

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION, PT. 4
ROMANS 5:9-11

One pastor decided to take his family, including his four children on vacation — “We’re going to Junction City, Kansas,” he said. “It’s where my dad used to pastor a church, and we can have lots of fun there — they have playgrounds, and a swimming pool, and an ice cream stand, and maybe even a bowling alley.” Trusting as they were, the kids bought into the plan and told their friends, “We’re going to *Kansas* on vacation!”

So the day of their departure came and they got in their car in Denver and drove to Kansas. They toured Grandpa’s old church and were set to go to the motel and swimming pool when dad announced: “You know something, it’s kind of boring in Kansas. Why don’t we just drive to *DISNEY WORLD* instead!” And then his wife pulled out four Mickey Mouse hats from a bag in the front seat and they expected jubilation and rejoicing. Instead, mom and dad heard complaints: “Ah, who wants to get back into the van?” “What about the swimming pool? You promised!” “I thought we were going to go bowling!”

The pastor’s family surprise backfired. For hours as they left Junction City he heard all the advantages of Junction City over Disney World coming from the skeptics in the back seats.

As he reflected on the experience, he likened it to C. S. Lewis’s observation: “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.” Our joys are too small and our anticipation is too short-sited.

It’s that way with holidays, and heaven, and our salvation. Our tradition at GBC is to recognize communion monthly, to remind ourselves of the work of Christ on the cross for us. And it is easy to become bored and apathetic with the practice, seeing the eternal and infinite provision as something mundane and dreary. But the Scriptures never view the cross and our salvation in that way. And as we come back to Romans 5 and the blessings of our justification again this week, we will see in verses 9-11 that Paul emphasizes:

YOU WILL NEVER BE DISAPPOINTED BY THE HOPE YOU HAVE IN CHRIST.

How does hope never disappoint? Because...

1. We Have Been Saved From God’s WRATH (v. 9)
2. We have Been Reconciled to GOD (v. 10a)
3. We WILL Be Saved By Christ (v. 10b)
4. We Now EXULT in God (v. 11)

1. We Have Been Saved From God's WRATH (v. 9)

- Verses 6-8 were something like a parenthesis, with Paul explaining the overflowing nature of the love of God that he mentioned at the end of verse 5. Here, Paul is returning to the theme of hope (v. 5) and the blessings relating to Christ's justifying work for us that he introduced in verse 1.
 - ✓ We see that in the statement, ***having now been justified by His blood***, which is parallel to the similar statement in verse 1. Through justification, the believer receives benefits. Paul is going back to the theme he began in verse 1 and reiterating still more benefits to the believer.
 - ✓ And notice that Paul says here in v. 9, ***much more then...*** He is making a comparison in which he argues, "If God has done that great thing, then He will certainly be able to do this lesser thing."
 - ✓ In other words, since God has done the really great and difficult work of justifying sinners, then we can be fully confident that He will also do many lesser things for us as well.
- And what Paul mentions next is that ***we shall be saved from the wrath of God...***
 - ✓ If God can and has declared us righteous (when we are not inherently righteous), then we can also be certain that we will be spared from the coming wrath of God.
 - ✓ When Paul uses the word ***saved***, he is talking about a rescue and deliverance — preservation. Paul uses this word frequently:
 - He uses it to refer to *past* deliverance from the penalty of sin at conversion (**Rom. 8:24**; Eph. 2:5, 8)
 - He uses it to refer to the *present* process of salvation (**2 Cor. 2:15**; 2 Thess. 2:10)
 - He uses it (as here) to refer to the *future* final deliverance from the power of sin and final judgment (**1 Cor. 3:15**; 5:5; Phil. 2:12). Here in Rom. 5:9, Paul is thinking specifically about the future, final salvation of the believer.
 - ✓ We need not worry about the security of our salvation; whatever trials we face on earth and whatever our struggle against sin, when we have been justified our final outcome is sure. And Paul emphasizes that when he uses the future tense, "we will be saved." He is pointing to a certainty. This is a promise that is sure and dependable. There is no doubt about our being ultimately saved.
 - ✓ And our salvation is from God's wrath. Let's also think for a moment about ***the wrath of God...***
 - First, a definition: God's wrath "is God's resolute action in punishing sin." [J. I. Packer] So God's wrath is an expression of His holiness. God's anger is against sin. It is His "holy revulsion...against that which is the contradiction of his holiness." [Murray] Every act of sin is an act of rebellion against God and therefore His wrath is always just (righteous, **2:1-2**).
 - God's wrath is expressed even now against sin (**1:24, 26, 28**). But God's full wrath is not yet experienced against all sin and God is patient in carrying out His wrath so that many will repent and trust Him (**Rom. 2:4**; 2 Pt. 3:9; cf. also Ex. 34:6 [+ 8 more times in OT]). God *wants* to forgive and relent from His wrath.

