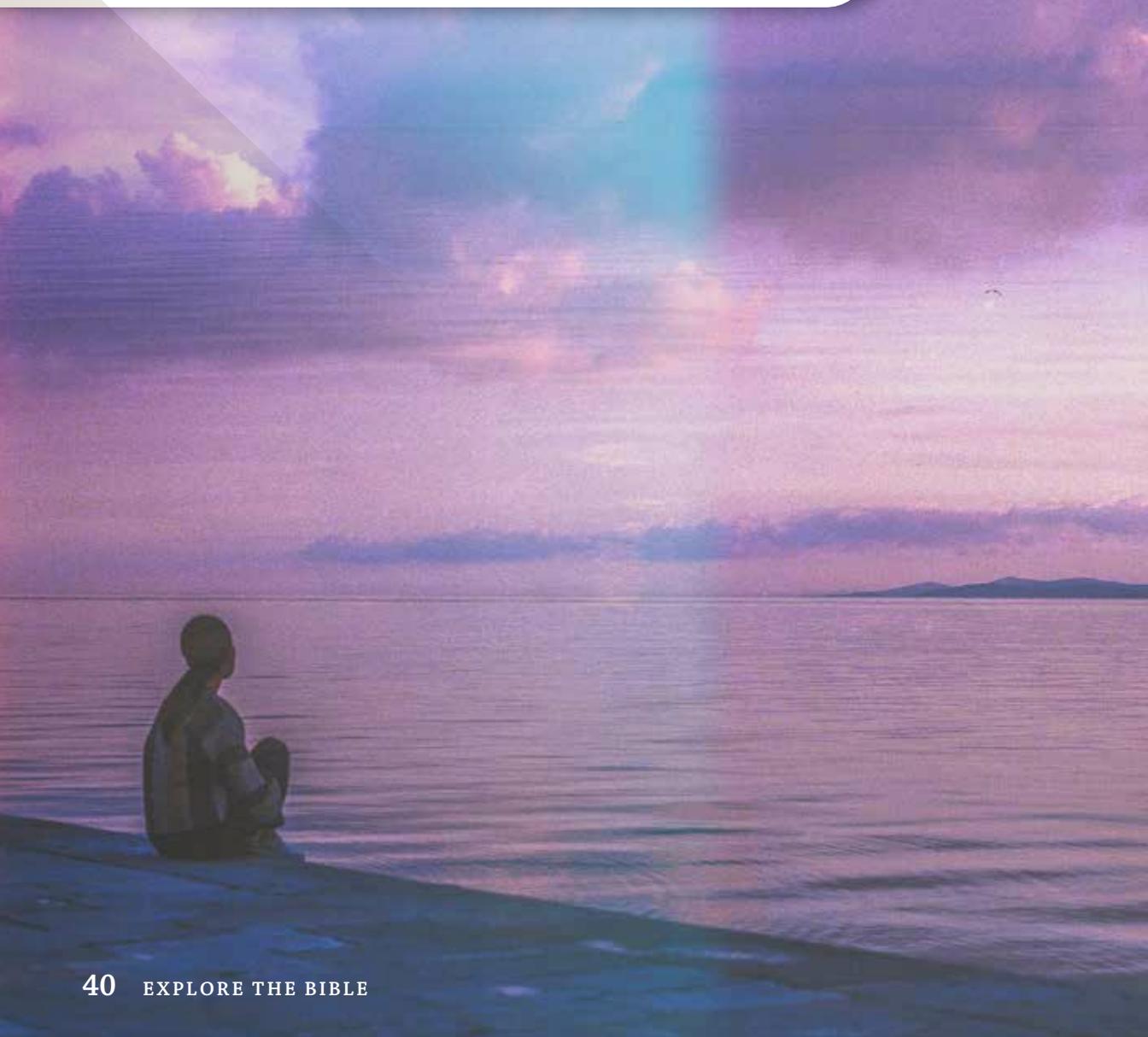


Session 5

At Peace

All who accept the gospel find peace with God.

Romans 5:1-11



Why is it important to find the primary cause behind some type of event? How might a person go about identifying the specific cause that created a specific event?

We live with a basic understanding of “cause and effect.” With everything we see or experience we tend to look for some type of cause. Paul followed a similar line of logic as he walked his Roman readers through the reality of salvation and the Christian life. Sin has an effect and so does faith in Jesus.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Paul identified the problem in chapter 3. Sin wreaked havoc on humanity and the world in general. Jews and Gentiles alike stand condemned with no hope for a right relationship with God.

In Romans 4, Paul revealed the other side of the coin. False gods offered no help to the pagans, and the law of Moses only revealed sin; it did not remove it or free the individual from its effects. But God made sure things didn't stay that way. He shined a light in the darkness. That light was His Son.

