

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION, PT. 1
ROMANS 5:1-2

Proverbs 18:22 says, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD.”

So the day that Raye Jeanne and I got married, I knew I was a blessed man. Only a little more than a year before we married (and before we met) I had been thinking that perhaps I should commit to a life of singleness. So when the Lord to give me her as a gift I realized I was receiving much grace from Him.

And I knew that I was getting a special woman as well. From our first date, I recognized that she was unique among all the women I had ever dated and I was intrigued by her nature and character. By the time we got married, I knew that she was just right for me. But I had no idea on that day just how right she was and just what a great gift she was to me. Now, after 30 years of marriage, her character and worth have been demonstrated in innumerable ways, and I recognize that whatever grace I thought I was receiving on the day of our marriage has been multiplied 10,000 times.

That perspective is also true of our salvation. When we trust Christ as our Savior and God declares us just even though we are not just, we are humbled and grateful and sometimes even overwhelmed by His grace in our lives. But that is just the beginning of our blessings in God. Yes, our justification has spared us from the wrath of God, but there are so many more blessings that we receive through our justification.

In Romans 5:1, having concluded his explanation of salvation as justification through faith alone, Paul transitions to a new section on sanctification — the process of living out our salvation. And as he begins that section, his first thought is to consider the blessings that come to us through justification. In verses 1-11 he emphasizes that:

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION GIVE US ALL WE NEED FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE.

Here are three of the blessings that the believer receives as the result of being justified by God:

1. We Have PEACE with God (v. 1)
2. We Have GRACE for Living (v. 2a)
3. We Have the HOPE of Glory (v. 2b)

1. We Have **PEACE** with God (v. 1)

- Paul begins verse 1 with the word **therefore**. He has made his conclusion about justification, saying it was not only a benefit to Abraham, but it was for us as well (4:24-25). Justification, by way of reminder, is a legal declaration of our righteous standing before God. It declares sinners, who are not righteous on their own and incapable of being righteous, to be righteous on the basis of Christ alone. Christ has satisfied God's wrath against sin and when a sinner trusts that Christ atoned for sin and satisfied God on the cross, that sinner is then declared righteous (3:26, 28; 4:4-5; 1:16-17).
- And now Paul draws attention to further benefits of justification.
 - ✓ When I was in seminary, I was involved in an evangelism training program at our church. One Wednesday evening, the man I was training (a friend and fellow seminary student) asked the question, "I know what the Gospel gets us in Heaven, but what good is it now? What do we tell people are the benefits of salvation *NOW*?"
 - ✓ There are benefits to being justified that are experienced on earth even now. And these verses answer my friend's question. It offers implications for our life now, as well as our future life.
- The first benefit Paul identifies is that **we have peace with God**.
 - ✓ The first thing that Paul says about this peace is that **we have** it. For four chapters he has primarily used the second and third person voices ("you" [pl] and "they") — e.g., 1:20-21; 2:1-2; 3:1-2, 28. But now he switches to the first person, **we**. Now the letter becomes more personal; the benefits of this salvation are for Paul, his readers, and all who likewise believe in Christ. This is *ours*.
 - ✓ And further, he also says we **have** it — that is, it is our present possession. It is not something that will come to us in the future, but is something that we presently own (and cannot lose).
 - ✓ What is this present possession? It is **peace with God**.
 - Now sometimes in Scripture **peace** refers to a subjective feeling of peace that we have when we are content and trusting in Christ (e.g., Phil. 4:6-7).
 - But that's not what Paul has in mind here. He is referring to an objective reality, not a subjective feeling. We have a real peace with God. That points to the fact that at one time we did not have peace with God, which is what Paul will say in a few verses (cf. vv. 9-10). God was ready to pour out His infinite wrath on us and was our enemy (an enemy against whom we had no chance of defeating or even standing). And now we have peace with Him.
 - This peace is also more than just the absence of war; it is also the presence of positive relationship. He is now our friend (Jn. 15:13-15; Js. 2:23); He is our Father (Rom. 8:14-15); Christ is our brother (Heb. 2:11).
 - God's peace is "the presence of God's rich and full blessing....When we read that Christ is our peace we are being told that completeness, wholeness, soundness in our lives depend on Him.

What he has done provides for our deepest needs.” [Morris, *The Atonement*, 142.]

