

## “The Benefits of Our Justification”

### (Part 2)

Romans 5:1-11

- INTRO. - ILL. – If we had to choose a theme for the Book of Romans, I think we would have to say that it is “the just shall live by faith” and that those who are justified in God’s sight are justified by faith alone, apart from any works of the law.

- And Paul has been developing this theme for several chapters now. He has clearly laid out his position on “sola fide” (by faith alone) in the first four chapters.

- He has made it clear that all men are sinners, and that we cannot save ourselves by our own good works. We are totally dependent on the grace of God to save us, as we place our faith in Jesus Christ alone.

- And he has used Abraham as the prime example of one who was justified in God’s sight through his faith in God’s promise. So we have clearly seen the doctrine of justification, but in chapter 5 he moves to the benefits of it.

- In this section of Romans 5 we see 7 benefits of justification by faith. Last week we looked at the first three. In the first few verses of this chapter Paul talks about:

I. OUR PEACE WITH GOD (v. 1)

II. OUR POSITION THROUGH GRACE (v. 2a) and

III. OUR PROMISE OF GLORY (v. 2b)

- Now, today, we need to move on to see:

IV. OUR PROCESS OF GROWTH (vv. 3-5a)

- In addition to hoping in the glory of God, Paul says that there is something else we are exult in. We are also to exult in our tribulations.

- Look with me at v. 3, “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations...” Why Paul? Why should we exult in tribulations? “...knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint...” (Stop right there)

- Paul informs us that tribulations actually bring about, *not only* a *present* blessing, but also a *future* glory. The cross and the crown always go together. Christians in our day and time often have difficulty understanding the value of suffering through trials.

- In *our* society we have grown to believe that comfort is *good* while any kind of pain is *bad*. And

yet Jesus said, “Blessed are those who suffer for my name’s sake.”

- *That* doesn’t make a lot of sense to most people in America today (even Christians). But as Kent Hughes puts it, “blessings are [usually] poured out in bitter cups.”

- But we need to understand something here. The word that Paul uses for “tribulations” (here) doesn’t really apply to our “aches and pains” or our frustrations and disappointments. It is really a word that refers to the pressure of persecution. It is suffering that is a direct result of living for Christ.

- John MacArthur says, “The ‘tribulations’ of which Paul is speaking are *not* the troubles that are common to all mankind but the troubles that Christians suffer for the sake of their Lord.”

- And I could easily preach an entire sermon just on this truth, but God’s Word tells us that when we suffer for Christ’s sake, it serves to build into our lives perseverance, proven character, and (ultimately) hope that does *not* disappoint.

- In other words, God allows tribulation to come into our lives for His own purpose. He allows it (and sometimes even causes it) as a part of the process of our sanctification.

- And we need to learn that suffering and tribulation is *not* necessarily a *bad* thing – because God uses it in our lives to help us grow spiritually. In fact, Paul actually lists tribulation among the *benefits* of justification. The benefit is *not* the tribulation itself, but the perseverance, proven character, and hope that it produces.

- But let’s think about this process for a moment. The word “perseverance” is the Greek word “hupomone.” It is often translated “patience,” but it usually has the meaning of “endurance” or “the ability to continue working in the face of strong opposition or great obstacles.”

- Literally, it means “to abide or to stay under pressure.” You and I usually want to escape pressure, but God knows that it is needed in our lives to bring us to maturity.

- God knows that perseverance is something we desperately need, and He knows that it comes *only* through trials. There is no other way to teach this.

- ILL. – A young Christian man went to an older believer to ask for prayer. He asked, “Will you please pray for me that I will be more patient?” The older Christian said, “I would be happy to.” They knelt down together and the more mature saint began to pray, “Lord, please send this young man tribulation in the morning – and then send him tribulation in the afternoon – and...” At this point

the young man interrupted, “No, no. I didn’t ask you to pray for tribulation – I asked you to pray for patience.” The older man said, “Ah, but that is the only way we learn patience – it is through tribulation.”

