

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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December 3, 2023
Jesus Brings Us Peace With God
Romans 5:1-5

This morning, we are continuing our Advent series. Remember, the word “advent” means “coming or arrival.” Last week, I told you there is an intentional double meaning in the use of the word advent. Advent is a time of preparing to celebrate the arrival of Jesus into this world 2000 years ago at Christmas. It’s also a time of preparation as we look forward to the arrival of Jesus in this world when He comes again. But there’s also a third meaning to the advent of Jesus – the arrival of Jesus into our personal lives.

You see, the work Jesus accomplished during His life on earth made it possible for Him to enter our individual lives today, to live in us, and to transform us by His power. So, Advent isn’t just about looking back at the work Jesus did in His first coming or looking forward to the work Jesus will do at His Second Coming. Advent is about looking right now to Jesus, trusting Him to work in our lives today.

So, with that in mind, let’s consider our second Advent theme – peace. Jesus came to bring us peace. Our text for this morning lays the foundation for how Jesus brings us peace and what that means for our lives so, look with me to God’s Word in Romans 5.

Romans 5:1–2

5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

This is the Word of God for us this morning. And this Word is full of powerful truth. The Protestant Reformation occurred, in large part, because the truth within these verses permeated Martin Luther’s heart and spread throughout Christendom. In France alone, some 1 million protestants, known as Huguenots, were killed trying to escape persecution or were enslaved in the galleys of the Roman Catholic king because they believed the straightforward teaching of this text.

So, we are dealing with monumental truths this morning. And my desire is to simply walk through these two verses and see what there is to learn about the peace Jesus brings to our lives. And, let me start by giving you the big idea from our text.

Big Idea: Being justified by faith in Jesus brings peace and grace to us and glory to God.

That’s exactly what these two verses are saying. Since we have been justified by faith in Jesus, we have peace with God through Christ. That’s the fundamental peace Jesus came to bring us, peace with God. Along with that, we have also gained access to a new standing before God that is based on His grace to us in Jesus and that standing provides us with peace within because we can be confident that God is for us and is working by His power for our wellbeing. This work of God’s grace

that brings good to us will result in bringing glory to God. That's what Paul is saying in our text. That's our big idea. Now, let's walk through that a little bit at a time.

We have been justified by faith in Jesus.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith

The word justified is a legal term that was used in the Roman Court system. It basically means "to declare someone not guilty or right with the law." A judge would preside over a trial. Once all the evidence had been presented and the arguments made, the judge would have to render a verdict. If the person was found to have done nothing wrong, they were declared "not guilty," or they were justified.

And, in our text, God Himself is the Judge. One day, every man, woman, and child will stand before Him and receive His verdict over their lives. And there are two possible verdicts. God will either declare us guilty of sin and condemn us to hell, or He will declare us not guilty and grant us entrance to His presence in Heaven. And that's not good news. You see, the first three chapters of Romans are written to make it completely clear that all of us are guilty before God and deserve to be punished for our sin.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

This letter begins by saying that God is rightfully angry over sin – He has wrath against all unrighteousness of men.

Romans 1:21 - For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

The central issue at the heart of our sin is that we have chosen not to honor God as God. In other words, we have attempted to overthrow the rule and glory of God. That's what sin is. It's disobedience to God. It's living like you are God and God is not. Sin is rebellion and high treason against God. Some might say, "that's an overstatement...I've messed up, but I'd hardly say I live like I want to be God." And the fact that we don't see our sin as that serious, shows how serious our sin problem really is.

Romans 1:29-32 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Romans 3:23

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

So, the first 3 chapters of Romans paint a grim picture for us in the courtroom of God. All of us have sinned against God. We have made ourselves enemies of God. We are all deserving of punishment from God. There is no such thing as peace of mind if you realize you are at war with God Himself and will stand accountable to Him at the judgment. What does it matter how much money you have or how smooth your holiday season goes or how much stress you have in your job if you are destined to be condemned by God?

That's the great dilemma for all mankind. God is a perfectly just Judge and will have to render an honest verdict over us and we have all sinned against Him. So, how can God possibly justify any of us and declare us to be "not guilty" if we all have sinned?

