

The Epistle to the Romans Doctrinal 2: The Gospel Results of Justification, Roman 5:1-11

The other day I was thinking about different memberships or insurances I have. I don't have too many but there are several things which provide me with benefits in certain circumstances. Some memberships are for things that we enjoy: for trips out and about or shops. Others we need to have, such as for cars and houses, in order to protect us when things go wrong. I recently needed to make a claim on our insurance and thankfully I was pleasantly surprised about how good the cover was. I always knew I had insurance, but I always expected it to be less than I would need. But when the time came it was exactly what it needed to be. While I had no issues, it was there in the background. But I only fully appreciated what I had when I had to use and access the benefits of it. Most of these sorts of things are like that, we only see what we actually have when we are actively engaged with them.

So, where does that link into our topic of the Gospel in the book of Romans? In many ways the question itself is an answer. If I were to ask people about the key aspects of the Gospel, justification probably wouldn't be the first thing mentioned. Most would likely point to forgiveness and repentance. Even in this short series on Romans, it is the last of three topics regarding the Gospel. We therefore don't hear much about the results of our justification; our topic for this talk. Justification can become something that we know we have, but we never really enjoy what it means and what it gives us. Our focus when considering the Gospel is often centred around forgiveness and the grace of God. You may ask what is wrong with that? I would answer nothing at all. The Gospel is a wonderful thing that has provided us with so much but if we continue to search more deeply into it we find that there is a never-ending supply of wonders that we can enjoy.

The words justification or justify, when used in the Bible, are centred around the thought of being righteous. This means that because God sees the believer in Jesus as righteous, then He can bless us and give us things that we couldn't have whilst we were still lost in our sins. This brings us beyond the thoughts we may have had when we first believed the Gospel. At that point, our thoughts are all focussed around forgiveness, the wonder of it and all that it frees us from. Sadly, many people stay around this thought, either being satisfied with knowing they are forgiven, or being concerned that they may lose it somehow. But when we believe, when we have faith, we are justified as well as forgiven. It is a certain thing and as a result of this new position before God, we can benefit from God's love and His willingness to bless.

This is where our passage starts; without hesitation it states our position of being justified and there is no thought of that changing. The passage that we are considering is not very long but it is full of incredible things that result from our justification so I will just read through it now.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope

does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

In this passage we have eleven verses filled with content and written by the Apostle Paul. The verses split up fairly well into the four following sections:

- What we have now – verses 1 and 2
- What we can work on – verses 3, 4 and 5
- Why it is secure – verses 6 to 10
- A response – verse 11.

Moving quickly onto the first two verses, we have the immediate results of justification that we can enjoy now: Peace, Grace and Hope. These are three incredible things to offer and it is something that the world is lacking at the moment. We live in times where there are constant threats of war, whether it be on an international stage or just between people in everyday life. A world where people are encouraged to look out for themselves and not to be concerned with other people’s needs. A world where people are generally worried about what the future holds, not having much hope of a good life. Yet here in these two verses we have them offered and offered abundantly.

The nature of their being offered is also remarkable. It is not just a list; specific descriptors are included which are wonderful results of our justification. The first sets the scene of the whole topic of justification: “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Three things really impress me about this statement. The first is that word peace. Peace is a major topic in the history of the world, let alone the current politics of our day. If you look at history, it becomes very clear that peace is an incredibly difficult thing to obtain, and when peace is obtained it seems a very precarious thing. There is a statement written down on the wall of a museum in Manchester which talks about the peace between world war one and world war two. I can’t quote it exactly but the gist of it was that there wasn’t really a peace between the two wars, but a forced amnesty. If you consider the 18th and 19th centuries, war is almost a constant event. In our western societies it is probably the fear of the consequences of a war that prevents more wars occurring. Peace is hard to come by and this is not just on a large country by country scale, but in our everyday life. One definition I found for peace is free from disturbance. Take a normal day; could you say that we go through it free from disturbance? Just getting in the car can result in a day without peace! This is not the case in our statement here. It is so final and definite. We have peace, no conditions or timeframe. We have it and it will not be going away. How wonderful!

