

**International Sunday School Lesson
Study Notes
July 24, 2016**

**Lesson Text: Romans 5:1-11
Lesson Title: Not Without Hope**

Introduction

One of the saddest descriptions of sinful man is found in Paul's words to the Ephesians, describing their condition before salvation, "...*having no hope, and without God in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12). Paul is saying, "Apart from salvation and justification in Jesus Christ, there is absolutely no hope of being justified in the sight of God." The good news is because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, those who repent of unbelief and trust Christ for salvation can have hope.

In the first four chapters of Romans, Paul established man's sinfulness and his inability to save himself. Paul also declares God's method of justifying sinners and answers the questions and objections raised by man. Beginning in chapter five, Paul demonstrates the *benefits* derived from justification at the moment of salvation and the *blessings* accompanying justification throughout the believer's life. One of the *benefits* and *blessings* of justification is "hope."

Peace with God (Romans 5:1)

Verse 1

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

The first word of Romans 5 is "Therefore." It is a word serving as a bridge between chapter 4 and chapter 5. Now that sinful man has been "justified by faith," the result is "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Being justified by faith" means the subject received, but did not initiate the action. Paul is saying, "At some point in the past, without our help, God justified us, that is, He declared us righteous and began to treat us as righteous." That point in time was when we as a sinner confessed our sin to the Lord Jesus Christ and asked Him to save us.

Every person is born with a sinful nature, so that puts him or her at war with God. Most people live and die at war with God, and they face eternal torment and God's wrath forever because of that separation. However, for those who have been "justified by faith," there is "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

“Peace” here is not a feeling, but a state of peace. The peace “of” God is inner tranquility which God gives to the Christian when there is external turmoil. The “peace with God” Paul is speaking about in this verse is different. It is a “peace” which means “no more war” and marks the end of our hostility toward God and His wrath toward us. The alienation is gone, and fellowship with Him has begun which will last forever.

This “peace with God” is made possible “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” How is this possible when Paul just taught us our sin brings divine wrath? The Lord Jesus Christ endured the wrath of God toward the sinner, thus satisfying God’s wrath toward those who are in Christ by faith (Romans 3:25). As our mediator, Jesus Christ has worked out our peace treaty with God through the shedding of His precious blood (Ephesians 2:13-18).

Access to God (Romans 5:2)

Verse 2

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Justification not only brings “peace with God,” it also provides “access” to God. “By whom” refers to Jesus Christ. By “faith” in Christ and through His redemptive work, we have been given “access” or introduction into the very presence of God. In the Old Testament, only the priest entered into the presence of God. In the New Testament, the believer, through Jesus Christ has “access” into God’s presence (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16).

“Access” means “admission.” So many things in life now require passwords or security clearance to gain admission. If you do not have the correct password, you are not granted “access” or “admission.” It is the same way with God. If you want to approach God, the “access” is Jesus Christ.

Our “access” is “into this grace wherein we stand.” If you search the Bible you will find the problem of standing before God was a great concern. The psalmist asked, *“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”* (Psalm 130:3). God asked Job, *“...who then is able to stand before me?”* (Job 41:10). None of us have a leg to stand on when it comes to a defense of our sinful actions. But now that we are justified and have “access by faith into this grace,” we have a standing.

How is this standing maintained? By “grace.” Any man who tries to stand in his own works, his own character, or by his own righteousness will fall. God’s amazing “grace” maintains our standing! Through the justification which God accomplishes for us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we “rejoice in

hope of the glory of God.” What does it mean to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God?” “Rejoice” means “to boast.” Boasting is usually thought of in a bad sense, such as self-confidence or pride. In this case, Paul uses boasting positively and justifiably. The “glory of God,” of which we have fallen short, is the perfect standard of Christ’s righteousness (John 17:22-23). We can “rejoice” or “boast” in the fact that whatever we are today, now that we are justified we have “hope” that one day we will be like Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2-3).

Glory in Tribulations (Romans 5:3-4)

Verse 3-4

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:”

Paul wanted believers to rejoice not only in the peace, access, and grace, but he also wanted them to see the possibility of being able to “glory” in life’s difficulties. He knew the Roman Christians were undergoing “tribulations.” The word “tribulations” means “pressure.”

Paul said, “We rejoice” referencing believers. The unbeliever is unable to “rejoice.” To the unbeliever, this life is all he has. But the Christian deals with life differently and is able to “rejoice” in whatever comes. Paul describes how that takes place in the following sequence. First, “tribulation worketh patience.” “Patience” is “steadfastness, constancy, endurance.” That is the ability to remain strong while bearing the burden of life’s pressure. Second, “patience” results in “experience.” The word “experience” means “approved character.” When life’s pressures come our way and we remain steadfast and endure, the result is a fortitude which proves the presence of the Lord in our lives. Third, “experience” results in “hope.” “Hope” is “the certain knowledge that as children of God, we will one day be glorified like the Son of God” (Romans 8:17).

God’s Love in Our Hearts (Romans 5:5-8)

Verse 5

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Unbelievers who know nothing about a life of faith and trust in God often ridicule believers who have strong hope in God for their future. Believers are often accused of having our head buried in the sand or not being realistic about life. However, no matter what unbelievers think or say, believers are “not ashamed” because we have “the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” That phrase means the Holy Spirit living within us, makes it clear that God loves us and will take care of us.