- God's wrath will be finally expressed in a final way against all unrepentant sinners (2 Th. 1:7ff; Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:9-11; 16:1ff; 20:10-15)
- God's wrath was poured out against Christ who satisfied that wrath so that it ended (1 Jn. 2:1-2). So all who have faith in Christ as the One who satisfied God's wrath, will be justified (3:25-26). [Notice that in Rom. 5:9, twice Paul states that it is only through Christ that we are saved from God's wrath — it is **by His blood** (sacrifice and death) and **through Him**. And notice what that means. We are saved *from* God (and His wrath), *by* God (and His sacrifice), and *to* God (to enjoy Him forever). God's wrath is swallowed up by His grace....]
- Because of Christ and salvation, God's wrath is also a demonstration of God's grace (9:22). And that is a glorious truth for the believer. God is infinitely angry against sin, but if you have been justified by the blood of Christ, you have been saved from that anger —

"It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of a holy God who's wrathful. But there is no wrath for those whose sins have been paid. That is what salvation is all about." [Sproul, The Truth of the Cross.]

- As sinners, we were all deserving of the wrath of God, but through justification, we have been saved from that wrath, never to endure it or be fearful of it. This is a blessing of our justification. As one writer has noted, "The ultimate threat confronting sinners is neither sin itself, nor the power of Satan, nor even death, but the wrath of God..., and we are saved from that only through the death of Christ." [Kruse, 236.]
- Hope is not disappointing because we have been saved from God's wrath. And secondly,...

2. We have Been Reconciled to GOD (v. 10a)

- **For** generally offers a reason for something ("because..."); here Paul is using it to offer a restatement of what he has said in the previous verse. It indicates a parallel thought and idea.
- The parallel idea is that there was a time when **we were enemies** of God:
 - ✓ This phrase means that we hated God and wanted nothing to do with Him (8:7; Phil. 3:18; Col. 1:21).
 - ✓ But it also means that God was our enemy and fully opposed to us and our sin (1:18; 2:5; 5:9; 1 Pt. 5:5b). It is not just that we were enemies of God, but that He was our active enemy as well. And as one commentator said, "An enemy is not a person who comes a little short of being a friend; it means someone in the opposite camp." There was nothing friendly between God and us. He is opposed and wrathful against sin and because we were sinners, He was opposed to us.

