



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Romans

Lesson 8: Romans 5

As we discussed in the last lesson, Romans chapter five is a beautiful, and important transition in this letter. Up until this point, Paul has been focusing on the special place that the Jews had in God's plan while at the same time demonstrating for all of his readers that, from the very beginning, God's plan included the Gentiles as well. He has primarily done this by focusing on Abraham's role in God's plan and by demonstrating that God's covenant with Abraham was actually established before Abraham was circumcised. In chapter five Paul will begin to bring his arguments full circle by demonstrating how God's eternal plan was culminated in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and what that sacrifice means for us as Christians.

Before you begin read Romans chapter five and look for any key words or phrases.

Read Romans 5:1-2

Paul's letter to the church at Rome is full of powerful doctrine, and chapter five is no exception. Right away we notice that chapter five begins with, "therefore." This refers back to what Paul has just said in chapter four:

because Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It's important to note the verb tense Paul used in this text, "we have peace." This indicates a continuous state of peace with God for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately, I have met many Christians who do not seem to have confidence or peace when it comes to their salvation. God does not want us to view him as a vindictive deity who is just waiting to smite us as soon as we mess up, but rather he wants us to have peace, to have confidence in our eternal destination because of what Jesus has done for us. However, the first part of this verse is equally important, "since we have been justified by faith." This peace is only available to those who have been justified by faith through Jesus Christ. (Chapter six will describe for us in beautiful detail how and when this justification takes place.)

Paul goes on to tell us that through Jesus Christ we not only have peace, but by faith we are able to stand in God's grace and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The word "stand" here calls to mind Psalm 1:3, "He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers." Through Christ we can stand,



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firmly planted and unshakeable, in the grace of God! And because of this grace we can rejoice in our hope; our confident expectation of the glory of God!

Do we truly have peace regarding our salvation?

Are we truly standing in the grace of God as Paul describes here?

Read Romans 5:3-5

How often have we heard the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” Somehow, we have created this idea that if I am a good person who strives to do good things then bad things won’t happen to me. This struggle is nothing new, in fact this was exactly what Job and his friends struggled with; no one understood why Job was suffering so much unless he was guilty of sin. We even see this idea from Jesus’ own disciples in John 9:1-3 when they asked him whether it was the blind man or his parents who were being punished for their sins by his blindness.

Yet Scripture tells us to expect the exact opposite. In Mark 13:13 Jesus warned his disciples that they would be hated for his name’s sake. James 1:2 tells us to count it joy when we meet trials. The entire book of 1

Peter is preparing the Christians of Asia Minor for the intense suffering they would endure at the hands of Nero specifically because of their faith in Jesus Christ. The truth is that as long as we are on this earth bad things will continue to happen. In fact, sometimes bad things will happen as a direct result of living a godly life. However, in this passage Paul gives us hope!

As Christians we can rejoice in our suffering because we know that our suffering will produce endurance, which will produce character, which produces hope, and because of God’s love hope does not put us to shame. We will suffer, but through that suffering we will learn how strong we really are, and that we can endure so much more than we ever realized. This is true emotionally, spiritually and even physically. In Jesse Itzler’s book, “Living With a SEAL,” he states that when our minds are telling us that we are done, for instance during exercise, we have actually only accomplished 40% of what we are capable of. We will never know how strong we are with God’s help until we endure the sufferings of this world.

Once we have persevered through suffering and those around us see our steadfast endurance, this reveals our character. This word “character” can be defined as trustworthiness or genuineness. As Christians we are the same in the good times as we are in the bad. Not only this, but we are the same person at home as we are at the church building, and we are the same person at work that we are when dealing



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with a frustrating cashier while Black Friday shopping. Through our suffering we have proven our character to be consistent and dependable to the point that the people in our lives don't feel the need to "walk on eggshells" around us for fear of how we will react to things.

Finally, this steadfast character produces hope. This hope is not in ourselves, but rather it is in God's love and affirmed through the Holy Spirit. In spite of all of our flaws, as those who are his faithful children, God has given us his Holy Spirit to demonstrate his love and the confident expectation we can have that God will keep his promises.

Have you allowed your suffering to produce endurance, character and hope? How can you better use your times of suffering to glorify God?