Faith has always been God's standard for justification. Abraham had believed and been justified by his faith centuries before the law. Later, David testified to the role of faith in salvation. The entire sacrificial system pointed to the Lamb of God who would come and provide the final sacrifice. Ultimately, the faith of the ancients became realized in Jesus Christ. Anyone who put his or her faith in Jesus and His work on the cross would be justified in God's sight.

That was the cause of salvation; in Romans 5, Paul turned his attention to the effects of justification. Because God has declared us righteous, we now live in peace with God. The human race's war with God can end. In addition, we now experience hope and purpose for this life and the next.

Paul pointed out that the chaos caused by the first Adam had been replaced by the peace produced by the second Adam—Jesus Christ. Because we are at peace with God, we can live at peace with one another.

ROMANS 5:1-11

1 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** We have also obtained **access A** through him by faith into this **grace B** in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. **3** And not only that, but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, **4** endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

5 This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the **Holy Spirit C** who was given to us. **6** For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For rarely will someone die for a just person — though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. **8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** How much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by his blood, will we be **saved through him D** from wrath.

10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be **saved by his life E**. **11** And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Passage Outline

Justified With Benefits
(Rom. 5:1-5)

Justified Through His Death
(Rom. 5:6-8)

Justified Equals
Reconciliation
(Rom. 5:9-11)

Keywords

- A. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).
- B. Our position before God is based on His grace and not our performance (Heb. 4:16).
- C. The presence of the Holy Spirit within us is God's assurance that we're saved (Rom. 8:14-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 13:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 1 John 4:13).
- D. Since Jesus took our place on the cross, the wrath of God is satisfied regarding our sin. We don't have to fear His judgment, but we strive to love Him as our Father (1 John 4:17-18).
- E. Not only are we saved by Jesus' death, but we're also saved by His life: "[that is, we will be saved because Christ lives today]" (AMP).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

KEY DOCTRINE: Salvation (Justification) – Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God (Gal. 3:13).

Where Paul had previously addressed those outside the faith, he was now focusing on believers who had been justified and needed to understand how that changed their lives. The first benefit of justification is *peace*. This includes the absence of conflict but goes farther by emphasizing completeness or unity. Those who trust Christ can experience peace with God. As a result of peace with God, believers have access to God. Instead of being in a state of hostility toward God and separated from Him, they now can approach Him as Father.

What is the relationship between peace and hope? How do they complement each other?

Justification will not remove all the *afflictions* in our lives. Paul used a Greek word that suggests suffering experienced for the sake of the gospel. In a sense, this is a specific category of suffering reserved for believers as God transforms them into His likeness. Even when we suffer, our new relationship with God gives meaning to those challenges. The world is filled with disappointments. Focusing on disappointments can mar our character and produce despair. But the hope God produces in our lives through affliction, endurance, and character does not fall into that category. It never disappoints. It always meets us right where we are with exactly what we need.

BIBLE SKILL: Compare similar passages by the same writer. – Compare Galatians 2:15-17 and 3:10-14 with Romans 5:1-2. Identify common words, phrases, and themes in these passages. What insights do you gain about justification as a result of this comparison? Write a summary statement based on the comparison.

Not only are humans in a perpetual state of war with God before being justified through Jesus, they are actually *helpless* to change their situation. No human can achieve a right relationship with God. God's response to our helplessness was to send Jesus to die in our place. He poured out His love on us, and the tangible proof of that lavish gift was the sacrifice of His Son. God did what no one could have predicted. He sacrificed His Son to rescue individuals living in rebellion against Him. That's unheard of in human logic. Because we know we have been justified by God through faith, we can know just as surely that we will avoid His *wrath*. Through the death of Jesus on the cross, we have been saved from our sins.

What does this passage teach us about God and about ourselves?

We have been given an opportunity to begin a new relationship with God through the death of Jesus. But reconciliation involves action on both sides.

Along with the benefits gained through faith in Jesus, what responsibilities are also now carried?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Peace with God results from being declared just through faith in Jesus.
- God demonstrates His love to us through the sacrificial death of Jesus.
- Believers are saved through faith in Jesus, now and forever.

List adversities you are currently facing. How can you reflect the hope you have in Christ through these adversities?

Focus on Romans 5:8. Reflect on each word and phrase, noting how that word or phrase impacts you. With whom can you share what this verse means to you?

With your Bible study group, identify groups that may wonder about God loving them. What can you and the members of your Bible study group do to intentionally share God's love with the people you identified? What insights from this passage can be shared with them?

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: God's grace gives us hope.

Read Romans 5:1-2, highlighting peace, grace, and hope.

Paul reminded the Romans that salvation was all the result of God's grace in their lives. They had no standing of their own, but they stood in the unmerited favor that God poured out on those who lived by faith. In addition, this grace—and the access it provides—gives individuals confidence in *the hope of the glory of God*. Previously, Paul had noted that humanity fell short of God's glory (3:23). Now, however, those who have been justified reflect God's glory and find hope for this life and the next.

