

DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME V // THEREFORE PEACE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: What are your top five favorite things about being a Christian?

Key Text: “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:1-8)

Giving Up Too Much to Follow Christ?

A skeptic said to his Christian friend one day, “You have to give up so much to become a Christian—how can you be so happy?” The Christian paused for a moment, pondering over his non-Christian friend’s question, then he responded, “Let’s see, to follow Jesus, I had to give up sin for forgiveness, emptiness for fulfillment, anxiety for peace, sadness for joy, fear for security, meaninglessness for purpose, sorrow for joy, loneliness for love, and hell for heaven. I’ve never given up so much in all my life and been so happy!”

In Romans 1-4, Paul had argued that nobody can be made right with God by trying to obey the law of Moses since nobody can obey it perfectly (Romans 3:10, 23). Righteousness comes only by faith in what God has accomplished for us through Christ’s death, which paid sin’s penalty in full, and His resurrection, which secures our justification (Romans 4:24-25).

Now, in Romans 5:1-8, Paul shows four benefits that a Christian can rejoice over—blessings that come with justification. Each benefit is summarized in a key word.

1. Peace

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v.1). The Bible teaches that before salvation, we had the disposition to please ourselves and be our own gods. That rebellious nature sets us at odds with God. In our sinful state, we cannot be reconciled—we cannot have peace with God—no matter how hard we try. We are at enmity with God (Romans 5:10). But God took the initiative in pursuing peace by sending His Son to earth. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and through His death and resurrection, He gives us a permanent peace with God.

Discuss: How would you explain to a non-Christian that the Bible says they are at enmity with God?

2. Access

“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (v.2). The two Greek words that are translated “access” (v.2) mean “to bring forward.” It referred to having an audience before a king. You could not just stroll into a king’s palace and have an impromptu meeting with the king! You had to have someone with special authority to bring you forward into the king’s presence. In verse 2, Paul tells us that it is “through him” (v.2)—Jesus—that we can come to God any time to talk to Him directly in prayer. God is always available—we have 24-hour access to Him.

Discuss: Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What are some key words and phrases that encourage us to pray?

3. Hope

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (v.3-4). Biblical hope does not mean wishful thinking; rather, it is a confident expectation that God will keep His promises—a confidence strong enough to act on it. Paul teaches us that we can have hope even in our suffering because we know that God is in control, and suffering produces endurance which produces character, which results in hope!

Discuss: When have you seen suffering result in character and hope in your own life?

4. Love

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (v.5-8). Have you ever put your hope in something or someone and ended up being let down? Paul declares that God’s love will “not put us to shame” (v.6)—God’s love will never disappoint us or let us down. You can always count on God’s love!

Discuss: What comes to your mind when you read that God’s love is “poured into our hearts” (v.5)?

Discuss: Read and discuss God’s great love described in Romans 8:31-39. How does Romans 8:31-32 compare with Romans 5:7-8?

For Further Study:

Peace with God by Billy Graham

“Does God Love Me?” article at www.gotquestions.org

Making Sense of Salvation by Wayne Grudem