

David Carter

Unshakeable: Romans / Romans 5:1-5

I'm willing to bet that few have heard the name Hetty Green?

Hetty Green was one of the wealthiest people in America in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

At the time of her death in 1916 she was worth roughly 100 million dollars — which in today's money would be somewhere in the billions.

She was so tight with her money, so obsessive about holding onto her finances that Wall Street nicknamed her the Witch of Wall Street

The story is that despite all of that wealth — despite having more money than most people could ever dream of — she lived like she had nothing.

It's said that she wore the same black dress day after day until it literally fell apart. She refused to heat her home. She ate cold oatmeal because she didn't want to pay to heat it.

And perhaps the most heartbreaking story about Hetty Green is that when her son Ned injured his leg as a child, she delayed getting him proper medical treatment because she didn't want to pay for it. She delayed so long that it cost him his leg — it had to be amputated.

She had every resource available to her. Unlimited wealth. And yet she lived as though she had nothing.

The question that most of us are asking is, how could someone have that much and live like that?

But I wonder — I wonder if that's a picture of how many of us live as followers of Jesus.

Because here's what Paul has been showing us over these past several weeks in Romans. That through faith in Jesus Christ we have been justified — declared righteous before God. That the sin debt we owed has been paid in full. That the righteousness of Christ has been credited to our account.

We are rich beyond measure in Christ.

And yet we can live as though none of it is available to us.

Like, we're still the same person we were before Christ, still under condemnation, still trying to earn what has already been freely given.

This morning Paul wants to change that.

Because in [Romans 5](#) he pivots from explaining what the gospel does. What life actually looks like when you start living in the reality of what you have in Christ.

Because the question isn't just do you believe the gospel. The question is are you living in the reality of it?

Has the gospel actually impacted your life? Has it changed how you live, how you handle conflict, how you face suffering, how you walk through anxiety and fear?

Because the gospel doesn't just save us — it changes how we live.

Look with me this morning at [Romans 5](#), just the first five verses.

We've come to the end of the first section of Paul's letter to the church in Rome and a shift happens in [Romans 5](#).

[Romans 1-4](#) Paul has been explaining to us the gospel.

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that salvation is available to everyone who believes and trusts in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus is counted righteous before God. Not by works, not because we deserve it. But only by faith.

And the shift in chapter 5 answers the “what now?” What does it look like to live in the reality of the gospel?

I believe that Jesus died for my sin that he was resurrected for my justification. I believe that, I’m trusting in that, I’ve staked my eternity on it.

What now...

What does it look like to not just believe in the gospel, but to live the gospel?

If Romans 1-4 is laying the foundation, chapters 5-8 is looking at what is built on that foundation... if chapters 1-4 are the root, then chapters 5-8 are looking at the fruit of salvation.

The gospel doesn’t just change our status before God, it changes our lives, how we live and treat people, how we view and understand life and the world we live in. It changes how we deal with trials and tribulations.

That’s where Paul goes next, in these first five verses but really chapters 5-8 is all about what the gospel produces within us.

See the key word is therefore in verse 1, “therefore since we have been justified by faith...”

Therefore, when you see therefore, you need to ask what it is there for, because if there is a therefore, it’s there for a reason...

Therefore, it’s a signal that everything that Paul is about to say is in light of everything he has just said.

Therefore, because we have been justified by faith, here is what that means for you and me, here is what the gospel produces in us... because we have been saved, justified, because we have been declared righteous and made right with God here is what that looks like now.

Here's where Paul starts.

PEACE WITH GOD

Because we have been justified, we have peace with God.

That's the first thing there right in verse 1, you see what it says.

Romans 5:1 ESV

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's so important. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus, those who have been justified, declared righteous by their faith in the death and resurrection, now live at peace with God.

And that makes sense doesn't it, in light of everything Paul has said since chapter 1? Because what Paul has been describing is essentially a state of war. We have rebelled against God. We have rejected Him, suppressed the truth, replaced Him with false gods, lived as though He doesn't exist. We are in danger of His wrath, His judgment.

