

**A STUDY OF ROMANS**  
**FROM JUSTIFICATION TO GLORIFICATION – PART 1**  
**Taught by Bruce Bickel**  
**September 12, 2012**

Good evening everyone. It's nice to see you. Thank you for coming out on a beautiful Wednesday evening. This is a study of the Book of Romans, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. I am pleased to let you know that it is going to be recorded by my friend, Sig, with his iPod Touch, and then Darlene is going to transcribe this for us. She does the transcriptions for the Friday men's group that we teach. She's been doing this, and it's wonderful gift that...all the things that I say, she transcribes, and I have to be careful. {LAUGHTER} When they told me Darlene was going to transcribe this, I said, "Oh no!" {LAUGHTER} I sometimes have to say, "Sig, turn the tape off for a minute." Let's have a show of hands of how many of you are not members of MLUPC? The majority of you. Very good. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it very much. I know you're from the Friday men's group, the Thursday group, Dale's church. It's just nice to have all of you with us.

Let's ask the Lord to teach us. We have a very exciting and a very wonderful section of Scripture to study. It is absolutely life-changing. When I studied this over the past several months when Pastor Tim asked me to teach this course, I said the one who will benefit the most is me. One of the men that I studied with when I was at Oxford preached Romans and it took him 13 years to go through it. I'm only going to cover four chapters in ten weeks. {LAUGHTER} You're just going to get the gleaning of this. I trust that the Holy Spirit will pull out the significant things that we need to hear for his glory and our benefit.

Would you pray with me. Heavenly Father, we are overwhelmed that we have the privilege of access of coming into your presence through your grace. We ask, Lord, that you'd be pleased to be our Teacher, that your Holy Spirit would fulfill his job description, and that is to guide us into all truth and call us to the mindset of the person and work of Christ. Father, to that end, we just pray that you would cleanse us of all unrighteousness, and make us worthy vessels to sit at your feet during this hour, and we pray this for Jesus' sake, and may it be so. Amen!

I invite you to open your Bibles to Romans 5. You have notes. I will give you notes every week. The notes that you have now will cover this week and next week. You'll have two weeks on Romans 5, two weeks on Romans 6, two weeks on Romans 7 and two weeks on Romans 8. You'll get four handouts, but each of the handouts will be for two sessions. Please bring this back next week because you'll need the second half of this because we won't complete all this tonight because it's just too much to go through in one evening.

May I call your attention as I read from the English Standard Version of Romans 5? I'm going to read the first 11 verses, because that's basically where we will cover tonight. This is the word of the Lord, <sup>1</sup>"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup>but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,

much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

I just read Romans 5:1-11; we'll pick up the other verses next week. The handout that you have will suffice for this week and next week as well. The theme of what we're going to discuss in the next four to eight weeks is going to be the absolute certainty of our salvation and our final glorification. In other words, this is one of the most important sections of Scripture that you and I can understand our position of what it means to be in Christ, our union in Christ. Throughout the years, there has been a great deal of, and continues to be a great deal of debate in a subject known as the security of the believer, or what we would say in layman's terms, “Can a person lose their salvation?” In chapters three and four, Paul's thesis is that salvation comes by grace through faith alone. In Chapter 5, he begins to defend that position.

The belief that one can lose their salvation puts what I would call maintenance on the accomplishment and the finality of your salvation. In other words, God has saved us, but we must maintain our salvation and live up to a certain set of standards in order to hold on to our salvation. It would mean this—logically, if you fail at one position, you've lost it all. If you blow it once, then you've lost your salvation. That's the argument over the centuries. That is what we would call a works righteousness system. It's a perspective that says we're saved by grace, but you must maintain by works.

The security of salvation was a tremendously revolutionary concept to the Jewish people to whom Paul was writing in Rome. They were reared on this works mentality, this works righteousness system. Quite honestly, friends, all world religions are based upon that works righteousness system. It basically says that a person must live up to some standard, not only to earn your salvation, but you must live up to those same standards and do even more things in order to keep your salvation. In a salvation as a free gift of God's grace, unearned and unmerited, because that's what grace is, and appropriated by faith was really difficult for people to swallow, just as much as it is today. People always think that I've got to earn something, I've got to do something because salvation is my choice. It's something that I do. We're going to see that Paul has a rather different perspective on the whole issue of free grace, of salvation. That's what Paul's going to deal with in this passage as he speaks directly to this issue of a works righteousness perspective on earning your salvation and keeping it.

Let me give you a quick overview of these four chapters. If you look in your Bibles to Chapter 5:1-2, Paul tells us that our salvation is complete and it's guaranteed. It's final, it's complete and it's guaranteed. That's verses one and two of Chapter 5. In verses 3-5, he then says that nothing can shake us out of the salvation that has been accomplished for us by the person and work of Christ. Nothing can shake you out of that. In verses 6 to 11, he explains why it is unshakably certain, your salvation, and that is because it's all of God and not of us. Even in our weakest moments, in our weakness, in our sinfulness, when we were actually God's enemies, is when he saved us. You cannot take credit for your salvation. Paul says the reason it is so unshakable, the reason it is so complete, the reason it is absolutely guaranteed is because you had nothing to do with it. You didn't earn it. It was given to you.

Take a look at Romans 5:10. Let me show you a little illustration of what I mean. You see, Christianity is really based upon a lot of logic. You see a wonderful logic right here in verse 10 “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” Now logic would say this. When you accomplish the greater deed, it's easy to do the secondary deed. Notice in verse 10, the greater effort was to reconcile an enemy to himself, to change the legal status of you and me as sinful enemies against God's holiness, to reconcile us, that's the bigger thing. If he can do that, he's going to do the other thing, and that is to save you by his life. Logic would say if you accomplish the greater, you're going to accomplish the lesser.

You're going to see that running through the passages of Scripture a great deal as we walk through Romans 5.

Then we come to verses 12-21 of Chapter 5. Here we begin this wonderful discussion about the union with Christ; what it means to be in Christ. You'll notice that Paul, in the New Testament, uses 129 times the phrase "in Christ." He does not describe somebody who has a saving relationship to God the Father through God the Son empowered by God the Holy Spirit. He does not call them a Christian. He says they're in Christ. That's what he is going to deal with in verse 12-21; what it means to be in union with Christ. You're either in Christ or you're not in Christ. You're not half and half out. You're either in or you're not. That's what he's going to deal with in those verses. He uses the phrase "in Christ" 129 times to describe a person who has a saving relationship to God the Father through God the Son.

If you were to walk down to streets of Pittsburgh, or even go into our church, and say, "Are you in Christ or not?" people are going to look at you. They're either going to understand what you mean or they're going to think you're a zealot. They'll say, "What are you talking about?" You see, most people in the church today have no idea what it means to be in Christ. They refer to themselves as a Christian. Why do they do that? "Well I was born in America. I live in Mt. Lebanon. I go to church. I tithe. I'm a member of this church." You see, people have got this warped idea that they had something to do with their salvation. Consequently, they have this warped idea that says, "I think we can lose it. Because if I earned it, therefore I can un-earn it." You see, that's the debate that Paul is dealing with. In Chapter 5, he begins to explain why that is not a Scriptural concept. This works righteousness perspective is really unbiblical. All the false religions of the world are based upon that untruth, which he now defends in these verses.

Then we go to Chapter 6. People are going to say, "Well if it's all a free grace, I can sin as much as I want because grace will become more evident." Paul's position is exactly the opposite. If you read 1 John 3:3, it's basically when you understand that, in Chapter six he deals with all the objections to that particular position. 1 John 3:3, "And everyone who thus hopes in him (in Christ) purifies himself as he is pure." Paul's going to teach us in Romans 6, "Give me all your objections to free grace as the way of salvation, and I'm going to deal with that," because if you really understand it, if you understand Chapter 5, you'll understand that your responsibility and your desire and your motive is now to want to purify yourself because you understand grace, not violate it. He's going to deal with all the objections that you're going to throw out at the possibility. We'll see that and Chapter 6.

Chapter 7, he teaches us the purpose of the law to show that it was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, as he told us and wrote to us in Galatians 3:24, "So then, the law was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ in order that we might be justified by faith." We're going to see in Chapter 7 the relationship of the non-believer to the law and we're going to see the relationship of the believer to the law. Basically it's the same thing. The law was given to expose our sin so that you would know that you need a Savior. One of the things we're going to realize is this. Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven?

***Audience Members:*** Yes.

Absolutely. God doesn't grade on curve. God is holy. Do you think you're going to get into his presence because you're a good guy, born in Pennsylvania or West Virginia? Of course not. You see, Paul's going to say this, "You've got to be absolutely perfect." Are you perfect?

***Audience Members:*** No.

You need a Savior. That's Chapter 7. Chapter 8 is God's great plan and certainty of salvation. It's all going to come to fruition.

I want you to notice one thing. Go to Chapter 5:1, and turn over to Chapter 8:30. I want you to notice where they start and where they end. Chapter 5:1 begins with this, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It starts with justification. Notice what he ends with in Chapter 8:30, “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” You see, we’re going to see in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 the goal of salvation is not your happiness; it’s God’s glory. He goes from justification to glorification. In between is sanctification, how you live your life.

The purpose the Gospel is not to make you happy. It’s not to give you blessings. It’s not to make Jesus your friend. It’s to bring glory to God by fully giving you a guaranteed salvation that you will be glorified when the Lord returns. He starts with justification and he ends with glorification. That’s what we’re going to see in the next ten weeks. That’s a quick overview of these four chapters.

Let’s take a look at the first 11 verses of Romans 5:1-11. Let’s talk a little bit about justification, because he starts with “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” notice the first word the he uses. It’s the word therefore. Those of you who have been with me over the years understand that I’m always going to ask this question, and that is?

