

## Having Access into Grace

*Communion*

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**Bible Text:** Romans 5:2  
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The following sermon was preached at Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, CA. For more information, please visit our website at [hopeprd.org](http://hopeprd.org).

Let's open the Bible this morning and turn to Romans 5. Romans 5, we read the first 11 verses.

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Thus far we read the divinely inspired sacred Scripture this morning. The text for this morning is verse 2,

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, for some two chapters at least now, the inspired Apostle Paul has been teaching the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Now in chapter 5, he proceeds to a list of some of the benefits, the fruits of justification. The first

and outstanding benefit of justification by faith alone is peace with God. Verse 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Are there any other benefits for the justified believer? Indeed, there are. Verse 2, "By whom also we have," verse 1, "we have peace with God," verse 2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." We not only have peace with God, we have access into the grace wherein we stand.

What is the grace wherein we stand? That's the important and difficult question of the text. What is the grace in which we stand and into which we have access by our Lord Jesus Christ? Peace with God is very specific, it's very descriptive. It conjures up warm and comforting thoughts in one's heart, "I have peace with God." What about access into the grace wherein we stand? That sounds very vague and even abstract. What is the grace in which we stand? Some suppose that this grace, verse 2, this grace in which we stand is pointing back to verse 1, and this grace is our justification by faith. It is indeed true that our justification by faith is gracious, certainly our justification by faith is a legal standing before God, so what is this grace in which we stand? Some say it is our justification.

Let's then follow the line of the inspired apostle's thought, then. He says, "You have been justified by faith alone. Let's mention some of the benefits. Number 1: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Benefit number 2: by whom also we have access into our justification." The benefit of being justified by faith is that we have access into our justification. Why do we need access into our justification if we have justification? Why would a man need access into the White House if he's in the White House? Justified believers have as a benefit of their justification access into their justification, that cannot be the thought of the inspired apostle.

This grace, others say, obviously is pointing back to verse 1. It's not justification by faith, it must be our peace with God. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and now verse 2 is telling us, by our Lord Jesus Christ also we have access by faith into our peace with God. Why would the inspired apostle tell us in verse 2 that we have access by Jesus Christ into our peace with God when he just told us in verse 1 that we have peace with God through, that's similar to access, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, verse 2 says, by whom also. That's indicating something has not yet been taught by the apostle. There is a new benefit coming according to the word "also" in verse 2. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." This grace in which we stand is not our justification and it is not our peace with God, then what is this grace in which we stand? That's the hard question of the text. Whatever it is, we must understand it. We must believe it. And it must fill our heart with warmth, with gratitude, with praise to God. It must be as precious and dear to our souls as peace with God is, our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.

Let's open up the sacred Scripture in Romans 5:2 this morning, taking as our theme "Having Access into Grace." Noticing three things, sort of, from this perspective: present, past, future. Developing the text along these main lines: 1. where we now stand; 2. how we have arrived; and 3. what we shall do.

Having access into grace. Let's begin with where we now stand. I don't know where you stand, I don't know where you live says the Christian in Rome to the non-Christian. I don't know where you stand, I don't know where you live, says the justified believer in Redlands to the unbeliever, but let me tell you where I stand, I stand in grace. In. The apostle says, "by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein." In. That word is indicating to us, that word is speaking now of a sphere, of a place, of an area, of a room, of a land, of a country. In. We stand in grace.

We stand in grace. By "grace" the apostle is referring to the ample and wonderful spiritual place which God has given to us, and in which we who used to live in the narrow and awful place of sin and death, now stand. We stand in the place called grace and deliberately the inspired apostle uses the broadest possible term to refer to this place in which we stand.

Grace. Grace is so broad. It's so broad a term. We stand in grace. This grace, he says, and now here's the key rightly to interpreting this text: that little word "this" as a demonstrative pronoun, as you know, it's like a pointer finger, it's pointing at something. We have access into this grace and the key to understand the text is that "this" is not taking the listener in Rome and directing his attention back to some word, some phrase, some concept in the preceding verse, but "this" refers to something as broad as possible. As it were, he's telling the justified believer in Rome who gathers with other believers to hear the preaching of the holy Gospel and to hear the letter that has been written by the Apostle Paul, that they stand in this grace and he means here, as it were, "Look around. All this grace. You stand in grace." What grace? "This grace. You have faith, right? Yes. Look around. All this grace."