That's not peace. That's war.

But now — because of what Jesus has accomplished — the war is over.

Think about what happens at the end of a war. At some point one side extends terms of peace. An armistice is declared. A peace treaty is signed. And from that moment on the two sides are no longer at war. The hostility is over. The conflict has ended. Not because one side defeated the other on the battlefield — but because peace was agreed upon and signed.

And we see that playing out even in our world right now — nations at war, and the desperate longing for someone to say the fighting is over.

That's what Jesus has done for us.

God extended the terms of peace through His Son. Jesus went to the cross — and in His death and resurrection He signed the peace treaty on our behalf. The hostility between us and God is over. The war has ended.

Through Jesus we have been reconciled to God, we have peace with God.

The war is over.

But I think it's important to define what this peace actually is.

It's important to note that just because we are at peace with God doesn't mean there is an absence of conflict in our lives. Life is still hard. Storms still come. Conflict is still real.

But it does mean that even in the face of strife and conflict there is a peace we can have in the midst of the chaos.

See peace with God leads to the blessing of the peace of God.

Peace with God is positional — it's already been secured through Jesus. But the peace of God is what we experience as we live in relationship with Him.

It's the peace that surpasses all understanding that Paul describes in [Philippians 4](#). That even as we face the most pressing issues of life, in the midst of the chaos, despite the storms — because we are at peace with God we can experience the peace of God.

It's not a circumstantial peace that comes and goes with life circumstances. It's a deep abiding peace of the soul. An assurance that you belong to Him, that you are loved, that your life is in His hands and no matter what is going on around you — He is in control.

So many are looking for peace in their lives, but peace in life flows from peace with God.

You wonder why there is conflict in your life, in marriage, conflict on your job, conflict in your family? Let me ask you — how is your peace with God?

We cannot have true and lasting peace until we find peace with God. And the peace with God flows to every other relationship.

Maybe you're asking this morning — why am I not experiencing this peace?

The first question is this. Have you made peace with God through Jesus?

That's where it starts. Have you surrendered your life, your will to Christ? Recognizing that yes, you have been at war with God — but God has provided peace through His Son.

But maybe you've done that. Maybe you've placed your faith in Christ, and you say — I still don't have peace. I'm not experiencing it.

Then I would ask you — whose voice are you listening to?

The enemy loves to rob you of peace. And he does it through the voice of temptation. Whispering — come on, give in, you'll enjoy it, you deserve it, go ahead.

And if you are living in a lifestyle that is not consistent with the character of God — if you claim to be a child of God but are not living your life as a child of God — then no wonder there is conflict within you. Because that is not who God has called you to be.

But Satan isn't just the tempter. He is also the accuser.

His voice tempts you to go in — and the moment you do, that same voice turns on you. Now it's not whispering come on in. Now it's condemning you. Calling you a failure, a fraud, a phony. Questioning whether you even belong to God.

Whose voice are you listening to?

Because the Holy Spirit does convict us when we stray — but conviction and condemnation are not the same thing.

The voice of the enemy condemns. It tears down. It accuses. It tells you that you are too far gone.

But the voice of the Holy Spirit says — God has better things for you. This is not who you are. Come back. That's the voice calling you to repentance, calling you back to peace.

Condemnation leaves you feeling hopeless. Stuck. Like there's no way back. Like God is done with you.

Conviction leaves you feeling drawn. Called back. Like there's a hand reaching out saying come on, let's go, there's a better way.

One pushes you further from God. The other leads you back to Him.

Peace with God is available through Jesus, but you and I have to live and walk in that peace.

In Christ we have been given peace with God.

And that's the beauty of what God has done for us in the gospel.

Not only have we been brought to peace with God — but notice what Paul says next.

We stand in grace.

STAND IN GRACE

We aren't granted peace and then hold on for dear life, no.

Since we have been justified, declared righteous by faith, we are at peace with God — and secondly, we stand in grace.