- But God being our enemy is not the last word about our relationship to Him: while we were enemies, we were **reconciled to God**:
 - ✓ This word picks up the theme of v. 1 — that we have peace with God.
 - ✓ To be reconciled means that there has been an exchange and change in status; the key aspect to notice is that God is not reconciled to man, but man is reconciled to God. Man has only sinned against God and God has not and cannot sin against man, so man must be reconciled to God and there is nothing in God that needs reconciliation to man. This verse makes that clear — *we were reconciled to God* (and notice that we didn't do the reconciling work). Paul affirms this in **2 Cor. 5:18-20**.
 - ✓ And while the word justification focuses on our legal standing with God, this word is a *relational* term that indicates the peace that has intervened between two estranged and warring parties. Other religions don't use this word, because they do not have personal categories for their deities. But God is a relational God — we see that in the fellowship of the Trinity (the love of the three persons for one another) and in God's relationship with His people: called sons, adopted into the family, brothers with one another, God is the Father, the Son is our elder brother, the Son is also the Bridegroom of the church, while the Father is the Bridegroom of Israel. We are not God's slaves; we have been made His sons to enjoy the rights and privileges of that sonship (**8:14-17**).
 - ✓ This word reinforces what Paul said earlier in this section: because of justification, ***we have peace with God***. And because God loves us (vv. 6-8), He reconciles us to Himself.
- And notice that we were reconciled ***through the death of His Son***.
 - ✓ Nothing the sinner does will bring about reconciliation; only the sacrificial death of the perfect Lamb of God will satisfy God's anger against sin. So God provided His own Son to die in our place so that His wrath against us would be laid aside and satisfied and He might adopt us as His sons.
 - ✓ The Father loves and the Father is reconciled through His own plan and the provision of His Son.
 - ✓ Because of Christ's death, the sinner "is adjusted to God's holy character" (Chafer) and being declared righteous, he is reconciled to and in fellowship with God.

- Listen to the Puritan, Thomas Watson:

"It is man that sins; it is God that dies. This is a sovereign cordial to believers. Christ having poured out his blood, now God's justice is completely satisfied. God was infinitely more contented with Christ's sufferings at mount Calvary than if we had lain in hell, and undergone his wrath for ever. The blood of Christ has quenched the flame of divine fury. And now what should we fear? All our enemies are either reconciled, or subdued; God is a reconciled enemy, and sin is a subdued enemy." [*The Lord's Supper*, 83.]

- You will never be disappointed with your hope in God because you have been saved from His wrath and have been reconciled to Him. And even more...you will be saved by Christ.

3. We **WILL** Be Saved By Christ (v. 10b)

- Paul uses the same term ***much more*** in v. 10 that he did in v. 9, and his point is the same: if God has done the greatest thing, then He can (and will) do the lesser thing.
 - ✓ And if God has done the great work of justification and through justification also reconciled us to Himself, then ***we shall also be saved by His life***.
 - ✓ We might say it this simply, “If God has made us to be at peace with Him through justification, then He will also complete our salvation and make sure we arrive safely in Heaven.”
 - ✓ Justification not only changed our status before God, but it also changed our relationship, and saving us by bringing us to Heaven is the fulfillment of that new relationship.
 - ✓ How does God bring that about? He does it ***by His life***. Literally, Paul says, “we will be saved *in His life*.” Paul is pointing to the fact that when we have been justified, we are *in Christ* and He is *in us*. We are identified with Him and connected with Him in a way that cannot be broken (e.g., 6:5-8). Because we have the eternal life of Christ in us, we *will* be saved eternally. We can no more lose the life we have in Christ than Christ can lose His eternal life. Since Christ cannot lose His life, if we are in Him and identified with Him, we cannot lose our life either.
- Friends, this is such a great hope for us, who have been justified. Because even though we have been saved from sin and we are liberated so that we don’t have to sin, we still sin. And it might be tempting to think, “I have sinned again so I am lost and incapable of being saved.” No. If you are in Christ, you *are* saved, you *are being* saved, and you *will be* finally and completely saved.
 - ✓ Paul will say it this way in Romans 8:29-30 — if you start in the chain of redemption, then you will be kept in the chain of redemption until it is fulfilled in Glory.
 - ✓ And remember, you are not saved by your own works; you are saved by the work of Christ. You are not kept by your own works, but you are kept by the work of Christ. That’s why Paul emphasizes, “we shall be saved *by His life*.” It is the life of Christ that saves Terry and takes Terry to Glory; it is not the life of Terry that saves Terry. Cf. also 1 Pt. 1:3-5.
- But, friend, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ — if you have no faith that Jesus died for your sin, if you are still asserting that you are good and righteous enough to be pleasing to God and if you don’t believe that He is angry and wrathful against your sin, then you have not been saved from His wrath, and you have not been reconciled to Him, and you will not be saved and taken to Glory. And even worse, you will experience His wrath, you are still His enemy, and you will be condemned to Hell. Unless you repent. And if you repent, and turn away from your sin, and trust that only Christ can save you and believe that His death satisfied God and that He can and must change you, then you will be saved and all the blessings we have spoken of will be yours. I urge and compel you to believe and place your faith in Christ today.