This grace. It never used to be that way and you know that. By nature you lived, Romans 1:18, you lived and the wrath of God was being revealed from heaven upon you and all of your ungodliness and unrighteousness. That's where we used to live, in the place of sin and death, the curse and the wrath of God, now we stand in grace. What grace? Look around. All this grace. We are surrounded by grace. We stand. We not only live in grace, we certainly do not fall, we're not in the fallen position, the apostle says, "We stand. We persevere. We stand in this grace."

Now, later in the book, the inspired apostle will become more specific and he will open up this concept of grace and what's included. He'll speak of our resurrection in Jesus Christ unto newness of life. He will speak of our adoption unto sonship whereby we say to God, "Abba, Father." He will speak of our knowledge whereby we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Here he is as broad and general as can be.

If you look at things from the earthly dimension, believer in Rome. There you see yourself. You stand in Rome. You see buildings. You see houses. You see other human beings. You see blue sky and trees and birds. But if you, and you can do this because you have faith, if you look at things from the spiritual dimension, what do you see? All you see is grace. Grace. This grace in which we now stand. We are surrounded by grace.

The apostle does not name any specifics but we can learn from Scripture what grace is and help ourselves out here. Ask the Bible, "Bible," which is to say ask God, "God, what is grace?" So we have to go to the Bible and have God tell us what grace is. Then we have this broad category, grace, which is something like a broad category called living things, and we can break it into subcategories such as land animals, birds of the sky, fish of the sea. And so we take the broad category of grace in Scripture and Scripture will allow us to break it into three subcategories: beauty, gifts, power.

God's grace, what is God's grace? God's grace is, first of all, beauty. It's loveliness. It's fairness. It's attractiveness. God is in himself the God of all grace and from all eternity God is gracious and that he is beautiful in himself as the God of infinite perfections. God is beautiful. God is gracious. Psalm 45:2, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." Why are you so beautiful? Because beauty, that is, grace has been poured into your lips. Look at your lips. They are so beautiful as you speak the truth of God. Grace is beauty.

Grace is gifts. Now, in Catechism we say what is grace and the children will all be able to answer this, what is grace? Every child says undeserved favor. Undeserved favor. Grace is a gift and it's something that's freely given. You don't deserve it. A gift. 1 Corinthians 1:3-4, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace is the gift of salvation. May it be yours. Grace unto you. The apostle continues, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." Grace is an unmerited, undeserved gift that God freely gives. Salvation is by grace alone. It's the free gift of God. Gifts.

Thirdly, grace is power, an inner operating power. 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul did so much in his missionary labors, Paul did so much and what Paul did, Paul did by the grace of God working in him, an inner operating power.

Grace is beauty. Grace is gifts. Grace is power. We justified believers stand in this grace. We stand surrounded by grace. What grace? This grace. Look at all of this grace: the beauty of God, the gifts of God, the power of God. Beauty, we stand in all of this beauty. For example, look around by faith right now and you will see the beauty of God's holiness in worship. By faith you can see it, the beauty of God's holiness in worship. With the eye of faith, go to a home where there is a covenantal family there and sit in the midst of a family and look around and you will see the beauty of God's covenant, his fellowship. We stand in this grace. What grace? Well, grace is beauty. All this beauty.

Grace is gifts, favor. Look around you by faith and start counting all of the blessings, the gifts, the treasures, which God freely bestows upon you, upon us as his people. The forgiveness of sins. The hope of everlasting life in heaven. Faith to read the Scriptures and believe what the Scriptures are teaching. God's blessing upon our work, our endeavors. A covenant child. Communion at the table of the Lord. A new job. A

Christian friend. A denominational seminary. Count your blessings. They go on, one after another. Grace is gifts. God's gift that he freely gives to us. Look at this grace in which we stand. What grace? All this grace. All these gifts.

