Romans 5 (Part 1) :1-11 • Justified by faith

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Romans chapter 5. We're going to slow down a little bit tonight. We've been taking some pretty big chunks of Scripture–whole chapters here in Romans, but we're going to slow down a bit and just take 11 verses this evening.

You might remember, for those of you that have been connected to this study throughout, back in Romans chapter 3, we were introduced to a new word, and that word was, justified. And Paul used it at that time and it's important.

I didn't spend a great deal of time back in chapter 3 talking about the meaning of that word, and so I wanted to do it tonight. And the reason we're going to do it tonight is because it's used significantly in this section of Scripture. But admittedly, the word, justified is a bit of a strange word if we don't think about the definition because it really is very different from the way we use it in our usual language today.

For example, if I was going to use the word justified, I might say something like, he was justified in the amount of force he used when the thieves were trying to break into his home. Okay? And that's typically the way that we would use it, and it essentially means that whatever force he was using was reasonable and was warranted. That's how we use the word justified. He was justified.

But in the Bible, justified has a very different meaning. And if you don't understand that going into it, you're going to see Paul's usage of the word, and you're probably going to think that you're going to try to define it by today's sort of definition.

But the Greek word that is used and translated, justified in the Bible, by the way, it's very close to righteous. It literally means, shown to be righteous. Okay? In the Bible, justified means, shown to be righteous. And it carries the implication that whoever is referred to as justified is being declared not guilty, like in a court of law.

It's the same today, the way we would say, someone has been acquitted. They've been acquitted of all the charges. They're not guilty, okay? So you can see how

different that is from the use that we would use, saying that someone's force perhaps was reasonable.

I want you to be aware of that difference because the apostle Paul is going to have a lot more to say about the idea of being justified by Jesus. In fact when we read, we're going to read these first 11 verses. When we read that, I want you just to in your mind, when he says the word justified, I want you to think, declared not guilty, okay? Cause that's how he means it. So we'll say the word justified, but you can go ahead and insert, declared not guilty.

All right? So let's read through verses 1 through 11, chapter 5, then we'll open up in prayer. It says, *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,* (right, declared not guilty) *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* **2** *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* **3** *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,* **4** *and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,* **5** *and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

6 *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* **7** *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—* **8** *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* **9** *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood,* (there it is again) *much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.* **10** *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.* **11** *More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." (ESV)*
Stop there. Let's pray.

Father, use this time, we give it to You. We thank You, Father, that we can come together, that we can open our hearts to the ministry of Your Holy Spirit. We thank You, Father God, for the Word that has been preserved for us these many years. And we pray that tonight You would nourish our hearts and fill us with understanding and insight from the Word so that we would walk from this place tonight built up, encouraged, and prepared for the work to which we've been called. We look to You to do these things, and we thank You for them in advance through Jesus our Savior and Lord, amen. Amen. Amen.

All right. You can see some keywords in this section right away. For those of you that like to do that when you read through the Bible, it's always good. It's

always good to look for the keywords. And the keywords are, as we've already said, justified. There's also the keyword reconciled or reconciliation. Those are all keywords.

But I want you to notice first that chapter 5 begins with the word, therefore. And whenever you see the word, therefore, the beginning of sentence, it always tells you that what you're about to hear is going to be based on what was said previously. So in other words, we made a point in the previous section, now we're going to make a conclusion or we'll give you a summary based on that.

And let me just show you up on the screen. I mean, he's been talking for 4 chapters but let me show you up on the screen what I'm referring to. It's really from Romans 3:20-24. This sums up what has been said. Paul writes,

Romans 3:20-24 (ESV)

*For by works of the law no human being will be **justified** in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified** by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus…*

*For by works of the law no human being will be **justified*** (declared innocent) *in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified*** (declared innocent, not guilty) *by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus…*

So this is what he's been saying. This is the essence of what he's been saying. And so now based on that essence, it's not through the law, it's through faith. He now says, *"Therefore…"* here in chapter 5. *"Therefore, since* (verse 1, he says) *we have been justified by faith,…"* We have peace with God.

