

Justified, Perfected and Loved

Romans 5:1-8

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Introduction: We have probably all experienced some sort of personal relationship that was performance based. By this I mean.... one in which you are accepted by the other person only if you please them. If you say the wrong thing or forget something or leave something undone, they can explode on you or just shut down on you. Your standing with that person is always precariously based on your actions. What you do or do not do! Such relationships are sadly....very common.

Then there is the relationship in which you are unconditionally loved. Hopefully your marriage is like this. If it is not then you should make that a goal in life. If you are the one with conditional love this should be your wake up call. If you are the one denied unconditional love then you must and can find it in Christ.

Now....of these two scenarios which one will bring about a settled peace of mind? A knowledge that even if we forget a birthday or dent the fender or burn the roast, we are loved, accepted and cared about and cared for. Which one? Sure....everyone agrees that it is the second one. The relationship that is not conditional. It brings us peace in at least two ways. Peace of mind and heart and assured peace with the person who loves us this way.

What I have described is an earthly example of the difference between salvation by works or good works and deeds and faith alone through Christ alone. After making his point several different ways, Paul opens chapter five this way....

Romans 5:1-8 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And with these words....God begins the application of this great truth of Justification by Faith alone to your daily walk with Him. It is not an abstract truth or doctrine. Some people are so cavalier about doctrine as if it is some sort of personal choice....like what kind of salad dressing you prefer or your favorite color. No friends, this is a serious business. It has to do with what happens to your precious life which you love after the few short years that you get to live it here on earth. It is an ongoing life and it will be spent in eternal joy with God or eternal damnation apart from him.

We are Justified by Faith [1-2]

Therefore, having been justified by faith [1a]: This is the summary statement of the past 4 chapters. It introduces what is about to come by appealing to a definitive justification. “Having been justified” is a completed reality and not open any longer to discussion. The case has been made and it has been shown that neither the keeping of the law or the practice of any ritual will ever save. Man has a sin problem. We are already sinners by the time we care about it. No man can turn back the clock and undo what has been done. If you are filthy dirty...putting on a clean shirt will not make you clean and yet this is what all religion prescribes. Good works to balance the sins we have already committed. NO! We must be cleaned and washed in order to enter the presence of a sinless God. God did this by sending His own dear Son into the world to die for your sin. If you trust in Him alone you will be justified by Faith...if not then you cannot be justified at all.

Titus 3:3-7 ³ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ [1b]: A lot of people do not think they are enemies with God. They are just neutral, but God....being God....does not accept being relegated to some corner of man’s subconscious. You can understand this if you have children or have been one. Your child refuses to speak to you. He denies that you are his or her biological parent. They change their name as soon as they can legally do so. They will never let you know your grandchildren or even let them know that you exist. They never express any gratitude for the life you gave them or the food and clothing you gave them or even for the loving affection you gave them. This is NOT neutrality! This is enmity and it is rampant among men and women who think they are not offending God in any way and He should not be upset.

The Bible says that exactly one thing will bring about peace with God and it will not be us. It will not be our morality, our ethnicity, our nationality, our religion, our self-righteousness or our good works. It will be faith! Putting your trust in Jesus Christ alone to take your sins at the cross and give you His righteous standing before God

Through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand [2a]: It is not “through which” but “through whom!” One of the common pitfalls of evangelicals is to trust in doctrine and not in Christ. I grew up with this kind of thinking. If you believed the doctrines about Christ or if you had prayed the sinners prayer then this was sufficient. Jesus was aware of this tendency in Jews as well and warned them often that Salvation was in Him. He was the sin bearer and the things they did or did not believe or do would not save them. God’s Word is vital to know God, but is not the end in itself. Again...justification is by faith alone in Christ alone.

John 5:37-40 ³⁷ "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. ³⁸ "You do not have **His word abiding in you**, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

So let's look at this verse carefully. The word "introduction" also implies access. We have obtained access by faith. Not by works, not by morality....but by faith! This means that Christ has obtained this access on our behalf. All spiritual blessings you have, have been obtained for you by Jesus Christ. We get them by putting all our trust in Christ.

