

EXPLANATION OF 45TH BIBLEBOOK

ROMANS 5:1-11 (April A.D. 67)

INTRODUCTION

Romans 1:1 to 3:20 proves that all people have *need* for God's righteousness (salvation). Paul concludes his teaching that no Gentile or Jew is righteous in God's eyes and that everyone stands condemned before God (3:19). He also concludes that keeping the law cannot attain righteousness (3:20).

Romans 3:21-31 revealed *the only way* to attain God's righteousness. The sacrificial death of Christ is the ground (reason or basis) of God's righteousness.

Romans 4:1-25 shows *the means* of receiving God's righteousness. The example of Abraham shows that the faith of the believer is only the means of receiving God's righteousness.

Romans 5:1-11 reveals *the blessings* of God's righteousness, namely, experiencing God's peace and grace that leads to a life of hope and love.

Romans chapter 5 emphasises what a Christian ought to believe: his legal state (position) in Christ is that he is once for all justified!

Possible titles for chapter 5 are: "Justification (salvation) of sinners triumphs over the fall of mankind into sin" or "The legal state (position) of the believer before God."

OUTLINE

Theme. The Christian's legal state (position) in Jesus Christ.

The Christian has been justified *once for all* and experiences the results of God's righteousness: God's peace and grace that lead to hope and love.

- (I) 5:1-11. The benefits (results) of justification are very sure.
- The benefit of peace with God (5:1).
 - The benefit of access to God's grace (5:2a).
 - The benefit of joy in the hope of God's glory (5:2b).
 - The benefit of joy in God's love amidst our sufferings (5:3-5).
 - The benefit of assurance of God's self-sacrificial love for us (5:6-8).
 - The benefit of assurance of our justification, reconciliation and final and complete salvation (5:9-11).

If God has given *the greater resulting benefit, namely, reconciliation with God*, then he will much less withhold *the lesser resulting benefit, namely, salvation from God's wrath*. The fact that Jesus Christ died for his enemies (the greater benefit) guarantees the fact that he will save and preserve his friends from damnation (the lesser benefit)!

EXPLANATION

(I) 5:1-11. The benefits (results) of justification are very sure.

a. The benefit of peace with God (5:1).

5:1. Therefore, *once for all* having been justified (vpap) by faith, we have (vipa) peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

First, God makes peace with us. A person, who relies on his own good works of keeping the law for his justification in the eyes of God, can never have peace with God or experience peace of mind, because God remains his enemy (5:10)! *All his good works cannot remove God's wrath against his sins, nor quieten his apprehension and fear of God's punishment.* Peace with God can only be attained when God justifies the believer and when that justification is founded on Christ's sacrifice of atonement.

Because God is perfectly holy and righteous, he demands that all people must be perfectly holy and righteous and that all sins must be punished. God hates all people who are wicked and love violence¹. God's wrath is directed against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth (1:18,25) and who reject Jesus Christ². Only the sacrifice of the atonement of sins of Jesus Christ on the cross can satisfy his holy and righteous indignation against man's sins and can and will remove his holy anger against sinners and save them from his just punishment of sins. *It is therefore not we who make peace with God by keeping the law, but God who makes peace with us by the atoning sacrifice of Christ!*

Then we can make peace with God. Only after God has made peace with us, can we make peace with God! Only after God has reconciled himself to us, can we reconcile ourselves to God!

Only after God has changed his relationship to us, can we change our relationship to God! It is impossible to have or experience peace with God without Christ's sacrifice of atonement!

¹ Psalm 5:4-5; 11:5

² John 3:18,36

Thus believers in Jesus Christ have a new relationship or state (position) with God, which is expressed as having ‘peace with God’. *God made peace with us* by justifying us on the ground of the sacrificial death of Christ. And *we make peace with God* by receiving his gracious righteousness through the means of faith. Thus, the result of God’s peace with us is our peace with God!

Experiencing peace with God. We experience the peace of God as a deep assurance of three things:

- Our *sins of the past* have been forgiven.
- Our *evils of the present* are being overruled for our good.
- All our *future events* cannot bring about our separation from God’s love!

‘Peace’ is the absence of fighting, war, irritation, anger, retaliation and negative feelings. But ‘peace’ is also being made whole again, the perfect restoration of all fractures inside us and all broken relationships outside us, experiencing perfect well-being and a sense of being recreated by God.

b. The benefit of access to God’s grace (5:2a).