And so what he starts to do here is he starts to enumerate the benefits of this justification, this declaration of not guilty that He has bestowed upon us who have come by faith, and received what His son did for us on the cross.

And in these first 2 verses, the apostle Paul outlines these benefits, and you'll notice that the first benefit that he lists there in verse 1 is he says, we have peace

with God. *"...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Now guys, don't underestimate what he has just said. In fact, I don't think you can over estimate it possibly. This whole idea of peace with God is so important. But the first thing that we need to emphasize here is that it's only available through Jesus.

Do you know the whole world's looking for peace? You know that right? The world wants peace, desperately looking for peace, and they're looking for it all over. And they're trying to find it in all kinds of crazy ways, but it's only available through Jesus. That's what Paul says here. He says, *"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* It's made possible because what was once broken, and I'm talking about our relationship with God, has now been repaired. And since you and I have put our faith in Jesus…

I mean, good grief, our sins have been forgiven. The wrath of God is removed. We'll talk more about that. We've been declared not guilty. Wow! And this state of hostility that once existed between us and God has now been removed and we now have peace and friendship. Wow!

Let me show you how the apostle Paul describes it elsewhere. On the screen from Colossians 1, check this out. He says,

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV)

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death…

And you, who once were (look at these words) *alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death…*

Isn't that–see, that was us. Those two words described us before Jesus: alienated and hostile. Described me to a T. And now that has been put away and there is peace there. But there's another element of this whole idea of peace with God that I want to share with you, and I can't, I'll be honest with you, I can't really prove this biblically, but I believe that a lack of peace with God is one of the primary reasons behind what we see in the world. I mean the restlessness and the emptiness that is constantly seen.

We've heard testimony after testimony after testimony over the years from people who sought the things of the world. They ran after the riches of the world and the pleasures of the world. And a lot of people found them. They got them. They got it. They got the riches. They were able to take hold of the pleasures of this world, and they were able to literally sample the things that

everybody's looking for: fame and fortune and so on and so on. And we've heard over and over how these people, after receiving all these things, were still empty on the inside. And they said, I wanted fame and fortune and pleasure and I found them, and they didn't satisfy. Like that Rolling Stones song from so long ago, Can't Get No Satisfaction.

I always thought that was an interesting, title. I really did. I thought, wow that's the condition of the unsaved person. Can't get no satisfaction. That's life on planet Earth apart from Jesus. This life does not satisfy. But people ultimately come to Jesus Christ, and they find what they've been looking for. Suddenly, they're fulfilled. Suddenly, they have peace. And that emptiness that was there has now been filled and they love to talk about it and it's a beautiful thing. And I hope you found it.

Most of us in this room, we haven't found the things that the whole world is looking for. God graciously didn't allow us to get there. But you read through the Book of Ecclesiastes, one of the most powerful books in the Bible. Proverbs is called the book of wisdom. I call Ecclesiastes the book of foolishness because it–that's just...

Here's a man who has more worldly wealth than anyone should ever have, Solomon. He's filthy rich. He's got more wisdom than anybody else on the face of the earth. And he decides to set out on this project to see if there's any meaning or fulfillment to running after the things of this world. And he's got the money and the means to do it all. Good grief, the man had 1,000 wives. I mean, whether concubine or legal wife, it didn't really matter. And he had all this money and all these resources, and he sought to find fulfillment. And, you read the Book of Ecclesiastes and it comes to the conclusion and says it's all vanity.

Isn't that funny? We've got the Book of Ecclesiastes, but we don't believe it. We're still like, well, I'd like to try that. I don't know, maybe I could find something that he didn't find. I don't know. Lord, just give me a chance. I'll take the wealth and all the other stuff, and we'll see if we can dig through it and find some kind of meaning. No, I don't think so.

It is all vanity. It's a chasing after the wind. And that word vanity means emptiness. That's what it means. Here's Solomon, who went before you, and already told you that the world is full of emptiness apart from God.