Read Romans 5:6-11

In this section Paul describes mankind in 4 different ways: weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies. "Weak" carries the idea of being morally wanting. "Ungodly" means exactly what it sounds like, someone who has no reverence for God or his laws. "Sinner" means one who has tried to aim for the target but has fallen short and missed the mark. Of all of these phrases, "enemies" is the strongest and carries the connotation of actually being hostile towards God. Paul is covering the full gamut of our status before God as human

beings. On our own we are morally corrupt, opposed to his very nature, and even when we try we still fall short.

This makes us deserving of God's wrath except for those two, beautiful words from verse 8, "but God." We deserved wrath but God, in his ultimate goodness and grace showed his love for us through the death of his son. We as fallible human beings would possibly be willing to sacrifice ourselves for our loved ones, but certainly not for our enemies. Yet when we had made ourselves an enemy of God in every way imaginable Christ chose to die for us. When we connect with Jesus' blood (see chapter six) we are reconciled to God. "Reconciled" means that God has made atonement for us by taking our sins on himself, paving the way for us to be at peace with him.

Another interesting phrase in this text is found in verse six where Paul writes, "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." In his Bear Valley class on Romans, Denny Petrillo points out three interesting characteristics of the first century that led to that being the right time for the word to become flesh:

The Koine Greek language is one of the most precise that mankind has ever known. This helped ensure that the New Testament would be written and passed on exactly the way God intended.

Although it was very precise, Koine Greek did not last long as a language, it was quickly replaced by Latin. This helped to ensure that word meanings did not continue to change.



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The Roman empire had established a widespread system of roads that would have assisted in travel to spread the gospel. This timing coincides with prophecies that are found in Daniel chapter six.

Do we live like we have been reconciled to God, or do we take for granted the amazing opportunity he has given us?

Read Romans 5:12-14

Some people use verse 12 to teach the idea of original sin, however it is important to note that the end of the verse specifies that death spread to all men because all men have sinned. Yes, Adam was the first one to sin, however I deserve death because of my own sin, not because of anything I inherited from Adam.

Paul is pretty wordy in this section, but he is basically re-stating what he said in chapters three and four; that God gave the law to help us understand what sin is. God does not expect us to miraculously know what sin is and his expectations of us, he has clearly explained it to us in his word. And once again, Paul is reminding his readers that God's plan has been the same from the beginning of the time and was intended for all man. Sin has reigned all the way from the time of Adam and the time of Moses, both before and after the law of Moses was given.

There is also an interesting distinction made in verse 14, "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam." The word for "sinning" here means to miss the mark, so this would refer to a more unintentional sin, or a sin where one was trying to do right and just didn't quite make it. This is contrasted with the transgression, or intentional sin of Adam. It doesn't matter whether our sin is intentional or not, any sin is deserving of death.

Do we sometimes minimize or justify our sin, or the sin of those we love? Do we try to be more just than God by extending grace beyond God's boundaries of right and wrong?

If so, how can we strive to fix this?

Read Romans 5:15-21

Here we find a stark comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ. Although sin entered the world through Adam, abundant grace has come through the Son of God. Where once the world looked dark and hopeless, the light of the world has come to offer justification to all who would live in obedience to him. Where once death reigned supreme, now grace and righteousness reign through Jesus.



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The Truth for Today commentary on Romans offers insight on verse 20 where Paul writes that the law came to increase the trespass: basically, sin was stoked by the law like a fire, yet no matter how much our sin increased, God's grace increased all the more. This section is the culmination of all Paul has been saying: sin was a problem from the very beginning. God knew that by revealing himself to us through the law sin would increase even more. Yet in his infinite wisdom God had planned for this from the very beginning. God knew that no matter how far we chose to run from him, the grace brought by Jesus would be more than enough to bring us back to righteousness if we would just choose him over the world around us.

Throughout chapter five we have seen both the depravity of man and the amazing, infinite grace of God. We have also seen that this grace, this justification, is only found in Jesus Christ.

Think of someone, a specific name, in your life who is not yet in Christ. Pray for wisdom, pray for them to have an open heart, and then begin intentionally working towards sharing with them the hope that we have in Christ.

Works Cited:

Denny Petrillo's Bear Valley class on Romans.

Truth for Today Commentary an Exegesis & Application of the Holy Scriptures. Romans an Exegetical Study. Paul Pollard, PhD. General Editor, Eddie Cloer, D. Min. Resource Publications, Searcy, AR. 2018.