5:2a. through whom we have also effectively gained³ (vira) the access by faith into this grace in which we stand⁴ (vira).

Through his death and resurrection Jesus Christ opened the way for every person who believes in Jesus Christ to come into the reality and presence of God⁵. *The state of grace means the same as the state of justification*. People are justified (saved) by God’s grace and through their faith⁶.

Bonded to Jesus Christ, believers have complete access into God’s reality and presence⁷ and they may approach God with freedom and confidence⁸ in order to receive his mercy for their shortcomings and his grace to help them in the time of their need⁹.

c. The benefit of joy in the hope of God’s glory (5:2b).

5:2b. And we rejoice (vipn) in the hope of the glory of God.

Hope is the certainty that *the promised future expectations will become present realities*. The things we expect to become realities is summarised by God’s *glory* (cf. the explanation of Romans 3:23). This glory includes at least three things:

- when we see him face to face our spirits (souls) will be completely conformed to the glorious image of Christ (8:29-30)¹⁰;
- at his second coming our lowly bodies will be transformed to be like the glorious resurrected body of Christ (8:11)¹¹
- and we will live in a gloriously redeemed universe (8:21).

Because we have been justified by faith, we also have the very sure expectation that we will share in God’s future glory. Although in our actual daily lives we fall short of this ideal, *this sure expectation is not presumption, but is our privilege. Therefore we may rejoice!*

d. The benefit of joy in God’s love amidst our sufferings (5:3-5).

5:3. And not only so, but we even rejoice (vipn) in our sufferings, knowing (by intuition, reflexion and relationship)¹² (vpra) that suffering again and again produces (vipn) perseverance:

5:4. perseverance (produces) approved (proven) character¹³; and approved character (produces) hope.

5:5. And this hope does not disappoint (vipa), because the love of God has been permanently poured out¹⁴ (virp) into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was once for all given (vpap) to us¹⁵.

Human suffering serves God’s purpose. Our sufferings as Christians consist of *the ordinary sufferings* of people in a fallen and broken world. Christians share in the ordinary sufferings, like sickness, weakness, disability, troubles, setbacks, failures, disappointments, and disasters like epidemics, earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines and wars. Christians also suffer *the special sufferings* caused by their persecutors in the world.

³ G: echó

⁴ G: histémi

⁵ cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5

⁶ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁷ Ephesians 2:18

⁸ Ephesians 3:12

⁹ Hebrews 4:16

¹⁰ 1 John 3:1-3

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,50-54; Philippians 3:21

¹² G: oida

¹³ G: dokimé

¹⁴ G: ekcheó

¹⁵ Ephesians 1:13

But don't all these sufferings cause Christians to be sad? How can Paul say that Christians rejoice in sufferings? The answer is as follows: God is absolutely sovereign and therefore all things that happen on earth serve God's purpose¹⁶! Even human suffering serves God's purpose¹⁷, even if Christians cannot grasp what that purpose might be.

God's purpose is that we develop Christian character. Christians who accept that sufferings have a purpose will experience how these sufferings produce perseverance, approved character, hope and love in their hearts and lives! Before we became Christians we regarded sufferings only as expressions of God's displeasure with us. However, *when our relationship to God changed, our relationship to other people, things and events (including sufferings) also changed!* When we submit to God, God uses sufferings to transform us! Pressures, hardships, oppressions and persecutions directly contribute to the forming of Christian character, hope and love. God will develop great *perseverance, endurance* and eventually *joy* in us¹⁸. By means of this testing God will transform our character so it becomes a tested and approved character, that is, it will become more Christ like. God will give us hope, the expectation that what he promised will certainly become a reality.

Our sufferings also produce Christian maturity, holiness, righteousness, fruitfulness, the certainty that we are God's sons and that we will share in Christ's glory¹⁹.

God's purpose is that we experience God's love. Although our responsibility is to persevere in difficult times because *we love God*, the fact that we can and will persevere is due to the fact that *God loves us!* Our perseverance in difficult times should not be attributed to the strength of *our love for God*, or to anything else in ourselves, but only to *God's sovereign and gracious love for us* (8:38-39)!

Through his Holy Spirit, God abundantly and continually pours out *his* love for us in our hearts. He fills us with a consciousness of his presence and favour, and inwardly persuades us that we are the objects of his love. God's sovereign and gracious love for us gives us more and more hope (the certain expectation) that finally we will share in all God's glory. *This causes our hope in God to become as irreversible as God's love for us!* God's love for us causes us to love him more and more and even love the people who cause these sufferings in our lives. We love them by forgiving their sins against us and being patient and kind to them²⁰.