What is the relationship between peace and hope? How do they complement each other?

Day 2: Our hope is rooted in God's love.

Read Romans 5:3-5, identifying the process from affliction to hope.

Believers can *rejoice* in affliction because they recognize the hand of God at work in those hard times. This is not simply keeping a stiff upper lip and making lemonade out of lemons. Affliction, Paul noted, creates *endurance*. Athletes put stress on their bodies through exercise and training. That work is hard but produces more strength and endurance for the competition to come. The same is true with our afflictions. The hard times we experience build spiritual muscle that helps us endure and move forward. Endurance produces *character*. The Greek term translated *character* carries the idea of something being proven through a trial or hardship. Afflictions squeeze our lives and reveal ungodly actions and attitudes. As we endure, God refines those rough edges and we become more like the people God created us to be. Then our renewed character brings us full circle, back to the *hope* we have in Christ. This is not pie-in-the-sky optimism. It is a deeper sense of peace and trust that God has a plan for our present and our future. Focusing on disappointments can mar our character and produce despair. But the hope God produces in our lives through affliction, endurance, and character does not fall into that category. It never disappoints. It always meets us right where we are with exactly what we need. That's because it is rooted in *God's love*. When we come to Him in faith, we move from being the objects of His anger and wrath to being the recipients of His love. Paul wrote that God pours out His love on us, completely covering us. Our afflictions lead to hope, which gives us a keener sense of His love for us. God's love is *poured out* on us through the work of *the Holy Spirit*. In any circumstance, the Spirit will guide and direct us in the right way, helping us endure hard times and grow stronger in our faith.

Consider a difficult time in your life. How did that process grow your faith?

Day 3: God saved us at just the right time.

Read Romans 5:6, understanding what Christ did for us.

Sin required the penalty of death. Without divine intervention, we would be forced to pay that price ourselves—both in this world and throughout eternity in hell. But as He did for Isaac in Moriah (Gen. 22:1-19), God provided a substitute *at the right time*. Paul made a similar comment in Galatians 4:4-5. The relative peace of the Roman Empire, combined with a common language (Greek) and a general curiosity about religious ideas, created a perfect historical environment for the Messiah's arrival. But it was also the perfect time because humanity was helpless.

In what ways are you helpless without faith in Jesus?

Day 4: The cross is proof of God's love for us.

Read Romans 5:7-8, considering the sacrifice God made through Jesus.

A few heroes might voluntarily suffer for someone they care about, but who would endure pain to help an enemy? That's exactly what God did. God's radical commitment to our salvation can be traced to one motivation: *his own love for us*. He demonstrated that when Jesus died on the cross.

Sometimes, people are tempted to think they have to "get right" before God will accept them. But Paul was clear: We don't have to become good enough; we can't become good enough. Instead, God took the first step while we were still at war with Him. Even though *we were still sinners* living under His wrath, *Christ died for us*.

The benefits of justification are great. But the cost was great as well. We must never forget that sacrifice. If we ever wonder about God's love for us, the cross should be all the proof we need.

How does knowing the depth of God's sacrifice for you affect your feelings toward Him?

Day 5: God has given us genuine joy.

Read Romans 5:9-11, underlining every use of reconciled.

Paul reminded the Romans that Jesus' death was only part of the story. Jesus also rose from the dead. Because He is alive, our lives can be different. Salvation has both "now" and "later" aspects that reach into eternity. We are saved from the consequences of our sins by His death. But we are saved to walk in holiness through His power working in us. God's work on our behalf through the death and resurrection of Christ is a lot to take in. He has done so much and provided so much. We can never repay His grace and love. But we can live differently. We can live out our right relationship with Him each day for the world to see. Salvation does not make us perfect. Christians still sin and miss the mark of God's design. But that does not change our standing. Christ is still our substitute, and we are still righteous in God's eyes. That, Paul said, is reason to *rejoice*. As we demonstrate the genuine joy God has given us, unbelievers will take notice and be interested in learning more. Joy makes our witness to the world much more effective.

Along with the benefits gained through faith in Jesus, what responsibilities do you also now carry?

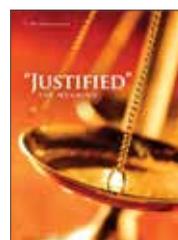
TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Romans 5, sharing with other members of your Bible study group.

What does it mean to be "declared righteous by faith," or justified? What are the benefits of being justified?

How does Jesus' sacrificial death demonstrate the depths of God's love for us?

How did Paul describe the process of us moving from being God's enemies to being reconciled to Him?



For additional context, read "Justified, the Meaning," available digitally in the Spring 2020 issue of *Biblical Illustrator for Explore the Bible* at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator.