

Back in 1986, *People Magazine* published a “Sindex” – an index on sin. It was a study of its readers on the subject of sin. The worst sins were murder, rape, incest, child abuse, and spying against one’s own country. Cutting in front of someone in line was deemed worse than divorce. The study said, “Overall, readers said they commit about 4.64 sins a month.”¹ They made the mistake that is often made, namely that humanity’s downfall is sins rather than Sin. Another way of saying this is that we are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. We have a nature problem that leads to action problems. And because of our nature and our actions, we have a problem with God and God has a problem with us.

You see, when we sin, we are claiming authority. We are claiming kingship. We know best and we have the right to live how we want to live. The age old problem of autonomy. Luther said sin is being curved in on the self. We have chosen self. We have preferred the world and James 4:4 says, “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” Enemies of God. God is holy and his holy response is wrath. We need to be reconciled. We need atonement, which is an Anglo-Saxon compound word; at-one-ment.

The cross provides reconciliation. That’s the angle for the morning. As we’ve seen and will keep seeing, no single concept is adequate to do justice to the NT’s teaching on the cross. The cross achieves substitution, propitiation, expiation. Propitiation is oriented toward God. Expiation toward sin. Reconciliation and redemption are oriented toward us. / Turn to Rom 5 [886]. One of the values of my ministry is 2 Tim 2:2. Cody. My turn. Luther called these the happiest verses in Romans. **5:1-11 This is .** 7 points on what the cross of Christ provides for his bride.

I. We have peace with God – 1. Therefore. This is a connecting word so it’s irresponsible to start in chapter 5 verse 1. What is the therefore there for? What was chapter 4 about? Justification by faith. So was chapter 3. Justification by faith is being declared in the right when you believe in Jesus. Much of Romans is about justification. 1:18-3:20 the need, 3:21-5 the way of J, here in 5:1-11 the blessings of justification. Here he moves from argumentation to adoration. / **3:19-24, 28, 4:4-8, 22-25** therefore.

Not just therefore, but therefore *since*. We have been justified by faith (chapters 1-4), therefore, since we have been justified by faith. Because we have had our sins forgiven and are counted righteous in Christ, we have peace with God. / Friends, this is why the Protestant Reformation was so important. It was a discovery of justification by faith, which here is the path to peace. Luther said J is the article upon which the church stands or falls and here in Rom 5:1 justification by faith is the article upon which your spiritual life stands or falls.

Peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through him and his work that we have peace. Through the cross. Jesus died for our sins so that we could be forgiven and declared in the right. Because of justification, we have peace *with* God. Not the peace *of* God – we have that too – the peace of God that surpasses understanding. That is subjective peace – what a gift – but this is talking about objective

¹ *People*, February 10, 1986 quoted in Rutledge, *The Crucifixion*, 194.

peace. Peace with God. Peace with God leads to the peace of God. Our subjective peace – if it is to last – but be grounded upon objective peace with God. See the last sermon on expiation: having our guilt removed.

II. We have access 2a Once again, it is by faith. We trust in Jesus, we rely upon his finished work and gain access to God. You can't merit it, you are given it. Yours for the asking. You have the access card in your pocket. You have the lanyard on your neck. Formerly restricted areas have been re-opened. VIP pass into the hallway of heaven.

We have access through Jesus - his person and work, who he is and what he's done. *Through him we have also obtained access.* He makes a way where there was no way. You have seen the bridge illustration. Chasm, cross. Eph 2:18: "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." Eph 3:12: "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him." That's why when Jesus died the temple veil was torn, from top to bottom. Access granted. TK once tweeted: "The only person who dare wake up a king at 3:00 AM for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access."²

We have access by faith, not by works. We have access by faith into grace. Here, grace means the sphere of our privileged position of being loved by God.³ Amazing. We stand in grace. We do not fall into it and out of it like a politician falls in and out of favor with the people. No no no we stand in it, for that is the nature of grace. 1 Cor 15: the gospel of Christ dying for sins, which you received, in which you stand (1 Cor 15:1).

