



Many have said that Romans chapter 5 is like a hymn of joy as Paul exults over the blessings of the gospel: justification, reconciliation, peace, grace and hope. As you study it, think of what Christ has done in your life, and thank Him for reaching out to you - even when you were an enemy.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Romans 5:1-21

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned -- ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Verse 1: Why does justification bring “peace with God”?

In verse 3-4 Paul shows how God turns suffering into hope. How does it happen?

Verse 5: How is this biblical idea of “hope” different from the world? (It may help to look up “hope” in a Bible dictionary or word book.)

Make a list of all the things true about us by writing down the phrases that start with “we” in verses 1-11:

What three phrases in verse 6, 8, and 10 (“we were...”) describe our condition before we became Christians? (Can you see a progression in them?)

Verse 12: Who is the “one man” (see Genesis 2:17, 3:19), and how do you think “death came to all men”?

How was Adam “a pattern of the one to come”? (see 1 Corinthians 15: 21-22 and 45-49.)

did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Make a list of all the contrasts that Paul draws by comparing Adam and Christ in this passage:

ADAM	CHRIST

“The word translated “increased all the more” (verse 20) is scarcely translatable in few words. *Super-increased* is a possibility, or *super-abounded*. It pictures unending, overflowing grace — a grace that knows no bounds. Grace is always more abundant than sin”

Kent Hughes

Read the quote from John Stott on the following page and discuss it with your group, or summarize its main points if you're studying alone.

Moved by the perfection of his holy love, God in Christ substituted himself for us sinners. That is the heart of the cross of Christ. It leads us to turn now from the event to its consequences, from what happened on the cross to what was achieved by it. Why did God take our place and bear our sin? What did he accomplish by his self-sacrifice, his self-substitution?

It would be hard to exaggerate the magnitude of the changes which have taken place as a result of the cross, both in God and in us, especially in God's dealings with us and in our relations with him. Truly, when Christ died and was raised from death, and a new day dawned, a new age began.

This new day is *the day of salvation* (2 Cor. 6:2), and the blessings of such a great salvation (Heb. 2:3) are so richly diverse that they cannot be neatly defined. Several pictures are needed to portray them. Just as the church of Christ is presented in Scripture as his bride and his body, the sheep of God's flock and the branches of his vine, his new humanity, his household or family, the temple of the Holy Spirit and the pillar and buttress of the truth, so the salvation of Christ is illustrated by the vivid imagery of terms like *propitiation, redemption, justification and reconciliation*.

They are not alternative explanations of the cross, providing us with a range to choose from, but complementary to one another, each contributing a vital part to the whole. As for the imagery, *propitiation* introduces us to rituals at a shrine, *redemption* to transactions in a market-place, *justification* to proceedings in a lawcourt, and *reconciliation* to experiences in a home or family. My contention is that *substitution* is not a further *theory* or *image* to be set alongside the others, but rather the foundation of them all, without which each lacks cogency. If God in Christ did not die in our place, there could be neither propitiation, nor redemption, nor justification, nor reconciliation.

There is logic in the order in which we are reviewing these great words which describe the achievement of the cross. Propitiation inevitably comes first, because until the wrath of God is appeased (that is, until his love has found a way to avert his anger), there can be no salvation for human beings at all. Next, when we are ready to understand the meaning of salvation, we begin negatively with redemption, meaning our rescue at the high price of Christ's blood from the grim captivity of sin and guilt. Justification is its positive counterpart. True, some justification is the opposite of condemnation (e.g. Rom. 5:18; 8:34), and both are verdicts of a judge who pronounces the accused either guilty or not guilty. To reconcile means to restore a relationship, to renew a friendship. So an original relationship is presupposed which, having been broken, has been recovered by Christ.

We have examined four of the principal New Testament images of salvation, taken from the shrine, the market, the lawcourt and the home. Their pictorial nature makes it impossible to integrate them neatly with one another. Temple sacrifices and legal verdicts, the slave in the market and the child in the home all clearly belong to different worlds. Nevertheless, certain themes emerge from all four images. First, each highlights a different aspect of our human need. Propitiation underscores the wrath of God upon us, redemption our captivity to sin, justification our guilt, and reconciliation our enmity against God and alienation from him. These metaphors do not flatter us. They expose the magnitude of our need.

Secondly, all four images emphasize that the saving initiative was taken by God in his love. It is he who has propitiated his own wrath, redeemed us from our miserable bondage, declared us righteous in his sight, and reconciled us to himself. Relevant texts leave us in no doubt about this: *God ... loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God has come and has redeemed his people. It is God who justifies. God ... reconciled us to himself through Christ.*

Thirdly, all four images plainly teach that God's saving work was achieved through the blood shedding, that is, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. With regard to the blood of Christ the texts are again unequivocal. *God presented him as a propitiatory sacrifice, through faith in his blood. In him we have redemption through his blood. We have now been justified by his blood. You who once were far away have been brought near (ie. reconciled) through the blood of Christ.* Since Christ's blood is a symbol of his life laid down in violent death, it is also plain in each of the four images that he died in our place as our substitute. The death of Jesus was the atoning sacrifice because of which God averted his wrath from us, the ransom-price by which we have been redeemed, the condemnation of the innocent that the guilty might be justified, and the sinless One being made sin for us.

from **The Cross of Christ**,
pp. 167,168,182,192, 202,
by John R. W. Stott