- And in an act of abounding grace, it was *while* we were enemies with Him that He acted to make us His friends and give us peace with Him (vv. 6-8).
- And notice that this peace is **with God** who is ready to pour out His wrath against us; this peace is with God the Judge. Now compare our relationship with God the Judge to a human judge:
 - ... When we stand before a human judge there is no personal offense against him; he is there only to evaluate us in relationship to a law that is external to him. There is no personal animosity between him and us.
 - ... When we stand before God the Judge, there *is* personal offense against Him because we have violated *His* law — the law that He has made and the law that emanates from Him and His attribute of truth.
 - ... When we appear before a human judge, there is no personal relationship with him after the verdict — there is no animosity if we are found guilty and there is no friendship if we are found innocent. The judge has merely done his job.
 - ... When we appear before God the Judge, when He pronounces “Guilty,” there is animosity and anger from Him towards us; and when He pronounces, “Justified,” there is friendship and fellowship and sonship — a real presence of peace and intimacy between us.
- How do we get this peace? Only **through our Lord Jesus Christ**.
 - ... Everything we have is all and only through Christ, the Lord.
 - ... This phrase dominates chapters 5-8, appearing only once in the book outside of it (15:30). Notice what we have through Christ: reconciliation (5:11), grace that leads to eternal life (5:21), the free gift of salvation (6:23), freedom from sin and the Law (7:25), and security in the love of God (8:39).
 - ... With Christ we have so very much. Without Christ we are paupers and destitute. As we come to the communion table this morning, look to the cross and rejoice in what God has given you through Jesus Christ. You are at peace.
- ✓ Shortly after the end of World War II, General George Marshall said, “If man does find the solution for world peace it will be the most revolutionary reversal of record we have ever known.” Well, we may not know world peace, but we do have “universal” and eternal peace through Christ: “Our peace does not come from our removing the God of wrath from our thinking, but from removing his wrath from us. He has done that by sending Jesus to die in our place so that, for everyone who believes in Jesus, God’s wrath is taken away.” [Piper] Friend, that is your peace that you have today.
- ✓ And finally, notice also the condition for having peace with God. Not everyone has peace with God. If one desires to have peace with God, there is a condition: **having been justified by faith**. That is, he must have been declared righteous by God on the basis of his faith in Christ. If one is not trusting in Christ alone for salvation, then he will not be justified and if he is not justified he has no peace with God and if he has no peace with God, then God is still his enemy and fully against him. He has no peace now and no hope for the future apart from being justified.

- ✓ If you are not believing in Christ *alone* as the means for your salvation and justification, then you must believe — you must renounce your self-reliance and trust in Him alone to save you and justify you. And when you turn away from your sin and believe, He will declare you righteous and will give you peace with God. And friend, there is no greater hope or joy!
- There is a second benefit to our justification...

2. We Have GRACE for Living (v. 2a)

- Here Paul says ***we have obtained our introduction....*** Just as in the previous verse, this is our present possession. Because we have been justified, we have also obtained this introduction.
 - ✓ What is this ***introduction***? It is our “access” to grace. It is the means by which we receive grace. Paul is picturing grace as a field or arena to which we are brought and given an ability to access it.
 - ✓ It is akin to what Peter writes in 1 Pt. 5:12. The believer stands in grace.
 - That could mean that the believer can stand in the presence of God and before God’s throne without shrinking back in terror; Paul uses it in just that way in Eph. 2:18; 3:12 (Cf. Rom. 14:4).
 - But ***standing*** also refers to the manner in which one lives his life — he is resolute in his dependence on the Lord (1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 1:24; Eph. 6:11, 13, 14). So what Paul means here is that the believer “has the ability to stand and endure in life.”
 - ✓ Not only has Christ provided the basis of our peace, but notice that v. 2 also says that *He* is the basis for our ***introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand***. This grace comes ***through Him***. The only ability we have to live faithfully to the Lord is through Christ and in Christ.
 - He has given us access to the grace we need to always be accepted by God.
 - And He has given us access to the grace we need to live life well and pleasing to the Lord.
- How does one “stand in grace?” He lives dependently on the Lord for all his needs. And what he supremely needs to stand faithfully to the Lord is to be free from sin. And God’s grace does just that.
 - ✓ The justifying work of Christ not only has freed believers from the wrath of God and the penalty of sin, but the justifying work of Christ has freed us from the power of sin so that we are not obligated to sin. Because we are under grace, we no longer have to sin (6:14-18). This is the grace that justification has given to us through Christ.
 - ✓ Justification doesn’t free us from the wrath of God so that we can keep on sinning with impunity.
 - ✓ Justification frees us from the wrath of God so that we can live righteously and please God. Horatius Bonar captured this when he wrote in his hymn, “The Sin-Bearer:”

Thy bonds, not mine, O Christ
Unbind me of my chain,
And break my prison-doors,
Ne’er to be barred again.