After we become Christians, we begin to realise that sufferings are also manifestations of God's love for us! Christians consider it an honour to suffer for Christ, because Christ considers the sufferings of Christians as sufferings inflicted on himself²¹! Therefore, Christians are able to rejoice *on account of* their sufferings.

God's purpose is that we rejoice even amidst our sufferings. Christians also rejoice *amidst* their sufferings. Our sufferings become occasions for God to manifest his power in our support and deliverance. *Our problems become God's possibilities!* According to 2 Corinthians 12:9, our own weakness serves to magnify God's power! Precisely when we acknowledge that we are weak but God is strong and ready to help, we will seek help from above. Because God's help is sufficient, our faith is strengthened. As a consequence, we want to persevere and we can and will persevere. We know that sufferings are God's means to build character, make us useful in this world and prepare us for the new world to come. Suffering should therefore never surprise or baffle us, because to suffer is completely consistent with being a child of God (8:18)²². To be sad amidst suffering is not inconsistent with being a Christian. But we *may and can rejoice* in our sufferings.

e. The benefit of assurance of God's self-sacrificial love for us (5:6-8).

5:6. For when we were (vppa) still powerless (weak), at just the right (appointed) time, Christ *once for all* died (viaa) for the ungodly.

5:7. Now scarcely anyone will die (vifd) for a righteous man, though for a good man possibly someone might dare (vipa) to die (vnaa).

5:8. But God demonstrates (shows, renders conspicuous)²³ (vipa) his own love for us in this: that while we were (vppa) still sinners, Christ *once for all* died (viaa) for us.

In Romans 5:6-8, Paul exalts the greatness of God's love. He says that in the Bible, the death of Jesus Christ is the highest possible or highest conceivable evidence of God's love *for unworthy people*.

God's love acted when we could not act (5:6). By nature, when we were still unbelievers or non-Christians, our weakness was a lack of strength to do what was spiritually and morally good. By nature, we could not keep God's law, we could not do God's will and we could not do what is considered good works in God's eyes. Our weakness was

¹⁶ Ephesians 1:11; cf. Romans 8:28; Proverbs 16:4

¹⁷ John 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

¹⁸ Colossians 1:11, *perseverance/persistence* (hupomoné), *endurance/patience/forbearance* (makrothumia), joy (charas)

¹⁹ James 2:2-4, Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Peter 4:12-16

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

²¹ 2 Corinthians 1:5; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 4:13

²² 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 12:6

²³ G: sunhistémi

caused by our sin and it consisted of our hopeless and total inability to rescue ourselves from the effects of the fall of mankind into sin.

Our weakness was that we could not save ourselves from God's condemnation, from our separation from God, from our spiritual and moral depravity and from our suffering and death. We could not pull ourselves up by our own shoestrings! We could not change our lives.

God's love acted on behalf of wicked people (5:7). Among people it was never heard of that someone died for a man who was *righteous*, that is, who was believed to keep the law. The most human nature could be expected to accomplish was that a person should die for a *good* person, that is, for someone who had shown his love and kindness to him. On earth among people, somebody would scarcely die for a righteous and good man. But Christ did the completely unexpected - he died for *unrighteous and wicked* people! The death of Christ was a manifestation of God's love without any human example in history!

We can understand that God should love people who are righteous, good, pure and godly in our eyes. But that the holy God should love unholy and ungodly people and give his Son Jesus Christ for their redemption, is the greatest wonder!

God's love cost God everything (5:8). It is not true that the God who revealed himself during the Old Testament period was a God of wrath and vengeance, while the God who revealed himself during the New Testament period is a God of love and forgiveness. *Both the Old Testament and the New Testament clearly teach that God is both a holy God who hates sin and a loving God who seeks to save sinners.* The Old Testament²⁴ says that God hates the wicked and those who love violence²⁵. The New Testament²⁶ says, "God hated wickedness." But the Old Testament²⁷ also says, "I loved you (the believer) with an everlasting love and I have drawn you with loving kindness." And the New Testament²⁸ says that God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son to die for sins (of believers).