So what fills that emptiness? Well, the reconciliation that comes through Jesus Christ to have our relationship with Him reconciled. And I looked up that word

in the Greek and it means a complete reconciliation. Not a partial, but a complete one.

Here's the thing I want to encourage you about. Your relationship with God has been reconciled through Jesus. There's been peace that has been made. But I want you to know and understand that the enemy knows that you have been reconciled to God. And because he knows it, he is going to try very hard to get you to believe the opposite. He's going to try very, very hard to get you to believe that God is angry and that you have fallen out of favor with God, and he'll do pretty much anything to do that.

And I'll be honest with you, there are a good many born-again Christians who take that bait and who end up believing that they have fallen out of favor with God, and they are no longer in this relationship of peace and reconciliation with God. And they believe that it's now all evaporated, and they've sinned too much, and God is now once again their enemy. But can I just encourage you this evening not to go there? Do not believe your feelings above the Word of God.

I want to remind you that Satan is a liar and the father of lies. And because of that, you know that he is going to do his level best to try to get you to disbelieve what the Bible says. And what the Bible says is, you've been reconciled with God and there is now peace. And that is the truth. And that is a truth that you can count on.

The enemy's going to come along and try to get you to believe the opposite. Don't go there. Don't believe him. All right? You got to hang on to the truth of God's Word no matter how you feel. Okay? Your emotions do not create a commentary on the Word of God. They do not challenge or contradict the Word of God.

And if there is a contradiction between your feelings, what you're feeling, and what God's Word says, you always say, you know what? I choose to believe God's Word. I choose to reject what my feelings are telling me, and I'm going to believe God's Word instead.

The next benefit that Paul talks about coming from being justified is in verse 2. Look with me again in your Bible there, please. It says, *"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we* (now) *stand."*

I don't know how clear the ESV's rendering of that verse is. Let me put up a couple other renderings for you on the screen. Here's the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

(NASB)

...through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into the grace in which we stand;

It says, *"...through whom we* (have) *also* (or excuse me, *we also*) *have obtained our introduction by faith into the grace in which we stand;"*

(NIV)

... through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

And the NIV says, *"...through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."* Very similar to the ESV.

Essentially, what it means is, is that you now have a position of favor, because that's what the word, grace means. You now have a position of favor with God, because that's what grace is. And it means you've been accepted into His family. You're now near and dear to Him.

Get this, guys, you are as near and dear to God as His own Son. Did you hear me? You are as near and dear to God as His only begotten Son. That is the favor in which you now stand. In other words, God welcomes you now as His children. You're no longer strangers. You're family. Paul calls it the grace in which we now stand. It means you have a standing of favor.

When I was growing up, I was one of 4 siblings, and we all kind of knew, every family kind of knows who is probably going to get the best answer from mom and dad if they go to ask them something, and that was my sister. I had one sister that we figured she had more favor with mom and dad. So if we were going to ask something of them, a special favor or to take us to Dairy Queen or something like that, it wasn't going to be me or my brother that was going to ask, we'd get a quick no, a hard no. But if my sister went and asked, there's a chance that we're going to get a good answer. Why? Because it seemed like she had a special favor, with my parents.

Well, you have that special favor. That's what Paul is telling you. It's the grace in which you stand and it's the benefit of that justification. Now that you have been declared not guilty, you have this favor of standing before the Lord, right? Pretty powerful. It's an amazing thing. And by the way, it is a permanent

standing. I hope you heard me there. It's a permanent standing. You can't sin your way out of that standing.

Next, Paul says in verse 2, and we're looking at the end of verse 2. And this is really the next benefit. He says, *"and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* The New American Standard Bible says, *"and we celebrate the hope of the glory of God."*

And you need to understand, first of all, before we dig into this, that hope has a different definition, again, biblically, than the way we define hope. We use hope to speak of a wishful thought. I'll say something like, I really hope the weather's good for our picnic this weekend. And then I don't know the weather's going to be okay. I have no real confidence that it's going to be okay. I'm just saying I hope it is. Or, I hope when I get home, Dad's not going to be too mad when he finds out that I broke my bike or something like that. It's a wishful thought.