Grace is beauty, grace is gifts, grace is power. Look by faith and see the power of God that worketh within you so that you are able, to use the language of the text, to stand, to stand in faith. God's grace is his power, his strength, to be able to perform the duty of our station and calling as willingly as the angels do in heaven. That takes grace. God gives grace which is power, the strength to manage all of our needs, to meet the demands. Strength to endure sorrow and grief and pain. To resist temptation. To flee sin. That takes an inner operating power. It's grace. God upholds us, causes us to stand by grace. What is grace? Beauty, gifts, power. You stand in this grace, all this grace.

The apostle is not using the demonstrative pronoun "this" to point back to something specific in the immediately preceding context. He's referring to everything about this new spiritual place in which we now stand, having been converted and coming out of the place of sin and death. We stand in this grace and isn't it a beautiful and lovely and pleasant place to stand?

Where do you stand? I stand in this grace. Oh, indeed, the justified believer with other men walks through the valley of the shadow of death, he suffers, he hurts, he cries, he has pain, he's opposed, as all men are on this earth, nevertheless, the justified believer even now on this earth, he stands in a most splendid place, he stands, look around by faith, he stands in all this grace.

Where we now stand. We have arrived in this place in which we now stand by our access through the Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we, and the verbal tense here is indicating we ought to understand it this way, by whom also we have had and we still do have access by faith into this place in which we now stand. Access. Access refers to a passageway from one place to another. Let's suppose there are two countries, they border one another, and there is a massive border wall between the two countries. Access is the opening in the wall. It's the open gate. It's the passageway so that you can get from one country to the other. How? Through the access.

But the word "access" as it is used here by the inspired apostle means especially an introduction and so there's not only the opening in the wall, but you need an introducer. An introducer is an authority figure who comes along beside you saying, "I know you. Come with me." And he brings you to the guard who stands at the opening in the wall and he says, "I know this man. Let him through." And the guard says, "Yes." And he goes through the access. Jesus Christ is our access, not only in the sense that he's the doorway, he's the path, he's the way, but he's also the introducer, the authority figure who says, "I know you. You are my friend. Come." He says to God, "Let this man in." And God says, "Of course."

Jesus Christ is our access. We have access by faith, says the apostle. Faith is that mystical spiritual bond by which we are engrafted into Jesus Christ so that we're not merely a

friend who walks alongside of him, we're bone of his bones, we are flesh of his flesh, we're grafted into Jesus Christ and because of this bond, we have the activity of faith whereby we can believe in Jesus Christ and we trust in him as our access into the grace so that even after Jesus has initially brought us into the sphere of grace, even after he initially brings us into the new place which is the sphere of grace, it is still a matter, a daily matter of faith, to be able to see the grace, to taste it, to experience it.

We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. "By whom," begins the text. Verse 1 concludes, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom," by our Lord who is our Master, by Jesus who is our Savior, by Christ who is the anointed Messiah prophet, priest and king. By the Lord Jesus Christ we have access. There is no other way into the grace in which we stand than by our Lord Jesus Christ who is the way and the introducer. By nature we stand in the curse land, we stand in the wrath country. There is a new land, it's called grace land, grace country, and Jesus Christ is the only way into the grace land.

Now, sacred communion, this morning we'll present this even before our eyes before the understanding of our faith so beautifully as we see the Lord Jesus Christ in his suffering and hanging there upon the cross at Golgatha under the curse of God, standing in our place under the curse of God. He took that wrath revealed from heaven, he took that curse, that judgment of God, and at the same time he also earned, he worked, he merited, he accomplished blessings for us and now he is the great introducer who takes us through the access that he is and brings us initially into the state of grace, and then every day he introduces us into all of the experiences of grace by faith.

Christ. The apostle begins there. By whom? By our Lord Jesus Christ also we have whatever we have. Always by Christ. By nature, no man simply walks into this splendid place in which the Christian lives. Man needs access. Man needs access. No man comes into the grace sphere of his own will, his own works, his own obedience, his own holiness, his prayers, his worship. Man needs access. Any man can walk into this sanctuary, no man can walk into the grace of the appreciation of the beauty of God's holiness in this worship service. Man needs access into that grace.

From a certain point of view, virtually any man could have a child. A human being can have a child, find a child, claim a child, adopt a child, but no human being can walk into the grace, that is, gratitude and praise to God for this child as a covenant child, covenant child. You need access into that grace.