But this is not all. Our peace is with God! This is something that we can be a bit neglectful of in terms of not really appreciating how incredible this is. God created this world. He is sovereign, righteous, holy and just. He cannot put up with anything that falls short of this. We may worry about having a difficult neighbour or colleague, but this is nothing compared to being on the wrong side of God. In Leviticus we are told about the day of atonement. That was the one day in the year when the High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice which would mean that the sins of the nation of Israel were atoned for, for another year before God. If the sacrifice was not good enough or not correctly presented, then the High Priest would die there and then. But not only that. If anyone came near without permission, at any time in the year they would die. In

Second Samuel chapter 6, Uzzah put his hand on the Ark of the Covenant to steady it and he died there because the Ark was not to be touched. It may sound harsh, but God is holy and righteous. If we were to read the book of Job and the way Job acts when God confronts him, it gives us a bit of a better understanding of who God is. But in our statement, we see that because we are justified something wonderful is provided for us. Our peace is not just in terms of our situation or position, it is with God. We need not fear Him like the Old Testament people did, because our peace is with Him.

We get one more little gem of information in this statement about peace. I said earlier that peace in the world in which we live is precarious. History shows that this has ever been the case. But what about here in Romans? Should we be worried that perhaps the peace may be removed at some point? Perhaps over enough time we may need to renegotiate, or God will change the terms? Thankfully the words "through our Lord Jesus Christ" put paid to any such thoughts. Our peace is based solely on the Lord Jesus Christ. His work has brought it about and while He lives it will not go away; He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. We need not worry that Jesus will not always be there, so our peace will always remain. It relies on nothing of ourselves. How wonderful is this Justification that we have!

Having dwelt on the peace we have, we can start to look at the next thing that we have through our justification and that is grace. We start with peace, but it is only the beginning of what we have. The words say that we have access to the grace of God. It may seem a little strange that grace comes after peace as when we hear the Gospel message, usually grace is the key theme. The forgiveness of God is brought about because of His grace is what we would normally hear. But in this case, the word may be better put as favour. The definition that I have always used for grace is to receive something that we did not deserve. This is true of the Gospel message with regard to forgiveness, but it is also true of God's favour to us. We, in our unsaved and unjustified state do not deserve God's favour, but His wrath. However, when we are justified through the Lord Jesus we are not just forgiven, but we are now able to be in God's favour. If we were to turn to Ephesians and chapter one, we see how great this favour is. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. These things are available to us now and God holds nothing back. Not only do we learn something more of how wonderful our justification is, but we learn that God is a God eager and willing to bless and care for His people. Our own failures often prevent us from being able to fully enjoy these things. The grace, or favour, of God is similar in many respects to the idea of reconciliation, which is brought out later in the passage. Both of these aspects clearly show that God wants a relationship with us.

Having obtained peace and the favour of God, the first section of our passage today finishes with the mention of our hope. A hope in the glory of God in which we can rejoice. Of course, this is not a hope that we come across on a day to day basis in this world. Hope is often used as a longing for something highly unlikely or some distant dream. The hope of the Christian is something sure and certain, something we can look forward to. No longer do we have to worry about what the future holds. The Bible is not very forthcoming on what heaven is like and what our eternal existence consists of. But it is clear about the fact that we will be with God, with our Lord and Saviour and we will see Him without any restraint. Glory speaks of shining, of light and in a sense, it describes the fact that we will see the full nature and person of God. A truly remarkable consideration! If God is Love, if He is a God that blesses, then this will be revealed fully to us over all eternity. Something to rejoice in and something to look forward to! Our hope is a certain thing that is well worth having. It is all brought about because we are justified.

This concludes some of my thoughts on the first little section of our passage. If we were to consider peace, grace and hope as our status, we have these things and they cannot change. Even if we cannot not fully appreciate them, they nevertheless remain a constant. The next section of our passage could perhaps be considered a more practical result of our status and justification. It is fascinating that as we consider a more practical result of these things, we are brought to the thoughts of sufferings. The normal expectation of being justified, if it was our own decision, would

be to highlight successes and benefits and attribute them to this justification. God in His wisdom brings a different approach as He enables the believer to appreciate any sufferings in a different way, allowing us to learn from the process.

Suffering is often used as a reason for saying that God does not exist, making the use of it here even more remarkable. For the unbeliever the suffering experienced in the world should speak of the failure of mankind and drive him or her to God and His salvation which is the true remedy of this world's problems. For the believer, suffering now carries a different outcome and perspective. The suffering described here is that which God allows us to go through in order to learn of His ways. In our passage, we see a progression of attributes which ultimately lead us to hope. Hope in the future with God. This process enables the believer to have a greater appreciation regarding that which we have been given by God as well as our glorious future with Him. We do not gain through the suffering as we have a future with God already. But the sufferings help us to focus and understand better. I am sure many of us know of believers we have met in the past who are so full of the wonder of salvation and God's grace and love, and yet have been, or are going through, some tremendous sufferings or difficulties in their lives.

