, many plate ourselves up in bullet proof armour and blaze away at the police. Eventually though, the vulnerable spot is hit, and for all the brave bluster they try to coat themselves with, they bite the dust at last.

At last, like Ned after his capture and trial, as they stand on the trapdoor when the hangman places the bag over their head and the noose around their neck, all they can do is resign themselves like Ned did and opine, “Such is life”. And bang! The floor opens up and they fall with a thud into eternity to face their Maker.

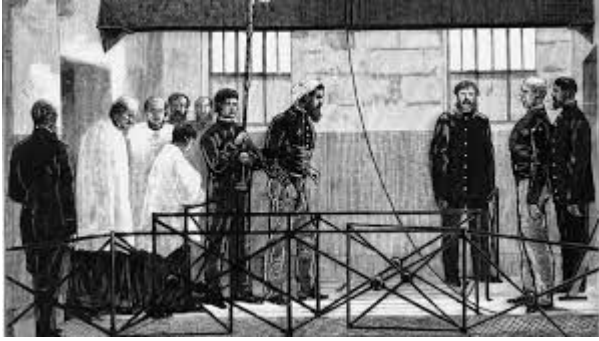


The Australian Bushranger Ned Kelly suited himself up in heavy metal-plated armour so as to defy the law. He blazed away at the police seemingly invincible ... until one officer aimed for his unprotected knee.

<sup>5</sup> I owe this illustration to Phillip Adams and Patrice Newell in their introduction to *The Penguin Book of Australian Jokes*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria. p. 7

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 25



An artist's eyewitness sketch of the moment of Ned Kelly's hanging in the Melbourne Gaol in November 1890.

People are looking for peace. They will try anything to numb their pain. Like Ned Kelly they plate themselves up in thick layers of protective remedies. Whether that means turning to drink or drugs, the rush of adrenaline in sexual pleasures, politics or music, religious cults or the occult, the power of positive thinking or no thinking, altruism or consumerism. Nevertheless, the holiness of God, His justice, His Law cannot ultimately be evaded.

Some take solace by comparing themselves with others. They take some kind of comfort in the fact they are not as bad as the worst of us or as most of us.

### HE'S A SAINT!

It reminds me of the story of two brothers who were infamous around the town for all the wrong reasons. The brothers were notorious crooks and despised for their cheating business deals. By their devious swindling, they became incredibly successful and insanely rich.

Suddenly one of the brothers died. The surviving brother found himself looking for a minister who would be willing to conduct his brother's funeral. Out of desperation he finally made an offer to one minister who was willing to do the funeral. "I will pay you a huge sum of money" said the living brother, "if you will agree to just one little condition. All you have to do if you want this handsome reward, is call my brother a 'saint'. If you do that, you will get a handsome reward."

The minister was a pragmatist and agreed to the condition. Why not? After all, the money would help with the chapel restoration costs.

When the funeral service began, the chapel was filled with all the important dignitaries of the town, and all the business associates who had been swindled over the years. They were unaware of the deal that had been made with the minister, and they were expecting to be at last vindicated by the public exposure of the man's character.

At last, the much anticipated moment arrived. The minister spoke the eulogy. "The man you see in this coffin was a vile and crooked individual. He was a liar, a swindling, deceiving thief. He was a total reprobate who destroyed the reputations and the careers and the businesses of countless people in this town, many of whom are here this day. Yes. This man did every low-down, rotten and unconscionable thing you can think of. But compared to his brother here, *he was a saint!*"

This humorous story carries a universal truth. We all like to compare ourselves with ourselves. We feel safe in the middle of the herd. We imagine we scrub up pretty well when compared to everybody else. We are like the Pharisee thinking he was fine by comparing himself with the tax collector. And so we are lulled into a false sense of peace, because it leaves our primary and fundamental need unexamined; what is my standing before my Creator God? How will I stand before Him in the Day of Judgment? How will I find peace with Heaven?

That is your greatest problem, and mine. Instinctively we know we cannot face a holy God. Deep down we are afraid of God. We feel He is not happy with our behaviour and treatment of others and indeed, ourselves. I mean, when we mistreat another person, when we lie about them, when we cheat them, when we abuse them, when we neglect their pleas for help, there is something deep within us that makes us feel "dirty" and unworthy and ashamed.