Look with me at verse 2.

Romans 5:2 ESV

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.

Through Jesus we have obtained access by faith into grace. And I love that word access.

The word access in the original language was used to describe the role of someone who brought a person into the presence of a king. Someone who had that kind of relationship with the king that they could introduce others into his presence.

Think about it this way. Imagine you and I landed in England, and you said — take me to Buckingham Palace, I want to see the King. So we grab an Uber, pull up to the palace gates and you say — now take me to see him.

I don't know the King. I don't have that kind of relationship. And you and I would probably create an international incident trying to get past those gates.

But what if we knew the King's son? And we said to his son — I would love to meet your father. The son could grant us an access to the King that no one else has.

That's what Jesus has done for us. That's what grace looks like. Jesus is our access. He introduces us into the presence of the King.

And tied up in that word access is the idea of unlimited access. Whenever you need it. Wherever you are. You can call on the King at two in the morning in the middle of nowhere — and you have access to him.

I was in a meeting a couple of weeks ago and my son called me. At first, I just hit ignore, figured I'd call him back. But then he called right back again and because he's my son, I dropped everything and picked up the phone. Because my son has access to me that no one else has.

And that's what Paul is saying. Jesus has opened up that kind of access to the grace and presence of God for us.

Any time I need Him, any time I call, He's there.

But grace isn't just something we just receive for a moment in time.

It isn't just the grace that saves us — it's the air we breathe. We live in grace now. Grace is as much a part of our existence as the oxygen we breathe.

See, Paul is talking about something different here than he was talking about in previous chapters.

There is saving grace — by grace meaning salvation is a free gift, God gives us what we don't deserve through faith in Jesus. That's saving grace.

But then there is sustaining grace. And that's what Paul is describing here.

We often think mostly about the grace that saves us. Like we get saved by grace and then somehow, we have to work to stay saved. But if you and I couldn't work to earn salvation — why would we think we need to work to keep it?

The same grace that saved you is the grace that sustains you.

Romans 5:2 ESV

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand...

Notice that. We stand in grace. Present tense. Ongoing. Grace isn't just a past event — it is a present, ongoing work in your life and mine.

We stand. We don't fall. We don't turn away. It's a sustaining grace that keeps us, strengthens us, prevents us from falling or walking away.

But maybe that brings forth the question in your mind...

If we have this unlimited access to grace — if grace saves us and sustains us and keeps us from falling — does that mean, we can just freely sin? Like if grace covers everything, do we have a blank check?

And Paul will address this directly when we get to chapter 6, but for now, it's important for us to see in this verse that grace doesn't just save us and sustain us.

But grace is producing something in you, in me. Grace changes us.

Grace isn't just covering your sin — grace is changing you.

We look one more time at verse 2 when it says we have access into grace, we stand in grace and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Notice that phrase we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Remember what Paul said about humanity without Jesus, why we need the gospel?

Remember he said because all have fallen short of the glory of God. That is we fall short of reflecting the moral character and righteousness of God.

We once fell short of the glory of God, but now through grace we live in hope of the glory of God.

This is the work of grace, this is the work of the gospel in our lives, grace begins to restore what sin has distorted.

Now the grace in which we stand is actually beginning to restore what sin took from us.

By grace we are being transformed, changed to reflect the glory we once fell short of, we strive to live for the glory of God.

That's how I know grace is at work in my life, because I'm not the same person I used to be, I have this desire, this longing, this hope to live for the glory of God, no longer for myself.

Grace doesn't just save us, it changes us.

That's called sanctification. And it's the work of grace in your life.

But it doesn't stop there. Because grace isn't just changing us in the present — it's preparing us for something.

It says, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, that we are longing for something, longing for the day when we will see the fullness of God's glory, the day when Christ returns.

And the work of grace is to prepare me for that day, prepare me so that when Christ comes, I will be like Him, I will reflect the glory I long for.

So grace isn't a blank check for sin. Grace is actually the very thing that empowers you to walk away from it.