***Audience Member:** What is the there for?*

What is the therefore there for? It’s logic. He’s saying go back and read the first four chapters so you’ll understand the next five or six chapters. In other words, everything that he’s now going to say is based upon what he said in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In many ways, the Christian life is really a matter of logic. Paul shows us that I light of what he’s already said (the therefore, Chapters 1-4), there are certain inevitable deductions, logically, that we can and should draw from what he’s already said in Chapters 1-4. What I’m going to do is draw those out, these logical, inevitable deductions that come as a result of Chapters 1-4.

From this verse on, all the way through the end of Chapter 8, Paul puts before us this wonderful doctrine of justification by faith alone. He now goes on to show us that when we believe on him who raised Jesus from the dead, our salvation is absolute, it’s guaranteed, it’s final and it’s complete, and that no one can rob you of that. It is, in the final end, our salvation is for the glory of God. That’s the end result of your salvation. The end result of your salvation is not eternal life. That’s a consequence. The end result of your salvation, dearly beloved, is your glorification. That’s what he says in Romans 8, “Those whom he predestined, he called, he’s going to glorify.” You see the end result of the Gospel is your personal, your individual, and our collective, glorification. That’s what Paul is going to teach us in these next ten weeks.

The whole scheme of salvation is guaranteed to you, Paul tells us in these verses. It’s important that we understand very quickly the summary of what he means when he says you’re justified by faith alone. Justification is a forensic legal statement that God makes about a person who has put their faith in the person and work of Christ. Notice, Chapter 1, it comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn’t come through your efforts. It doesn’t come through your anything. It comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Justification is when God makes a forensic legal description on how he views you. He gives you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. In other words, it’s what we would call imputed righteousness. You get credit for a righteousness that is not your own. Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven?

***Audience Members:** Yes.*

Yes. Absolutely you do. Whose righteousness is going to get you there? Yours?

*Audience Member: No.*

Have you ever had one bad thought? You flunk. You're not going to make it. The only way you can make it is to be given credit for someone who met the standards of God's law—sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. That's the imputation of his righteousness. It's what we would call, theologically, an alien righteousness. It's outside of you. You get to heaven not because of who you are, it's because of what he did for you. It's through the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 1). You're going to hear me refer to that many, many times—through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's when God declares you as sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. He gives you credit for his sinless perfection and perfect obedience, and Christ takes upon your sin and disobedience. That's imputed righteousness. That's justification. That's when God declares a statement about you.

Notice this. The justified sinner cannot be anymore righteous in the sight of God, or the court of heaven, than he or she is at the moment of their salvation. You will never be any more righteous than at that very moment. Do you understand that? You will never be any more righteous—now you make look differently, may express it differently—but in God's sight, you will never be any more righteous than you are the moment of your first belief. That's justification. Because you got credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. You see, the newest believer, whose been justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, is at that very moment of first belief as righteous as you will ever will be, in God's sight. You'll be as righteous as you'll ever be. Because what have you received? The sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. Can you improve upon that? No! Legalism says you can. Legalism says, "Well I need to do this. I need to do that. I must do this. I must do that." That's legalism. How are you going to improve upon perfection? Justification. You see, you'll never be more righteous in God's sight than the moment he declares you as justified.

Let me tell you a story I read of a pastor friend told me this recently. Napoleon Bonaparte, one day, his horse ran away from the corral. One of his army privates ran after the horse. He came back and handed the reins of the horse to General Bonaparte. Bonaparte looked at this private in his army and said, "Thank you, Captain." Immediately that young private, that never, never doubted the word of his commanding general, he immediately went to the quartermaster and he changed his uniform from that of a private to that of a captain. He went back to his tent, took all of his gear and went into the officer's quarters. Immediately his status was changed the moment he said, "Thank you, Captain," and he never doubted. That's justification.

You see, that's what happens at the moment of your justification. God changes your legal status. It's immediate, and you can't improve upon it. That's why your salvation by grace alone cannot be improved upon or lost. That's Paul's whole argument in Chapter 5. We need to understand that the cross is enough. Do you understand that? The cross is enough. You don't add to it.

Several years ago, it was very popular to wear that little bracelet, "WWJD." What would Jesus do? Well I have no idea what he would do. Far be it from me to think that I'm egotistical enough to think that I have the mind of Christ and I can figure out what he's going to do. Isaiah 55 says this, "My ways are not your ways, Bickel. So who are you to think that you know how I think? My thoughts are not like your Bickel. Do you think you know what I'm thinking about?" That's the height of ego-centered self-centeredness. I have no idea what Jesus would do. But I do know this. I know what Jesus has done. That's why the bracelet should say, "WHJD." What has Jesus done? I know that. He's justified me. He's declared me righteous. He's taken my sin, he's put it on the person and work of Christ at the cross. He accomplished my salvation. And now he says, "You're sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient." I know

what he's done. That's what changes your life. It's not trying to figure out what I should do. It's figuring out what he has done and responding to that. That's what Paul is teaching us in Romans 5. Do you understand that? That's why you can't lose your salvation, if you understand it correctly. Because you didn't have anything to do with it. It was all of grace. It's all of grace.

