

## Initial Results

Romans 5:1-11

March 27, 2011

Okay, we have followed Paul through his argument that all of us, Jew and Gentile alike are sinners and worthy of incurring God's divine wrath. We have seen that the only corrective for this sin is faith in the God that both calls us justified, and acts on our behalf to justify us. We are saved through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is through His shed blood, and only His shed blood, that our sins are forgiven, and it is only by the grace of God that we are saved as He credits our faith in Jesus' sacrifice as righteousness. If we are right with God, it is only because Jesus has made us so. It is only God's grace, applied through faith, that makes a way for us to be forgiven. This is where we have come on this journey over the last several weeks.

We ended last week with the thought from which Paul launches this week. Look with me again at Romans 4:25. "*He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*" This is the gospel in a nutshell. It is the core of the message. All the good news we have in regard to our sin springs from this truth. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. He was raised from the dead that He might share His life with us and we might not die in our sins. It is all God's doing, and it was done for all who believe.

I want to pause just a moment to talk about belief. Our postmodern world has made it possible to say things that the ancient world could never have understood. We have convinced ourselves that two things that are opposite can both be true, or that truth either doesn't

matter or can be different from person to person. I don't have time to get into the philosophical debate this morning. There are too many much better things to talk about! I just want to remind you of the nature of what God means by belief. To believe what the Bible says is not to admit in your head that the people who wrote it thought they were writing truth. Believing what the Bible says is not even to accept that it chronicles specific events that actually took place in history. When the Bible mentions belief it means both that your mind accepts the truth of the facts and that your heart and life bend to them. Too many people accept that Jesus actually died on the cross and go to church to thank Him for it, but never actually bow down at the cross and allow God to bend their will to His. **Belief** is more than just having knowledge and accepting it. It is allowing that knowledge to change your life.

As we move into this morning's text I need to remind you that this passage is written for those who are saved, who are in the church, who are part of the body of Christ. These promises are only for those who believe in the sense we have just talked about. It is only belief—faith—that justifies us before God because God's grace is given to us through faith. The results of being justified are only available to those who have been justified through faith. Paul opens by stating his assumption that we are in that position. Everything that follows is dependant on it.

Paul lists two benefits that result from our justification in this morning's text. The first is found in verses 1 and 2: "*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord*

*Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.” (vv.1,2)*

The first result is **peace**. Our peace with God is based on the truth that we are justified through faith. It is not based on what we do, because we can never do enough. If we are to have peace with God it has to be based on Him, not us.

By providing peace with God, Jesus brings us access to God’s grace. Paul’s letter to the Romans, up to this point, has been about how all of us are deserving only of God’s wrath. It is wonderful that He is gracious, but none of us deserve that grace. We have nothing about us that can lay claim to it. Now that Paul is into the gospel full tilt, he tells us that our faith in Jesus gives us access to God’s grace. It takes our divine Judge and allows Him to be our loving Father. Through Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him, we stand in God’s grace and at peace with Him.

The second result is **joy**. Look with me at the last part of verse 2: *“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (v.2)* Despite the therapeutic desires of our culture and even therapeutic leanings in the church, God does not exist to make us happy or to make us feel better. Yet, joy is one of the results when we submit to Him and start allowing the Holy Spirit to mold us into the people He wants us to be. God wants us to be happy, but that happiness is always a side effect of submission and **obedience** to Him.

A result of being justified through faith is that we rejoice. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We rejoice that He has saved us. As Paul cried out in joy to Titus, *“But when the kindness and love of God our*

*Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” (Titus 3:4,5)* We rejoice that we can escape the wrath to come and that we can enter into the rest God promised to His people. There are too many good things about which we can rejoice to even begin to cover them here this morning.

Yet Paul does not focus on the good things about which we rejoice. After all, it’s easy to get excited about good news. Paul says we **rejoice** in our sufferings. We rejoice in things that before brought us pain and heartache. The way Paul explains it, it seems he actually means for us to rejoice because of them.

Actually, Paul does mean that we can rejoice because of our sufferings. We can rejoice in our suffering, and even because of it, because of what God does in us through it. Look at verses three through five. *“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. 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.” (vv.3-5)* Once we are in Christ, God uses our suffering to bring about a cascade of changes in us. While the suffering itself is still suffering and painful to bear, we rejoice in it because of the way in which God uses it. Once we belong to Christ, suffering builds us up instead of tearing us down. It builds perseverance in us. Perseverance builds strength of character. Character builds hope as we see what God has wrought in us. We hope for a better future and to be better people. This hope does not disappoint us because we have the Holy

Spirit testifying to our spirits and reminding us that we are objects of God's love now instead of His wrath.

As Paul continues this thought, he gives us another review of the gospel of Jesus Christ! This is to what it all always comes back. *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (vv.6-8) What more can I say than that? I can't expand much on that or state it any more clearly, but it bears repeating. We are powerless to save ourselves. So Jesus died for us even though we did not deserve it. We were ungodly, unholy, unrighteous, and yet the righteous, holy, Son of God paid the penalty for our sin. God shows His love in this—Jesus died for us on the cross, even though in God's eyes not one of us is any better than the worst of society. Would you die a long, agonizing death in order to preserve the life of a drug dealer, serial rapist, or murderer? Jesus did.

This brings Paul back to our first point. Part of having peace with God means we are saved from His **wrath**. Look again at verses 9 and 10. *"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 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!"* (vv.9,10)

God sent Jesus, and Jesus willingly came, to save us from God's wrath. In all of our talk about God's love,

we must never forget that the default position is that we are objects of God's wrath, not His love. To say that Jesus' death reconciles us to God is to also state that reconciliation is needed. It is not horrible that God in the name of justice would send people to hell. To believe that sending people to hell makes God an immoral monster is to have both too low a view of God and too high a view of **humanity**. It is also to deny what the Bible says.

It is amazing and wonderful that a just and holy God—out of love for evil, rebellious people—would find a way to save some of His enemies! We are not friends of God until after He gets us and we are in Christ. Because of the Fall, the human heart is naturally an enemy of anything holy and righteous, let alone the Divine Creator. Because of sin God's wrath is the only thing we can claim we have earned or we deserve. Acceptance by God of those who stood opposed to His purposes is the ultimate in peace. In the coming months Paul is going to fill us in more on how this amazing grace of God's works.

The other result also finds its ultimate fulfillment through Jesus Christ, and with it we close. *"Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."* (v.11) We not only rejoice because of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, and even because of our sufferings. We also rejoice in God. Through Jesus we are justified and reconciled to God. We can celebrate our relationship with Him rather than fear it. We can rejoice that the curse of death has been lifted and we are destined for life.