

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 10, 11 & 12 – Romans 5 & 6 (God's people united in Christ)

Introduction

Paul identifies himself with all who have been justified by faith, whether Jewish or gentile, and expresses the solidarity of the people of God, the new community of Messiah Jesus.

Week 10: Romans 5:1-11 (The Results of Justification)

Paul begins with six bold assertions about the results of justification.

1. We have peace with God (v1)
The pursuit of peace is a universal human obsession, whether international, industrial, domestic or personal. However peace with God is the most fundamental and our reconciled relationship brings us this peace.
2. We are standing in grace (v2a)
'Grace' is normally God's free and unmerited favour, his undeserved, unsolicited and unconditional love. Here the word means not so much His quality of graciousness but 'the sphere of God's grace', our privileged position of acceptance by him. The word 'access' (which suggests we take the initiative) is better translated 'introduction' – as this acknowledges our unfitness to enter, and our need for someone to bring us in. We do not fall in and out of favour like a temperamental king's courtiers. We stand in it, secure, for that is the nature of grace. Nothing can separate us from God's love.
3. We rejoice in our hope of the glory of God (v2b)
Christian hope is the joyful and confident expectation which rests on the promises of God. The object of our hope is the glory of God, namely his radiant splendour which will in the end be fully displayed.

Paul's first three affirmations about the results of justification, peace, grace, joy, hope and glory sound idyllic. And it is – except for Paul's fourth affirmation.

4. We also rejoice in our sufferings (v3-8)
The word sufferings is often translated 'tribulations' and doesn't refer to 'the trials and tribulations' of our earthly existence, meaning our aches and pains, fears and frustrations, deprivations and disappointments but rather to the opposition and persecution of a hostile world.
How can we be sure of God's love during times of suffering? Firstly God has 'poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us' (v5b). God also has a second and objective way to prove his love for us, Christ's death on the cross. The essence of loving is giving. See John 3:16.

"To be sure of the love of spouse or friend is marvellously conducive to human fulfilment. To be sure of God's love brings even richer blessings. It is the major secret of joy, peace, freedom, confidence and self-respect."

– John R. W. Stott

5. We shall be saved through Christ (v9-10)
Verses 9 & 10 are notable examples of the New Testament tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet', between what Christ has accomplished at his first coming and what remains to be done at his second. If God has already done the difficult thing in dying on the cross when we were his enemies, can we not trust him to do the comparatively simple thing in completing the task? See Philippians 1:6.

6. We also rejoice in God (v11)
This is quite different to the Jews bragging about God. Theirs was a boast as if he was their exclusive property and they had a monopoly interest in him. Christian exultation in God begins with the shamefaced recognition that we have no claim on him at all, continues with worship for the fact that while we were still sinners Christ died for us and ends with the humble confidence that he will complete the work he started in us.

"The degree of love is measured partly by the costliness of the gift to the giver, and partly by the worthiness or unworthiness of the beneficiary. The more the gift costs the giver, and the less the recipient deserves it, the greater the love is seen to be. Measured by these standards, God's love in Christ is absolutely unique. For in sending his Son to die for sinners, he was giving everything, his very self, to those who deserved nothing from him except judgement."

– John R. W. Stott

A major mark of the justified believer is joy, especially in God himself. We should be the most positive people in the world. For the new community of Jesus Christ is characterized not by a self-centred triumphalism but by a God-centred worship.

Q1. Does anyone have an experience of suffering that lead to hope?

Q2. xx?

Memory Verse:

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" – Romans 5:1