Notice the first consequence. Now I set this clock back, but it's not going to work. {LAUGHTER} That means that we can stay as long as I need us to stay. {LAUGHTER} First of all, notice the first consequence in verse 1. The believer has peace with God. Now this is accomplished through the person and work of Christ. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith." Do you understand justification? You've been declared sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. It's a legal standard. God views you differently than he did before; a one-time single event in your life that never reoccurs. We have peace with God. The very first thing is that we have peace with God.

Now notice, the first result is peace with God, not peace of God. We always talk about, "I want the peace of God." Well you can't have the peace of God until you have peace with God. There's a difference. Go to Philippians 4:7, "And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." There's a difference between the peace with God and peace of God. You will not have peace of God (Philippians 4:7) until you have peace with God. That's why peace with God comes first. You see, peace of God deals with trials—trials and tribulations of your life. That's when you want the peace of God. The peace with God deals with your legal standing of how views you. You're never going to get God's blessing until you have peace with God.

Many people in modern evangelism say something like, "Well just come to Jesus, in order to get this blessing. You want this blessing? Then come to Jesus. You want to have your needs met? Then come to Jesus. Do you want a friend? Let me introduce you to Jesus. He'll be your friend. You want comfort? Come to Jesus. Do you want happiness? Do you want health? You want peace? Joy? Patience? Come to Jesus." They never mention this. You've got to have peace with God. You see, you never get those other blessings until you, first of all, have changed your status in your relationship of being a sinful enemy of God, and he reconciles you by justifying you by faith. Then you get those other things. Those are consequences. That's not the result of the Gospel. Those are consequences. The purpose of the Gospel is reconciliation.

Christianity, when we preach evangelism like that, and promote a Gospel like that, really makes Christianity look like all the other cults, because do you know what they offer? Friendship. Peace. Joy. Happiness. Contentment. Health. Comfort. Need a friend. You see, the cults offer that. The difference is this. They offer it through their teaching. They say this, "Come to Scientology. Come to Mormonism. Come to this other cult. Whatever it is. And it'll be our teachings that are going to give you Jesus as a friend. We're going to meet all your need, all your felt needs will be taken care of. Just come to Jesus." You see, that's what the cults do. They say, "Come to Scientology. Come to this cult. Come to Confucianism. Come to Muslim. Come to Islam," whatever it is. You see, they offer the same things Christianity does, but notice how Paul says what? Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Ours comes through a person; theirs comes through some teaching. Christianity, when you preach that type of a Gospel, an evangelism makes us look nothing more than just like the cults of the rest of the world. Because we're offering them blessings that they cannot have because they don't have peace with God.

Paul says the first thing that must happen is people must have peace with God. So we start with this and we start out with our various needs in modern evangelism. We start off with our problems, our troubles, our desires and say, "Come to Jesus, as he's the one who will satisfy all your felt needs." Now that is true. He will manage all your felt needs, and he will take care of those. But he will not do that and give you peace of God, until you have peace with God. The cults say the same thing.

Why is peace with God first? Because there's no blessing from God unless we have access to God, unless we are reconciled to him. You see, the grand theme of the Gospel, primarily, is not your needs. The glory of the Gospel is the glory of God and your final glorification as a result of a salvation by faith alone, because you're justified by faith alone, through the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, the cults and false religions will offer them everything Christianity does. When we talk in their language, we're no different than they are in any regard. Paul reminds us of this. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's where every one of our blessings come. It doesn't come through some teaching, as the cults would say.

The question is this. How do I gain access to God so I can commune with him? That's the real question facing us. We pay no attention to this in modern evangelism. We think, and we tell people, "You can go right to God in your present condition and ask for whatever you want. Bring out your wish list. He's there to take care of your needs." But quite honestly, friends, that is not possible. All blessings come through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must first be at peace with him if you're going to get any blessings that come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at John 9. Read this sometime after tonight. It's the healing of the blind man. You may be familiar with it. The skeptics and the Pharisees said this man was not healed; he was born blind, and they said, "No, you were not blind; you just had an eye pigmentation and there was something wrong you, but you weren't born blind. You really never were blind because you can see." So they went to his parents and they said, "Was he really born blind?" and they said, "Yes, he was born blind." Then they said, "Well the man who healed you was a sinner." Now go back and read this. This is something that's often, all the time, overlooked in modern evangelism and from the pulpits in America. The blind man said something that most evangelicals never even consider, and that is this. He makes the statement, "God does not listen to sinners." Do you realize that? God does not hear the prayer of a sinner. That's what he's saying. The reason he says that is this, "You were saying that the man who healed me was a sinner? That's impossible because God does not listen to sinners, and if this man were a sinner, he would not have listened to this prayer to heal me." Logic. God does not listen to sinners. And he was right. He is absolutely right. A sinner in his or her present condition cannot be heard by God because they don't have peace with God. The first thing that a sinner must discover is not how do I get my wish list filled. It's how do I get back to God? How do I have peace with God? How am I reconciled to God? And why is that first? Logic again.

