

The Apostle Paul has delivered quite a sermon on the sinfulness of mankind, the necessity of judgment, and the only way of salvation being to receive the grace of God through believing faith. We saw that the word "believe" in Greek meant to entrust yourself to. Abraham acted on his belief. He believed to the extent that he was willing to sacrifice Isaac knowing that God would raise him from the dead to fulfill the promise. That is the kind of believing that we are talking about. It is conviction on which your life is lived.

Paul used the Scriptural examples of Abraham and David, the two most important men in the history of Israel, to prove his point. It wasn't a message that was well-received by the establishment in Paul's day, nor is it well-received by the world today.

The stumbling block is twofold, admitting we are sinners, and the resulting lordship of Jesus in our lives. Our pride doesn't want to admit our depravity nor yield to any other master than self (2Corinthians 5:15). If you are human, you can relate. Now Paul will move to the application of this truth in the life of the redeemed. Chapters five through eight are some of the richest in the Scriptures on Christian living, so let us begin.

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul begins his application with the word "therefore". He is drawing a conclusion from the fact that it is through faith that we are justified. Remember that word means "just as if I'd never sinned". When we throw ourselves on the mercy of God and truly desire to turn from our ways that are rebellious toward God, by faith we are made right with God (3:28). How? It is because of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. He paid our sin debt so that we could be justly accepted by God. God can nullify our past sin only because the debt they incurred has been paid by Christ on the cross. The punishment due to you and me was dealt out on the cross of Calvary (1Peter 2:24). Now when God looks at you and me He sees the righteousness of Jesus, our Savior (2Corinthians 5:21).

This is the only way to be free from guilt. You can pay thousands of dollars to a psychiatrist, and he can tell you that your sins aren't really sins, or aren't your fault, or that you need tools to move on with your life. But the only way to truly be freed from guilt is to have our sin erased on the cross. By faith we receive the forgiveness of God, and in God's eyes, it is just as if you'd never sinned. That is the only way to find peace with our holy Maker. It is the only way to live and die in peace.

There are so many stories of the last moments of atheists and Christians. I have witnessed some of the saints going home. While atheists go out shaking their fist at a God they have claimed all their life does not exist, believers longing for their heavenly home calmly breathe their last. Ravi was recently shared about a saint who at the last

Commented [notes1]: 2 Corinthians 5:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Commented [notes2]: Romans 3:28 (ESV)

²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Commented [notes3]: 1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Commented [notes4]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

moment revived and told his wife he loved her and then looked up and said, "Beautiful", and he was gone.

There are books that give the accounts of dozens of people who caught a glimpse of heaven or of hell when they were clinically dead and then miraculously revived to tell the story. It changed their life from that point forward. Do you have peace with God? He is the Judge, and we will all give an account (14:12). Those who have thrown themselves on the mercy of God having accepted the work of Jesus on their behalf will be rewarded for their obedience with no mention of their sin debt, because it was paid. Knowing that give us tremendous peace in our heart. Those who rely on their own goodness or who stubbornly resist the grace of God that gave them opportunities time and time again to repent, will find that they must pay their own sin debt, regardless of how many "good deeds" or religious acts they've performed.

It is only possible to receive grace and forgiveness because of Jesus' sacrifice. 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.* We stand in this wonderful realm of grace because Jesus became the door for us. He made it possible to enter the grace of God. Even when we fail in our walk, we stand in this realm of grace because our sins, past, present and future, were borne by Jesus (1John 1:9). This grace realm is much more than salvation from judgment. It means we have become sons and daughters of God (Romans 8:15, 29). We are called the brothers and sisters of Christ (Hebrews 2:11). We have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3). We look forward to eternity in God's presence.

