

Series: This Grace in which we stand - 5

Verse 11: WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED RECONCILIATION

Romans 5: 1 – 11

In our studies of 'standing in grace' we have considered several important words that enable us to rejoice where God has placed us in Christ; Justification, faith, peace, grace, hope, joy, glory. Together they describe four significant components of the Christian life: ***Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are standing in grace into which we have obtained access, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*** Our new position, justified by faith, meaning our new relationship with God has been settled by God not by us. This is conversion or new birth, requiring repentance, all by His grace through faith. We are not under wrath and our conscience has been cleansed by resurrection, the determinative proof of our justification; **Romans 8: 1 – 4.**

Romans 5: 3 – 5; V3 emphasises, *More than that/ Not only so, we rejoice in our sufferings ...* such suffering is not sickness, pain or sorrow, but tribulation. We rejoice in the effects of tribulations; the pressure of a godless and hostile world. *Suffering/tribulation* is the pathway to glory. -- **Luke 24: 26**, *was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?* Also Hebrews 12: 6, Revelation 3: 19. **Romans 8:17** where Paul is not saying that we put on a brave face and bear the suffering. No; he is saying that we rejoice in both the hope of glory and in our sufferings. How can you rejoice in suffering?

V. 3—5 explain this paradox. It is not rejoicing in the sufferings by themselves, but in what they produce. There is no idea of being a stoic and gritting our teeth. As believers we see God's divine purposes working out in the sufferings and we rejoice because of what that produces. Suffering produces endurance or perseverance. *Perseverance produces character*; it is put to the test and comes through. It refers to the quality of metal or car tyres which cannot be used if it hasn't been proved or tested. *Character produces hope*; meaning confidence of final glory. Hope will not be disappointed, but will receive the object of its anticipation; **1 John 4: 9 & 16**; God's love to us is Himself. As we mature, it shows that God is at work within us. He doesn't give up His job

before it is finished, for patience/endurance implies submission to God's will. He transforms us and brings us to the reality of His glory; **John 16:33**; *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. !!!*

The test of our Christian profession is the way we react to the trials and tribulations of life; reveals what we are inside. We can glory in tribulation because our faith, our standing in justification and peace with God enables us to view situations that are working not against us, but developing our character. V3 & 4, are conditioned or confirmed, **not** produced by faith; **v5b**; *because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. 2 Corinthians 8: 1 & 2*

John Calvin: "The abundant revelation of God's love flows through our whole heart. It penetrates every corner and does not only alleviate sadness; it mixes itself like a mild seasoning with all trials, lending them a pleasant flavour."

Martin Luther: "Therefore God's love alone, which is the purest feeling towards God, setting right the heart, removed unrighteousness; it alone destroys the satisfaction of one's own righteousness. For it loves God Himself only and solely, not just God's gifts."

5: 6 – 11; our helplessness in sin is total. We are separate from God and cannot find any way back. We are helpless to deal with guilt or the power of sin and cannot repent. If repentance were possible it would be something that we could do and redemption would be unnecessary, so again it points to God's grace in giving repentance; all this is the work of God through the Cross and resurrection! But what about our responsibility? There is a paradox in the N.T. between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The N.T. nowhere assumes that because salvation is entirely the sovereign work of God that we have no responsibility to repent and believe. We are called to believe; we are held responsible if we do not believe, but we may never realise the particular time when divine sovereignty and human responsibility meet.

In Mark 3 is the story of the man with a withered hand. Jesus said to him, *Stretch out your hand*. He was incapable of doing of doing that, but our Lord's command gave the impetus of faith for the man to respond and receive healing. Power is present in the proclamation of the Gospel. We were God's

enemies, failures, rebels and we cannot save ourselves. But for people like us Jesus Christ died, we have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ and our salvation is secure and will finally be complete, we have already received reconciliation, so we rejoice in Him. **V9**; the justified are preserved by our Lord Jesus Christ; **John 5: 24 & 1 John 2: 28 & 29**. **V10** repeats v9 in a parallel fashion with *justification* equated with *reconciliation*. Our continuing in salvation is described by the indwelling *power of the Holy Spirit*; meaning we are saved by his life.

James Denney; Scottish theologian (1856-1917): “Much more shall the love which wrought so incredibly for us in our extremity carry out our salvation to the end.” **1 Peter 1: 3 – 9**.

John Bunyan; *Pilgrim's Progress*: Christian and Faithful see a town they must enter because the Holy Way passes through. All year, merchandise bought and sold – houses, lands, honours, titles, countries, lusts, pleasures, delights, wives, husbands, children, lives, bodies, souls, silver, pearls, etc. Always; games, plays, fools, rogues, thefts, murders, adulteries, false-swearers. Pilgrims entered and cause a stir, dress different, language (of Canaan) not understood. Put down as fools and madmen. Irked townspeople by attitude of turning away from goods, fingers in ears; *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*, Ps. 119:37. Crowd gathers to taunt and revile them; arrested for disturbing peace, questioned, beaten, locked in iron cage to be made a spectacle; objects of sport, malice, revenge. Christian and Faithful conduct themselves “very wisely and soberly.” Some townspeople sympathetic and urge their release; town split into two factions which clash. Prisoners held responsible, authorities bring trial, charging, ‘enemies to and disturbers of their trade, they have made commotions and divisions in the town, had won a party to their own most dangerous opinions in contempt of the law of their prince.’ – ‘Since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his angels’. Vanity Fair.

V10, we have now received reconciliation; so change the state between those at variance by removing the grounds of difference. Satisfaction must be made to God's justice. We don't put aside our enmity to God; He lays aside His enmity to us on account of the death of His Son; essentially a change in His attitude toward us. A double reconciliation of God to us, then us to God; **v11**.