What's the opposite of peace? War. The reason peace is first is because as a sinner you're at war with God. God's at war with you. Christ has dramatically changed your legal position because we are at war with God. Really? Yes really! You as a sinner, me as a sinner, we're at war with God. Before you came to Christ, you were at war with God, and he was at war with you. People don't like to hear that because it doesn't make you feel good. But that's the truth, friends. The truth is what's going to set you free. You see, the reason I'm going to dwell on this for a few minutes is this—if you don't understand the condition from which you were rescued, if you don't understand the condition from which you were reconciled, if you don't understand the condition from which you were redeemed, you will never take your salvation seriously. You'll take it flippantly and glibly, because you think you had something to do with it because you were worthy of it. Paul says, "No, no, a thousand times no." You're at war with God and God is at war with you. You say, "Well Bruce, I think he's a pretty good guy. I just don't believe in him." That's irrelevant because the Scripture says, "Regardless of what you think, God is at war with you if you're a sinner." That's why he can't hear your prayers. God does not hear the prayers of a sinner, until they're justified by faith through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is at war with the sinner. God is the enemy of sin. God is the enemy of Satan. If you're not a child of God, you're a child of Satan, Paul tells us, and you belong to that dominion, that system, which is at war with God. That's why Paul tells us in Romans 12, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." He's saying the system of this world is really

enmity with God. It's at war with God. If you're part of that system, you're at war with him and he's at war with you. That's why John 9 is never talked about in modern evangelism, because we don't want to tell people that God does not listen to their prayers, because we want them to come to Jesus. I want them to come to Jesus, but I want them to come on the right terms; on the Jesus of biblical revelation, not the Jesus of human imagination.

Let me give you some verses that will help you understand this. 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." God's at war with those people, just as he was with me before I came to saving faith. That was my condition. How about Deuteronomy 32:21, "<sup>21</sup>They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

My friend, John MacArthur, made a statement recently that I would really support. He said this, "If God were to choose to bless the United States of America, he's going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." If God is going to bless America, he'd have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. Take a look at our culture. It's at war with God. Do you understand that? And so are you if you're not in Christ. So was I before I came in Christ.

How about Isaiah 13:9, "Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it." Isaiah 13:13, "Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger." Nahum 1:2, "The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies." Who are his adversaries? Those who are at war with him."

"Let no one deceive you," Paul says in Ephesians 5:6, "with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Psalm 7:11, "God is a righteous judge and a God who feels indignation every day." Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is an enemy of God." Ephesians 2:3, "By nature we are children of wrath." Ephesians 4:18, "Alienated from the life of God."

Friends, the only reason I'm going through this is this. If you don't understand, if you don't understand what you've been rescued from, if you don't understand the condition you were in before God showered his grace upon you, unmerited and unearned as it is, until you understand that completely, you're never going to take your salvation seriously. That's why the church is so powerless today because they bought into a Jesus of their own imagination, not the one biblical revelation. They don't believe that they were at war with God before they were converted. You see, we don't take our salvation seriously. We just think it's a badge that you wear because you're an American. You see, Paul is saying, "No! You've got to understand what it means to be justified by faith alone." The very first consequence is this. God has done the one thing that you cannot possibly do yourself. That's reconcile himself to you, and you to him. Because you were his enemy.

Romans 5:10 was the verse that the Lord was pleased to prick heart when I was a young teenager, about eighth or ninth grade. I wanted to go to the Naval Academy, so I knew what it was like to be an enemy and to be an ally. One day I was just reading the Scripture and I came across Romans 5:10, "If while we were God's enemies, he reconciled us to himself." I stopped and said, "Wait a minute. Am I God's enemy?" I went to my father. I will be grateful forever for what my father had the courage to tell me the truth. I said, "Dad, am I God's enemy?" He said, "Yes, you are." I said, "But Dad, I don't want to be an enemy. I don't want to be God's enemy." He said, "Then read the rest of the verse. You see, what happened. You see, I'm so grateful my dad didn't buy into the American evangelistic theme, which is oh God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life; you're good the way you are. My dad had the



courage to say this, “You’re an enemy of God, and until that changes, Bruce, you’re going to be an enemy.” The rest of verse is so wonderful, because if he reconciled you, first of all, then isn’t he going to save you with his life? He reconciled you with his death. He’s going to save you with his life. That’s when I said, “Lord, I don’t want to be an enemy anymore. Would you grant me saving faith?” The Holy Spirit was pleased to change my heart, removed my heart of stone and gave me a heart of flesh. Ever since that day, my real desire has been to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ more fervently and more personally and more intimately, and to become more mature. You see, that’s what changed my life. It was the fact that my dad had the courage to be honest with me and say, “Right now, Bruce, in your unregenerate state, you’re an enemy,” and I didn’t want to be one. I don’t know where you are tonight, but if you’re not in Christ, you’re an enemy.