Just look and listen to the dying confessions of the Nazi tormentors, the paedophiles, the abusers of mankind in whatever shape or form you might think about, and their universal angst and shame and torment is telling. Their greatest need is to come clean, to confess, to ask forgiveness, to be reconciled to their victims and above all to their God.

The moment a man realises these things he is afraid to think about his Maker. He feels out of harmony, out of step with "the universe". He is disturbed and troubled. He sees that God is holy and just, and so he is no longer at peace with God. Indeed, he now hates the God of the Bible Who has revealed Himself as the God Who must judge sin. And let's not kid ourselves. This is the natural state we all find ourselves in. Afraid of God. Afraid of judgment.

The problem with all of man's efforts at self-help is that they lull into a false sense of peace. They dope our deepest cry; how may I be reconciled to the Living and Righteous God of all? That is everybody's fundamental need; how may I have peace with God? No amount of humour, no degree of trivialising, no measure of positive thinking or of denial of the problem will satisfy our hearts. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ meets this need.

And this is the meaning of the statement from Romans 5:1-2 that we are examining. It says the person who trusts in what God has done through His Son stands justified by faith and has peace with God.

Here is the test as to whether your profession of being a Christian is solid. Are you still afraid of God? Do you daily look with confidence into His Face and know He is for you? If you still fear death and facing the Eternal God and His judgment, then you have not yet grasped the first implication of "having been justified by faith [is that ] we have peace with God. Later in Romans 8 Paul will write it this way,

Since God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will He not also with him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One Who justifies ... (Rom. 8: 31f).

The highest court in the Universe has declared the Christian acquitted. God is for us. It is God Who has justified us. Therefore, having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, Paul does not say the Christian is hoping to have peace with God. No. He says we have it! We rejoice in it.

Peace with God is our present possession through Jesus Christ. Our minds are at peace because we know He is at peace with us. Here is a good test to see whether we understand the Gospel of Christ. Do we understand that, everybody who rests on the work of God Who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, has God's declaration that he or she does not come into judgment, but has already passed from death into life (John 3: 18).

Jesus himself declared this truth first,

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5: 24).<sup>8</sup>

Ah. The Christian who believes and commits himself to the Gospel of Christ already has peace with God. He is secure about his relationship with God. He knows he is justified by faith. God gives this as a gift of His grace and mercy --- apart from works. Since God is satisfied with the work of Christ, my heart is satisfied and at peace.

## SOME TESTS

Now let's be very practical. How may I truly know if I fully understand and enjoy this doctrine of "justification by faith"? What tests may I apply to myself to maintain my peace with God through Christ?

Well, the first thing is this: How do I answer the accusations of my own conscience? What happens when I am overcome by 'the guilts'? When my heart criticises me and says, 'Just look at yourself. Look at those thoughts that rush into your head. Just as well nobody else can read your mind. How dare you think God has accepted you, that He loves you, that He has cleansed your wicked heart? Some fake Christian you are!'

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<sup>8</sup> Once again observe we are not talking about easy "believism". Bible faith is never mere mental assent to certain facts. Bible faith, like the faith of Jesus, is faith that "hears my word", faith that obeys God's word in Christ.

So what do you do when these accusations raise their ugly head against you? What is your response?

I would suggest that if these accusations shake you, then you have not yet grasped the doctrine of “justification by faith” *apart from works* and cannot enjoying the peace of God as you are meant to.

Worse still, what will you do on the occasion when these accusations become so sinister, so dark and heavy, that it seems as if the Devil himself is hurling his worst at you? Many of the greatest men and women of faith have testified to the ferocity of such Satanic attacks. It seems like the nearer a soul wants to draw near to God and walk with Him, the more fiery these devilish darts of accusation and doubt assail. Peace with God seems like the furthest thing from us.

How do you answer the Devil’s “fiery darts” (Ephesians 6: 11)? As you struggle to lift that shield of faith up, what practical strategy will you employ? Ah, there is only one thing to satisfy the conscience no matter how dark and desperate our past, there is only one thing to silence our old Enemy ...

**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony ... (Rev. 12:11).**

There is the strategy right there. You silence your own conscience, and you shut the Devil’s mouth right up, by pointing away from yourself and by claiming the power of the blood of Christ. I don’t fully understand it. But I know that when I appeal to the shed blood of Christ, I have peace with God. It works every time. Here is the victory. Here is our testimony, “Devil, I appeal to the blood of Christ! God has declared me righteous in His sight through Christ. I am standing on the covenant sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ.”

