

Romans 5:1-5

1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

I'm going to start off with a question. Are we justified? In the Scripture there is a lot to unpack: justification, grace, the glory of God, suffering, endurance, character, hope, the love of God, and the Holy Spirit. Today the theme is justification. Being justified is not a matter of being righteous according to one self; justification is a matter of being righteous with God. The Bible is full of lessons on being right with God

Justification is one of the main themes of Romans, it is grounded in God's action in Christ. We received our faith and our salvation from Jesus. As a consequence we have a new life and we have peace because we receive both forgiveness and restoration. Justification is a matter of our status before God. When we receive a new standing before God, life opens up for because we appreciate God's mercy. We are justified by faith. Our relationship with God has been severed by sin but it has been restored with God by the gift of God's Son given to each one of us. Therefore, we have peace through Jesus Christ, a result of life and the work of Jesus. Justification results in peace with God. Suffering produces patience and this patience attributes to endurance and perseverance, then this produces, or refines, the character of the individual, resulting in hope.

In Romans chapter 5, the Apostle Paul gives us an affirmation of hope. Hope does not disappoint us because hope is fulfilled in God's promises. It is guarantee by God's saving work. Hope is brought to us by the right relationship with God due to our faith in Jesus Christ and due to the faith of Jesus Christ. It is due to the faith of Jesus Christ due to his obedience and his being willing to die on the cross for our sins. It is due to our faith in Jesus Christ due to our acceptance of the sacrificial gift. We are justified by faith. Therefore, we have direct access to God which is provided for us by Jesus. It is through Jesus and because of Jesus that we have faith. We have a righteous relationship from which we are at peace with God and have access to God's grace.

Jesus teaches about righteousness in many places in the Bible. In Matthew Chapter 25 he teaches a hard lesson of righteousness in the parable of the talents. The person with only one talent is called a wicked and lazy servant. When we become Christians we promise to live a new life of devotion and service. Faith produces action. Faith in Christ results in action that demonstrates that faith.

The whole of Christian doctrine is based on love; love your enemies, love your neighbor, do good for others and treat others like you want to be treated. Jesus says "your reward will be great in heaven." Jesus teaches we have to respond to our faith with appropriate love based action. I once had a boss that said "I don't want to hear it, I want to see it." In other words, don't tell me, show me. Don't tell me what you intend to do, show me the results. Well, the same is true with Christian faith. When you confess that you are a Christian, the world around you needs to see it. The Bible teaches that faith

without a response is faith that is dead. Suppose someone is hungry and his friend expresses some sympathy but makes no effort to help.

There was an e-mail that circulated about 20 years ago. It was about a little boy that complained to his grandma about a number of problems. He kept on complaining over and over again. While his grandma was baking a cake she offered the little boy a snack. "Here you go, have some cooking oil." He shook his head no! "OK, how about two of these raw eggs?" He firmly challenged her "Grandma!" Then she offered some flour. The little boy was dumbfounded. Then grandma began to explain that all of these things are bad by themselves but when you put them together they make this delicious cake. God works the same way. We go through bad times but when God puts things in order they come out for the good. We just have to trust in God

For the Apostle Paul the Christian faith was a hard reality - the reality of the cross. Faithfulness is not just a matter of doing the right things; faithfulness is directly connected to suffering. Faithfulness is exemplified by the faithfulness of Christ who willingly suffered for us. Therefore, faithfulness can be measured in sacrifice and suffering. We share in his suffering and when we do, we also share in his glory. So, when we suffer, we not only share in the suffering of Christ but we also share in the glory.