

Guest Preacher Rev. George Macaskill

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Date: 28 July 2024

Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Now let's turn in our Bibles to the chapter of God's Word, which we read in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 5.

And as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on the first three verses. So let's read them again. Romans chapter 5, verses 1 to 3.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance.

[1 : 10] Paul is at pains to emphasize that no Christian is merely forgiven.

When any sinner, however vile, whenever any sinner puts their trust in Jesus Christ, they are not merely instantly forgiven for all their sins.

The salvation of Christ includes much, much more. Along with forgiveness, we have read there that they receive peace, grace, and joy.

Along with a host of other things. But we'll confine ourselves to these three things at the moment as God would help us.

So let's look at them all, beginning, of course, with justification. Therefore, since we Christian believers have been justified by faith, what does justification mean?

[2 : 29] Justification refers specifically to forgiveness of sins and our standing before God. The moment any sinner, however evil, however wicked, the first moment he puts his faith in Christ, he is instantly made right with God.

No sin, past, present, or future, counts.

God does not count your sin if you believe in Christ. If you believe in Christ, you are standing on a penalty-free zone.

Nothing you do will ever be brought up against you on the day of judgment. God treats you as if you are perfectly perfect.

And you are everything but. And so am I. But justification means God treats us as if we were perfect.

[4 : 05] Our relationship with him, our status before him, is one of perfection.

We are now standing in a position where God will never, ever condemn us.

We have immunity as believers in Christ. We have immunity from prosecution.

Irrevocable. That position, that situation, that status before God will never, ever change.

That's the blessing the Christian has. Why on earth would anybody say, Oh, I'm not into Christianity.

[5 : 10] I'm not into this faith business. Why on earth would anybody say that when there are such blessings? However wicked you've been, for the first time, depend on Christ's sacrifice at Calvary.

And all your sins, past, present, and future, are eternally forgiven by God. And you stand in a penalty-free zone.

Now, the true sign, the true sign, that that's your position, the true sign that you're a genuine believer, is that you now fear sinning.

Some people, when they hear the gospel, as Paul discovered himself, and mentions in the very next chapter, verse 1, some people say, Well, if that's the case, I'm going to believe in Jesus, and then I can live any way I like, and I know it'll be great, I'll still get to heaven, whatever I do.

Well, if you think like that, let me say, first of all, that's perfectly natural. But you behave like that, and you will discover you're not a genuine believer.

[6 : 40] Because if you believe in Jesus Christ, you'll love him, and be very, very grateful to him. And you will want for the rest of your life to please him.

But you won't succeed, because you'll still fall into sin. But you're justified. Your relationship with God will never change.

That's the blessing of justification. And that's how Paul starts explaining his position here. Having, since we have been justified by faith, since we're in that glorious situation of our sins forgiven forever, irrevocably, he tells us we have something else.

You see, the primary blessings of Christianity, the primary blessings of being justified in a right relationship with God, are really in the next world.

The real blessings of the next world. The future is the glorious thing for Christians. But down here on earth, there are problems to face.

[8 : 04] And we need to be able to face them. So there's other things we have to experience.

There's other blessings to enjoy. You see, the moment Christ becomes your Savior, that moment, Satan becomes your enemy.

And he'll hound you till the day you die. But your position before God will never, ever change if you really believe in Christ.

Christ. So that's justification. So he's telling us here, therefore, since we have been justified by faith, here's another blessing.

We have peace with God. Peace with God.

God. Whatever goes wrong, from now on, you're a believer in Christ. Whatever goes wrong, you have peace.

[9 : 17] You are at peace with God. Now, listen. Peace with God is not a feeling.

It's a status. It's a position you're in. It's not a subjective experience. It's an objective fact.

Your relationship with God remains the same. Whatever you feel. You're reconciled to God.

Now, that is not to say that a Christian believer cannot grieve God. We still grieve God.

But God is never angry with us. Christ at the cross absorbed all God's anger against every believer.

[10 : 27] Christ has taken away every little bit of God's anger against our sins. But that does not mean he's not grieved by our continual sinning.

And that's why it's so important to distinguish between peace with God on the one hand and the peace of God on the other hand.

Peace with God is a status, a situation, a position, a relationship. That's peace with God. But having the peace of God which Christians are granted the moment they believe is a different thing.

It is an inner calm and quiet assurance that puts our hearts at rest, but it is subject to our behavior.

It will change. Peace with God never changes. But having, enjoying the peace of God can fluctuate according to the way we live.

[12 : 01] Peace of God can be disturbed by stepping out of God's will through disobedience or worldliness. Peace with God is a state that can never change and never be lost.

But the peace of God is a feeling dependent upon our behavior. There is never ever war between the Christian and God.

Never. But we can grieve him and we can demoralize ourselves through our behavior, our bad behavior, our wrong behavior.

As long as we are alive, we'll be sinning. But the great difference between an unconverted sinner and a saint who is a sinner whose sins are forgiven, saints are sinners whose sin is forgiven, the difference is the saints sins trouble them.

