

Jan. 9, 2021

The Security of Justification

Part 1

Romans 5:1-5

Justification by faith is proved sufficient by the eternal gifts that it secures.

LTS: Psalm 103

Today, we make the transition into the second major section of Paul's letter to the Romans. In the first section (chp. 1-4) Paul has explained the substance of Justification by faith alone. In chp. 5-8, then, Paul's focus shifts from the substance of our Justification to the security of your Justification.

The question that Paul intends to answer in the next four chapters is this:

How can we be sure that justification by faith is enough?

How can we know that justification is sufficient to bring us all the way home?

These next 4 chapters are like large chests of treasure overflowing with good news from God, and I am sooo looking forward to digging into it with you.

So, let's begin by standing together and reading the text before us, Rom. 5:1-5

Read Rom. 5:1-5

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.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

“How can I know for sure that my justification is enough to keep me secure until the Day of Christ? I am confident that this is what Paul has in mind because He says (v.1),

Therefore, since we have been justified, by faith, we have... and then tells us what God has given to us as the overflow of our justification. You see, justification is the essential substance of our salvation, but once it is activated, all kinds of other benefits begin bubbling over to prove how secure we are until we see the Lord face to face.

I like to think of these truths as great anchors of assurance that can never be hoisted, moved, or destroyed.

Now, it's going to require more than one sermon to speak adequately about all the anchors of security Paul has in mind. But this morning, I think we will only have time to cover one.

Before we do that, however, there is something foundational that we dare not miss. It is a biblical teaching that serves as a kind of rope that ties all the anchors together. That teaching is called, the doctrine of Union with Christ. Now even though this teaching is implicit rather than explicit in this text, I want us to invest significant time to refresh ourselves on it because it's so important. That's why it is labeled as the first point in your printed outline.

I. Union with Christ.

1. Now it seems clear to me that Paul assumes his readers are already acquainted with this foundational teaching of the Bible. The reason I think that is because of the specific language Paul uses to set up this text.

2. Notice with me in verse 1 Paul says we have peace with God Through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Again, in verse 2 Paul says, Through Him we have obtained access...”

Now, whenever Paul uses the phrase “Through Him” or “Through Jesus Christ, or (Paul’s favorite term) “in Him, he almost always has union with Christ in mind.

3. If you are new to Calvary Bible Church or perhaps new to expository, theological preaching, you may be unaware of the fact “Union with Christ” is a major N.T. teaching. So, right now many of you may be asking, O Pastor Dan! Please, please don’t let another moment pass without teaching me about this amazing truth!

I love it when people say that. I have actually never had anyone say it in real life, but in my imagination, it happens all the time! So, let’s dive right in.

4. The doctrine of union with Christ tells us that believers are so intimately identified with Jesus and he with us - that Scripture says we are united – He is in us and we are in him. The Lord and his people share a common spiritual life, such that the apostle can say (Col. 3:3), For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

5. Union with Christ is all about how God thinks about you as a believer. And the way God thinks about you has everything to do with Jesus Christ.

Now, let me make an important statement that you will want to remember. God never thinks about you apart from Christ.

6. There is never a time – not even when you sin – that He thinks of you apart from Jesus.

- A. Now, as I said last time, that doesn’t mean that your sin doesn’t matter. It does matter.
- B. Your sin will break fellowship with God.
- C. Sin will hinder your prayers.
- D. Sin will enslave you if you let it go unchecked.

- E. And the N.T. even warns that a professing believer may even be self-deceived about their salvation, thinking that praying the “Sinner’s prayer” guarantees their salvation even though they live in habitual, unrepentant sin. But I will leave that for another day.
- F. The point is, if you are united with God in Christ, God always sees you and thinks of you the way he thinks about the sinless, perfectly righteous Son of God.

7. Consider how Paul speaks of union with Christ in other passages:

Because of your union with Jesus...

- You have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20),
- You have died with him (Rom 6:8; Col. 2:20).
- You Have been buried with Him (Rom. 6:3),
- You have been raised with him (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1)
- and you have been enthroned in heaven with him on the seat of His Father (Eph. 2:6).

8. My friends, the importance of the doctrine of Union with Christ can hardly be overstated.

A. John Murray describes Union with Christ as the central truth of the whole doctrine of Salvation. Likewise,

B. Sinclair Ferguson describes Union with Christ as the heart of evangelical theology.¹
These strong statements affirm the biblical teaching that everything God has for us comes to us by virtue of our union with God in Christ.