4. We Now **EXULT** in God (v. 11)

- You can almost feel Paul's excitement as you read this passage. And his passion seems to crescendo when he says, **And not only this**... All this and more! Not only does the believer have all these things, but the believer also has an ability to **exult in** (boast in) **God**.
 - ✓ How dramatic is this change we experience in justification? Once He was our enemy and now we boast in the fellowship we have with Him through Christ!
 - ✓ The word **exult** has appeared several times in this section and means, "to boast." In relation to God it is an expression of worship and adulation.
 - ✓ And notice the object of our exultation: ***we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ***.
 - So the Father is the object of our exultation and the Son is the means by which we worship.
 - And note that Paul reminds us again of Christ's work — it is **through** Him (and only through Him) that we have received *the* reconciliation. We have *received* reconciliation (as a gift). And we have received the only reconciliation that is worthwhile — the peace we need with God.
 - Our exulting worship and gratitude should always be associated with Christ's work in saving us from the Father's wrath and reconciling us to the Father as His children.
 - ✓ The life of the believer is one that is turned from hatred of God to one that delights in God. He has not only befriended us, but we are His friends and we love and adore Him.
- This verse not only affirms that we can and should exult in God but also gives us a reason *why* we should exult in God — because He gave us a gift that was fully unattainable by us in any other way. We rejoice in Him because He is all we have and all we need.
- Are you rejoicing in God and your justification [adapted from Keller]?
 - ✓ If you are boasting in God there needs to be someone who hears that boasting: do you speak with gratitude to other believers about God and His work? do you tell unbelievers about Christ's work for you? (This week when my weekly calendar alarm on Monday morning went off: "Tell someone about Jesus this week," I immediately prayed, "Lord, I haven't had a chance to do that in 2-3 weeks; will you make me to see an opportunity this week?")
 - ✓ When you remember your past sins do you give thanks (and rest peacefully) that Christ has fully paid for the debt of those sins and God is no longer angry at you for those sins?
 - ✓ When you identify current sins: fearfulness, lack of self-control, anger and bitterness, lust and covetousness, pride in too many forms, are you drawn to His love and do you lean on His present sanctifying work in your life?
 - ✓ When your conscience accuses you of repeated failures, do you say, "Well may the Accuser roar, of sins that I have done: I know them all, and thousands more: Jehovah knoweth none!"
 - ✓ When you rejoice, do you rejoice in the greatness of what you have done and what you are, or do you affirm, "I am nothing, but Christ is everything and because I am in Him, all of His is mine?"

- When you are saved by Christ for God, then Christ and God should be everything to you. You may not have the things the world values, but you have the One eternal treasure, and you have every reason for boasting.

CONCLUSION:

Life is full of disappointments. And most people face disappointment. Maybe that's what led writer Alexander Pope to say, "Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed." And William Butler Yates echoed that when he wrote, "Life is a long preparation for something that never happens."

Whether it is the dream of a marriage that never comes or a marriage that is dissatisfying or children who are rebellious or a job that is unfulfilling or health that is lost or something as mundane as a package that doesn't show up on time in the mail or a driver that isn't driving "right" and inhibits you from getting where you want to be, we all face disappointment.

Maybe humorist and author P. G. Wodehouse identified it best when he said of one of his disappointed characters, "He had the look of one who had drunk the cup of life and found a dead beetle at the bottom."

Friends, one thing will never disappoint you. And that is your salvation in Jesus Christ. It is everything that you need for today and it is everything that you need for eternity. Exult in God for what He has given you!

BENEDICTION: 1 Thess. 5:23-24