If God loved us only because we loved him, then he would love us only as long as we love him and on that condition! Then our salvation would depend on the constancy of our treacherous hearts. However, because God loved us first²⁹ and loved us as *ungodly* people, as *sinner*s and as his *enemies*, and because Christ died for us as *ungodly* people, as *sinner*s and as his *enemies* (5:6,8,10), therefore our salvation does not depend on our love for God, but only on the constancy of God's love for us³⁰!

It is not Christ's death that persuades God to love us or proves that God loves us. Rather it is God's eternal love that constrained God to give himself in Christ to die for those who believe in Christ³¹. The death of Jesus Christ was the only adequate way in which God could demonstrate his love in a clearly visible way to us³².

Some people think that God can only be a God of love when he simply forgives the sins of people. But a loving and merciful God, who does not punish sin and wickedness, would at the same time be an unrighteous and unholy God!

The God who reveals himself in the Bible is a holy and righteous God and he demands that all sins must be punished and that all people must be perfectly holy and righteous. Because not a single human being qualifies, God must block the way to come into his presence. This fact may be symbolically represented by the horizontal beam of the cross. But the God who reveals himself in the Bible is also a merciful and loving God and ardently desires to save lost people and grant them his perfect forgiveness (righteousness) and holiness. This fact may be symbolically represented by the vertical beam of the cross. Because Jesus Christ died and was resurrected, he opened the way for people to come into God's presence. Only through the death of Jesus Christ, could God's uncompromising holiness and righteousness be reconciled with his unfathomable mercy and love! There is only a cross in Christianity and no cross in any other religion in the world!

In order to remove our *problem*, called 'sin' (self-sufficiency and independence from God, missing God's goal, transgressing God's laws, twisting God's Word), Jesus Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross³³. In this way he removed our problem from us! He forgave us all our sins! This is called 'justification'. This fact may be symbolically represented by the horizontal beam of the cross.

And in order to take away *the consequences of our problem*, namely *separation* from God, he once for all died for sins and brought us to God³⁴. In this way he removed the consequence of our problem from us! He exchanged the enmity for friendship. This is called 'reconciliation'. This fact may be symbolically represented by the vertical beam of the cross!

²⁴ Psalm 11:5

²⁵ cf. Psalm 5:4-5

²⁶ Hebrews 1:9

²⁷ Jeremiah 31:3

²⁸ John 3:16

²⁹ 1 John 4:19

³⁰ 1 John 4:10

³¹ cf. John 10:11

³² cf. John 15:13

³³ 1 Peter 2:24

³⁴ 1 Peter 3:18a

Only Christianity and no other religion in the world deals adequately with the problem of sin and its consequence: separation from the one and only living God!

Christ did not die for us as an example. Christ did not die as a martyr. Christ died as a substitute! Christ died in the place of those who would believe in him³⁵. *Christ died in our place!* By dying, he made atonement for our sins. *Atonement* means, that he paid the penalty for our sins and he satisfied God's righteous and holy indignation against our sins. This means that God is completely free to love us (to show his mercy and grace to us) without setting aside his holiness and righteousness.

f. *The benefit of assurance of our justification, reconciliation and final and complete salvation (5:9-11).*

5:9. Since then, we have now *once for all* been justified (vpap) by his blood, how much more shall we *certainly* be saved (vifd) through him from God's wrath.

5:10. For if, when we were (vppa) enemies, we were *once for all* reconciled (to exchange enmity for friendship)³⁶ (viap) to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled (vpap), shall we *certainly* be saved (vifd) through³⁷ his life!

5:11. And not only this, but also we *continually* rejoice (vppn) in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now *once for all* received (viaa) the reconciliation.

What is the difference between justification, reconciliation and salvation?

Justification expresses a change of state (position). Justification means that with regard to God's holy and righteous law, God has *declared* a believer in Jesus Christ completely righteous in his eyes. As a consequence, he *regards and treats* the believer as completely righteous now and in the final judgement³⁸. Justification includes the forgiveness of sin, the reconciliation with God, the restoration to the favour of God and complete acceptance by God. Justification guarantees that blessings, like sanctification and glorification will certainly follow (8:29-30).

Our justification is effected *by the blood of Christ*. In the Bible this expression always means *by the death of Christ*. The Bible clearly teaches that the ground, reason or basis of our justification is not our work, not our faith, not our obedience, not even the work of Christ in us (e.g. regeneration), but the work of Christ for us (his sacrifice of atonement) (3:25)³⁹.