Peace with God, Paul tells us, comes through the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:20). Peace with God does not come by anything that you do. Peace with God comes through the accomplishments of the person and work of Christ because the cross is enough. Ephesians 2:14 says, “He is our Peace.” You see, peace is a person. It’s not circumstances. It’s not situational ethics. Peace is not the environment. Peace is a person, because you get peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, not through your environment, your conditions, your job situation. You see, he changed the relationship for eternity when he reconciled you to God, when you were justified by faith alone, and he gave you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ.

Paul tells us this in 1 Corinthians 13:5, “Test yourselves to see whether or not you’re in the faith.” Let’s do that. Let’s test ourselves. Do you have true peace? Or do you have false peace. Let me give you some things to ponder. Here are some of the characteristics of what I would call false peace; somebody who thinks they’re in Christ, but they may not be. Now I can’t tell you if you are or if you are not. Only you can answer that before the Holy Spirit. It’s not my job to go around seeing if you’ve got a great big “C” on your chest, or a big “Believer” on your chest. That’s not our role. All I can do is take you to the Scripture. You have to decide whether or not you’re in Christ or not.

Here are some characteristics of false peace. Thinking that faith simply means believing. Simply thinking that faith means believing. Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth and believe with your heart you’ll be saved.” Two words—confess and believe. The word “confess” means this—to say the same thing as somebody else has already said something. There’s a difference between your profession of faith and your confession of faith. If you profess Christ, you might just be saying Jesus is a nice, moral teacher. That’s a profession, because you’re making a statement. Confession means I agree with what somebody has already said about the Lord Jesus Christ, and that means that I agree with everything in the Scripture that God says, and one of the things I agree with is that I was his enemy. That’s what it means to confess.

So which Jesus do you confess? The one of your human imagination? Or the one that Paul is introducing us to, the God of biblical revelation? The word believe is the acrostic DART—depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in. Depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in. It doesn’t mean to give mental assent. Yes, I believe that Jesus was a good guy, a nice teacher, a moral man. He has nice ethics that we ought to listen to. You see, that is not belief. Belief is this. My life’s a shamble, but I’m going to depend upon the person and work of Christ. I’m going to adhere to the person and work of Christ. I’m going to rely upon Jesus. I’m going to trust him in the midst of these difficult situations, because I believe, because I confess. You see, false peace would say that faith just merely means believe.

Secondly, false peace might be resting on one’s faith, rather Christ and his work. If you’re trusting in your believing rather than Christ and his saving. Belief never saved anybody. Who saved you? Christ did. You see, a lot of people say, “I’m believing in Jesus. It’s my belief. I believe in Jesus, therefore I’m

saved.” You may or may not be. I don’t know that. But I can tell you this. A lot of people have false peace because they’re believing in their believing rather than trusting in his saving work.

Thirdly, false peace might be never being troubled by doubts. What is your response to what you’re hearing tonight? Do you thank God for your justification? You know, when I was studying this, the one thing that came out of this for me is, “Why me? Why me? I’m so overwhelmed by what I was like when I was an enemy and what I am now. The issue is this. I’m just lost in that, in the wonderment of that, the joy of that, and I can’t figure it out because I don’t have an answer for why me, because the only answer is God.” It has nothing to do with me. I have doubts all the time. I think how can I be a Christian when I just thought that again? How can I be a believer when I just did that same thing over and over and over again? I’ve got to go back and say, “Look, it’s not what I’m believing. I’m trusting in your saving. Lord, help me not do that anymore.”

Do you see, one of the great assurances of your salvation are your doubts. If you don’t have doubts, you’re going to think that you earned it; you felt that you deserved it. You see, the real issue is this. Why me? Why did you shower me with your grace? Why me? Why did you justify when I was an enemy? That’s not logical. It’s supernatural. Why me?

Another reason for false peace might be you’re only interested in forgiveness and not righteousness. All you want is forgiveness, not righteousness. Hebrews 12 says, “You can’t see God unless you’re holy.” Do you just want to be forgiven, or do you want to be made righteousness? To live out your justified by faith alone, to live out the sinless perfection and perfect obedience Christ. It doesn’t mean you’re going to live a sinlessly perfect life. It means you’re motivated to change the style of life and the choices you make because you’re pursuing righteousness; you’re just not after forgiveness.