I was talking to my mom last week about the joy of knowing that in heaven all misunderstandings and animosities will be past. Our sin nature will be annihilated. We will all be completely Christ like (1John 3:2), yet with our own unique personalities. Forgiveness will be for all in relation to all experiences and will be complete. The old issues will fade away. **Access by faith into the grace in which we stand is much more than salvation from judgment. It is the love of God in all its fullness and all its expressions.**

We also rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We will see Him in His glory. That means we will see the outshining of all His beautiful attributes. When we finish Romans I want to go back and review the attributes of God with you because they draw us to Him in love. He is so utterly beautiful in His holiness (Psalm 29:2)! But this verse is not about hope in seeing the glory of God, it is rejoicing in the hope OF the glory of God. We will share His glory (8:17)! We will share His communicable attributes. His work in us will be completed. The fruits of the Spirit will be our continual expression. We will only express love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, and all His wonderful nature to one another. Kent Hughes writes, "Someday we will not only behold his glory, but will be glorified in

Commented [notes5]: Romans 14:12 (ESV)

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Commented [notes6]: 1 John 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Commented [notes7]: Romans 8:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Commented [notes8]: Romans 8:29 (ESV)

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Commented [notes9]: Hebrews 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Commented [notes10]: Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Commented [notes11]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Commented [notes12]: Psalm 29:2 (ESV)

² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

Commented [notes13]: Romans 8:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

him. Everything that now keeps us from being what God wants us to be will be gone forever!¹⁴ That is cause for rejoicing!

Commented [notes14]: Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word – Romans: Righteousness from Heaven

At Emogene’s funeral last week I read the hymn by Charles Gabriel, O That Will Be Glory for Me. 1. When all my labors and trials are o’er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will through the ages be glory for me. 2. When, by the gift of His infinite grace, I am accorded in Heaven a place, Just to be there and to look on His face, Will through the ages be glory for me. 3. Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will through the ages be glory for me. Refrain: O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me, When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me.

We do indeed rejoice in the hope of the glory of God! But this justification and grace in which we stand by no means suggests that life will be easy. There is an abundance of false teaching in the church that ends up disillusioning those who think coming to Christ means physical blessing. Paul says we have more reasons to rejoice, which are the trials that God uses to shape us. ³ *More than that, 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.*

Paul is clearly telling us in these verses that **God uses experiences to sanctify us**. An increasing number of believers in the United States refuse to attend church because of inter-personal trials. Guess what? It is part of God’s plan to shape you and those you rub the wrong way. These living stones grinding against one another are one way God shapes us to fit together (1Peter 2:5). They expose our rough edges and those of others. Together we grow in forgiveness and understanding. In our town, and I suppose in many others, there is a little rubbing and people jump to another church. God will see that they get rubbed there too. We can claim it is about doctrine or God’s will, but it is usually about people not having their way or not getting along with a person or being able to submit to the decisions of the elders (Hebrews 13:17). These trials are really all about producing character and hope.

Commented [notes15]: 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)
⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Commented [notes16]: Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

When we suffer, we endure or we run. If you are God’s child it doesn’t matter where you run, you will face it again. That is because the Spirit is out to mature you and me. When we finally learn to endure instead of running, then we develop character. We can hold our own convictions while letting others hold different ones. We can love in spite of differences (1Corinthians 3:3). That makes us hopeful that the Spirit of God is really transforming us, that we are really becoming more like our Savior.

Commented [notes17]: 1 Corinthians 3:3 (ESV)
³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

The wonderful thing Paul assures us of is that that hope will not put us to shame. We won’t find we are just indulging in wishful thinking. Why? It’s because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We really are growing in love

for our Savior and for one another. That is what it is all about. That is the Great Command (Deuteronomy 6:5). You can't get to the Great Commission (Mark 16:15) without growing in the Great Command.

Here is the proof that our hope will not disappoint us, the love Paul is referring to. ⁶ *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* We have Jesus' example of loving the unlovely even to the expression of the cross. It wasn't because we finally became godly that Jesus died for us. It wasn't because of our determination to be good. It was when we were weak. What an example for us in loving our brothers (14:1). That doesn't mean we compromise or enable them to live in sin, but rather that we keep loving even the weakest among us that keep stumbling. We offer them hope. We endure with one another's weaknesses (Colossians 3:13). If Jesus could die for us when we were weak, certainly we can put up with one another with a little sacrifice here and there. Amen? And if He died for us when we were weak and ungodly, surely our hope in Him will not end in disappointment.

When you and I were hopelessly lost in sin, when we were destined for the wrath of God, the love of God and the willingness of the Son to obey the Father sent Jesus to the cross to offer us hope. The more we realize what we were saved from, which is the depravity of our old nature and the wrath it deserves, the more we will appreciate the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus (Luke 7:47).