Reconciliation expresses a change of relationship. Reconciliation means that two parties that were enemies have made peace with one another. The Bible speaks of three kinds of reconciliation:

Romans 5:9-11 speaks of *the reconciliation of God to sinners*. Due to their sins, the holy and righteous God is separated from all unbelievers. He is like an enemy to them, who hates their sins and must and will punish their sins. But due to Christ's sacrifice of atonement, his holy and righteous anger has been propitiated (satisfied, appeased) and his enmity against people when they still were unbelievers has been removed. Now as believers they are no longer separated from God!

Romans 5:1 speaks of *the reconciliation of sinners to God*, that is, they experience peace with God. Due to the fact that they believe in Christ's sacrifice of atonement (sacrifice of propitiation), God justified them and they now experience peace with God. They experience the peace of God as a deep assurance of three things:

Their *sins of the past* have been forgiven.

Their *evils of the present* are being overruled for their good.

And all their *future events* cannot bring about their separation from God's love!

Matthew 5:23-24 speaks of *the reconciliation of two brothers in a congregation with one another*. And Ephesians 2:16 speaks of *reconciliation of Christians belonging to various nationalities and cultures with one another*. Because God has changed his relationship to us, we can and should change our relationship to God. And we can and should change our relationship to Christians belonging to other nationalities and cultures⁴⁰.

Salvation expresses a change of condition. 'Salvation' begins with justification, which is the *deliverance from sin (its guilt, shame, condemnation, and punishment)*. Salvation continues throughout life in an ongoing process of sanctification, which is the ongoing *deliverance from the pollution (filth) and the power of sin* (that made us slaves of sin). And salvation is perfected in glorification, which is the *final deliverance from the presence of sin and all its consequences*, like the death of our physical bodies⁴¹, the physical disasters on earth⁴², the corruption of this present world and the removal of all evil spirits⁴³.

³⁵ John 10:11

³⁶ G:katallassó

³⁷ G: en

³⁸ John 5:24

³⁹ Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 9:12

⁴⁰ cf. Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11; Revelation 5:9-10

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 15:26

⁴² Acts 3:20

⁴³ Revelation 20:10

When salvation is distinguished from justification as here in Romans 5:9-10, then 'salvation' indicates the completion of that work of which justification is the beginning. It includes deliverance from the evil world and from the evil influence of Satan and his demons; the deliverance from all kinds of suffering and death; the preservation from all causes of destruction, and the inheritance of eternal life in heaven and on the new earth (8:31-39)⁴⁴!

Salvation here is deliverance from God's wrath, which he will execute on the judgement day (2:5,8)⁴⁵. Because justification is complete and irrevocable, there is no condemnation or doom reserved for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:1). Their future complete salvation is absolutely certain! God will not leave his work unfinished! Romans 8:29-30 teaches that the people whom he calls, he justifies, and the people whom he justifies, he also glorifies! And Philippians 1:6 teaches that God will carry the good work, which he began in us, to completion! If while we were enemies Christ's death restored us to God's favour, Christ resurrection and divine life will secure our final complete salvation (5:10)!

There is an indissoluble connection between Christ's death and Christ's resurrection (4:25). Those who are the beneficiaries of his death must also be the beneficiaries of all that is entailed in his resurrected life. The fact that Christ was resurrected and lives as the exalted Son of God (1:3-4), the only Saviour, the highest High Priest, the greatest Prophet and the eternal sovereign King, is a secure guarantee that all believers in Jesus Christ will be resurrected and live forever (8:11)⁴⁶. Thus, believers in Christ have been justified and have been reconciled: their salvation has begun! And they will be sanctified more and more and finally be glorified: their salvation will be completed in the future.

These facts make believers joyful. We believers in Jesus Christ rejoice in salvation, which has its beginning on earth and will have its completion in heaven (the place where God in Christ lives)! Christian salvation is not just a single event (a point), but a continuous process throughout their lives on earth (a line with a definite beginning and a definite end). Their salvation will be completed and perfected at the resurrection of the dead⁴⁷!

If God has given the lesser benefit, that is, our complete justification and reconciliation here and now, he will certainly not withhold the greater benefit, that is, our complete sanctification and glorification at his second coming and forever! That is why Christians rejoice in the salvation that has already begun here on earth and will be completed and perfected in heaven!

⁴⁴ Jude 1:24; Revelation 21:4

⁴⁵ Matthew 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 6:16-17

⁴⁶ cf. John 14:19

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:26