Not by your own strength — but by the sustaining, transforming power of grace at work in you. Moving you toward the glory that awaits.

Through Jesus we have unlimited access to grace...

Grace saves us, sustains us, sanctifies us, and prepares us for glory...

But Paul doesn't stop there.

Look at what he says next.

Because we have been justified, we rejoice in suffering.

SUFFERING

That's the work of the gospel in our lives, this is what it produces: peace, grace and joy in suffering.

And we think man, that doesn't sound right... it sounds like maybe it shouldn't be there.

Look with me at verses 3 and 4.

Romans 5:3-4 ESV

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

That sounds counterintuitive doesn't it, rejoicing in sufferings?

But this is the hope of the gospel, this is why we can have true peace even in the midst of suffering because we are assured that God doesn't waste pain.

Jesus said in this world you will have tribulation.

It means suffering is not the exception, it's an expectation, it's part of living in a broken world, filled with broken people.

And when you live in a broken world, with broken people, you will experience some brokenness.

And the promise that God gives us in the gospel isn't that we will never have hardships or sufferings in this life, but that He is at work, He is using even the pain of this life for the work of glory.

And that's why we can rejoice. We can rejoice in our sufferings, not because we are sadistic and love to suffer, no. Paul isn't saying here that we simply grin and bear it or pretend it doesn't hurt.

He's saying that because of the peace we have with God, because of the access we have to grace that there is a deep settled joy that we have in Jesus that coexists with real pain.

These are some of the sweetest verses to me, they have gotten me through some challenging, trying seasons.

This is the power of the gospel, not just that we have the hope of heaven, but strength and hope for today.

We can rejoice, not in our circumstances, but in the work that God is doing, He is using the suffering of this life for our good and His glory.

We love that verse in a few chapters [Romans 8:28](#)

Romans 8:28 ESV

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

All things work together for good. All things, the good things, the happy things, and the hard things, the sufferings... All things God is at work.

That's what Paul is unpacking here, God is working even in your suffering.

We rejoice because God uses the pain of this life to produce within us endurance.

The NIV uses the word perseverance there — and I love that word. Because perseverance isn't just surviving. It isn't just gritting your teeth and bearing your way through.

Perseverance is the ability to keep going, keep trusting, keep believing even when everything in you wants to quit.

Think about an athlete. When an athlete wants to get stronger, wants to build endurance, they don't get there by resting.

They get there by putting their body under pressure. Under stress. Under resistance. The very thing that is uncomfortable, that is painful, that makes them want to stop — is the very thing that is building something in them that couldn't be built any other way.

You don't build endurance in the easy seasons. You build it in the hard ones.

I think we know that... we've experienced that.

And God knows that. So He uses the hard seasons — the suffering, the pain, the trials — to build within us a perseverance, an endurance that simply cannot be produced any other way.

And that endurance produces character.

Now character here isn't just about being a good person. The word Paul uses carries the idea of proven character — like metal that has been tested in fire and comes out pure on the other side. It's the character of someone who has been through something and is stronger, wiser, deeper, more Christlike because of it.

I think we can all testify to this. The people we know who have faced the greatest hardships — who have walked through the fire — there is something about them isn't there.

A depth. A wisdom. A settledness. A Christlikeness that you don't see in people who have never suffered.

Suffering does something in us that comfort never could.

There is a depth of character that is produced when we face the uncomfortable.

And that proven character produces hope.

And you might ask — how does suffering produce hope? That seems backwards. Shouldn't suffering produce despair?

But here's what Paul is saying. When you have walked through a hard season and seen God's faithfulness on the other side — when you look back and see that He brought you through, that He was at work even when you couldn't see it, that He didn't waste a moment of your pain — it produces in you a deep settled assurance that He will do it again.

Saints who have been through hardship look back and say — God brought me through before. He will bring me through again. That's hope. Not wishful thinking. Not a faint maybe. But a certain confidence rooted in the track record of a faithful God.

