

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Rejoicing in Righteousness

Romans 5:1-11

2000

Introduction

In this section of Romans, the hopelessly lost sinner who received a right standing simply by believing in the promised Messiah of God, now stands justified before Him.

The believer who was once under the wrath of God is now set free to exult with great joy in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

There are several notable characteristics of this passage:

1. The bold confidence of its chain of assertions
2. The surprising irony that joy can come from suffering
3. The change from plural to personal singular in Paul's writing.

In chapters 3 and 4, Paul has established that salvation comes only on the basis of God's grace working through man's faith. Man's only part in becoming saved is to receive forgiveness and reconciliation freely in faith from God's gracious hand. The person who trusts in anything else, including obedience to the law or circumcision or baptism or any other human work, cannot be saved.

Faith has always been the only way to salvation. There is no other way! But how is our salvation maintained or preserved? Is it by faith or by good works?

If the preservation of salvation depends on what believers themselves do or don't do, their salvation is only as secure as their faithfulness, which provides no security at all. According to that view, believers must protect by their own human power what Christ began by His divine power.

While continued faith is necessary, our being able to stand firm in the faith is founded upon the Lord's faithfulness, not our own.

Having presented a clear explanation of how God justifies sinners, Paul now lists the blessings associated with those who have entered into this new relationship with God by faith.

I The Fruit Of Faith In God's Gift

A. We have been justified by God

Justified = Dikaioo = "To render just or innocent – as if you had never sinned" [Past tense]

It changes the judicial standing of a convicted sinner and imputes to him a righteous standing before God so that the individual is declared to be fully righteous in God's sight.

It is a legal term meaning "continually being justified"

Justification didn't just happen when you received Christ as your Savior, but it happens every day. Even at this very moment you are being justified -- or declared righteous -- by Jesus Christ.

1. We have peace with God

We have = It is in the present tense meaning that it is something we already possess.

In fact, Christ not only brings peace to the believer but “He Himself is our peace” (Eph 2:14)

The peace that Paul is speaking of is not subjective (based on our feelings), but objective (based on facts).

Before being reconciled to God, the Bible describes us as enemies of God. Now you may not have felt like an enemy of God, but God describes every man woman and child who has not been reconciled by faith through the finished work of His Son as an enemy and at war with God and His purposes.

Before we were Christians, we had not even the faintest chance for real peace because we were far from God. God had given us over to the destructive effects of our own sins and the sins of others (1:24, 26, 28). This resulted in profound alienation not only from God but from our fellow human beings, and also a constant tendency toward more depravity. To top it off, we stood under the ultimate wrath and judgment of God. No amount of personal effort or bootstrap religion could even begin to help us.

But as Col 1:20 tells us, when we believed, God gave us peace with himself through the blood of the cross. The objective fact of that peace makes possible the inner subjective experience of peace with God. Whereas previously it was utterly impossible to experience true inner peace because God was not at peace with us, it is now ours because the Prince of Peace reigns in our hearts.

Although the peace that Paul is describing is the objective peace of being reconciled to God, awareness of that objective truth gives the believer a deep and wonderful subjective peace as well.

Through trust in the simple message of the gospel a sinner's war and enemy status with God is over for all eternity. Most people do not think of themselves as enemies of God because they have no conscious feelings of hatred for Him. At worst, they feel “neutral” about God. But neutrality is not something the

Bible permits. The mind of every unsaved person is by definition “hostile towards God” (Rom 8:7)

If we are not children of God, we are children of Satan (Jn 8:44).

If we are not citizens of God’s kingdom, we are citizens of Satan’s.

The very root of our joy is the peace of God. But this peace comes as the result of another amazing characteristic of God – His divine grace.

The result of this peace is that we are convinced in our secure position before God. It frees us from focusing on our own goodness and merit and allows us to serve the Lord with absolute joy and abandon.

Peace and joy are the twin blessings of the gospel. “Peace is joy resting; joy is peace dancing.”

2. We have access to God’s grace

Access = Prosagoge = Introduction or direct access

For the Jew, the idea of having direct, unfettered access to God was unthinkable.

After the Tabernacle was built there were strict guidelines as to who could approach the presence of God and when they could do so. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies – and that only once a year. But Christ’s death ended all these restrictions. Through His atoning sacrifice, He made God the Father accessible to any person, Jew or Gentile, who trusts in that sacrifice.

Grace = “Unmerited, underserved, unearned favor”

It is the unsought, undeserved, unconditional love of God. Grace is God pursuing us until he has found us and continuing on with us to the very end.

Eph 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.”

It is God’s grace that saves us and it is God’s grace that keeps us! If a dying Savior could bring us to God’s grace, then a living Savior can keep us in His grace.

