

## Romans: The Life of Faith. The Power of Grace.

“The Blessings of Justification” – Romans 5:1-11, 18-21

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We continue with our series, Romans – The Life of Faith; The Power of Grace. Last week we jumped ahead to the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans on Freedom Sunday to celebrate our spiritual freedom which comes through the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today we come back to 5<sup>th</sup> chapter and discover anew the rich meaning of being justified through grace by faith in our Lord Jesus. We will look at five blessings of justification today. Since we have been justified through faith in Christ, we are blessed with:  
Peace with God - Access to God - Hope for God's Glory - The Love of God - Reconciliation with God

Do you remember Casey Anthony and the verdict given in her murder trial? Many who followed the Casey Anthony trial were shocked by the not guilty verdict that was handed down. Many people had a sense that she was guilty and this not guilty verdict freed her from the consequences and penalty that she should be facing for committing the murder of her young daughter.

Now, while I am not here to comment on this case, it is interesting to me that what we are going to be talking about today has to do with a legal term that has as its definition exactly what happened in this case.

It is the term **justify**. It means 1. To declare free of blame; or to absolve. 2. To free (a human) of the guilt and penalty attached to a grievous sin. If you are a Christian, if you are someone who has received Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you have been justified by faith in Christ, and **you** have been freed from the penalty of **your** sin; even though **you** deserved it.

If you would like to turn with me to Romans Chapter 5, it begins on **page 1198 in the pew Bible**. Here Paul discusses some of the blessings of being justified by faith in Christ. Now the fact that we are being let off of the penalty that is due us because of our sin, it is a blessing in itself, because it is a penalty that we could never fully pay. But there are multiple other things that the Lord gives us along with this justification through faith in Christ.

And in these verses, Paul starts out by saying that since we have been justified through faith in Christ, we are blessed with...**Peace with God – read Romans 5:1**

What does it mean to have peace with God? Well, before we received Christ as Savior, we were enemies with God living in disobedience to Him. There is no peace between us and God because of our disobedience. Isaiah tells us in chapter 48 - "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."

But now, for those in Christ, God has made peace when it is we who have made God our enemy through our wicked actions. This is one of the blessings of being justified through faith in Christ, God making peace by paying the penalty for our sins and letting us off through our

trust in Jesus Christ.

But it doesn't end there. He goes on to say that since we have been justified through faith in Christ, we are also blessed with...**Access to God – read Romans 5:2**

In our culture, we tend to take access to God for granted. But to the Jews of the time when Paul was writing, this was a big deal. And the reality is that it is a big deal for us, too. You see, even though everyone may think they can talk to God, they do not have the access that a Christian does. And it is not because the Christian is any better of a person. It is solely because of what Christ has done on the cross and the Father imputing/placing Christ's righteousness to a person that gives them access.

Paul tells us in Eph. 2:8 that through him (Christ) we both (both Jews and Gentiles) have access to the Father by one Spirit. It is only through Christ we have access to the Father. What a blessing!

The Jews understood access better. It was only the High Priest who had access to God behind the Holy of holies and he could only enter that once a year. Access to God was something very special and very limited.

I think we take our access to the Father far too casually. We need to recognize it as the blessing it is and cherish it as the blessing that it is. If we recognized the blessing it is to have access to God through our prayer times, the privilege and blessing that it is to be able to talk to the King of kings and Lord of lords, prayer would not be something that we have to do, but something we get to do!

But we also have **the hope for God's glory. Read Romans 5:2b**. These first 3 blessings of justification really speak to our past, present and future. Peace with God takes care of our past. We are no longer enemies of God and He no longer holds our sin against us. Access to God takes care of our present. We can now come to Him at any time for the help we now need. Hope for God's glory takes care of our future – because we have been justified through Christ, we don't have to worry about our eternity. We will share in his glory. God doesn't just take away our responsibility to pay the penalty for our actions, but he also gives us hope for the future.

But not only is our hope for the future something to rejoice about as something in the distant future, but we can also now rejoice in the hope that our sufferings are not in vain. Many people have the false assumption that if I follow the Lord, I won't suffer.