- John Stott wrote, “We could *not* learn endurance without suffering, because without suffering there would be nothing to endure.” This word is used of squeezing olives to extract the oil from them, and so the idea is that of pressure that brings out the maturity of the heart.

- This is clearly what Paul is teaching here. Chuck Swindoll puts it this way, “As we become veterans of the wars of tribulation, we develop a marked ability to remain stable during the most trying of times. It is tribulation that toughens us, so we can stand up against any kind of persecution we may face in this fallen world.”

- And “hupomone” (the word for perseverance) is *not* a word that means “to grit your teeth and get through it.” It is a word that means “to live in victory in the midst of it.”

- This is certainly *not* the idea of “masochism” (here), which is the sickness of finding pleasure in pain, but it is the concept of recognizing God has a divine purpose for our suffering.

- But *not only* do we gain perseverance through tribulation, we also attain “proven character.” The word that is used here is a word that was used for the purifying of precious metals.

- In the same way that gold and silver is put through the fire to make it pure and refined, so we are put through the fire of tribulation and testing to build in us godly character. Hodge calls this “tried integrity.”

- And then there is a final result of this process, which is “hope.” And it is a hope that will *not* disappoint because it is an eternal hope, guaranteed by the grace and power of God.

- Paul put it this way in 2 Cor. 4:17, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...” It is that future hope of glory that enables us to face the “momentary light affliction” we face in this world.

- And we need to remember that our suffering (for a believer) is always temporary, and it does *not* even *begin* to compare with the eternal glory we will one day experience.

- My friend listen, no Christian ever has a reason to despair in this present life. No matter how great our suffering may be, and no matter how difficult it

may be for us to endure it from our earthly perspective, when we reach glory it will pale into insignificance.

- Along with Paul we need to learn to proclaim, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (That’s Rom. 8:18)

- But how do we know this? What is the ultimate ground upon which our Christian hope rests – our hope of glory? Benefit #5:

#### V. OUR PROVISION OF GOD’S LOVE (vv. 5b-8)

- This is how we know. Let’s pick it up in the last part of v. 5, “...because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

- How can we be assured of God’s love toward us? Two ways. First of all, “...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

- When a person receives eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, he enters into a new love relationship with God that lasts throughout eternity. And that love relationship is confirmed by the inner witness of the HS.

- Interestingly, this is the very first mention of the HS in the Book of Romans. But, as John Stott points out, this teaches some very important truths about the HS.

- First, this tells us that the HS is a gift that is given to *all* believers. How do we know that? Because Paul is saying this is a consequence of being justified. And what we need to note (here) is that it is impossible to become justified by faith without also being indwelt by the HS.

- Secondly, it teaches us that the HS is given to us at a particular *time*. The use of the aorist tense “has been poured out” points back to the time of our justification. This tells us that the pouring out of the Spirit is *not* something that happens some time *after* our initial experience of salvation.

- Thirdly, this tells us that one of the primary purposes for the HS indwelling the believer is so that we will become absolutely convinced of God’s love for us.

- And there is another angle on this, as John MacArthur points out: “The very fact that God gives His “Holy Spirit” to indwell believers is itself a marvelous testimony to His love for us, because He would hardly indwell those whom He did *not* love.”

- Now, the word for “love” (in this verse) is the familiar biblical term “agape.” It is describing an unconditional, self-sacrificing kind of love. That is the kind of love God has toward His children.

- And we *know* that God’s love toward us was unconditional *before* we were saved. That old familiar verse, John 3:16 makes it clear, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

- And if we personalize that, we can say, “God so loved me, that He gave His only begotten Son for me, so that if I will believe in Him, I will never perish, but I will have everlasting life.”

- But what Paul is saying (here in Rom. 5) is, that if this is true *before* we were saved, it is even *more* true now that we *are* saved. How *much more* does God love us unconditionally, now that we are His children? (And we’re going to see this point made clearly in vv. 9-10)

- Now, notice *what* God does with His unconditional love. He pours it “out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” The word for “poured out” is a word that means “to lavish to the point of overflowing.”