The saints sins displease them and displeases God, of course, so that they have to confess their sins. Confession of sin continues throughout our lives because we're continually sinning and we have to continually confess our sins.

[13 : 43] But God has put in writing, if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

sins. That's a blessing. We always have peace with God, we're always at peace with God, but we may not enjoy the feeling of the peace of God through wrong behavior, through sin.

And we have to have the assurance and the comfort and the consolation that if we confess our sins, he will forgive upon confession.

We don't need to go on and on and on confessing the same old sin. If we confess our sins, he will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So that's justification and that's peace with God. But there's a third blessing mentioned here. Verse 2, through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

[15 : 16] Access by faith into this grace in which we stand. As indicated already, we're standing in a penalty-free zone before God where we're immune to prosecution by God.

Not by men, but by God. You might ask, what does grace mean? Well, it just means undeserved kindness.

And the time to remember the grace of God that it is undeserved kindness is when you feel you've blown it.

Do you ever feel you've blown it with God? If you're a Christian, a genuine believer in Christ, you can't blow it. Oh, you grieve God, but you can never make him turn against you.

You have to confess your sin. You have to apologize, as it were, and grieve and repent of your sin. And he will forgive if you only believe.

[16 : 32] this access into this grace, unlimited access, free.

You know what it's like when you get a new computer program. You might get a helpline, but it's only for three months. It might only be for twelve issues.

It might only be certain hours of the week or the day, and of course, it might be by appointment, but this access. Christians have free access into the undeserved kindness of God the moment you believe on Christ.

That's the blessing. Unlimited access to the free grace of God. Now, why would you want more grace?

You know, somebody said to me a while ago, how is grace like money? How is grace like money? And his answer was, the more you get, the more you want.

[17 : 51] But wait a minute. Why do you want more money? What's the reason you want more money? grace like grace like because it doesn't satisfy.

The amount you have doesn't satisfy. You want more. But why do you want more grace? Do you know why?

Precisely because it satisfies. As the disciples said, Lord, evermore give us this bread. food. We want more grace because it satisfies, because it works, it's real.

You want more money because it doesn't satisfy. And so we ask, look, what is grace for?

Why do you want more grace? grace? Why do Christians want more grace? Mature Christian men do not pray for Alpha Romia cars.

[19 : 03] They pray for more godliness. Mature Christian women do not pray they'll look a million dollars.

They'll pray they'll look more like Christ. Genuine believers pray for more holiness.

How holy are you? How are you going to measure it? I was always sobered by hearing once, I can't remember who it was that said it, but he said, you are exactly as holy as you want to be.

Challenging, isn't it? You're as holy as you want to be. Christians are predestined.

You know, there's no verse in the Bible that says Christians are predestined to be in heaven.

There's no verse in the Bible that says that. What does the Bible say? We're predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

[20 : 24] We're meant to be Christ-like because Christ paid for our sins and we don't have any more worries in the world. You don't need to worry about the day of judgment for every secret thing will be exposed.

No worries. Christ will come forward on the day of judgment and said, my shed blood paid for that person's sins.

Yes, he was rubbish. Yes, he couldn't be relied on, but my blood paid for his sins. Let him go free.

No worries about the day of judgment.

heaven. But, we are predestined to be more holy and we have to strive to be more holy because we want to please him.

He died for us. He went through agony for us. The least we can do is what he wants us to do. That's what we want more grace for.

[21 : 29] More grace to please him. How do we get access for this? Well, how often did we read?

Through him. Since we've been just, we have been through our Lord Jesus Christ and through him we have also obtained access by faith.

It's by faith. Do you believe it? That's it. Do you believe it? Do you not? That's it. Then there's the third blessing that accompanies justification.

Not only that, verse 3, not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings. There's something.

Do you like suffering? No. It doesn't say you like it, but you're able to rejoice in it. Sorrowful, yet, always rejoicing.

[22 : 40] One of the Christian paradoxes. You know what a paradox is? An apparent contradiction, but only apparent.

Sorrowful, and yet, always rejoicing. Rejoice. It is absolutely vital.

When you become a Christian, it is vital to grasp, in this world, what promised problems. Heaven's for the next world.

The future's glorious. You needn't worry for a second about the next world, but you should be concerned about this world. Are you pleasing Him? Are we bringing glory to Him in this world? In Christianity, being a Christian, there's immunity from prosecution, but there is no immunity from trouble.

[23 : 49] One of the first things Christ said to His disciples before He left them to suffer for them was, in the world, you will have a great time.

It's not what my Bible says, nor your Bible. In the world, you're of tribulation, but still, be of good cheer. Sorrowful, yet, always rejoicing.

The Christian paradox. No immunity from trouble, but there is a guarantee to Christians in trouble. What's that guarantee? All the trouble a Christian is to go through will eventually turn out for good. That's a consolation. It's not a waste of time enduring suffering, trouble, tribulation, going through problems.