Imagine what these verses could say? "If and when we prove ourselves by living a morally good life, then we can have peace with God. Through our performance, it is up to us to gain access to a holy God. This by works and not by faith." Naw fam, all grace. He is for us. Children tend to draw near to the Father when he is tender but aloof when he is disapproving. We stand in grace. As we sing, "Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Or, "Only by grace can we enter, Only by grace can we stand, Not by our human endeavor But by the blood of the Lamb."⁴

III. We have joy 2b-4 We rejoice. This word for "rejoice" is often translated "boast" or "exult" (*kauxaomai*). Joyfully brag. We used to boast in the self. No longer. Phil 3:3: we are the people of God who boast in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. **3:27, 4:1-3.** Gal 6:14 God forbid. . . . Isaac Watts: "No more, my God, I boast no more Of all the duties I have done; I quit the hopes I held before, To trust the merits of Thy Son. No more my God, No more my God, No more my God, I boast no more. Now, for the loss I bear His name, What was my gain I count my loss; My former pride I call my shame, And nail my glory to His cross. Yes, and I must and will esteem All things but loss for Jesus' sake; O may my soul be found in Him, And of His righteousness partake! The best obedience of my hands

² @timkellernyc 2:05 AM – 24 Feb 2015.

³ John Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1994), 140.

⁴ Quoted in Michael Bird, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2016), 169.

Dares not appear before Thy throne; But faith can answer Thy demands, By pleading what my Lord has done.”⁵ / We don’t boast in the self, except now we can boast in our weakness. 2 Cor 11:30 “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (2 Cor 12:5).

Now we boast or rejoice in hope of the glory of God. In hope. Hope in the Bible is not just wishful thinking but a joyful and confident expectation based upon the promises of God. Hope is a sure and certain settled conviction that God will make good on his promise and it gives meaning and shape to life in the present. Hope is not fingers crossed but thumbs up. Hope looks to the future in light of the past. **8:19-25.**

Notice how God’s got us: past, present, and future. Past (peace w God, declared righteous), present (access, stand in grace) and future (hope). / But not only that. As if that weren’t enough! We can even rejoice in suffering? Why? **3 Knowing.** We can rejoice in suffering because we know what it produces, we know what God is up to in it. But it takes the eyes of faith. How does Cowper put in “God Moves in a Mysterious Way?” “Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan his work in vain. God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain.” We must look through the suffering to see the purposes of God.

And we can’t forget what we just read. We are justified by faith. We are pleasing in God’s sight. Sins forgiven. Dearly beloved, listen up – if you miss this – if you miss justification, you will be tempted to think that suffering is God’s punishment of you. If you are in Christ, there is no punishment left. Jesus paid it all.

Suffering produces endurance or perseverance. The ability to remain. Endurance is a single-mindedness, focus, a realignment of priorities that lasts. Suffering loosens your grip on this world and steels the spine for eternity. Endurance produces character, which refers to the quality of the person. Who you truly are. Your holiness. You are tested and proven genuine. The sturdiness of a veteran in contrast to the softness of a fresh recruit. Character produces hope. The more Christ-like you become the more you want to be with him. To live is Christ, to die is gain. You become future-oriented, not worried about today or tomorrow but concerned with what will matter 10,000 years from now. We are hopeful and we view are various trials in light of eternity. As DAC says, “I am not suffering from anything that a good resurrection can’t fix.”⁶

5 The Spirit makes the love of God experientially real in our lives. That’s one of the main ministries of the Spirit: to show forth the love of God by sending the son. 1 Cor 2:12: the Spirit helps us understand the things freely given to us by God – that is he helps us understand how deep grace is – the things freely given (*charizōmai*). The Spirit makes the love of God felt, like a Dad swooping up his little girl in his arms. Was she legally his child before? Yes, but then she acutely feels it. If you have the eyes of faith, even in your suffering, when you see it for what it is, in the hands of a benevolent Father, you’ll experience more of his love. On the flipside, if suffering makes you experience less of God’s love, you lack maturity and Rom 5 gives us the steps to grow.