III: If you wanted a job and I know the president of that company, I could say..."Let me introduce you." You now have access that you would not have been able to get in a million years.

Justification by Faith works like this illustration. Suppose you were charged with a crime and then found out that your lawyer was the beloved only son of the judge before whom you must appear. But you also know that the judge is a good and just man and will follow the law which you know you have broken. You will be convicted and are, but your lawyer says to the judge. Father....I know we must do what is just and convict this person, but I will take his punishment and serve it so that you may let him go free. In that way justice will be served, the penalty paid and my client will be free.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

We gain access to God through trusting in Jesus Christ who has access to God. We are with Him. He introduces us. The New Testament uses this word two other times. Both describe blessed open access to the God of Creation through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 3:12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

It is said to be an access into "this Grace." Grace is favor. It is undeserved kindness and this is the quality or character of God and Christ that makes your salvation possible. Why should God let a sinner go unpunished in hell and His own Son take the punishment for sin? Because both the Father and the Son are full of Grace. It is their most blessed attribute. John said that Jesus revealed it fully.

John 1:14 ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus came into the world revealing the Father who was invisible. He became an actual, flesh and blood human being who was entirely filled up to capacity with the grace and truth of God that had not been seen on earth since Adam sinned.

John 1:18 ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

How fully did Christ reveal God? Perfectly! Exactly! Cults and others who deny that Jesus was fully God have no idea who God actually is. Jesus revealed Him fully to men.

Colossians 1:15 ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

We exult in hope of the glory of God [2b]: “Exult” means glory in it. Boast in it! Shout about it and brag about it! ‘I CANNOT BELIEVE IT!!!! I HAVE ACCESS TO GOD!’ I am going to heaven when I die! I am going to experience the Glory of God in all its fullness! Hope is akin to Faith. It is an earnest and settled expectation because it is based on what we know Jesus Christ has done for us and His gracious love toward us poor sinners.

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope,

John 17:22 ²² "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

We are being perfected by Faith [3-5a]

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations [3a]: There is only one reason to do this. It is the confidence that we are loved, sought and bought by Jesus Christ and that His purposes for us are therefore perfectly good. He could have let us slip off into a lost eternity, but has instead left heaven's glory, lived a sinless life of great trial and tribulation and died a sinners death on our behalf. How He has loved us.

God's Word teaches us that troubles are part of our human existence. Job spoke of it in the oldest book in the Bible.

Job 5:6-18 ⁶ "For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble sprout from the ground, ⁷ For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward. ⁸ "But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God; ⁹ Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number. ¹⁰ "He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields, ¹¹ So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. ¹² "He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success. ¹³ "He captures the wise by their own shrewdness, And the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted. ¹⁴ "By day they meet with darkness, And grope at noon as in the night. ¹⁵ "But He saves from the sword of their mouth, And the poor from the hand of the mighty. ¹⁶ "So the helpless has hope, And unrighteousness must shut its mouth. ¹⁷ "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reprove, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. ¹⁸ "For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands *also* heal.

Knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance [3b]: We have all heard the saying, “whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.” Well...it turns out that is pretty close to the truth of Scripture. In the physical world only resistance makes a person stronger. You need to lift weights to become strong not feathers.

One of the most blessed of all character traits is patience. But it is only, ever produced by tribulation. Difficulties and resistance to what we want to do. I really wanted a college degree but I had to endure four years of unpleasantness to obtain it.

And perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope [4]: Proven character is tested character. Have you ever wondered if your faith is real or sincere enough? Well this is how God proves it to you! He sends trials and you endure in trusting Him. This is exactly why you can rejoice in trials. God uses them to prove to you that you are His dear child. You have not turned back. You have endured or persevered.

The word “proven” actually means tested and found to be genuine. It is the Good Housekeeping seal of approval” on your Christian profession. God sent it to prove to you that your faith is real and cannot be lost. Jesus spoke of such a man...

Matthew 13:20-21 ²⁰ "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away

If you have afflictions and trials in life and are trusting Christ...LISTEN...YOU ARE NOT THAT MAN!!!

And that should give you biblical hope! A settled assurance of Christ’s faithfulness to you that has been proven through enduring trials in this life. You can and will have every expectation of getting through this life and coming joyfully into the presence of Christ.