And that hope does not put us to shame. It will not disappoint. Because it is not based on our circumstances — it is based on who God is.

This is how God works, we rejoice in sufferings not because we enjoy suffering, but because even though they are inevitable in this life, we serve a sovereign God that uses even the sufferings of this life for our good and His glory.

God is at work.

Isn't this the testimony of the saints throughout Scripture?

Think about Joseph. How do you make sense of his life? Assaulted by his own brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused, thrown into prison as an innocent man. Year after year of suffering that made no sense.

Until it did.

Because God was positioning him. Working through every painful moment to place him in exactly the right place at exactly the right time — to preserve his family, to protect the future of God's people from a famine that would have wiped them out.

And when Joseph stands before his brothers all those years later, he doesn't say — look what I survived. He says — what you meant for evil, God used for good.

That's the testimony of suffering redeemed.

And ultimately — isn't this the testimony of the cross itself?

Did God spare His Son from suffering? From pain? From the agony of the cross?

No. Jesus suffered and bled and died. But it was not in vain. It was for our good and for God's glory.

If God can use the suffering of His own Son to bring about the greatest redemption in all of history — He can use your suffering too.

God is at work. Even now. Even here. Even in this.

This is the work of the gospel, the work of justification in our lives. The gospel doesn't just save us; it changes how we live.

We have peace, unlimited access to grace, we rejoice even in suffering,

and it's all possible because of this, because through it all we are filled with God's love.

GOD'S LOVE

We read verse 5 there.

Romans 5:5 ESV

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.

God's love has been poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit.

What a gift the Holy Spirit is to us.

He is the one who makes the gospel a reality in our lives.

It's amazing that when Jesus was getting ready to leave His disciples, He said to them this is better for you.

It's better for you that I go, because if I go the Helper, the Holy Spirit will come to you.

And you wonder like what could be better than having Jesus right there with you? What could be better than having Jesus physically there with you. And Jesus' point is that it's better if I go because if I do the Father will send the Holy Spirit and He will come and He will live inside of you and through Him we will make our home in your heart.

He will live in you, and through Him I will be with you always.

Because the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, we carry with us the presence and power of God with us wherever we go, whatever we go through, whatever life brings us we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us assuring of God's presence and God's love.

Everything that Paul talks about here in this passage is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of God's people.

We have God's peace because we have the Spirit of Peace, who lives in us, it is the work of the Holy Spirit within us who sustains, sanctifies, grows us transforms us, who seals us with God's love until Christ returns.

It is the Holy Spirit who is assuring us of God's power, His strength, His love, the Holy Spirit who supplies us with wisdom and perseverance and hope in the times of trials and suffering.

The voice of the Holy Spirit who in the moments that Satan's whispering defeat in our ear, who remind us that we belong to Jesus and reassures us of the Father's love.

This is the work of the gospel. This is what justification produces in our lives.

But [Romans 5](#) shows us that the gospel doesn't stop at saving us.

It changes how we live.

Because we have been justified — we are at peace with God. Not striving, not performing, not trying to earn what has already been given. At peace.

Because we have been justified — we stand in grace. Saved by it, sustained by it, sanctified by it, being prepared by it for a glory that is coming.

Because we have been justified — we can rejoice even in suffering. Not because the pain isn't real. But because we serve a sovereign God who doesn't waste a single moment of it.

And because we have been justified — we are filled with the love of God. Poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who lives in us, assures us, strengthens us and never leaves us.

That's the reality of the gospel.

So here's the question I want to leave you with this morning.

Are you living in the reality of it?

Not just — do you believe the gospel. But is it changing how you live? Is it showing up on Monday morning? In how you handle conflict, how you face fear, how you walk through suffering?

You have peace. Are you living in it?

You have access to grace. Are you accessing it?

You have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. Are you listening to His voice?

Don't be like the woman who had everything but acting like she had nothing — sitting on an inheritance worth billions and living like you have nothing.

You have everything you need in Christ.

Live like it.

Let me pray for us this morning.