

Adam & Jesus

Memory Text: “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.” (Romans 5:1, 2)

Setting The Stage: Today we witness the relentless pursuit of peace in the face of wars – wars occurring within nations and wars existing between nations. Peace often seems elusive. At the heart of the world’s conflicts, including the conflicts we see near to us and perhaps even happening in your home, is the lack of peace in the human heart – a peace with God that has not been secured. Fix this, then we might see peace in our homes, in our relationships, in our communities, our country, and the world.

Our memory verse describes how we might acquire peace with God – through justification by faith.

Sunday – Justified By Faith

Romans 5:1-5; 8:7; Isaiah 57:20; 32:17

Romans 5:1-5. In view of the preceding verse and what Paul has argued in chapters 1-4 [which is: (1) all alike are sinners under condemnation and in need of righteousness; (2) the need of righteousness cannot be met legalistically by works of obedience; (3) that God freely offers to supply our need by offering us, according to His grace, pardon and reconciliation (justification) through faith in Jesus Christ], he now proceeds to highlight some of the incredible benefits that come to those who share in the experience of justification by faith.

“Peace.” V. 10 reminds us that it is us needing to be at peace with God because we are God’s enemy, not God needing to be at peace with us as if He were our enemy.

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”

Isaiah 57:20: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

There is no peace, no quietness, and no assurance for the average person who is at odds with God. But the effect of being justified by faith brings peace that once troubled and agitated the mind. Prior to justification we are enemies of God, which is revealed in attitudes and actions of rebellion against God’s authority and His law. But after we have been justified (or reconciled) with God we are no longer at war with God, we are at peace with Him. Before, while at variance with God we were under a sense of the guilt of sin, leaving us with fear and a restless conscience. But

now being forgiven, we have peace in our hearts knowing all that guilt has been taken away.

Isaiah 32:17: “The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.” (see Genesis 3:15)

The connection Paul makes between peace and justification makes it very clear that justification is not only a mere adjustment of a sinner’s legal status with God. Forgiveness alone doesn’t bring peace. A person who has pardoned for some crime that he’s committed might feel gratitude toward his benefactor, but at the same time he might also be filled with shame and embarrassment insomuch that he avoids seeing the person. Although pardoned, he might feel no better than a released criminal. His self-respect is gone, and there is little motivation to live a clean life.

If justification meant no more than that, it would actually work against God’s plan for restoration. The only way we can be brought back into harmony with God’s purposes and plans is by a confident and loving fellowship with God by faith. So God not only forgives, He reconciles. He sets us right with Himself. He even treats us as if we’ve never sinned by imputing His righteousness to cover our past life of sin. He invites us to a fellowship with Christ that inspires us with courage for the future and provides us with an example we can follow.

“The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception...As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require...Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven’s treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 162)

“Access by faith.” The idea here is one of introduction and entrance into the king’s audience chamber, not initiated by us, but by God and through Christ. We would have no right into God’s presence because of sin, but through the merits of Christ alone Christ bids us come, and not only to come, but also to stay. Christ is the One who brings us to God (1 Peter 3:18). And our standing with God as one justified is one of security and confidence.

“Rejoice.” God wants us to continue to have joy, satisfaction, and confidence in God’s grace working in us. This experience stands in contrast to the person who is ever wondering whether they are at peace with God; believing He can pardon, but not sure He will for them. However, just because we have been justified doesn’t mean that our future salvation is guaranteed and there is no need for a continual experience of faith and obedience. We are no once always saved. We are to hope

and remain watchful, especially as we enter into difficulties and trials, refusing to let our connection with Christ to become slackened.

Monday – While Yet Sinners

Romans 5:6-11; John 15:13; 1 John 3:16

Our hope lies not in anything within us, but upon the assurance of God’s unchanging love for us.

Romans 5:6-11. True heroes are those who, putting themselves sin harms way, at the risk of their own lives, run toward trouble to help those in need of their assistance. Firefighters, EMT personnel, medical professionals, safety and rescue teams, even concerned bystanders often display this type of heroism. No questions asked. Assistance is provided. However, this behavior is extremely unusual and is often confined to working professionals.

Human nature tends toward self-preservation. We don’t say a word when someone at school or work is unjustly accused, when we could speak up and set the record straight. There are those who are keen to capture a horrifying incident on their smart phones than to intervene and offer help. And even if that person is a good person, a righteous person, someone who has done a lot for us, who has loved us and helped us, barely would we think about giving our life up for that person. But, not so with God. Paul paints a stark contrast between the best of people on planet earth and the incredible regard God has for those people. While we were deemed of little worth, useless, enemies with God, God initiated the process of our redemption, no questions asked!

John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

1 John 3:16: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Christ didn’t die to win God’s love for mankind, but to win man back to God. In fact, god’s plan for our redemption and reconciliation was conceived back in eternity before we even sinned (Rev. 13:8). Therefore, in anticipation of God’s atoning sacrifice it was possible for Abraham’s faith to be reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:3) and for the patriarch to be regarded as a friend of God (James 2:23) long before Christ’s death on the cross.

