

Praise God, We Are Justified Through Faith!

In Romans chapter five, the Apostle Paul has established that we are justified by faith and shifts from explaining how we are saved to describing what a saved by grace life looks like. He begins with a triumphant announcement in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is not a future hope or a tentative wish. It is a present possession. This peace is not just an emotional feeling of calmness; it is a fundamental shift in our status. We are no longer at war with God. The rebellion is over and God has embraced us as sons and daughters. Because we have peace *with* God, we can begin to experience the peace *of* God in our daily lives.

Paul says something next that sounds completely upside down to our modern culture: "We also glory in our sufferings..." We do so because suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. God does not waste our pain. In the hands of the Holy Spirit, trials become the workshop where Christian character is forged. Suffering doesn't destroy our hope; it anchors it deeper. Paul reminds us that we can glory in these moments because the Holy Spirit is using everything to form and shape us. He is using the tension of the trial to weave the deep structural patterns of perseverance and character into your soul, making you a resilient instrument for His kingdom.

In Romans 5:5, Paul tells us that "hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." Grace is not given to us in tiny, stingy drops but is poured out like a torrential summer rainstorm! And Paul reminds us of the timing: *Christ died for us while we were still powerless, while we were still sinners, while we were still enemies. God didn't wait for us to clean up our act before He loved us. He loved us at our absolute worst.* Through the Holy Spirit, His love isn't rationed out to you based on your performance; it is a torrential, unyielding waterfall that completely floods your soul.

In the late 19th century, a destitute man saved every single penny he had for years to purchase a ticket on a luxury ocean liner traveling across the Atlantic to America. He was absolutely thrilled to go, but because his funds were completely exhausted after buying the ticket, he knew he couldn't afford the premium meals served in the ship's grand dining room. He packed a small suitcase full of stale crackers, hard cheese, and dried fruit. Every single day of the voyage, while the other passengers filed into the dining hall to feast on steak, fresh seafood, and magnificent desserts, the man would quietly retreat to a corner of the lower deck. He sat by himself, chewing on his hard, stale crackers, staring out at the ocean, and dreaming of the day he would finally arrive. On the final evening of the journey, as the ship approached the harbor, the ship's captain noticed the man sitting alone on the deck, chewing on a piece of moldy cheese. The captain walked over, sat down next to him, and asked, "Sir, I couldn't help but notice that you haven't joined us in the dining room a single time during this voyage. Has the food not been to your liking?" The man looked down in shame and whispered, "Oh, no, Captain. I'm sure the food is wonderful. But I spent everything I had on the ticket. I didn't have any money left over to pay for the meals." The captain stopped, looked at the man with profound shock and sorrow in his eyes, and said, "Oh, my dear friend. Did you not read the fine print on your ticket? The meals weren't extra. The feast was included in the price of the ticket. You've been starving yourself for three weeks for no reason at all." This is exactly what happens when we lose our sense of Christian assurance. We look at our suffering, we look at our past mistakes, and we live like spiritual orphans, scraping by on the stale crackers of fear and religious performance. We walk around wondering if God is still holding a grudge. But Romans 5 declares that your ticket has already been bought and paid for by Jesus Christ.

The peace, the hope, the character, and the torrential love of the Holy Spirit aren't extra things you have to earn later. They are included in the gift of your justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Stop sitting in the corners of anxiety; walk into the banquet hall of God's grace and claim the inheritance that belongs to you today.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Daniel