But for the apostle Paul, the word, hope refers to a confident conviction. And it's not just I hope as wishful, it's I know. I know. It's an expression of assurance by the apostle Paul. And the assurance is in God's promise that we will one day share in Christ's glory. And that's what he's saying here. And we will be made whole and complete on the last day.

He says, *"we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* We're not rejoicing in the hope that His glory is going to be there. His glory is always there. Our hope is that it's going to be there for us, that we're going to share in that glory. That's our hope. The Bible refers to it as the hope of glory, right?

And Paul says that results in joy. And again, it's not, gee, I sure hope. No. It's an assurance of confidence. I'm going to share in His glory. I don't even know what that means, okay? I mean, I…my imagination can go all kinds of places with it, I suppose, but I don't really know, and I don't think you probably do either. What does it mean to share in the glory of God? I mean, I don't even understand much about the glory of God anyway, and to think of the idea of sharing in His glory, it's just…, it's a mind-blowing sort of a thought. But Paul says just the thought gives us joy. It brings–we rejoice in this whole idea.

And then he goes on. You'll notice another interesting sort of a deal. He says how this, our new position in Christ, which is this declaration that we're not guilty, it also changes our perspective on suffering.

Look with me in verse 3. He says, *"Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings..."* And this is Paul's way of saying that this radically changed

relationship is not just for the future, it's for now, because now is when we're dealing with suffering.

Because you see, even as Christians, as born-again believers, we at times run into the negative reactions of the people of this world, don't we? Whether it's a coworker or a family member or something like that. I mean, this was something Paul dealt with all the time.

We frankly don't deal with it a lot. It may happen occasionally, and if you're online, sharing your thoughts on various online forums, you're probably more likely to be attacked, from somebody's keyboard. It's not going to show up as a bruise or an injury on your body, but it's a kind of attack.

But Paul dealt with constant physical attacks, threats to his life and it was an everyday experience for him. And honestly, you know that a lot of Paul's letters were even written from prison. He had plenty of time on his hands, so he would write letters to the various churches. Well, why was he in prison? Well, because he was being persecuted. And he tells us and wrote in his letter, first or second letter rather to Timothy, that it was something that all of us would experience to some degree if we want to live that kind of a godly life.

Let me show you this on the screen. It's 2 Timothy 3:12.

2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

He says, *"...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will..."* Ultimately experience some form of persecution. It's going to happen. Somebody's not going to like you. It's either for doing the right thing or saying the right thing or just expressing your opinion about what is right and wrong. It's going to happen.

And even though it doesn't happen that much and that often here in the United States, there are a lot of people in the world who have to deal with persecution on levels that you and I just frankly don't even, we scarcely understand. A pastor friend of mine recently posted something on his Facebook page that, it was a baptism questionnaire from a church somewhere in South Asia. And that would include, countries like Bangladesh and Afghanistan and India, Sri Lanka, countries like that.

And before they would baptize someone in water, okay? Before they would baptize them in water, they had to fill out this questionnaire, and they had to be willing to give a yes response to these questions. Questions like, are you willing

to leave home and lose the blessing of your father? Questions like, are you willing to lose your job? This is a reality for people who come out publicly and declare their faith in Jesus Christ.

Questions like are you willing to be beaten rather than deny your faith? Have you ever seen–can you imagine us doing a question like that here in the US? Questions like, and these are real questions. This is a real baptism questionnaire. Are you willing to go to prison for your faith? Are you willing to lay down your life for Jesus? Because the possibility is very real that one of those things is going to happen just for coming to Jesus. Just for confessing Him.

But Paul says rather than dreading those things, we now have a new perspective because of our new relationship with the Lord. And he says in verse 3 that, "*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,...*" Can you imagine that? Rejoicing. Rejoicing because we get an opportunity to suffer.