In the New Testament we often find the twin sisters of the NT linked together – *Grace* and *peace*. Grace is the initiative of God and peace in our hearts is the fruit of grace. And the net result of both is a positive, triumphant, jubilant approach to life.

3. We rejoice in the hope of God’s glory

Rejoice = Kauchaomai = “To boast in the sense of jubilation; to shout and exult”

Before being justified, we fell short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), but now we boast about it! We shout about it!

Hope =

As long as we exist in the flesh, our future glory remains a hope, but it is a sure hope because of the One who has made the promise.

The Christian has no reason to fear the future and every reason to rejoice in it, because he has the divinely secured hope that his ultimate destiny is to share in the very glory of God.

Two aspects of our glory:

1. Our glory now - 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Cor 4:16-18)
2. Our future glory – Rom 9:23; Rom 8:18

As believers we look forward to the day when we will one day fully behold the glory and beauty of our redeemer. A brother put it this way: “I can’t wait to be held by him.”

We also have account in Matthew 17:2 of Jesus Transfiguration before the disciples where “His face shone like the sun. But these events were merely appetizers for the glorious banquet of the Father’s full revelation of the Son in the last days.

One day, not long from now, we will not only behold his glory, but we will be glorified in Him!

In Jn 1:14 “John tells us that we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the Father.”

This rejoicing sets us apart from every other religion known to man.

The eastern religions offer no hope with their endless nightmare of reincarnations.

Existentialists see the future as absurd.

Evolutionists have no comfort.

But Christians “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Now it isn’t difficult to rejoice in something as positive as the glory of God. But the rejoicing that Paul speaks of next can only be considered supernatural.

Salvation is anchored in the past because Christ has made peace with God for all those who trust in Him (5:1). It is anchored in the present because, by Christ’s continual intercession (Heb 7:25), every believer now stands securely in God’s grace (v. 2a). Next he proclaims that salvation is also anchored in the future, because God gives every one of His children the unchangeable promise that one day they will be clothed with the glory of His own Son.

Although the believer's security rests entirely in the finished work of Christ and the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit, a believer's outward living will testify to his inward spiritual life. Obedience to God does not preserve our salvation – it is evidence of it. Our perseverance in the faith does not maintain our salvation, it is outward proof of it.

4. We can rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that:
Suffering has the potential, through God's power and grace, to develop in us the Christ-likeness for which God designed us.
Suffering is most often the pathway to spiritual maturity.

In the New Testament, suffering is viewed as the normal experience of a Christian [Acts 14:22; 2 Thess 1:5]

Christians should not only rejoice in sufferings because those hardships are evidence of faithful living (which is blessed and rewarded), but also because of the spiritual benefits they produce.

- a. Suffering produces perseverance

Suffering = Thlipsis = "Pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution, tribulation, trouble." "To be under pressure; used of squeezing grapes to extract the juice."

3 types of suffering:

1. *Religious suffering*: Suffering as a consequence of persecution for one's faith in Christ. (2 Tim 3:12)
2. *Worldly suffering*: Suffering as a consequence of living in a fallen world (death, illness, etc.)
3. *Stupid suffering*: Suffering as a consequence of foolishness

Perseverance = Hupomone = "To abide under or stay under pressure." It carries with it the idea of endurance, the ability to continue working in the face of strong opposition and great obstacles.

The word is derived from a group of words that have to do with the refining of metals, dross being burned away.

- b. Perseverance produces character

Character = "Dokime" = "Proof"

The term was used of testing precious metals such as silver and gold to demonstrate their purity

Just as intense heat is used to melt silver and gold in order to cleanse them of physical impurities, so God uses sufferings to cleanse His children of spiritual impurities. James 1:12

Abiding under pressure develops sterling character – character without impurities. This refined, pure character serves to strengthen our hope in the glory of God.

Illustration: Saints who were transformed by pressure:

1. Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah
2. Jacob and wrestling with God
3. Joseph in the dungeon.
4. Moses and his trials before Pharaoh and God's people
5. David being pursued and crying out to God
6. Peter and the agony of his denial of Jesus
7. John on the island of Patmos
8. Jesus and the cross.

So often the greatest blessings are poured out in bitter cups.

Personal illustration: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

c. Character produces hope

1. And hope does not disappoint us

So, we've come full circle: Godly hope produces in the end, godly hope.

B. We have been filled with God's love

Love = Agape = "Divine and sacrificial love"

When a person receives the gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, he enters into a spiritual love relationship with God that will last for all eternity.

The most amazing aspect of the gospel is that God loved sinful, fallen, rebellious mankind, so much "that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"

1. Poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit

Poured out = Is being poured out to the point of overflowing!

