

The Epistle of Paul to the *Romans*

Justification: The Provision of God's Righteousness (3:21 - 5:21)

Paul has presented a clear case that sinners are justified by God on the basis of faith alone. In the following section ^{v.1-11}, he emphasizes a believer's salvation is expressed in good works. And, from the time of spiritual birth, Christians are eternally bound to Jesus, who preserves them by His power ^{Psalm 36:5-9, Lamentations 3:22-26, Hebrews 10:23}. The evidences of their everlasting tie to the Savior are: (1) peace with God ^{v.1}, (2) standing in grace ^{v.2a}, (3) hope of glory ^{v.2b-5a}, (4) receiving divine love ^{v.5b-8}, (5) certain escape of divine wrath ^{v.9-10}, (6) joy in the Lord ^{v.11}.

The Blessings of Righteousness (5:1-11)

5:1-5a ¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us... While an internal sense of serenity can result from the "peace with God", this peace is a timeless reality indicating that a person's separation from God, due to defiant rebellion ^{Deuteronomy 32:19-22, Ephesians 5:6}, has ended ^{Colossians 1:21-22}, and the person has been fully reconciled to God ^{2 Corinthians 5:17-21}. Having "access" to God ^{Ephesians 2:18, 3:12} was unthinkable to the OT Jew ^{Exodus 19:20-21, 28:35}, but the sacrifice of Jesus ^{Matthew 27:50-51} made it possible for all believers ^{Hebrews 10:19-22}. Unlike worldly hope, Biblical "hope" communicates something that is an absolute certainty, which was secured by "Christ Jesus" ^{1 Timothy 1:1} and is declared through the promises in God's Word ^{Psalm 119:114, Hebrews 6:19-20}. The believer's hope is to share in the glory of God ^{John 17:22}. Paul described one of the Biblical paths to spiritual maturity ^{Matthew 5:3-12, James 1:2-4, 2 Peter 1:5-8}:
sufferings (*thlipsis* : persecution, tribulation or a pressing together) ⇒ **perseverance** (*hypomonē*: endurance, patience) ⇒ **character** (*dokimē*: proof, proof of genuineness) ⇒ **hope** (*elpis* : desire of good with expectation of obtaining it).

Notes: **sufferings**: olive press; **perseverance**: not yielding; **character**: testing metal purity

The phrase "have been justified" means salvation is received as a one-time legal declaration with continuing results. Being "born again" ^{John 3:1-15, 1 Peter 1:23} happens in a moment in time.

The Biblical image to “stand” usually represents a firm/secure position ^{Mark 13:13, Ephesians 6:10-15}.

In order for a Christian to mature through the entire process described here by Paul ^{v.3-5}:
suffering→perseverance→character→hope, they must make every effort to work in concert
with the will of God ^{Hebrews 10:36, 1 Peter 4:12-19} and with God's perspective ^{2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 16-18}.

5:5b-8 ⁵...because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. ⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God's love for man ^{Ephesians 3:14-19}, and man's love for God and his fellow man ^{1 John 4:7-12}, are of supreme importance, because love is the centerpiece of Christianity ^{1 Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22}. God gave a powerful testimony of His love for mankind when he “poured out” on believers ^{Acts 10:45} the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit ^{John 16:7,12-15}. The actions Jesus performed in order to make salvation available for everyone were carried out in the strength of God ^{Isaiah 12:2} and at a time that God deemed appropriate ^{Galatians 4:4-5}. The phrase “at just the right time” alludes to the perfect timing of God ^{Mark 1:14-15, Galatians 4:4}.

Attempting to understand verses 7-8: Paul seems to have contrasted what man is willing to do for other men with what God has done for man. “Very rarely” (almost never) will any man give up his life to save a “[self-]righteous man”. And, while still rare, there is a greater chance a man “might possibly...die” for a “good man” (a generous, friendly man). The majesty of Christ's sacrifice was revealed by His (1) willfully submitting to the worst kind of death, (2) accepting the punishment for all of mankind's sins and (3) freely doing it for His undeserving enemies.