What's causing this rejoicing? It's not a sadistic sort of a thing where we enjoy pain. He describes it later on in verse 3. What is causing this rejoicing? Look with me in your Bible. He says, *"knowing that suffering produces"* things. It brings about good things in our lives." And he starts off by *"endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,..."* He says suffering actually has a positive benefit or impact in our lives.

He starts by saying it produces endurance. And you guys know that endurance is the ability to hold fast even when things aren't going well. Do you know, that's really, honestly, that's one of the hallmarks of a mature believer.

We recognize Christian maturity in someone when life begins to become strugglesome and they hold fast to Jesus. They hold fast to His Word, and they say, things aren't going well at all right now, but Jesus knows, and I'm trusting Him." That's somebody who's holding fast. That's called endurance. And that probably- that person's probably been through some level of hardship and persecution in the past to learn how to hold fast through endurance.

And then he says *"endurance produces character."* Don't you hate that? But the idea behind the word character is being approved by virtue of testing. All right? That's the long definition of that Greek word, being approved by virtue of testing. And I think that everybody here in this room... Well, I don't know if everybody in this room.

I will say that a good many of us perhaps in this room can relate to having gone through a difficult season in our life, and getting to the end of that difficult

season and realizing that it actually brought us closer in our relationship with Jesus. And it actually, it improved our attitude. It improved our prayer life.

I got a note from a gal from Pakistan just today who corresponds with me on a fairly regular basis. But she's a young gal, probably, I don't know, 23, 25. And Pakistan is not an easy place to be a Christian. She's already had to go into hiding once because she wrote something that got published that people didn't like. And that was a very dark time, but she was going through a different dark time. But she wrote me today, and she said I... This has been really hard, but my prayer life has improved. My relationship with Jesus has improved through the course of this. And guys that's character.

It's when you have you emerge from a difficult season with greater clarity, with greater mercy toward others. You have a deeper fear of God because of what you've gone through, the hardships that you've endured. And you get to the end of it, and you can actually say to God, thank You. Please don't do that again. That's kind of what I say usually, to the Lord. Thank You for that. I appreciate but please don't do that again. But He doesn't seem to listen to me in that area. But that's character, and that's how character is often built in our lives.

And Paul says when you begin to see those changes and that greater clarity and that improved fear of God and your understanding of God's particular role in your life, he says it produces hope, because now you know that none of this is going to go away. This isn't going to...

In fact, he goes on to say, *"hope…"* This is verse 5. *"…and hope does not put us to shame,…"* And that's Paul's way of saying, hope doesn't disappoint us. That's actually what the New King James (NKJV) says. Hope does not disappoint. And the idea is hope is never going to fail you. Why? Because of who your hope is in.

See, I can say I hope about something in this life, and I can be disappointed. And I can even tell people, I hope this is going to happen, and I can end up being ashamed of my statement because my hope didn't come to pass. But if my hope is in Jesus, I will never experience shame because I will never experience disappointment, because Jesus doesn't disappoint. He can't. And the reason He can't is because He's all-powerful and He will never go back on His promises.

Now, that's not to say that if I put my hope into something that He didn't promise that I'm not going to be disappointed. I'm not trying to sit up here and say that people have never been disappointed in God, because they have, and I know that. People have told me that, I'm really disappointed in the Lord. But

you know what? That's a disappointment that comes from putting their hope in something He never promised in the first place. And they may have even been told that they could stand on a particular promise, but it wasn't a promise. And so they ended up doing it, and they ended up getting disappointed because, God never promised.

And sometimes the things they put their hope in are unexpressed. Why did God have to take my grandpa? Why did he have to die? He was only 93. How long did you expect him to live? People have all kinds of really interesting and rather unrealistic expectations. And when God doesn't meet their expectations, many times they become discouraged and so forth. But that's not what Paul's talking about here.