The idea in the Greek is that God's love has been and continues to be poured out in our hearts. Our hearts have been filled to overflowing with divine affection and the agent of this love is the Holy Spirit, who personally represents God's love in our hearts. It is a love that is beyond the power and capacity of unregenerate man.

The rivers of blessing can flow out of believers only because of the divine rivers of blessing of divine love, that God has poured into them through His Spirit.

Love is an evidence of a truly born again believer.

I Jn 4:7-8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

In fact, love is one of the fruits of the Spirit that He produces in those who belong to Him – Gal 5:22

When we have a desire to live a righteous life, when we have a hunger of God’s Word, when our hearts long for a growing closeness to God through prayer, when we delight in worshipping God just because of who He is, we know we are being led by the Spirit. The natural man has no such desires and even believers would not have them if the Holy Spirit did not prompt in them the hunger and desire to do so.

C. We have been given the Holy Spirit

II The Timing of God’s Gift To Man

A. It came at just the right time

At the time of our greatest need, when nothing else would help – Christ made a way.

1. When we were still powerless

When we were powerless to escape from our sin, powerless to escape death, powerless to resist Satan, and powerless to please Him in any way, God amazingly sent His Son to die on our behalf.

2. When we were still ungodly

Natural love is invariably based on the attractiveness of the object of love, and we are inclined to love people who love us. Consequently, 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 on how much we love Him.

But God’s immense love was supremely demonstrated by Christ’s dying for the ungodly, for totally unrighteous, undeserving, and unlovable mankind.

B. It came despite our sinfulness

1. The world’s demonstration of love

a. Rarely will someone die for a righteous man

b. Occasionally someone might die for a good man

Paul’s point in this text is that 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 people are inclined to give their lives to save a person they know to be unworthy.

But God shows his love for us in Christ's sacrificing his life for those who were neither righteous nor good, but ungodly sinners (1 Jn 4:10)

2. God's demonstration of love

a. Christ died for us while we were still sinners

It was because of Christ's love that He laid down his life for us when we were weak, sinful and totally unattractive. Human love will go to death for those who are its natural objects, but hardly for the unlovely and unloving. Yet, God confirms his love to us in the fact that Christ died for us while we were in a state of rebellion against Him.

Paul describes our pre-justified condition with four words:

"Powerless", "ungodly", "sinners", and "enemies".

In doing so, he tells us that God's love was totally unmotivated by anything in us. Because this love is unmerited and is not dependent on us, it will never change. Think of it! We are lavished with a love that lies in God alone; God's love is the permanent possession of the child of God. Paul drives home this awesome truth later in Romans when he says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:35, 38, 39)

Application:

When we were enemies of God, hostile to His Son, He loved us enough to make the supreme sacrifice of His own Son. If He loved us in that condition, how much more will He love us now that we are His children.

III The Fruit Of God's Gift Of Jesus Christ

A. We have been justified in the past by Christ's blood

Even when men openly hate God and do not have the least desire to give up their sin, they are still the objects of God's redeeming love as long as they live. Only at death does an unbeliever cease to be loved by God. After that, he is eternally beyond the scope of God's love and is destined irrevocably for His wrath.

B. We will be saved in the future from God's wrath

How much more = Paul uses a familiar argument, which the Rabbis of Jesus day called "Kal wahomer", which means "light to heavy".

Another way to put it would be to say that “If it is true in one situation, then it will be even more assured, and to a greater degree, than the first.”

Because we are now identified with Christ and are adopted as God’s children through Him, we are no longer “children of wrath” (Eph 2:3)

1Thes 5:9 “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Those who have been pronounced righteous by God can rejoice already in their deliverance from the end-time wrath.

1. If God loved and reconciled us when His enemies

a. We will be saved through Christ’s life

The argument that Paul makes here is that since Christ died to save us when we were miserable sinners, how much more will he save us from the wrath to come now that we belong to him.

If He has rescued us from sin, death and future judgment and promised us eternal life and salvation, it is absurd to think that our present stand of righteousness before God would be in jeopardy.

If sin was not a barrier at the beginning of our redemption, how could it become a barrier to its completion? If sin in the greatest degree could not prevent our becoming reconciled, how can sin in 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?

C. We rejoice in the present:

1. In the gift of reconciliation

Col 1:21-23 “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.”

Every time reconciliation is mentioned in the New Testament, God or Christ is always the reconciler, and human beings are always the objects of his reconciling act. God is always the initiator, and man is given the opportunity to receive the gift of a reconciled relationship with God.

We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (v. 2)

We rejoice in our sufferings (v. 3)

But most importantly, we rejoice ...

2. In God through our Lord Jesus Christ

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