That is simply not true and is not taught in the Bible. In fact Jesus said in John 16 that "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." But the trials and troubles and sufferings we face work for us and not against us, because we have been justified through faith in Christ.

Rom. 8:28 – "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." He doesn't just take the pleasantries of life and use them for our good, but now He takes our sufferings and helps us to learn

perseverance and grow our character, so that we can be the men and women of God that He is calling us to be.

If you truly believe in Christ as your Savior, you have been justified and our God will use any of the suffering you are experiencing for your ultimate good. I may not know now, and you may not know now, how things will turn out in the midst of the suffering you may be experiencing, whether it is physical pain, whether it is emotional turmoil, whether it is financial hardship, but I can tell you that God will use it for your ultimate good if you have been justified in Christ by faith in Him as your Savior.

And He does this because of another blessing of our justification through faith in Christ, **the love of God. Read Romans 5:8.** God has demonstrated his love so we can know it in our minds, but He also pours out His Spirit into our hearts so we can experience His love.

So, let me ask a question: If He has given us His Spirit and we can experience His love, why do we sometimes question God's love? It is because we fail to walk with Him at times. There are times when we aren't spending time with Him through His word, in prayer, in solitude.

Imagine if we were not around our spouse for lengths of time. We may start to question their love for us, simply because we are not spending time with them. But in reality, even though it is a blessing of our justification to be able to experience the love of God and there are times we don't because we are not walking with Him, the reality is that His love does not leave us. In Romans 8:39 Paul assures us that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." His love is there for us in fact and in reality. Experiencing it is a blessing that is available always through His Spirit and that God has demonstrated through His sacrifice of Jesus.

These are not the only blessings that our justification through Christ has brought us. It has brought us **complete reconciliation with God. Read Romans 5:10a.** God did much more than just accomplish the legal requirements of justifying us, of allowing us to escape the penalty that is rightly due our actions. He also reconciled us to Himself.

Reconciliation is more a language of friendship. Christ not only paid the price for our sin so we have this right standing before God, but through His life right now, He stands as a mediator and priest constantly making intercession for us so we are continually reconciled with God.

Listen to what the author of Hebrews says when talking of Christ's priesthood in chapter 7: "because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."

So, Christ's death, burial and resurrection has justified us, brought peace between us and God, given us access to God, brought us hope, love and complete reconciliation. Being justified in Christ has not just let us off the hook for our sin, but has restored us to right relationship with the Father.

I started out this message talking about Casey Anthony and how we have experienced something similar in our being let off for sins we have committed. But that is where the comparison ends. While she may be let off for something many people think she did, she will not be experiencing a right relationship with the world. Everything is not restored for her. Like OJ, she is still facing other consequences of what people think she did. She is literally living in hiding, each and every day.

We don't have that. We have been completely reconciled. We have sinned and we have not only been justified because someone else has paid our penalty, but we have been reconciled as Christ continually intercedes for us. Oh, have we been blessed beyond anything we could ever imagine.

It is in the realization of these blessings that we will be able to live to glorify the Lord. Not to do things to try and pay Him back for what He has done. We can't possibly do that. But we act and do things simply to glorify Him and please Him because of what He has done.

#### Conclusion

Maybe you are here today and think you are not as bad as anyone else. I don't mean to be morbid, but everyone of us here is going to face physical death because we have been judged a sinner.

Too often we are worried about what we think is fair or right for others rather than the fact that we are in need of God's justification for ourselves because we have sinned against God and that carries a penalty that is too high for us to ever pay.

What are you relying on when you meet God face to face? Is it your goodness? – You aren't good according to the standard God sets. Are you relying on the fact that others are worse than you, so you think there may be a curve in the grading system? There is no curve. It is pass/fail and the only passing grade is perfection.

Our only hope is to be justified through faith in Christ. And when we are, we are not only justified, but blessed beyond belief with peace, access, hope, love and complete reconciliation. It is only through receiving Christ by faith that we will be justified and reconciled and truly be free to live.

Let it be so in Jesus. Amen!