Well, the first word of Romans 5:1 is the word "therefore." That's a reference to what was said before our text. So, let's back up just a little bit and see what the therefore is there for. What did Paul say in between the declaration that all have sinned and the statement that we have been justified by faith in Jesus?

Romans 3:23–26

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Verse 24 says that our justification occurs by God's grace gift. It's something given to us, not something we earn by our own works. Then, Paul goes on to say that justification occurs through the redemption that is in Christ whom God put forward as a propitiation. The word propitiation is a reference to an appeasing sacrifice. God presented His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our sin. Jesus came into this world at Christmas so that He could live a perfect life and die a sacrificial death in order to take the punishment for our sin and appease the wrath of God on our behalf.

And verse 25 says this was to show God's righteousness. That's really important. It helps us solve the problem of how God could be a good judge and not punish us for our sin. He wouldn't be right (or righteous) if He just allowed sin to go unpunished. But that's not what happens. He doesn't let sin go unpunished. He punished our sin at the cross. Jesus was condemned by God so that we would never have to be. God is just to justify us because Jesus has taken the punishment for our sin.

And that's amazing news. Some of us have an innate sense of justice. We know we have done wrong. We've sinned against God, and we've sinned against the people in our life. And, we have this feeling that someday God is going to drop the hammer on our sin. Listen, if you are trusting in Jesus, God has already dropped the hammer on your sin. He poured out all His punishment for your sin at the cross of Jesus. Yes, you have sinned. And, yes, your sin must be punished. But, if you are willing to trust in Jesus, your sin has already been punished at the cross of Christ.

"My sin - O the Bliss of this glorious thought! - my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my Soul!"

But there's more to justification than Jesus taking our punishment. Justification is the declaration of righteousness. Let's go back to the scene in the courtroom. Imagine you had accrued a million dollars in speeding tickets. And, just as the judge was sentencing you to pay the million-dollar fine, a rich man stepped forward to pay the fine on your behalf. That would be awesome. And, in some way, that's what Jesus did for us at the cross. But that's not the same as being found not guilty. That's more like being found guilty but being forgiven of your debt (which is certainly part of our salvation).

Justification is what happens when the Judge says you are right in the sight of the Law. How does that happen? Look at Romans 4:22-25.

Romans 4:22–25

22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Romans 4 uses the example of Abraham to show that God has always justified people through faith. So, when verse 22 says "his faith was counted to him as righteousness," that's referring to Abraham. But verse 23 says that's true for us, too. He says we will be "counted righteous when we believe in God's work for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The word "counted" is a bookkeeping term. Sometimes it is translated "reckoned or credited." It's what you do when you are accounting for the money you have compared to the money you've spent.

The idea is that God is considering our spiritual account. He's evaluating our status. He's calculating our righteousness or calculating our sin. And even though we are spiritually bankrupt in our sin, God has made a way for our spiritual account to be filled with His righteousness. So, that when God judges us, He doesn't just forgive our sin debt, He counts us to have done every good thing we should have done. How does He do that?

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

At the cross of Jesus, God credited our sin to Jesus. It's like God charged the debt of our sin to Christ's account. As the righteous Judge, God punished our sin on Jesus. But God didn't just pay off our debt and let our account go to zero. He made a deposit of righteousness. God fills our account with His own righteousness. He credits our spiritual account to be filled with all the righteousness of Jesus.

Through faith in Jesus, we are made into something new. We are new creations. We are miraculously united to Jesus Himself in a way that Jesus is united to our sin and can be punished and we are united to Christ's righteousness and can be rewarded. We are gifted righteousness through Christ in us. Jesus has done it all. He has obeyed the Father in every way we have failed to obey

Him. He has lived up to the standard of God's glory. He has done it all. And just like Jesus died on our behalf, He also lived on our behalf. He lived out perfect righteousness for us.

That means that when God justifies us, He really means what He is saying. He is declaring us to be righteous because, in Christ, that's exactly what we are. We are imputed with the righteousness of God in Him!

If you are trusting in Jesus as your Lord and Savior: You are right in the sight of God, not by any good thing you've done or will ever do. You don't earn anything good from God. It's all a gift of grace that comes through faith in Jesus. Jesus did it all! The work is finished! Jesus came at Christmas to bring you peace through His perfect life, His sacrificial death and His victorious resurrection through faith, Jesus Himself will enter your life and miraculously unite you to His perfect righteousness so that you can be justified by God Himself.