- One commentator says that Paul is using the vivid metaphor of a cloudburst on a parched countryside. His love is poured out on us like a drenching rain storm.

- My friend, God is *not* stingy with His love! He fills our hearts full of it, to the point of overflowing. The idea of the Greek in this verse is that His love *has been* and *continues to be* poured out on us.

- And it is the presence of this love that gives us constant assurance of our salvation. And what the HS does is to make us deeply aware of God’s love for us.

- Later on in Romans, Paul said, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” (expound)

- Now, *natural* love is almost invariably based on the attractiveness of the object of love, and we are inclined to love people who love us. Therefore, we tend to attribute that same kind of love to God. We

think that His love for us is dependent on how good we are, or how much we love Him.

- As Paul says in v. 7, it is uncommon for a person to sacrifice his own life in order to save the life *even* of someone of high character. Still fewer would be inclined to give their lives for someone they knew to be a wicked scoundrel. But God's love is different from that of man's. It is unconditional.

- "But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We were (in fact) wicked scoundrels, but God's love was still demonstrated toward us.

- And someone might ask, "What is to say that we will continue to love God the way we should?" But that's *not* the right question, because our eternal security is *not* based on *our* love toward God – it is based on God's love toward *us* – and His love toward us is unconditional and perfect.

- And (in fact) that love has already been demonstrated in such a tangible way that we could never doubt His love for us. It was demonstrated in the fact that "while we were still sinners," the very Son of God died for us.

- My friend, the unconditional love of God is a source of wonderful assurance! God's love for us

was demonstrated in an unmistakable way when Jesus went to the cross for us.

- And Paul uses the word "demonstrated" (here) in the sense of "proved." It is the cross that is the greatest tangible proof of the love of God toward sinners.

- Now, Rom. 5:8 is one of the most significant verses in the Book of Romans, but in order to grasp the profundity of it, we need to remember that the essence of loving is giving.

- "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16) "The Son of God...loved me and gave himself for me..." (Gal. 2:20)

-And we inherently know that the *degree* of the gift is measured by the costliness to the giver, and by the worthiness (or unworthiness) of the recipient. As John Stott puts it, "The more the gift costs the giver, and the less the recipient deserves it, the greater the love is seen to be."

- And measuring by this standard, God's love toward us is unique, in that God paid the greatest price imaginable for those who deserved nothing but His wrath.

- If you think about the recipients of God's love, even in *this* passage of Scripture Paul portrays how unworthy we are. He uses the word "ungodly" in v. 6. He uses the word "sinners" in v. 8. He uses the word "enemies" in v. 10.

- By using these terms Paul is making the point that God's love was totally unmotivated by anything good in us. We are totally unworthy of God's gift of saving grace. We're *not* basically good – we're basically evil.

- And when we think about the price that was paid, all we have to do is to think of what it was like when "Christ died for us." Think of the agony of the cross. Think of all Christ endured on our behalf.

- Stott says, "The unique majesty of God's love lies in the combination of three factors, namely that when Christ died for us, God (a) was giving of Himself, (b) even to the horrors of a sin-bearing death on the cross, and (c) doing so for his undeserving enemies."

- So this is a powerful verse that speaks of the "proof" of God's great love toward us. How could we ever doubt God's great love toward us? Objectively in history, and subjectively in experience, there is undeniable proof of His love for us. (pause) Equally comforting is our next benefit, which is:

## VI. OUR PROTECTION FROM GOD'S WRATH (v. 9)

- Look with me at v. 9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him."

- The use of "much more" says to us, "as if these *others* are *not* enough, there is another benefit that is even greater." Paul says that our justification (through faith in Christ) guarantees our deliverance from the wrath of God.

- And surely this applies to the wrath of God against our sin, that we rightly deserve, but was taken by Christ in our place on the cross. He emphasizes that aspect here (I believe) by using the phrase "by His blood."