There is only one thing to silence a guilty conscience. There is only one strategy to make the Devil flee from you. Plead the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Since Jesus Christ has borne my sins, I will not dishonour his perfect work by carrying them anymore. God is just and will not judge the same sin twice. <sup>9</sup>

I suggest you speak out your faith. Be audible. Say, “Devil, Jesus has borne my sin. I appeal to the power of the blood of the Lamb. God is satisfied. He raised Christ up from the dead proving once for all that not one of my sins has held him down! **Therefore** I am forgiven and have peace with God.

That is the only way to know you have peace with God. Every time your conscience rises up to bother you, every time the Devil pokes his finger at you, every time you even wonder if you are a true Christian, just say, “I answer with the blood of Christ. I am at peace with God.”

Oh, but you say, what happens when everything’s been going along so well, but suddenly, out of the blue, I have fallen into a terrible sin. I am shattered. I thought that old habit was long gone. But it’s reared its ugly head again. You have no idea how troubled, how frightening this is to me. My peace with God is gone. This temptation seems to have been hiding behind the door all along, lurking there, waiting to mock me in a moment of unguarded weakness.

What now? Ah, it’s right and proper that we should feel so disturbed. Sin in the Christian is no trifling matter. God will not condone sin whether it’s found in the unbeliever or in the believer. Like the Psalmist the true Christian will feel that their sin is ever before them, that they have done evil in the sight of God, that their bones are cracking and their inner spirit is crushed. We may even feel we never were a Christian, that we have lost our relationship with God and our salvation. We may even plead like David did, “Take not Thy Holy spirit from me!”

But here is the answer;

**If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1: 7,9).**

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<sup>9</sup> John 1: 29 may also be translated to read “The Lamb of God *carries away* (*airon*) the sin of the world”.

God has pledged His own righteous character to forgive and cleanse us from all confessed sin. The ground on which he so acts is His faithfulness to the blood of the covenant ratified by Jesus' own blood. Thus Jesus is "the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins" (1 John 2:2), even when we fail.

So, if you say, "Because of this dreadful failure of mine I have lost my standing before God", you only go to show that you thought you had it because you thought you were good enough! You were living under a false sense of security and peace all along. You were resting on your performance and not on the grace of God given you in Christ.

So, even when we sin, our peace with God should not ultimately be robbed. If, every time we sin and fail, we go back over our whole standing before God, we only prove we have not yet grasped the wonder of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Once we confess our sins, we may rest in peace because God is faithful and righteous to treat us on the basis of the covering of the blood of His Son:

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

The Greek tense here means this is a declaration of a fact accomplished already in the past. Every time we may fail, sorrowful as that is, we do not have to ask God to again justify us in His sight. God has once and for all pronounced us forgiven, cleansed, and right before His throne. <sup>10</sup>

I like the illustration that Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones uses here,

Faith in this matter is remarkably like the needle of a compass, always there pointing to the magnetic north. But if you introduce a very powerful magnet at some other point of the compass it will draw the needle over to it and cause it to swing backwards and forwards and be most unstable.

But it is certain that the true compass needle will get back to its true centre, it will find its place of rest in the north. It may know agitation, it may know a lot of violence, but it will go back to its centre, it always finds the place of rest, and the same thing is always true of faith.

So the mere fact that we may be tempted to doubt, the mere fact that we may have to struggle and bring out our arguments, and go over the whole question again, does not mean that we have not got faith. In a sense it is proof of faith, as long as we always arrive back at the position of rest. <sup>11</sup>

So, even though faith may be assailed and on occasions doubt, nevertheless true faith will always reason the situation through. True faith will always box on, fight on, and learn how to answer. True faith always finally overcomes because it comes to the place of resting in God's declaration that He accepts us on the merits of Christ alone, and not on our own performance. True faith rests on the blood of the new covenant, which is legally binding. True faith knows how to think and to apply the Gospel facts by saying,

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

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<sup>10</sup> I am not here talking about the question of "once saved always saved". A Christian may ultimately forfeit their salvation and standing before God by persistent and unrepented sin. For "the just shall live by faith" (Rom.1: 17) and faithfulness is the proof of genuine faith.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5, Assurance*. Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, Great Britain, 1971, p. 23