And, when that's true of you, your relationship with God is dramatically changed. That's the next part of our big idea.

Being justified by faith in Jesus brings peace and grace to us.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand,

What kind of relationship does God the Father have with His Son, Jesus? Is He disappointed? Is He frustrated? Is He pleased? Does He barely put up with Him? Does He like Him? What's their relationship like?

When you are trusting in Jesus, your relationship with God the Father is an extension of His relationship with Jesus. You are united to Jesus, so God the Father treats you like He treats Jesus. In Christ, He's as pleased with you as He is with Jesus. He loves you and likes you with the same affection He has for Jesus. (John 15; 1 John 4)

You see, the word "peace" in the Bible is not just referring to the absence of conflict. It's the presence of wholeness or wellness. Jesus didn't come to merely negotiate a cease fire with God where God would release us from hell and let us just go on without Him. That's not it at all. Jesus came to purchase our peace, our wholeness and wellbeing. In Christ, we are adopted into God's family and our Heavenly Father is eternally committed take care of us by His power and authority.

That's our new standing that Paul refers to in verse 2. It's a standing based on God's grace to us in Jesus. A grace that unites us to Christ Himself and makes us the righteousness of God in Him and redeems us from sin and restores us to a right relationship with God as our Father. That word "access" is kind of misleading in English. It makes it seem like it's something we enter through our own power, like we access a room by walking into it. But the emphasis in the original language of the New Testament is on the work of Jesus. It's more like we have gained access to a room because Jesus carried us into it. We are already there in Christ. We are in a place of Grace - a new standing

with God as our Father. We have a peace with God that not only releases us from the punishment of our sin, but it places us in a position of blessing where God commits all His power and authority to bring about our well-being.

That's the kind of Peace Jesus came to bring, the kind of peace He brings into your life when you trust in Him.

And that peace with God cultivates amazing peace within.

- You do not have to live in guilt and shame over your past because you have been gifted the righteousness of Christ and stand completely forgiven in Him.
- You do not have to live in anxious worry over your present because your loving Heavenly Father is watching over you and cares for you with the same affection He has for Jesus.
- You can lay aside the paranoia that God is constantly changing His mind about you based on how good you feel you're doing at the Christian life. Jesus is your righteousness and God considers you as righteous as Jesus.
- You can enter the presence of God with bold confidence in prayer, asking Him for every good gift because Jesus gives you access into a new standing of grace.
- You can live with power over the forces of darkness in this world because Jesus has united you to His victorious resurrection life of righteousness.
- You can have peace within even as you live in a world that is falling apart at the seams because God is for you and working to bring about your wellbeing, working all things together for your good and His glory (even the insanity of this world gone mad).

All because Jesus came into this world at Christmas and comes into our lives when we trust in Him. We are justified by faith in Jesus and that brings us peace with God through our new standing in grace.

And that brings me to the last part of our big idea.

Being justified by faith in Jesus brings glory to God.

Romans 5:2... *and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

This connects with what we talked about last week when we studied hope from 1 Peter 1. We have a confident expectation that God will fully display His glory. In Romans 8, Paul says that the glory of God that is going to be revealed includes the moment when Jesus completes every good work He began in us. When His righteousness has its full effect in us and we receive our new resurrected bodies. On that day, God the Father, Son, and Spirit will be glorified because the entire universe will see the completed work of Redemption that was made possible through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He will get the glory because He has done all the work.

So, when Paul says we have hope in the glory of God, I take Him to be talking about the glory that will be revealed when Jesus comes again. But that's not the only way God is glorified here. Paul says that right now we rejoice. That word rejoice is sometimes translated "boast." It's a joyful boasting in the confidence we have that God will be glorified when all is said and done. That's another way of

saying we glorify God. We say, "God, you're amazing. You're glorious. You're Awesome. Jesus, I boast in you!"

So, hear the word of God for you this Advent season – Jesus came into this world at Christmas to be your righteousness so that you can be justified by God and have peace and grace in your new life in Christ and, thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift in Jesus.

Rest in Peace. It is yours in Christ.

Rejoice in Hope. Jesus will do all He has promised to do. He will be glorified in you.