He's talking about the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, that He can take the difficulties of life and make them mean something, and bring about in us endurance, character, and hope. And that hope will not disappear.

He gives the reason at the end of verse 5, *"because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."* He's talking about the love of the Spirit that comes into the life of a believer that is so tangible and so substantial, that it effectively communicates that all these things are true. This is not a lie. God hasn't led you down a rosy path just to disappoint you and it's a very real truth.

When you come to terms with the fact that God is on your side, it changes your perspective. It really does. It made the apostle Paul, and frankly all the other apostles, bold as lions. They could stand in front of rulers and look them right in the eye and say, well, here's who Jesus is, and you crucified Him, and you need Him in your life because you're a sinner. And they didn't care. You know why? They knew. They knew. In fact, Paul's going to develop this idea later on in this letter. He's going to talk more about it.

Let me give you a little preview of coming attractions. It's from Romans chapter 8.

Romans 8:31b (ESV)

If God is for us, who can be against us?

We'll get into this later, but on the screen, you'll notice that he says, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

That's the attitude, you guys. That's what I'm talking about. That's the hope. That's the attitude that says what do I have to be afraid of? If God is for me, who can be against me? Well, a lot of people can be against you, but what good is it going to do them? Because even if they kill you, you go to be with the Lord. It's a win-win. That was Paul's confidence and I think it needs to be ours as well.

And if you need further convincing of God's love and favor in your life, here comes verses 6, 7, and 8. Let's look at it together. *"For while we were still weak,* (Paul says) *at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."* Who did Jesus die for? The ungodly. Don't ever forget that. He did not die for people who were worthy. He died for the ungodly, okay?

And then Paul goes on to say, *"For one will scarcely die for a righteous person*—(that might happen, he says) *though…* (maybe for what somebody considers to be) *a good person…* (somebody) *would dare even to die—* **8** *but* (listen to this) *God shows his love* (in other words, He reveals His love) *for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* What is Paul saying here? What is the essence of the message that he wants to convey to you and me?

Well, here's what he's saying. He's saying God's love belongs in an entirely different category than your love and my love for other people. Because as humans, we tend to offer our love to people that we think deserve it. We have a real hard time loving undeserving people. And we might as well just admit it right now. And that's sometimes we even have to say, Lord, give me love for this person cause it isn't there. I just don't have it. He or she just squeezes every drop of love that I might otherwise feel right out of me, so I need Your love.

Well, that's just the way we are. But God has revealed a different kind of love. How does Paul describe it? He says, He loved us even while we were still His enemies, because that's what it means when it says while we were still sinners. We were His enemies. We were literally in a hostile state toward Him.

Have you ever had somebody act in a hostile way toward you? It's hard to like somebody who is being hostile toward you, let alone love them. Now try giving your life for them when they're in a hostile state against you, right? I mean, that kind of puts it in perspective, and that's what Paul is saying.

Jesus offered you and me life when we were dead. He offered us freedom when we were captives. And He came to us when we were trapped in darkness and said, I love you enough to give my life for you. And it's funny, he didn't wait for us to get our act together.

It's really interesting. Have you ever invited somebody to church and they said something to you to the effect of, that, well thank you for the invitation. There's just some things in my life I need to kind of get together before I come to church.

Have you ever had somebody say that to you? It's a very common sort of a response, but what those people are essentially communicating is they have no concept of God's love. None. And they think they, they have to be deserving in order to come to church.

That's why some people don't want to come through that door. And when you invite them, they don't want to come because they don't believe they're deserving to be there. And one of the best things you can say to them is, I love going to church, but you know what? I don't deserve to come to church. I don't deserve God's love, His attention, His goodness, and His forgiveness. I don't deserve any of those things, but I receive them, and I get them because He's good, not because I'm good. And when you say that, that begins to take a little bit of that, hopefully that struggle away from that misplaced understanding that somehow I've got to be worthy of God's love.