Any man can try to stand in adversity of his own physical and psychological and emotional strength, "I'll do battle with this. I can fight this to death." Any man can do that, can say, "I'll stand. I'll give it my best shot." But no man can come into the grace, that is, the experience of the all-sufficient inner operating power of God which enables him to stand unless he has access.

Access. You need access into this grace in which we now stand. Do you want to know what the great benefit of justification by faith alone is, says the Apostle Paul to the

Roman Christians? I'll tell you, it's peace with God. Peace with God. Do you want to know the second great benefit of justification by faith alone? Here it is: you have access by faith into the place, the sphere, of grace. Because we are justified by faith, we who were once guilty, damn-worthy, wretched sinners, because we are justified by faith, because we are declared righteous by God on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that's verse 1, because we are justified, we have our Lord Jesus Christ and all of his saving benefits: 1. peace with God; and 2. access into this grace in which we now stand. Without Jesus Christ, you have nothing. Absolutely nothing. But in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have this place called grace, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have access into it. He's everything. Without him we have nothing.

Where do we now stand? In this grace. How have we arrived? By Christ who is our access into this grace. What shall we do? The apostle says, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and," and from a certain point of view he's now giving a third benefit of justification by faith alone, but this benefit is so inseparably connected to the second benefit that it really arises out of it as a fruit of the second benefit. So the second benefit is that we have access into this grace in which we now stand and the fruit of that which ultimately goes all the way back to justification as a fruit of justification is that we now "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

That's astounding. Really that's astounding because hope is an ardent longing for some future blessing promised by God and what's so amazing is that here we are standing in the best possible place that a human being could ever stand on the face of the earth. Look around, we stand in grace and yet we're looking for something else? We are hoping for something more? While we're standing in this grace, we're always looking ahead to something else? Well, that's because we stand here in this grace but while we stand here on this earth, we have our sin and what believer doesn't sit here this morning not consciously aware of his own sin? And sadly, we look around and we see sin. There is sin around us. There is sin in other people. There is sin in the world. There is the devil. There is temptation. It's hard to stand.

It's hard to stand in grace because of all of the temptations and all of the sin and so as we stand here in this grace, we always look up to God, the God of all glory who is so glorious as God radiating in all of his infinite perfections. There is no sin in God. There is no weakness in God. There is no vulnerability to temptation and sin and falling in God. He stands eternally immovable as the God of all glory and in the Scriptures God has promised us that he will manifest his glory in us so that we will radiate with his own glory as we stand in glory in heaven.

That's what the apostle means when he says, "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." He's referring to that ardent longing for the blessing God has promised and the blessing is that God will manifest his own glory fully in us so that as creatures we radiate with his glory. No more sin. No more weakness. Never susceptible to falling. God's glory will be radiating us. We hope for that.

We hope for the glory of God and so what shall we do? The apostle says, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." He'll say more about hope later. We shall rejoice. That's what we do. That's what we keep on doing. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God because we look around and say, "Here we are. We're standing in grace and look at all the grace. Look at where we used to be. We used to be unconverted. By nature we're unbelievers under the wrath of God in that narrow place called sin."

That's where we used to be. Look at the table this morning, look at where Christ was, where Christ stood for us under the wrath and condemnation of God, and now look at where we are. We are in grace. Who has it better than we do? Find him. Find one. Who has it better than you do, justified believer, as you stand in all this grace?

Here we stand and we see the hope of the glory of God ahead of us. What do we do? We rejoice, says the apostle. We rejoice. That word is very strong. We exalt. We boast. We boast in God, the beauty of God. We boast in the gifts of God. We boast in the power of God. As soon as you say grace, you say God. As soon as you say hope, you say God. As soon as you say glory, you say God. As soon as you say access, you say God. As soon as you say faith, you say God. As soon as you say our Lord Jesus Christ, you say God. As soon as you read the text, you say God. Read the text, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." What do we do? What shall we do standing in grace? We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Amen.

Let us pray.

*Not unto us, O God, not unto any one of us but unto thy name be all of the glory forever and ever, world without end, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*