As a little aside, this section also brings in the Holy Spirit, who guides the believer into a greater appreciation of the hope that we have. By mentioning the Holy Spirit, we have all three members of the Godhead brought out in this chapter. This shows the completeness of the justification we have. All three members of the Godhead have a part to play in this work, showing the importance and greatness of its provision.

As we move to the third section of our passage, we are presented with the assurance for those aspects of justification that we have already considered. This is so important because we live in a world where nothing is certain, but by including this in the passage here God is telling us that what He offers is certain and the progression through these few verses shows us why. Verse 6 gives us the stark reality of the Gospel – Christ died for the ungodly. This is a sobering reminder of the condition we were in. God's chosen one died for those as far away from the character of His Son as you could be. It doesn't say, generally good people or those who live in a certain way; it is the ungodly, and we are all included in that. This in itself is a reassurance because Christ died for us when we were in that state and as that state was ungodly, we can't really be in any worse a state.

Verses seven and eight embellish the point regarding our condition, reminding people of the reality of whom we would tend to make a sacrifice for in this world. Again, we are nowhere near the point where we could consider that we are worthy of the action that God has taken on our behalf. The use of the word sinners also adds to this impression. Ungodly could be described as our condition, sinners could describe our intentions. But again, the subtleties in His word help us here. Our actions may be described as sins, but the use of the word shows action on God's part. Verse six tells us what happened. Verse eight shows us that God chose to do it. I know there is sometimes a debate over the best word to use, but the point still stands that God chose this course of action. It was not a mistake or a quick fix. This is what God had planned for us.

If we were still concerned that perhaps God could change His mind, we move to verses nine and ten, which provide us with further evidence for God's favour towards us. I put these two verses together because I think they bring out the same idea when considered together. Verse ten is, in many respects, an additional explanation of verse 9. In effect it is saying that Jesus was prepared to die for us, and He did so at Calvary. We were unsaved, in our sins and ungodly. Once He had died that immediate issue was dealt with. So, what now for the believer? We fail every day and we continue to do those things that we know we should not do. Does that mean we are again exposed to the wrath of God? Not according to these two verses! We have been justified and our living Lord is alive and the constant reminder of the fact that we are justified.

God sees us through our Lord Jesus and His saving work at Calvary. Nothing of our efforts need be considered because He has died once for us and we are fully reconciled to God through the work of our Lord Jesus. This status does not change for us. It is as true now as it was when we

first believed. We can never be more justified; we can never be more reconciled to God because Jesus is alive again having made His great sacrifice. The only thing that we are getting closer to is being more saved. This may be a strange thing to say but it is true. We look for the day when we will be taken up to be with our Lord and Saviour. On that day we will be made new and all our failing parts will be done away with. Each day is a bit closer to that final, fully saved state.

The last verse, and subsequently the last split of the passage that I have given is a final help for us when we consider this thought of justification. Surely the end of verse 10 would be enough for us but the apostle continues to reveal something more for us. We can rejoice because of the position that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought us into. This may seem an odd thing to bring out at this stage. Surely, we rejoice when we are first saved? This is very true, but when we are first saved our rejoicing is more thankfulness regarding what we have been brought out from. This rejoicing is in what we have become, our new relationship with God and our wonderful future. It is a rejoicing that looks beyond our concerns and considers the wonder of what God has given us.

The thought of reconciliation is also brought out here to show how complete this work is, and it is also the natural result of justification. Justification is a wonderful thing as it means all the debt that we owe for our failures is dealt with. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus means that a holy and righteous God is satisfied that the penalty has been met. Reconciliation is now possible because of the justification. God does not just want our punishment to be dealt with, but He wants us to have a better relationship with Him. This is another wonderful result of justification and it clears the way for reconciliation with God and all the blessings that He wants to provide us with. Truly we have much to rejoice in!

As I draw this talk to a close, I want to bring one more aspect out from the passage today. Twice in the first two verses we have the mention of faith. The first mention of faith is particularly linked to our justification. Now I don't want for one moment to suggest that justification can be lost because our faith may be lost. Faith is another topic entirely and from Scripture I do not believe that true faith is something that we can lose. However, putting that aside, the point I want to make is that justification is for those who have faith in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for the sins of the whole world. His sacrifice was enough to save every person who ever lived and who will ever live. But He did not justify the whole world. The world is condemned, and people will be condemned with it if they do not respond to the Gospel message. Justification is linked with faith and this has to be so because justification is through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to believe in His work and that work then justifies us. How wonderful justification is when we consider the results of it as we have been doing so in our talk.

Thank you for listening to this truth for today talk on The Epistle to the Romans Doctrinal 2: The Gospel, Results of Justification, talk number T1117.

New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless stated otherwise.

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