Guys, even as a Christian, you are not worthy of God's love. You will never be worthy of God's love. But He loves you. He loves you right here, right now. In fact, He is just tickled pink with you But not because you deserve it, not because you've had a good week or a good month or even a good last 6 hours. He loves you because He's good and He's chosen to love you through what His Son did on the cross. You're never going to be worthy, but it's really interesting. I say that from time to time, and I get people who object to that every so often.

And there are a good many folks, Christians I'm talking about, who refuse to believe that we are unworthy of God's love. And one of the reasons is they just can't conceive it because they're thinking of God in human terms. We tend to, again, give our love where people are worthy to receive it. And they'll even say things like, I think God saw in us some value. He felt that we were worthy of His love and attention.

Listen, if we were worthy, Jesus wouldn't have had to come to die on the cross. He came and died for... That's why I highlighted that earlier. Jesus came to die for the ungodly. You think ungodly people are worthy? Heavens no. Well, if they're worthy of anything, it's the hottest spot in hell, and that's what I deserved but instead, I got the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ my Lord.

I want to remind you of something that is revealed to us in the Book of Revelation. John is beholding things in a vision that are almost beyond words. I'm impressed that John could even find words. But you'll notice when you read through the Book of Revelation, he uses the language of similarity over and over again, because he doesn't have any way of describing what he's seen. So he'll say, it was like, and it sounded like the sound of waters. It sounded like this, and it looked like that. And so there were many things and so forth. But one thing he did see that he understood was there was this huge scroll that he saw. Let me put this on the screen. It's from Revelation chapter 5.

Revelation 5:2-3 (ESV)

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it,

It says, *And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"* (listen to this) *And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it,"*

Nobody was found worthy. That's, guys, that's a commentary. You just got slapped in the face. I don't know if you knew that. We're not worthy.

Now, you know the Book of Revelation, you know that one stepped forward who is worthy, because John literally started crying. He says, he says, I wept. And the angel said to him, don't weep. The lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed, and he is worthy to take the scroll and open the seals. (Revelation 5:5) There's only one worthy. There's only one.

Paul ends this section by laying out one final benefit of being justified through Jesus, and I want you to see this in verse 9. He says, *"Since, therefore, we have now been justified* (and again, you know that means declared not guilty) *by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."* And Paul is saying that now that you've been declared not guilty, there's no wrath for you That's good news. There's no wrath.

And I've shared this with you guys before in an earlier study, I'll say it again, this is one of the toughest concepts for Christians to lay hold of, that they have been saved from God's wrath. It's just funny.

And one of the reasons, and I know, I get it, I'm human just like you. And as humans, we're very aware of our failures. We're aware of our sin. We know that

we sin. We know that we mess up. We know it, we know it, we know it. We know how many times we have to go to the Lord, and we have to ask for forgiveness, and we have to confess before Him.

And because we're so painfully aware of those things, and then somebody like me comes along and says, by the way, there's no wrath for you. It's gone. It's been consumed in the person of Jesus. And people end up just kind of going, oh, that's really interesting. But they don't believe it. They can't accept it because they are so aware of their sin.

But as I told you guys last week, this happens because we focus on our sin and not on the sacrifice of Jesus. We think our sin trumps His sacrifice, when in fact His sacrifice trumps our sin. In other words, it's greater than our sin. Your sin is not greater than the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Okay?

And so what that means is when Jesus hung on the cross, He bore God's wrath for you and me. And what did He say at the end of that sacrifice? He said, *"It is finished."* (John 19:30) Right? That's what my Bible says. And it is finished means, paid in full.

So here's my question to you. First of all, is there anything more you need to pay? He said paid in full. So if you come back and you say, well, I mean, I need to work hard to... Then you missed the point. And then the second thing is there more wrath coming your way? Those are really the questions, two questions that every Christian needs to reconcile in their heart and mind. Is there more that I have to do, and is there more wrath coming down the pike for me eventually? The Bible says no, there is no more that you have to do, and there is no more wrath.