Colossians 1:27 ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And hope does not disappoint [5a]: This is not mere human hope of the kind we have when we say....I hope it rains or “I hope the stock market goes up.” This is the Biblical kind that is fully based on who God is and what He has promised to do. Christ Himself, according to Scripture is our hope. This biblical hope never, ever disappoints us because we are hoping in Christ.

Romans 8:32 ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

You and I do not perfect ourselves. Yes...God has called us to hear and obey His Word, to believe the truth of it, to gather together in His Body the church and grow together in Christ, but we do not perfect ourselves. Those are just the means that God uses to bring you to maturity. Obedience to His Word and the trials of this life combine to mature us...

Ephesians 4:13-15 ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of

men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

We experience His love by Faith [5-8]

Because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us [5b]: This is exactly why you cannot be disappointed in Hope. Hope....Christ Jesus.....does not disappoint. He has loved us unspeakably. It is hard to know where to begin to explain this. But let's try...

God, who knows all things before they ever came to be, knew that you would be Adam's sons and daughters and be hopelessly lost in sin. He knew that you would never find your way back to God. He knew that you would be born spiritually dead and would actually become His enemy. He knew every sin you would ever commit and every weakness of your character. You should never try to hide anything about yourself from God because He already knows everything. This God....and His Son Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:4-6 ⁴ chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

2000 years ago The Son entered human time and space and bore your sins on the cross. Then when you were actually born and hopeless The Holy Spirit poured out that love to regenerate your dead spirit.

Ephesians 2:4-5 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly [6]: When you were saved....you were still helpless. Dead men are the most helpless of all humans. In fact...before you were even born in your dead state, Christ died for you because you were ungodly. This is another compelling proof of justification apart from all works. Christ died for you before you were ever born and able to do a single good work. He determined to make you His before you could believe a single thing or pray a single prayer. You were helpless when He procured your salvation. He did it because He love you! Do you realize How Much Christ Loves You?

For one will hardly die for a righteous man [7a]: Try to imaging this then. A man who does everything required for him on earth. He obeys the law, does not cheat on his wife. Does not treat others with contempt or disdain. Would you sacrifice your life to save his. Not likely! Would you give the life of your only son to save his? "Hardly."

Though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die [7b]: "The good man" would be this righteous man with kindness and mercy added in. He goes beyond what is required with generosity and forgiveness. For such a man someone might possibly dare to die.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [8]: But we were not either of those toward God. We might be law keepers and even merciful to other people but we were not like this toward God. We were dead in our sins. We were His enemies. Let me read that description from the beginning of the message once more. We said...

You can understand this if you have children or have been one. If your child refuses to speak to you. If he denies that you are his or her biological parent. They change their name as soon as they can legally do so. They will never let you know your grandchildren or even let them know that you exist. They never express any gratitude for the life you gave them or the food and clothing you labored to provide or even for the loving affection you gave them. This is NOT neutrality! This is enmity!

Man's problem is with God. You can be a pretty good person toward others, but what about your relationship toward God. He has given you everything you are and have. Your very life is His gift. What is the response of men? IT is universally negative. They are dismissive of God or downright hateful toward Him.

It is for men like this that Christ died. You are included. He died for you before you ever came to faith. Before you ever repented of your sins. Before you ever believed a single true doctrine.

CONCLUSION: Salvation...your salvation, is totally apart from you. You have not contributed because it was done before you were ever born. God chose to do it before you were born and Christ carried it out before you were born and after you were born you were dead to Him and unable to help yourself. God did 100% because that is how much we needed Him to do.

Biological parents are 100 % responsible for the conception and birth and care of their children, because that is how much their kids need.

This is how much Christ has loved you. What is your response to it? Is this something you can just be casual about? Just give mental assent to? Or does it cry out for something deeper and passionate? When asked what the greatest thing a man could do for God, Jesus answered this way....

Mark 12:29-31 ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The foremost is, YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." ³¹ "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

How will you increase in your love toward God? Know this gospel and live in it! Tell it to yourself every time you sin and every time you do not. In it, John says,

1 John 4:16 ¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1 John 4:19 ¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.