Tuesday – Death Through Sin

Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; Revelation 1:18

Romans 5:12. Now Paul launches into what has been seen as the most complicated passage in the NT. This may be because the passage has been used for purposes than otherwise intended.

One point that is argued over is: In what way was Adam's sin passed on to his posterity? Did Adam's descendants share the guilt of Adam's sin, or are they guilty before God because of their own sins? People have tried to get the answer to that question from this text, but that's not the issue Paul was dealing with. He had a whole other object in mind.

Here Paul was trying to emphasize the far-reaching results of the work of Christ, by comparing and contrasting the consequences of His justifying act with the effects of Adam's sin. He was trying to get readers to realize just how bad sin is and what it brought into this world through Adam. Then he shows what God offers us in Jesus as the only remedy to the tragedy brought upon our world through Adam's sin.

In the KJV, Paul seems to characteristically digress to answer some problems that are involved in what he's already said through the use of parenthesis for vv. 13-17. However, it appears Paul picks up his argument in v. 15.

If Paul had completed the comparison between Adam and Christ, it might have read something like this: "As by one man sin entered in the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all men sinned; so also by one man, Jesus Christ, righteousness entered into the world, and life through righteousness, so that all, being justified by faith, might be saved."

Paul is stating the historical fact that sin entered the world through Adam and death was the consequence. There was neither sin nor death in the world until Adam sinned. After that there were both. Therefore, Adam's transgression was the cause of both. The important contrast is between death as a result of Adam's sin, and life as a result of Christ's righteousness. Paul's argument is that the gift of life and the benefits wrought out by Christ are far greater than the effects of Adam's sin ("grace did much more abound").

Although death is the result of sin, and although death is seen and experienced all around us, why is it that we don't like the idea of death? Could it have something to do with God placing eternity in our hearts, and that although death seems a natural occurrence to life, it wasn't a part of God's original plan for us? But does the believer have anything to fear from death?

1 Corinthians 15:21, 22: "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

Revelation 1:18: "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

Wednesday – From Adam To Moses

Romans 5:13, 14; 4:15

Romans 5:13, 14. **What is Paul talking about here?** The phrase “until the law” is paralleled with the statement “from Adam to Moses.” The law is referring to that which was given at the time of Moses at Mt. Sinai. All are equally involved in death. Paul is trying to show that there is something else at work besides the guilt of individuals for personal sins. That something is a result and effect of Adam’s fall. All of the descendants of Adam share in the effect of Adam’s fall, because death and the tendency to sin are inherited.

The point Paul is making is whether or not mankind has an explicit knowledge of God’s will “all have sinned” and all are involved in the inheritance of death. The one act of Adam’s transgression caused sin to enter this world. Even in the absence of personal transgressions, as in the case of babies/infants, mankind is still subject to death. Paul is emphasizing the universality of sin and death so that by contrast he may emphasize the universality of God’s grace.

Also, take note of Paul’s comment in v. 13. Even though there was no moral law written on stone prior to Sinai, sin was still in the world. Why, because a law still existed, even though it wasn’t revealed in writing to mankind.

Romans 4:15: “For where there is no law there is no transgression.” It’s absurd to think that God’s law wasn’t in existence until Sinai. If it wasn’t then Cain killing his brother wasn’t wrong. Joseph could have slept with Potiphar’s wife and it wouldn’t have been a sin, and Abraham’s lying wouldn’t have been lying at all. But of course, all of these things were wrong which testifies to the existence of God’s law before Moses.

Thursday – Jesus, The Second Adam

Romans 5: 15-19

Romans 5:15-19. (1) There is no comparison between the fall from righteousness and the gift of grace (vv. 15a, 16a).

(2) Provision has been made to meet all the evils of Adam’s fall, a provision as extensive in its applicability as is the ruin caused by sin. However, the gift of righteousness, whether it is imputed in justification, or imparted in sanctification, is of no avail unless it’s accepted by faith. Though ample provision has been made for salvation, only comparatively few accept the proffered grace. There is no limit in the gift itself but only in man’s willingness to accept it (v. 17).

(3) Only those willing to acknowledge their own helplessness and need, and in all humility and gratitude accept righteousness as a gift, shall reign in life (as opposed to the reign of death, vv. 14, 17). The plan of redemption restores all that has been

lost by sin. When the earth is made new and becomes the eternal home of the saved, God's original purpose in the creation of the world will have been fulfilled.

Adam is the representative and author of fallen humanity. Christ is the representative and author of restored humanity. In Adam's family, we have been abandoned to sin and its results. In Christ's family we have been adopted and accepted as His sons and daughters showered with grace to overcome sin with the hope of restoration. In Adam's family we die. In Christ's family we shall be made alive. In Adam's family we are lost. In Christ's family we are found. Which family do you want to be a part of?