9. And by the way, if you are familiar with Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he tells us in the first chapter that every believer in Jesus is in Him from the foundation of the world.

10. This is why I put union with Christ first. I said at the beginning that that each of the anchors Paul will describe, are ours as the overflow of our justification. But, even our justification is inseparable from the doctrine of Union with Christ. It is the metal from which each of these anchors are forged.

11. Well, now that we understand that all these spiritual Anchors come to us “through our Lord Jesus Christ (or by virtue of our union with Christ), we can begin thinking about the first Anchor Paul has in mind.

12 The first spiritual Anchor that proves our justification is sufficient and secure us forever is...

¹ Pastor Edward Donley, Trinity Reformed Presbyterian church, Northern Ireland. 2001

https://www.sg-audiotreasures.org/union/01ed_union32kbs.mp3

II. Peace with God:

1. Paul mentions this spiritual anchor in the first verse (1). He writes...

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

2. In post-modern America, most people still say that they believe in God. Nevertheless, I dare say that most of those people believe in a god that is a figment of their imagination. Or, as they say in Alcoholics Anonymous, he is the “god of your own understanding.”

3. When people re-imagine God like this, they typically make him out to be the author of supreme benevolence.

He’s the Santa Clause of heaven. His role in the universe is to make sure people feel accepted, happy, and protected from harm.

4. But the ungodly have no category for a God who is opposed to sinners. But this is the frightening reality that sooner or later every unrepentant sinner must face. God is at war with sinners and sinners are at war with God.

5. Perhaps you are here as an unbeliever today and you are thinking, “I’m not at war with God.” Yes you are. You may not be emotionally hostile toward him, but the fact is

- You bristle at the commands of God.
- You hate His word.
- You have no intention of submitting your life to his authority.
- You live as you please regardless of what God says.
- You reject what He says about sexuality, money, marriage, church.
- You disregard his warnings.
- You have no desire to read His word.
- You think of it as antiquated, outdated and irrelevant to real life.
- The fact of the matter is that while you claim to believe in God, you actually hate God.
- A recent example can be seen in the life of Desmond Tu Tu who recently died and was lauded as a South African Anglican Bishop renowned for his commitment to ending apartheid in his country. For that, he was justly commended. He was considered a great religious leader who won the Nobel Peace prize in 1984! But when it came to what God says about human sexuality, his opposition to God became clear. He said (and I quote)

“ I would not worship a god who is homophobic. I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say, ‘Sorry, I would much rather go to the other place.’”²

² The Briefing with Alber Mohler, in an audio segment on Monday, Jan, 2022. Available at <https://albertmohler.com/2022/01/03/briefing-1-3-22>

Last visited on Jan. 8. 2022

On another occasion he said, “If God is opposed to homosexuality, than I do not worship that God.”³ My friends, this is not a man who experienced “Peace with God.” God is at war with such people.

- Jn. 8 Jesus says of the unregenerate that their father is the Devil.
- 1 Jn. 5:19; The whole world lies in the lap of the evil one.
- Deut. 32:21. They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols...²² For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.
- Josh. 23:16, Because you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.”
- Nahum 1:2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.
- Psalm 7:11 tells us that God is angry at sinners every day.
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- John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”
- In Genesis we see the wrath of God against the whole world when God sent a world-wide flood to judge sinners.
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- We see it again in Sodom and Gomorrah when God rained down judgment upon those two cities.
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- Rom. 1:18 “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

Again, he writes, (1:24),

“Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves...”

Again (2:22)

“We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.”

6. Listen, friend: as one commentator put it, “You may not be that angry with God, but God is that angry with sinners.”⁴

³ Ibid

⁴ John MacArthur: Audio message on Rom. 5:1-2 entitled, Security – eternal salvation. Available at www.GTY.org

7. People will say, well, “My God would never say such a thing let alone follow through on a threat of divine anger eternal judgment. My God is tolerant, and benevolent, and doesn’t really care about what I believe or how I live. To which I can only say, if that’s what you believe, you don’t know God!

8. The ground of your theology is a mist, a vapor, a wish, a dream. But there is a true God, and He has spoken. And the fact of the matter is that everyone hearing my voice right now either IS or at one time was the object of God’s wrath because of sin. In fact, when Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians he said, Eph. 2:1–3

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

9. Eph. 5:6, Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Rev. 14, men will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger.