⁵ Isaac Watts, “No More, My God, I Boast No More.”

⁶ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/how-can-a-good-god-allow-suffering/>. Accessed 11/13/2025.

IV. We have a substitute 6-8 Christ died *for* us. In our place. PSA. And who is us? We are sinners, weak, and ungodly. This is all a clear demonstration of the love of God. You ever doubt God loves you, consider Christ crucified. Stott writes, “The degree of love is measured partly by the costliness of the gift to the giver, and partly by the worthiness or unworthiness of the beneficiary. The more the gift costs the giver, and the less the recipient deserves it, the greater the love is seen to be. Measured by these standards, God’s love in Christ is absolutely unique. For in sending his Son to die for sinners, he was giving everything, his very self, to those who deserved nothing from him except judgment.”⁷ Jesus Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners.

V. We are saved from wrath 9 - Because we are justified – not by faith this time but by his blood – by his violent death on the cross, we will be saved from the wrath of God. Are we justified by faith or by the blood? Yes, for we appropriate the blood through faith **3:25**.

VI. We are reconciled 10 - We *were* enemies. Enemies of God most high. There is no more dangerous position to be in! Enemies of God because of our sin. We have told him no. We have rebelled against him in word, thought, and deed. We are rebels. As Lewis puts it, “Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms.”⁸ **8:7-8**.

But God takes the initiative to reconcile sinners to himself by the death of his son. Col 1:21-22: “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.” The cross turns enemies to friends. Where there was once hostility, now there is peace. *Shalom*: “It stands for spiritual well-being at the highest level, a prosperity of soul resulting from being in right relationship with God.”⁹ We have been reconciled but we will be saved in the future by his life. Jesus lived the life we should have lived and died the death we should have died.

VII. We have joy 11. Did you already say that? Yeah, its that good. Verse 2, verse 3, and verse 11. Joy is the hallmark of the justified person. Our standing with God is secure. We have the love of God. We have access to him. It’s all by grace and we stand in that. We know that suffering is not punishment but purification. We have hope.

We have the Spirit. Even though we are weak and sinful, ungodly enemies, Christ died for us, turning us from enemies to friends. How could we not have joy?

Maybe you are here and not yet a Christian. Let me ask you if you qualify. Are you fit for the Kingdom of Christ? There are six prerequisites in these verses: You must be a sufferer. You must be weak. You must be ungodly. You must be a sinner. You must realize you are an enemy of God. You must have faith in Jesus Christ. There is this old hymn the church has sung for a few centuries that says, “Let not

⁷ Stott, *Romans*, 144.

⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* in *The C.S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: HarperOne, 2017), 54.

⁹ Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 242.

conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream; all the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him.” The first step is to see you need reconciliation. / And please realize that outside of Christ, none of the blessings can be claimed: no peace, no access, no assurance, no endurance, no lasting joy. But you can. They are yours for the asking. We’d love to talk more about Jesus with you.

Friends, because we have been reconciled, we are now reconcilers. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. **2 Cor 5:11-21**. We are compelled by the love of Christ to persuade others. This message is too good to keep to ourselves. This week, share the gospel with one person. God will make his appeal through you. / And Paul is writing to Christians here, we have been given the message of reconciliation. Because we have been reconciled vertically, we put reconciliation into practice horizontally. As God has been to us, so we are to others.

Is there an estranged relationship you need to take initiative with? Is there a call you need to make?
12:14-18.

Church, God has given us what we needed. We had a problem and through the cross God has solved that problem. DAC: “If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic, he would have sent an economist. If he had perceived that our greatest need was entertainment, he would have sent us a comedian or an artist. If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability, he would have sent us a politician. If he had perceived that our greatest need was health, he would have sent us a doctor. But he perceived that our greatest need involved our sin, our alienation from him, our profound rebellion, our death; and he sent us a Savior.”¹⁰

¹⁰ D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992), 109.