- ✓ The work of Christ in justifying us has been to release us from every aspect of sin's dominion.
- ✓ This doesn't mean that the believer will never sin again (7:14-25 makes that clear!), but it does mean that the believer no longer *has* to sin; the believer has the option to obey and please the Lord.
- ✓ How does that happen?
 - He gives us a new heart and new affections/desires (2 Cor. 5:9, 14-16)
 - He indwells us with the Spirit who produces His fruit (Gal. 5:22-25)
 - We use the spiritual tools of the Word and repentance and community to fight against the sin we now hate (Col. 3:16; 1 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:25-26)
 - He will complete what He has begun in us (Phil. 1:6)
- ✓ Does that really happen? Hear the testimony of one man:

...on Monday I went to search for something on Twitter. It was an innocent and well-intentioned search meant to help me find and respond to important information. But there at the top of the results, in high definition and impossible to miss, was a pornographic picture of a woman displaying what she offered and inviting me to just click for more. There was a time when that image would have been a sore temptation. There was a time when that image would have been an excuse for indulgence: "Satan tempted me and I barely stood a chance," I could have said. But not this time. Within the smallest fraction of a second my heart, my eyes, my hand had reacted. My heart had said "no," my eyes had turned away, and my hand had shut down the app. It was instantaneous. It was amazing. It was instinct. It was a gift of God, transforming and overwhelming a temptation of the devil. It was a moment to give thanks and praise to God. In this area, at least, God has transformed me. He has given me a new desire with a matching new instinct. And I give him the glory. [Tim Challies, "The Holiness Instinct," www.challies.com/articles/the-holiness-instinct-and-the-unexpected-temptation.]

- I don't know what your battle is today, but I do know that if you have been justified, you have been introduced to and you have access to all the grace you need to stand faithful to Christ today.
- There is one final blessing of justification that Paul identifies in these verses:

3. We Have the **HOPE** of Glory (v. 2b)

- Paul writes, ***and we exult in hope of the glory of God.***
 - ✓ "Exult" is an unusual word to us. It means, "to take pride in something, to boast, or brag."
 - ✓ Now that's not usually a good idea, and Scripture warns us about unrighteous bragging (3:27; 4:2).
 - ✓ But when the object of our boasting is God and His work, it is always appropriate because God is always ultimate. No one can say, "God hasn't done that, but I have..." All God's claims to His work are righteous and appropriate and we can never overstate the work of God.
 - ✓ So Paul not only states here that boasting in God is appropriate, but he also affirms it throughout his letters. In fact, Paul uses this word 30 of the 32x it is used in the NT (mostly in Rom & 1-2 Cor.).

- And what the believer boasts in is his **hope of the glory of God**.
 - ✓ We have seen the word hope before and we have noted that biblical hope is not a “wish” or “desire,” but is a confident expectation that God will do what He has promised (cf. 4:18; 15:4).
 - ✓ And the hope of the believer particularly is for **the glory of God**. That is, we rejoice in confident expectation of seeing His glory in Heaven.
 - ✓ No man can see God’s glory and live (Ex. 33:20; Mt. 17:5-7; Rev. 1:17). So to see God’s glory means that we must be changed. And we *will be* changed (Rom. 8:29-30; 9:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:2). And because of that transformation, we will be able to see the Lord in His glory.
 - ✓ And Paul’s point in this verse is that when we have been justified by God through Christ, we are confident of seeing God and His glory. That becomes our boasting — not what we have become, but what we will get to see and participate in for all eternity. We’d rather have eternity in God’s presence and the promise of conformity to God’s sinlessness than anything this world has to offer.
 - ✓ A while back I was talking to someone who was ensnared in a life of fornication. I shared with him the truth that Christ could free him from that sin. But he didn’t want freedom; he wanted his sin. So I told him, “In 50 years, you and your girlfriend will be in a box in the ground, unable to enjoy any kind of sexual pleasure, but you will still be alive. And you will be alive for 10,000 years past that and 10,000 x 10,000 more. And are you willing to trade this incredibly brief indulgence of sin for all the pleasures that can be had in being freed from sin now and enjoying God for all eternity?” He was. And as far as I know, he never repented. Friends, what God does in justifying us is gives us the hope and confidence of glory and a delight in it. We’d rather have God than sin.

CONCLUSION: I want you to notice one more aspect of these blessings we have received in justification:

- ✓ Having *been* justified...we have peace with God — this refers to the provision of friendship that was granted (in the past) at the moment of salvation.
- ✓ The grace *in which we stand* refers to our present position in Christ — how we live for Him day-by-day.
- ✓ The *hope* of Glory refers to the coming fulfillment of our justification.
- ✓ So this justification is working in our past, present, and future. All through our lives and for all our lives, justification is God’s great provision of blessing for us. Justification is the foundation of our blessings, the present reality for our blessings, and the confidence for our future blessings. Everything we need is bound up in the work of Christ to justify us. As we come to the communion table, let us again give thanks for the justifying work of Christ for us.

BENEDICTION: Jude 24-25