Lastly I think another case for false peace would be this. Taking sin too lightly, because you say this, “I’m covered by the blood of Jesus. I’m covered.” When I stand before the Father in heaven—you’ve heard this thing in evangelism—you’re asked the question, “On what basis would God let you into his heaven?” My answer is none. There’s no reason that God should ever let me into his heaven. But I tell you what I’m doing. I’m trusting the blood of Christ will cleanse all of my moral failures. I’m trusting the blood of Christ will meet his righteous law standards. I’m trusting the blood of Christ will prevent him from showering me with his wrath. That’s what the blood of Christ does. You see, so often we’re just saying, “I’m covered by the blood of Christ.” That is true, but what does it do to your life? You just can’t hide behind it and say, “I’m covered. I’ve got my life insurance. I’ve got my fire insurance. I’m covered.” You see, that could be an indication of false peace.

What are some characteristics of true peace? First of all, it’s never glib or lighthearted. You know what hell is and you know there’s only one reason why you’re not going there. There’s only one reason why you’re not going to hell, and you know that. That’s through the Lord Jesus Christ, and you don’t take that lightly. You don’t flippantly throw that around. Secondly, you’re filled with a sense of wonder and amazement. Are you just amazed at what Paul is teaching us? Is your response, “How can this be? I’m an enemy? And now I’m a child. Now he’s my Father. How can that be?” Are you amazed at justification by faith, or do you take it flippantly and say, “Well I’ve been going to church all my life?” I can’t answer those questions for you. All I’m saying, friends, is don’t take your salvation glibly or lightly. That’s why I’m spending so much time in helping us understand what you’ve been justified from, the condition you were in prior to your justification by faith alone. That’s Paul’s whole defense in Romans 5.

Thirdly, humility. It’s realizing the truth about yourself, it’s realizing the truth about God, and it realizes this. That you owe it all to God and not yourself. That’s humility. Humility is seeing that which is

perfect and realizing I can't achieve it. That's humility. When you see that in the person and work of Christ, you say, "I can't achieve that. I've just got to trust it. I'm trusting the person and work of Christ."

Number four, I would suggest this. You're careful about your life. You're not justified because of your carefulness, but you're careful because of your justification. You're not justified by your carefulness. You're careful about your justification, and you don't take that glibly or lightly and flippantly just throw it around. It radically changed your life.

Notice the next consequence. The first one this—you have peace with God. Secondly, in verse 2, we see that we have access to God. The second consequence of justification—first being peace with God—becomes the high privilege of having access to God. More accurately, this could be translated by whom we also have had. Paul is emphasizing what has happened to us once and for all, and that was that you were justified once and for all. It's not a repeated experience. There was a time when we did not have access, but now because of justification, you do have access because you have peace with God. The emphasis here is rather obvious. The justification by faith is not a process, but it's a one-time event that occurs once and forever. It's in that act in which God declares that you are in Christ, and he regards you as if you had never sinned before. How can that be? Why me? I'm amazed at that. As much as I've studied this, I'm just amazed. How can that be, that God now looks at me, who was once his enemy, and says, "I look at you as if you had never, ever sinned."

He pronounces that we are just and righteous. How does he do that? In and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our sins are forgiven. We're clothed in the righteousness of Christ. God declares that in justification is a once and for all concrete act. The moment God makes that declaration that you're justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, we have our access to God now, into the grace in which we stand. You see, before this, were outside of grace. Now we're in grace.

The word "access" there in verse 2 needs to be understood. It's only found three times in the New Testament. Here, Ephesians 2:18 and Ephesians 5:12. Literally it means an introduction. It carries the idea of being presented at court. Before you could enter into the courtroom, there were certain formalities, and certain requirements are necessary before you're permitted entrance, before you can have access into the room of court. What the Lord Jesus Christ does is he introduces you now to God. You now have an introduction to him. We cannot go in, in the condition we're in, because we're sinful, we're vile, we're polluted, we're his enemies. Our very righteousness is as filthy rags the Scripture says. We have no right, in our own name, to be allowed in to have access to God. But along comes one who has right access and can enter himself, who having dealt with our sin, can take us and introduce us to the Father. It is the Lord Jesus who does it all. He now takes you into the presence of the Father and says, "Father, this is one of ours. This is one for whom I died. This is one for whom I accomplished their salvation. I now introduce this child of yours to the Father." You see, that's what it means to have access. You've got the introduction. You see, the peace we have is through him, and the introduction we have is through him. It's entirely and completely through him.

Notice this in verse two. We're not moving in and out of grace. Do you notice that? He says we're standing in grace. What does Paul mean when he says you're standing in grace? He means our state of justification, of having been declared sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient is a state of grace. Having been justified by the person and work of Christ, he now brings us into a relationship with God where we now receive the benefits that you desire, and the blessings from God, which we could not have received otherwise.

Romans 6:14 says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace." You see, prior to this introduction, to this access of God because you have peace with God, God looked at us purely as a legal matter. We were under law and God did not look at us as his children. He

looked at us as enemies and rebels. We were under the wrath of God. God looks at all sinners that way; in strictly a legal matter. Strictly a legal view of/perspective of that person. But that is no longer the case if you're in Christ today, because we are no longer under the law. You're standing in grace. How can that be? How can that be?