5:9-11 ⁹ Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life. ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Paul used the phrase “how much more” to remind man that the more he recognizes how valuable the gift of salvation is, the greater his wonder is. Using the term “blood” is a graphic way to describe violent death ^{Matthew 23:35}; however, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” ^{Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22}. In addition, references to Christ's blood also symbolize His finished work on the cross ^{John 19:30} (the completion of the requirements for man's atonement, including Christ's scourging/death). As a result, saints can “rejoice in God” for “[receiving] reconciliation” to God ^{2 Corinthians 5:17-21}.

God reconciled man, but He also "gave [saints] the ministry of reconciliation" ^{2 Corinthians 5:18b,19b}.

The following chart was adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts* :

| Salvation: God's Greatest Gift – Man's Greatest Possession | | |
|---|--|--|
| Justification (Past Tense) | Sanctification (Present Tense) | Glorification (Future Tense) |
| Saved <i>immediately</i> from sin's penalty | Saved <i>progressively</i> from sin's power | Saved <i>ultimately</i> from sin's presence |
| For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8) | | |

The Imputation of Righteousness (5:12-21)

Next, Paul chose to discuss the effect one man can have on a vast number of other humans. In this section, he described the colossal influence the actions of two men had on the world.

5:12-14 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned – for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. The sin that ushered death into the world was Adam's sin of rebellion in response to Satan's temptation ^{Genesis 3:1-6}. However, what Adam passed on to all his descendants (all mankind) was an inherent inclination to sin through a sin nature that is present in all humans from the moment of conception ^{Psalms 51:5}. All are sinners, but prior to the law (Adam to Moses) there was no accounting of violations, because mankind did not have a specific revelation, as Adam had been given ^{Genesis 2:16-17}.

The death from Adam's sin has three manifestations: (1) spiritual death/separation from God ^{Ephesians 2:1-2, 4:18}, (2) physical death ^{Hebrews 9:27}, (3) eternal (second) death ^{Revelation 20:11-15}.

Humans are not sinners because they sin; they sin because they are sinners (have sin nature).

Paul used the last verse ^{v.14} as a transition from the pattern of Adam (whose sin transferred to all mankind ^{v.18a}) to Christ (whose sacrifice resulted in righteousness being offered to all mankind ^{v.18b}). In the remainder of the chapter ^{v.15-21}, Paul contrasts the condemning act of Adam and the redemptive act of Christ, which were different in (1) their effectiveness ^{v.15}, (2) their extent ^{v.16}, (3) their efficacy ^{v.17}, (4) their essence ^{v.18-19} and (5) their energy ^{v.20-21}.

5:15-17 ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. The "gift" and "trespass" are opposites. Paul used the word "many" in two ways ^{v.15}: the "many" who died meant all; the "many" who received the gift meant many. His use of "how much more" emphasized Christ's act of redemption as vastly greater than Adam's act of condemnation.

5:18-19 ¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous. Similar to his earlier use of "many" ^{v.15}, Paul used "all" in two ways: "all" men were unquestionably condemned through "one trespass", but while "all" men are offered the "one act of righteousness", only "many" are justified ^{Isaiah 53:11}. Summarizing the analogy of Adam and Christ, Paul continued to contrast the burden of Adam's trespass and the beauty of Christ's righteous gift ^{Philippians 2:8}. Satan lied ^{John 8:44} to Eve that her & Adam's act of rebellion would only bring good ^{Genesis 3:4-5}, but Christ's act of redemption accomplishes exactly what he promised it would ^{Ephesians 2:4-5}.

While Jesus' sacrifice on the cross could be called "one act", His overall obedience ^{John 6:38} was responsible for the gift of righteousness: living a perfect life ^{1 Peter 2:22}, submitting to beatings/contempt ^{Luke 22:63-65} and willingly allowing Himself to die on the cross ^{John 10:17-18}.

In context, the phrase "made righteous" has to refer to the gift of righteousness received from Jesus by every believer at the time of their justification. The process of becoming more righteous, known as sanctification, will be discussed later at length by Paul ^{Romans 6-8}.

5:20-21 ²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. As mentioned earlier ^{Romans 3:20}, the law acts as a spiritual mirror for man, producing an awareness of sin. After the Law was given to Moses ^{Exodus 34:1-28}, the awareness of sin increased dramatically, but God promised His grace would always be able to cover all of man's sins ^{1 Timothy 1:12-17}.