- It was the shedding of His blood (in other words, the giving of His life on the cross) that accomplished our justification. And therefore the penalty for our sins were completely paid for. We will never incur the wrath of God on our sin because of that.

- But eschatologically, the phrase "the wrath to come" is often used in Scripture to refer to the time of the Tribulation, that is one day going to come,

and we will also (I believe) be saved from that time of wrath.

- That is the Day of the Lord wrath, and I believe that Christ will take his church out of this world *before* that time comes. But the “wrath” of v. 9 surely includes the wrath that is coming upon the earth in the last days.

- This is the wrath that Paul talked about in ch. 2, when he said, of unredeemed sinners, “because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God...” (v. 5) He says this time of wrath is reserved for “those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth...” (v. 8)

- But on the other hand, believers in Christ will be exempt from that wrath. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers that their reputation of saving faith had gone out into all the known world, of how they had “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

- And *not only* that, but they were also waiting “for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Notice that phrase “the wrath to come.”

- We know that this phrase is more than just the idea of keeping believers from hell. It is also about being delivered from the Day of the Lord judgment, because that is a major theme of First and Second Thessalonians.

- So this is a great benefit of being justified by faith. We don’t need to fear *any* wrath from God in any form. And I don’t believe we will be around when God pours out His wrath upon this earth in the time of the Tribulation. Benefit #7:

## VII. OUR POSSESSION OF GOD’S RECONCILIATION (vv. 10-11)

- Look with me at v. 10, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

- Now, this verse has direct application to our eternal security. This is saying, that if God has the power and the will to save us in the *first place* (“while we were still enemies” of God), (and He did *that* through His redeeming *death*) then how “much more” will He *keep* us saved by His *life*?

- And what Paul is doing (here) is reasoning from the greater to the lesser. He is using a form of argument that the Jewish rabbis called “kal wahomer,” which means “light and heavy.” In

other words, it is an argument from the lighter to the heavier.

- Today (in legal terms) we call this an “a fortiori” argument. It essentially says, “if something is true in one place, it is also true in another.” That is especially true if it moves from something greater to something lesser.

- And essentially what Paul is saying here, is that it is a greater work to bring sinners to *reconciliation* with God than it is to bring saved saints to glory.

- Another way to put this is, “if God brought us to Himself ‘through the *death* of His Son’ when we were ‘His enemies,’ how much *more* (now that we are His redeemed children) will He keep us saved by the *life* of His Son?” If a dying Savior reconciled us to God, then surely a living Savior can *keep* us reconciled.

- Perhaps you have read the book *The Saving Life of Christ* by Ian Thomas. I read it years ago, and it is based on this verse. Thomas points out that v. 10 should really read like this, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, (now as an accomplished fact) we *shall* be saved (as a continuing process) by His life.”

- And the premise of that book is that a *risen* Savior is *continuing* to accomplish what He *began* to accomplish in His atoning death.

- And the thrust of this truth for believers is that our Savior *not only* delivered us from sin and its judgment, but also delivers us from uncertainty and doubt *about* that deliverance.

- If God has already made sure our rescue from sin, death, and future judgment, how could our present spiritual life possibly be in jeopardy? How can a Christian, whose past and future salvation are secured by God, be insecure during the time in between?

- If sin in the *greatest* degree could *not* prevent our becoming reconciled, then how can sin in a *lesser* degree prevent our *staying* reconciled? If God’s grace covers the sins even of His enemies, how much more does it cover the sins of His children?

- But the theme (here) is reconciliation, and he tops it all off in v. 11 when he says, “And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

- We exult in God Himself, because He is the one who reconciled us in and through the Person of His Son. Paul has used that word “exult” three times in

this passage. He says that we should “exult” in our eternal hope, in our tribulations, and in our God.

- The reason our hope will never let us down is because our God will never let us down. As an Irish convert once said, “I often tremble on the Rock, but the Rock never trembles under me.”

- The reason we can “exult” in tribulations is because we are absolutely convinced of the love of God that will carry us into eternity. He is our Rock of salvation that is ever sure.

- PRAYER