Let me read verse 9 again. *"Since, therefore, we have now been justified* (declared not guilty) *by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."* There it is. Here's the question: Are you going to believe it? Do you choose to believe it?

Somehow, we want to somehow circumvent faith. People will say to me, well, Pastor Paul, I know what the Bible says, but how do I embrace it? You do it by faith. You do it by believing God over you. You do it by putting His Word first and what you feel second or even later down the line.

You can't circumvent faith. It comes down to faith. You believe it. You believe it because He said it, and He's trustworthy, right? Frankly, what we've just read here in verse 9, this is one of the fundamental reasons why I believe that the

church is going to be caught up prior to the Great Tribulation. And I know that not everybody agrees with me on that point, and that's fine. We're not going to break fellowship over that.

But I'll just tell you right now, it's one of the reasons I believe that the church will be caught up to be with the Lord. Why? Because the Great Tribulation period is a time of wrath. It's a time of outpouring of God's wrath. And the Bible very clearly says we've been saved from God's wrath. That's not the only reason I believe, by the way. It's one of them.

Paul says in verse 10, *"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."*

And quite honestly, this sentence is given to you and me in a form that... Well, let me just say this. It's worded in a way that we, we don't really talk like this, even though this is a modern translation. Let me show you the NIV rendering. It's a little better.

Romans 5:10 (NIV84)

...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!

It says, *"...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!"*

Even that is a little kind of, verbose. There's a lot of words that you and I probably wouldn't include. I would say something like, if His death could save us, imagine what His life will do. That's what I would say. I mean, if His death saved you, imagine what His life's going to do for you. That's what Paul is saying, okay?

And finally, verse 11. *"More than that,* (he says) *we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."* And so the final statement, I think this final statement here in verse 11 is key because Paul is declaring what matters. And what matters is what we have through Jesus, and that's why we rejoice. That's what he says here. We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what matters.

There's a lot of things, there's a lot of things in this world that the world tries to convince us matter. But you know what really matters is what we have through Jesus. Because what we have is reconciliation with God, we have peace with God, we have justification, which means we've been declared innocent or not guilty. We have endurance, we have character, we have hope, and it's all through Jesus, and that's what matters.

And what we do, our own works, our own efforts, our own energies, that's not what matters. What matters is Jesus. It's all about Jesus and what He has accomplished. And if we can just get our eyes off ourselves long enough to focus on what Jesus has done and what He has accomplished. We're going to have the same joy in our lives that Paul's talking about here, this rejoicing in the hope of what is ours in Christ.

I know that it's hard. Not only is it hard because we're aware of our failings, it's hard because we have an enemy that likes to bring them up, too. And he is the accuser of the brethren, and he likes to point the bony finger to you and me and say, look what you did. And this is who you really are. And he wants us to just get our eyes on what we see in ourselves.

It's one of the reasons I don't... I'm not a big fan of modern-day counseling, because much of counseling causes people to look inward. And when you look inward, you find a lot of darkness. When you look outward, you find Jesus, and you find hope. That's where hope is found and that's why the Bible tells you and me that we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, right? Not on ourselves.

So this is just this recurring theme that Paul is giving us here in the Book of Romans. We've heard it in past studies. We're hearing it again. Where is our joy? Where is our hope? It's all in Him, amen? Amen. We're going to close in prayer and then give you some time for fellowship, and we encourage you to stick around and do that here as well. So let's pray.

Father, we thank You so much that our hope is found in Jesus, and we've lived long enough to realize that our hope is not in this world. Our hope is not in the things of this world, the ways of this world, and the delights of this world. But our hope is in You. Our hope is found in You, for there we have reason, we have purpose.

We find character and endurance, and we find a reason to rejoice because you have transformed our lives by declaring us not guilty. Lord, help us to remember, even when the enemy comes to accuse, to bring up all of our past failures and present failings, help us, Lord, to remember what Jesus did for us

and how we now stand in this favor that we have through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We thank You, Lord. We praise You, and we worship You in the name of our Savior, Jesus. And all God's people said together, amen. Amen