10. Can I summarize all of that in a simple statement?

If you reject the word of God:
You are considered an enemy of God.

11. He is at war with men and women who suppress the truth about God, hate his law, are offended by his holiness and constantly stand in opposition to His rule, even as they claim to believe in Him. God is at war with you, and you are at war with Him.

12. Witness Psalm 2 where God sets the stage of this enmity and hostility by saying,

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury.

13. This is a picture of a world governed by leaders who are opposed to God. And we see it throughout history. We see it in every historical instance where a nation attempts to eradicate God’s word or persecute His people.

14. More importantly, we see it in the historical record of how the leaders of Israel and the leaders of Rome in Jerusalem arrested the sinless Son of God, invented false charges against him, condemned him unjustly, and publicly gave him over to be crucified.

14. Why did the Jewish religious leaders take part in that? It was because, while they were devoted to religion, they hated God.

15. This is the condition of every human soul born into the world. There are no exceptions, save Jesus. By nature, every man and woman on earth has a natural bent against God and His word.

16. But now..., Paul says, since we (who were once at war with God) have been justified by faith, (1),

“We have
peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

17. For those who believe, The war is over. By the forgiving, justifying, redeeming, reconciling grace of God, those who once were at enmity with Christ are now “In Christ.”

18. Those who have been declared righteous by the Judge of heaven and earth, are no longer enemies God. For you who believe, there remains no threat of judgment.

19. Someone will ask, “Why? Upon what basis can God withhold his righteous Judgment upon sinners? Answer: He can do it because he directed all the wrath that was justly reserved for sinners and poured out on the holy, harmless, Son of God.

20. As Paul will say it in 2 Cor. 5:21 “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God... In Him.

21. In Romans 8, then, he will say, “there is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are...

In Christ Jesus.

22. Is Justification sufficient to take you all the way to heaven come what may? You better believe it! Because in the very moment God declares you righteous, you are instantly granted peace with God.

23. And by the way, Peace with God is not about how you feel. This peace is NOT about a sense of inner tranquility. We are not talking about a subjective feeling of peace. Rather, it’s a radical change in your relationship with God. When God declares you righteous in Christ, your status changes from Enemy of God to beloved child of God.

24. Beloved, any serious consideration of what it means to have peace with God should make our hearts throb with broken-hearted joy.

- A. Broken hearted because we realize how fully we deserve to be the objects of God's wrath.
- B. And Joy, because we know we have become the objects of God's eternal love.

25. Paul's favorite gospel term in this regard is *katalasso* "to Reconcile."

- (Rom 5:11)
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. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."
- (Col. 1:21) Paul, speaking of Gentiles like you and me, said, "And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you before Him, holy, blameless and above reproach."

26. The picture here is one of irreconcilable estrangement and enmity between sinners and holy God. What hope could there be that anyone could bridge the gap between the two.

27. And even if it were possible to bring them together, the debt the one owes to the other is insurmountable! And that's where Jesus' substitutionary life and death steps in.

28. In his life he fulfilled all righteousness requirements of God's law on our behalf. And by his death he fully paid the debt of our rebellion against Him. Reconciliation between God and sinners could only come through a mediator, and Jesus is the only one equipped with the necessary credentials to do it. And He did. That's why (in Rom. 5:1) Paul says,

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

29. By the way, the term for Peace here finds its roots in the promise of Shalom which would come to sinners through the Prince of Peace, who is none other than Jesus, our Messiah.

30. Beloved, this is why your justification makes you eternally secure. Jesus didn't broker a truce between you and God. No! He has established eternal Shalom with God; a peace in which God promises to receive you as a son rather than the object of His wrath.

31. Nothing could be more secure.

32. Is your Justification sufficient to bring you all the way to the Father's house in heaven? Absolutely! Why? Because the overflow of your justification is the reconciling Shalom of Jesus. You who were once an enemy of God now enjoy the benefits of being at perfect Peace with God. Objective peace that fills our hearts with subjective peace.

33. The Second anchor we receive as the overflow of our justification is...

II. Access to God

But we will need to wait till next time to learn about that.

Let's pray.

Justification by faith is proved sufficient by the eternal gifts that it secures.