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.* This is part of the Romans road to salvation. It is a verse we often quote or read to help people see what God is offering us out of His goodness and love. We might die for a family member we love. We might give our life for a person with great ability to help others. But God showed His love for mankind by dying for us when we were living in rebellion toward Him. If someone refused to listen to a thing you say, insulted you, and lived in a way that constantly offended you, and suddenly it came down to your life or theirs, would you instantly volunteer to die so that they could be saved? That is what Jesus did for you and me.

⁹ *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.* Being justified to God is the purpose of Jesus' sacrifice. That means man can again have fellowship with God because we are pure in His sight. Salvation from the wrath of God is the bonus! It is the inevitable effect of justification. This was made clear to me when I was just five years old. I wanted to be saved from wrath. The Spirit invited me to be saved so that I could know the One that loved me. That made more sense, and when I realized it was a better reason, I asked for that relationship. That instant I knew I was born-again. Salvation from hell is the bonus. The main thing is a restored relationship with God.

Commented [notes18]: Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Commented [notes19]: Mark 16:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Commented [notes20]: Romans 14:1 (ESV)

¹ As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

Commented [notes21]: Colossians 3:13 (ESV)

¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Commented [notes22]: Luke 7:47 (ESV)

⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven— for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Many Christians that can quote verse eight, have never moved on to verse ten. The death of Jesus saved us when we were enemies. Now that our relationship with God has been reconciled, what will the life of the resurrected Christ do in us? Do you see what this is asking? If when we were enemies of God Jesus' death saved us, now that we are friends of God, children of God, what does the resurrected life of Christ do? It saves us, and not just from wrath. It saves us from self-destruction of sinful lifestyles (Galatians 1:4). It saves us from a meaningless existence. It means Jesus is interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25). His life is now manifested through our lives as we love one another and serve our Creator. We aren't just free from guilt; we can now walk in the Spirit and live lives of eternal significance. If we were made right with God through the death of Jesus, how amazing is life now that we live by His resurrection power! It is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me (Galatians 2:20). That is salvation in this present evil world. That is experiencing the transformed life and the power of God (Ephesians 1:18-20).

¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. You mean there is more? There is abundant joy because we rejoice in the great heart of God that is increasingly revealed to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, the instrument of reconciliation (1Peter 1:8).

It is as if we had done some horrible thing to the king in whose domain we lived. We were insurrectionists. We said horrible things about him. We refused to see how gracious and loving he is. But one day when he came to entreat us to reconcile, the prince, the king's son, stepped in and offered to exchange places with us and let the king meet out his justice on him instead of punishing us. The king, with great love for us but with a perfect sense of justice, knew something we did not know. He knew the One that knew no sin could take the sin of others and the punishment that all that rebellion deserved. The mystery was that after the punishment took His life He would conquer death and rise to live to help us be like Him in all His sacrificial goodness (1John 2:6).

While we were rebels against His goodness, **He died for us, not just so we could be saved from wrath, but that we might be reconciled to our King.** That reconciliation is accomplished! Now we are preparing for our first audience with the King, in which we will become His bride (Revelation 19:9). The life of Jesus in us today is preparing us through communion with Him, through trials that shape us, through the word that transforms our thinking. Justification by faith, peace with God, reconciliation, saved from wrath, saved through His life, and all this results in joy unspeakable and full of glory (1Peter 1:8). Is it yours? Are you His? You can be, but only by exercising His gracious gift of believing faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

Commented [notes23]: Galatians 1:4 (ESV)

⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Commented [notes24]: Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Commented [notes25]: Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Commented [notes26]: Ephesians 1:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

Commented [notes27]: 1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Commented [notes28]: 1 John 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Commented [notes29]: Revelation 19:9 (ESV)

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Commented [notes30]: 1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Commented [notes31]: Acts 16:31 (ESV)

³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Questions

- 1 What is Paul's message to this point?
- 2 How can we be free from guilt?
- 3 How do we receive forgiveness?
- 4 What does "stand in grace" mean?
- 5 What is hope of the glory of God?
- 6 How does God use trials?
- 7 Why is it useless to run to escape trials?
- 8 Why did Christ die for you?
- 9 What does "saved by His life" mean?
- 10 What is our ultimate joy?