[24 : 56] I think we're probably all familiar with the text in Romans 8 28. Better get it right. 8 28.

Yeah. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

to those who love God. Everything that happens works eventually for good. But you know this? That verse is so often quoted missing the first few words.

We know. We're aware of it. And that's where the joy and the pleasure. How can you rejoice in suffering? Knowing, realizing, that it's not a waste of time.

God's got a purpose in it. Knowing every negative experience will one way or another eventually turn out for good.

[26 : 10] Believing, believing every sorrow somehow will eventually end in benefit. The pleasure, the joy comes when you realize that's happened.

You don't feel it. It doesn't look like it. But believing it, knowing it, realizing that every form of trouble that comes to you will eventually lead to glory.

some people are converted for a long time and I include myself.

I was probably years converted and didn't realize it and that's the key, realizing it. And illustration helped me greatly to appreciate that.

Whenever I read about testimonies and all that, some of them, not all of them, but some of them said immediately, oh, they were on a high, right away. And I remember saying to someone, how on earth, how on earth can I go from darkness to light without knowing it?

[27 : 26] Well, one of this, when you can only rejoice when you realize you've passed from death to life. There's this illustration of a company that was in financial trouble because their customers had gone bust and they couldn't pay the money.

And the managing director spoke to his banker about it and the banker said, look, if you don't pay that money in by Friday, meet me at 10 o'clock on Monday and we'll close you down.

You'll have to go into liquidation. I need that money. So the managing director went home and went back to his office and he phoned the customer and said, look, I need that check.

I need that check. I can't remember how many thousand it was. I need to have it tomorrow morning, Friday. And if I don't have it, he said, I've got to have it.

But if not, you take me down with you. Friday came, first mail, second mail, no check. What a sad weekend he played.

[28 : 39] What a sad weekend. Bust. So he met the banker on the Monday morning and the banker was smiling and he said, well, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

He promised me a check, but it never came. Oh, he says, what are you worrying about? He says, he paid it by bank transfer. He says, the money was paid in Friday morning.

When was that company rescued, saved? Friday morning. When did the managing director rejoice? When did he jump for joy?

Monday morning. But he was saved on the Friday, but he didn't realize the money was paid in. And Christians can be like that. Not realize believing in Christ forgives your sins and justifies you before God.

And everything you go through, every problem, every trial, every pain, every suffering, it's got a purpose. It's got a purpose.

[29 : 51] God is doing something with it. always remember, if you're a Christian, suffering is connected to glory.

It amazed me to discover it. Go through your Bible computer, suffering and glory together. It's a promise. It's not a waste of time, suffering as a Christian.

Blessed are you, Peter said. if we suffer for doing what's right, we're blessed. You haven't drawn the short straw, you're blessed. For our light, affliction is but for a moment, and it's working for us. Right now, as you're sorrowing, it's working for you, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I suppose we can go back to the children's story, darkness.

You can see and discover things in the dark you don't discover in the daylight. We hope for glory in the future. Verse 2 speaks of rejoicing in the hope of glory.

[31 : 05] And remember, in the Bible, hope means certainty. Rejoicing in the certainty of the glory of God.

And that glory, what does the Bible say about the glory that awaits the believer in Jesus? No eye has seen, no ear has heard, the heart of man has never imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

Do you love God? Do you love God? Are you grateful for Christ? What a glorious future you have. What a glorious future.

One last word. What if you're not a believer? What if you're not a Christian? What do we say?

Well, tell me, do you wish, do you wish, do you wish you had the blessings that the Christian has? Do you? Well, listen, everything which the Christian has is offered to you in Christ.

[32 : 28] You can have it too, but you must believe, you must trust Christ's sacrifice paid for the sins of a number that no man can number for multitude.

When he died at Calvary, he was paying God for the sins of those who will be in heaven. You can't get to heaven any other way but by faith in Christ's death.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will definitely be saved. May God the Holy Spirit make his word, his truth effectual to every one of us.

Let's bow our heads. Our gracious Father in heaven, be pleased to take the things of Christ and make them ours here in this place at this time.

Unite every one of us, we would humbly pray. Unite every one of us to your dear Son in a living, vital faith for your own glory.

[33 : 59] for your own glory, that Christ be glorified, honoured, and exalted in the gospel. We pray in his own name.

Amen. well, we'll conclude our service of worship by singing from Psalm 85 in the Scottish Psalter. We sing from verse 8 to the end. That's on page 340, Psalm 85 at verse 8.

I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk, he'll speak peace, and to his saints, but let them not return to foolishness.

And down to the last verse, yea, what is good, the Lord shall give, our land shall yield and increase, justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face.

[35 : 03] Psalm 85 verses 8 to the end. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll hear what God the Lord will speak, to his folk he'll speak peace, and to his saints not let them not return to foolishness.

To them that fear is surely near his salvation salvation and glory in our land may have her habitation ■ who say to the I know see hey springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven eye.

Yea, what is good the Lord shall give our love shall yield and grace justice to set us in His steps shall go before His face.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen.