



Independence Church Of Christ

Sharing The Freedom That Is In Christ

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Lesson For Sunday Afternoon, May 17th, 2020

The Object of Our Faith From Romans

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:1-2)

Paul, in Romans chapters 1-4, has established the fact that men are saved by faith. Now, in chapter 5, Paul keys in on the object of that faith. In chapters 1-4 the verb and noun forms of the word faith are used 36 times, but after Romans 5:2 this word is not used again until chapter 9. However, the name of Christ, used only five times between the introduction of the book and Romans 4:24, is now suddenly used 10 times in this one chapter. The argument is clearly shifting from the means of faith to its object. Let's go back and trace our argument to this point in order to put the object of faith in perspective.

Paul's purpose in the first four chapters of Romans is to prove to his readers that the only way a man can be justified and thus obtain salvation and eternal life is through faith. It is impossible, says Paul, for man to be saved by his own endeavors. Having stated this position, Paul deals with three possible objections.

Taking the role of God's prosecuting attorney, he meets the first objector, the pagan or natural man. This man's argument says, *“I do not accept the fact that man must be justified by faith for I was ignorant of God. Therefore, God is unjust to condemn me simply because I went my own way and did not obediently have faith in His Messiah. I should be pardoned and given eternal life because I was ignorant.”* To this Paul answers, *“You were not ignorant of God for all of creation proclaims His reality. You are to be judged on the basis of what you did with the little knowledge you had. You rejected even the little that God revealed to you. Therefore, God is just in condemning you. Guilty as charged.”*

Now the second defendant steps up. He is a Jew and a moral man. His argument says this: *“I reject the proposition that justification must be by faith. I don't need God's standards for salvation. I am moral and conform to my own standards as I think I should. I can gain salvation on the basis that I was moral and kept the standards I knew.”* To this argument Paul replies, *“God will judge you according to your own standards. However, you must keep those perfectly to be acceptable to God since your way of salvation makes no provision for forgiveness of sin. But you were not as good as you could have been for you did things you condemn others for doing. Therefore, God is just in condemning you. Guilty as charged.”*

Now, Paul turns to the third defendant, the religious Jew. His argument is this: *“I reject the fact that we must be justified by faith. As a Jew, I have many advantages. Because I am God’s chosen tool, I should be saved. God would be unjust in judging those He uses as tools in the world.”* To this Paul replies, *“The law was written to the Jew. But you have not kept the law. Since you refused to be God’s tool according to His revealed will, you forfeit your right to salvation on this basis. God is just in condemning you. Guilty as charged.”*

So then in the first two chapters of Romans, Paul has declared that a man must be justified by faith and he has shown that neither ignorance nor morality nor the Law can provide a basis for man’s salvation.

Having shown man the extent of his lostness in chapters 1-2, Paul, in chapter 3, describes the beauty of God’s salvation by faith. Paul shows in chapter 3 that while man was as bad off as he could possibly be and totally unable to make himself just before God, God had sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross. This death God accepted as the full payment for the sins of all men. God, in this, became both just and the justifier of all who place their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul here shows that man’s only hope of getting to heaven is for God to provide the way. That way, says Paul, is by faith. Man, in his hopeless position, can place his faith in Christ’s provision for sin and be totally justified by faith.

But a Jew might say, “Isn’t this a new way of salvation?” In chapter 4 Paul says, “No, for the principle of justification by faith is the glue that holds the Old Testament together.” In chapter 4, Paul gives four reasons why the Old Testament would be a pack of lies without the principle of justification by faith. *“First,”* says Paul, *“Abraham in the Old Testament was justified by faith. Second, circumcision was a sign of faith and only has meaning if we are justified by faith. Third, the promise God gave to Abraham is made good by faith. Finally, salvation in the Law was by faith.”*

So then, Paul in the first four chapters of Romans has stated the principle that the only way a man can be justified is by faith. He has shown that the means of ignorance, morality and religion are insufficient for salvation. He has clearly shown that faith is the only way sinful men could be saved and illustrated that men of all ages were saved by this same principle.

Now, in chapter 5, Paul shifts his emphasis from faith to the object of our faith to show us how our salvation by faith was accomplished. In verses 1-11, Paul will show that we are brought into fellowship with God through the Person of Jesus Christ. In verses 12-21, Paul will show that the work of Christ on the cross is the only rational means of justification and that all the benefits of salvation are provided to mankind through this one act. Let’s first look at verses 1-11.

The Work of Jesus Christ Has Brought Us Peace and Fellowship With God (5:1-11)

JESUS CHRIST HAS GIVEN US PEACE WITH GOD

If someone were to ask you, “What is the most sought-after possession in the world,” what would you answer? Some would say money, some would say wisdom, some would say beauty or popularity. But if you were to analyze these, I think you’d find that it isn’t money people want but rather what they think money will get them. It isn’t wisdom or beauty or popularity, but it is the security and peace people believe these things bring. But do these things really bring what they advertise? King Fasel was the wealthiest man in the world, but today his body lies in an unmarked grave. Marilyn Monroe was the beauty queen of Hollywood, but she committed suicide. Leonardo Da Vinci was the most brilliant man of the Renaissance, but he died a discouraged man having admittedly failed in finding the purpose of life.

You see, it is not money, wisdom, beauty or popularity people want most. Just ask the people who have these and you'll see they aren't satisfied. Rather, the most sought after thing in the world is inner peace and security. This is the real need of every person. Inner peace is not the cessation of problems on the outside. Rather, it is the ability to remain stable because you can see the end of the problems and know that you will come out on top. The problem we as individuals face is that we are not able to control our circumstances completely. Furthermore, there is someone who is in control of our circumstances — God, and if He is against us, we have no chance of having inner peace. The only way we can have inner peace then is by making peace with God, but how can men - who are sinners and stand in God's wrath - become reconciled and changed to the point that God will make peace with them? Paul tells us in Romans 5:1-2 that Jesus did this for us. He died and paid for our sins. We are then justified, as proved in chapters 1-4, by faith in Him. Now, says Paul, those who believe can, and do, have peace with God through what Jesus has done.

Verse two gives us a picture of how this peace with God was accomplished when it says "*Through whom we have obtained our introduction.*" The Greek word for introduction means "*to bring to.*" It is not that we went to God but rather Jesus brought us to Him and reconciled us, made us right before God by His death. Our peace with God, then, is not obtained on the basis of what we do but on the basis of what Christ did for us. It is in His work, not ours, that we depend for eternal life and so our peace with God can never be lost for Christ's work is already done and will never change.

BECAUSE OF OUR SECURE SALVATION, WE CAN BOAST IN THREE THINGS

- (1) In verse 2, Paul says we can boast in the hope of the glory of God.** In chapter 3, Paul has already shown that boasting or placing confidence in man's works is out of order. But here, he tells us we can place confidence in the hope of the glory of God. Now the biblical definition of hope is "to plan on a future that is guaranteed to us." That future as explained in Romans 8:30 is that we will be glorified, that we will be conformed to the image of Christ. Here, Paul is saying that we can boast about this because it is accomplished by Christ and not dependent on man's works. So, we can exult or boast in our position for we are at peace with God and assured of a future of glory.
- (2) In verses 3-10, Paul tells us that we can boast or exult in our pressures.** The Greek word for *tribulation* is "*pressure.*" It is an outside force that pushes on you and exerts pressure on you to yield and conform to it. Paul tells us that we can exult in these pressures as believers because of what they produce. The pressures of life, says Paul, are used by God to produce perseverance. This is the quality of a person who when faced with problems he has no control over and to which his only responses are either to endure with anger or to endure with patience chooses to endure with patience. Paul goes on to say that the practice of perseverance under pressure produces in us character which has been proven. Perseverance in trials proves that the godly qualities we practice are what we really are like, rain or shine. This proof of our growth toward godliness then encourages us all the more to trust in our hope — our plans for future glory that God has guaranteed us.

But someone might ask, "*How do we know we won't be disappointed? How do we know God will bring us through our trials to be conformed to the image of Christ and be saved forever?*" Paul's answer is, "*We know because of God's love for us.*" Verses 6-10 comprise a profound passage which there is not time to do justice to in a short time. Please listen as we read them together and

the import of God's word brings this truth home to you.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life (Romans 5:6-10).

- (3) **Verse 11 gives us the third reason for boasting—that we have received reconciliation with God through the death of Jesus Christ.** The word, *reconciliation*, means “*to be changed.*” Earlier in this book we learned that because of our sin, we were enemies of God. But Jesus' death changed man as far as God was concerned. Now, God is free to be at peace with man without blighting His holy and just nature. It is important to note that the effect of Christ's death toward man is called reconciliation — that is, that the effect was to change man in the eyes of God. The effect of Christ's death toward God is called *propitiation* which means that God's justice was totally satisfied. Reconciliation, the human aspect of Christ's death, is never said to save anyone. It only renders all men savable. Although, as verse 10 tells us, reconciliation occurred while we were enemies, dead in our sin, 2 Corinthians 5:20 points out that we must *receive* that reconciliation to enjoy its benefits. Paul spends his next thoughts (in Romans 6:1-4) revealing that receiving fully the saving grace of God through Christ is brought about through our cleansing in baptism.

So in verses 1-11, Paul has proclaimed that because of the object of our faith — Jesus Christ, and what He has done — we have peace with God and we can boast in our position, our pressures, and our possession of reconciliation.

Justification to All Men Comes Through the Righteousness of One Man, Jesus Christ (5:12-21)

Now we come to verses 12-21. We know from scripture that God, before the foundation of the earth, decided upon a specific plan of redemption and established the principles necessary for salvation. One of the principles He established as necessary for this plan was the principle of representative headship. By the term, *representative headship*, we mean that the actions of one man are imputed, *put to the account*, of those whom he represents. We practice this principle every day. The principle has both good and bad results for us and we tend to enjoy the good while seeking to deny the bad. In the United States, we are represented by our federal government. If they declare war on another country, we become enemies of that country even though we disagree with the government declaration. We have benefits from the actions of the government. We have some law and order, we have a defense against other aggressive countries, we have public roads, potholes and all. But when April 15 rolls around, we are all ready to disclaim our relationship to our government. Nevertheless, we do have that relation and recognize it. This principle of representative or federal headship is also part of God's plan of redemption. It is by means of this truth that Paul puts the capstone on his argument that salvation comes through the righteous act of the one man, Jesus Christ. Paul will do this by first proving the principle of headship from its bad effects and finally showing in its light the rational conclusion that salvation comes through one man.

As we begin this section there are two things to keep in mind. First, Paul has already spent four chapters establishing the necessity of faith for salvation. The word, faith, is not used again until chapter 9. It is assumed. Therefore, no statement in this section is to be assumed workable without the exercise of faith.

Second, it is important to note the emphasis of this passage. The word “one” is used twelve times in this passage and the terms “many” and “all” are used eight times. The major idea in the passage is that certain benefits or consequences come through **one** individual to a multiplicity of individuals. This is why Paul uses the term “*the many*.” What is important about this term is not the number or extent of those included but rather that there is more than one included — **many** are included. Now, it is clear that “*the many*” is in actuality “**the all**” several times in the passage but this is not the point. The point is that the act of **one** representative was imputed to a multiplicity of individuals.

Now, let’s turn to our passage. In verses 12-21 we will see two important points made. Paul shows that the principle of representative headship is biblical. First, Paul sets out to show by the example of Adam that the principle of representative headship is biblical. (Read verses 12-14.)

First, Paul points out that sin came into the world through one man. It was not through Satan who first sinned in the creation. Neither does Paul attribute sin to women, the first human who sinned, but to Adam, a man, for as we shall see Adam’s act of sin was imputed to all mankind. Paul then notes that death entered the world through that one sin and spread to all because all sinned.

Now the question arises, “**How did all sin?**” Paul’s answer is clear. He states that these were not personal sins because personal sins were not put to men’s account until the coming of the Mosaic Law. Nevertheless, men died because of their sin. The sin Paul speaks of is the sin imputed to all men because Adam, in God’s redemptive plan, was the representative head of all mankind.

Paul is saying, “*There is a valid principle of headship in scripture. This is clear because we know death is a result of sin; all men before the Law died but not for their personal sins. Therefore, they died for the sin imputed to them from Adam.*” So then, Paul has established that the principle of representative headship is operational in scripture.

Second, Paul points out that the basis of our faith is rational because our salvation corresponds in principle to our condemnation. Both, you see, were the result of one man’s action being put to the account of a multiplicity of persons.

Through ONE Transgression	Through ONE Righteous Act
Death came to many (v. 15)	Grace came to many (v. 15)
Condemnation came (v. 16)	Justification came (v. 16)
Death reigned (v. 17)	The righteous reign (v. 17)
All condemned (v. 18)	All justified (v. 18)

All made sinners (v.19)			All made righteous (v. 19)		
ONE ACT	imputed to ----->	MULTIPLICITY	ONE ACT	imputed to ----->	MULTIPLICITY

Now we can see how verses 12-21 fit into the argument of the Book of Romans. In chapters 1-4, Paul declares and proves that justification is by faith in Christ. In chapter 5:1-11, Paul says since justification is by faith in Christ, therefore, it is He that brought us to God. Finally, in verses 12-21, Paul says since we have been justified by faith and brought to God by Him, therefore, He is our federal head just like Adam was. The implications of this are that everything He did, we did and this is the basis of chapter 6 which teaches that we appropriate this Grace (Salvation) by dying with and being buried with and being resurrected with Christ through baptism.

Conclusion

So then, chapter 5 presents to us Jesus Christ, the object of our faith, and declares to us that the benefits of salvation are totally the result of His righteous sacrifice as our representative head. The implication of chapter 5 is that faith is only as good as its object.

Recently I heard the story of a robber who had been sentenced to die for his crime. While in the dungeon awaiting execution, he made a deal with his jailer through which he hoped to escape punishment. The robber was to pretend to die of sickness in his cell. The jailer would then have him buried but later come back and dig him up and the two would split the stolen money. All went as planned. The soldiers came, placed the robber in a casket with another body as was the habit of the prison to conserve work and money, and the casket was buried. The robber was elated at the ease of his escape. As he lay there chuckling to himself, his curiosity got the better of him and he pulled back the grave shroud to see who his coffin-mate was. To his horror, he discovered it was the body of the jailer who was to dig him up!

Now, I'd like to ask you, my friend, when death takes you, what are you trusting to save you from the wrath of God? Are you trusting money, beauty, wisdom, ignorance, morality, religion, good works? You see, none of these things will last any longer than you do. They will be buried with you. The only worthy object for your faith, you see, must be one who has come back from the grave, and there is only one who has done this, Jesus Christ. We invite you to receive your reconciliation with God by placing all your faith in the work of the one man, Jesus Christ, and being buried with Him and raised with Him through baptism. Then, you too, having been justified by faith, can have peace with God.

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