You see, quite honestly friends, that's the terrible position of a unregenerate sinner. That's a terrible position to be in; to be under the law. The sinner has the frown of God upon him. God cannot smile upon the unregenerate; cannot look at the sinner. God frowns upon him because he hates the sin. Habakkuk says that God is too holy to look upon sin. What a terrible state to be; not to have peace with God, not to have access to God and know this, that your prayers are never going to be heard, because God does not listen to the prayers of the sinner.

But now you have this introduction, Paul says. You've been introduced. God looks upon us now favorably. He not only accepts us, he delights to receive you. He delights to bless you. That's what the Apostle Paul is teaching us; that we're standing in grace. You receive that which you don't deserve, which is unmerited. We deserve nothing at the hand of God but punishment and retribution. Therefore all the blessings that you receive in your life, or ever will receive, are all undeserved, they are all of grace. It's grace in which we stand, and by grace we stand. Do you see that? It is in grace that you stand because you have peace with God. You've got access to God. You're now in his grace. You're now in there by grace, and you're standing there by grace. You see, it's a state of condition. The condition is changed. You don't go in and out of grace. You're not either in a little bit and out a little bit. You're either under the law or you're under grace. We'll see that Chapter 7. You cannot be halfway in, sometimes in and sometimes out.

The word "stand" conveys this mindset. Security, stability, continuance and establishment. It means we have the assurance because it is all of grace, and not of ourselves; therefore, we are standing in grace. You don't move in; you don't move out. You're standing. In my mind, dearly beloved, there's nothing more wonderful than that—to be introduced into this grace by the person and work of Christ, to be set there by him. He places you in grace, to be established there by him, and to be made to stand firm in there by him because you know that you're eternally secure because Jesus has placed you there in his grace and he has introduced to the Father, and now you have access to the Father. And now you're the recipient of all the blessings and all the benefits of what it means to be in union with Christ.

Friends, we should never forget the exceeding riches of God's grace. Don't ever forget that. The exceeding riches of God's grace. Do you see what that's done? It radically changes everything about the way that we live.

Notice the results of having peace and access to God. The third thing we notice in these verses is this. Rejoice and hope of the glory of God. We have, first of all, peace with God; secondly, access to God; and now you have rejoice and hope of the glory of God. Here's the third link in this chain. The security of the believer is, first of all, anchored in the past. Christ made peace with God. That's past tense. Secondly, the security of your salvation is in the present tense. It's anchored and maintained in the present because you stand now in grace, and Christ intercedes on yourself behalf. You're standing now in grace. That's present tense reality. And finally, the security of your salvation, the security of the believer is anchored in the future. Our future glory is guaranteed, for we have been redeemed to exalt in the hope of our glorification.

The word "rejoice" here means confident boast or exuberant jubilation. It's the strongest word in the Greek language meaning rejoicing at the highest level. What is it that you're rejoicing at the highest level? You're rejoicing in your future glorification. That's what you're rejoicing in. We have no need to fear our future because Christ's ultimate statement in John 6:37-39 is this, "All the Father gives to me

shall come to me, and I shall not lose anyone.” You’re standing in grace. How can that be? Why me? How can that be? Are you amazed at what you’re hearing? Do you just stand in awe of it, of the truth of what Paul is teaching us? You see, what Paul is telling us here in a summary statement is this, that he’s rejoicing in the hope of seeing God. He’s rejoicing. He’s going to see the Lord Jesus without a veil. He himself understands this. He’s going to be glorified. The end result of his future salvation is this. He’s going to be glorified. Friends, that’s the permanency of your salvation. You will be glorified. You will see God, you will see Jesus and you will be glorified. That’s why we call the death of a saint a glorification process. That is why any doctrine that teaches the possibility of falling away from salvation is unscriptural. You cannot boast about a salvation you’re going to lose. You cannot exalt about a salvation you’re going to lose. And you cannot glory at the ultimate glorification of your salvation if you suddenly can lose it. You see, the final result of our understanding justification by faith is this. You glory in the exultation of your future glorification. You can’t do that if the back of your mind is saying, “What if I do this? I might lose it.” No, because you’ve been justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, revealed in the Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone. Your salvation is complete, it’s secure, it’s guaranteed, because it’s all of God and not of us. How can that be? Why me? Why me?

Let’s pray. Father, we thank you for the magnificent clarity of your Scripture. Father, if I’ve said anything that’s inconsistent with your glory, your nature or your attributes, or your intention of preserving this Holy Word, that you would remove it from our minds, and only those things that are consistent with who you are in all of your glory will be the things that we remember. Father, we just pray, Lord, that you’d be pleased to help us look at our own hearts, examine our own selves, test ourselves. Do I have true peace? Do I have a manufactured peace based upon a Jesus of my own revelation? May it be so, Father, that we will be honest with our own evaluation. May it be so for Jesus’ sake, and may it be so for his glory. Amen! And amen!!