“Hope maketh not ashamed” means the “hope” we have in God will prove to be genuine as it is tested in the tribulations and pressures of life. How can we be sure? “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” “Shed abroad” means “to bestow or distribute in large capacities.” It is the same word “*shed*” used in Matthew 26:28 in reference to the shedding of Jesus’ blood for the remission of sins. “Which is given” means “to grant or impart. The moment a sinner receives salvation the gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, moves in to reside permanently with the believer (Romans 8:9). If you have been justified and saved by God’s amazing grace you need not look to a future time when you will need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit or receive what some call the second blessing. At the moment of salvation, Christ’s righteousness is ours, God’s love is ours, and the Holy Spirit’s abiding presence is ours.

The “love of God” in this verse is a reference to His “love” for us, not our love for Him. The most overwhelming truth of the gospel is God loves sinful, fallen, guilty sinners so much, *“that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

Verse 6-8

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Verses 6-8 relate the distinct quality of God’s love as it operates irrespective of human merit. Human love is given to those who are lovable; but God’s love embraces even the unlovely. “For when we were yet without strength” means “when we were helpless.” It is paralleled to the expression in verse 8, “while we were yet sinners.” Paul uses it to show our utter helplessness in the face of our all-encompassing sin. We were helpless to do anything about our situation. That is why God had to do something, and the something He did was at the cross.

“...In due time Christ died for the ungodly” means two things. First, circumstances did not bring Christ to the cross; rather, the divine plan of God brought our Lord to Calvary (Galatians 4:1-5). At the time of our greatest need, the only remedy was the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Second, Christ died for “the ungodly.” The “ungodly” is a reference to those who actively opposed God and His righteousness. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die” refers to one who observes the law or keeps God’s commands, perhaps the Jewish man of Romans 2. “Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die”

means it is highly unlikely that someone would die for an honorable, respectable person. The “righteous man” is approved by God, and hardly anyone would think of dying for him. The “good man” is loved by men, and most would not think of dying for him. But here comes the clincher! Paul’s argument is while we would rarely find anyone who would lay down his life for a “righteous man” or a “good man,” Christ “died for the ungodly” and “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners” or “without redeeming qualities (1 John 4:10).

“Commendeth” means “God demonstrated His love toward us by dying for sinners who deserved His wrath and eternal damnation. Every one of us deserved to die in our sins but the “love of God” gave us a way of escape from God’s wrath to receive new life in Christ.

Spared from God’s Wrath (Romans 5:9)

Verse 9

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Every man, woman, boy, and girl born into this world are by nature the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) and under God’s wrath (John 3:36). It is not popular today to tell sinners they are children of wrath and deserving of God’s wrath in the coming period of Tribulation as well as part of eternal punishment in hell. Acceptable preaching today focuses only on the love of God. However, the Scriptures repeatedly warns sinful man of God’s wrath against His enemies (Nahum 1:2) and the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7).

“Much more then” means if everything Paul has said is not enough, there is “more” blessings as a result of justification. “Now,” or when the sinner is “justified by his blood,” the “wrath” of God is no longer a possibility. Believers who have trusted Christ for salvation “shall be saved from wrath through him.” But what is this “wrath” from which Christians have been “saved?” Paul is not specific, and that is likely on purpose. When sinners are saved and justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, God rescues us and removes His “wrath” from our present lives and from our future (Romans 1:18). Believers in Jesus Christ will never be condemned to hell, nor will we ever be the objects of God’s “wrath” during the coming Tribulation (John 5:24; Romans 8:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9).

Saved by Christ’s Life (Romans 5:10)

Verse 10

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Some have misinterpreted this verse to mean sinners are “saved” by the physical “life” of Jesus Christ. In other words, live as Jesus lived and do the things He did and you can be saved. That is not the proper interpretation of the verse. When “we were enemies” of God, Christ’s “death” on the cross made it possible for us to be “reconciled.”

“Reconciliation” denotes a change in the sinners relationship to God. As sinners we were “enemies.” As Christians we have been “reconciled.” God by His own will and design, sent His Son, the only acceptable means of “reconciliation,” to save sinners and place them in an acceptable relationship to Him (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Colossians 1:19-20).

In what way are we “saved by his life?” Well, certainly not by His exemplary life, as great as it was (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus Christ personified everything God demanded in human life. He was the most caring and loving person who ever graced shoe leather. He was perfect. But the “saved by his life” statement relates to His heavenly life, not his earthly life. Today, this very moment, Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25). He is our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1) and our Great High Priest. Because Christ lives, we shall live also! (John 14:19).

Rejoicing in Christ’s Atonement (Romans 5:11)

Verse 11

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

“And not only so” means there are still more blessings and benefits to come in relation to justification. “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” When sin and the resulting wrath disappears, “joy” enters. “Atonement” refers to being restored, or as one author described it, “at one ment” with God!

“Our Lord Jesus Christ” made restoration with God possible and paid for “the atonement” which forever satisfied God. The reason believers can continue to “joy” and rejoice is that our lives are forever right with God (Psalm 70:4).

Conclusion

God’s amazing grace reached down to save us when we were enemies of God. God in His mercy came to us when we were without hope and alienation from Him

and reconciled us to Himself through His Son. Because of His actions of grace, believers are forever saved and secure.

Christians should be the happiest people in the world. We may be criticized, ostracized, and persecuted, but the inner joy of knowing Christ can never be taken away. Paul wrote, "*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice*" (Philippians 4:4).

Amen.