

## Romans 5

We're in Romans. If you haven't been with us, Romans is a book that explains this thing called the Gospel, the good news. We can enter into a relationship with God because of all that Jesus has done.

We saw in chapters 1- 3 that we need a savior; we can't save ourselves through rule keeping or through the law.

We're all guilty. So how are we saved if not through rule or law following? Chapter 4 says we're saved through faith.

So in chapter 4 we saw Abraham and how he was saved. He believed what God said, and the Bible says it was credited to him as righteousness.

So do we trust in God's promises, or place all our hope in our own efforts?

What we're going to see in chapter 5 are the benefits of a right standing) before God.

The overarching idea of Roman 5 is this: **By faith we can have peace with God.**

1-5

Look at verse 1. By faith we have peace with God.

And what that means is - the hostility that existed between us and God because of our sin is removed. Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished" (which means "sin's debt was paid in full.")

Peace with God means that when God conferred righteousness to us by faith, he also gave to his friendship. God now considers us his friend.

And so this is what's so encouraging. Through faith, peace with God is possible. Through faith we understand that the battle has already been won by Jesus.

(And in practical terms, that means regardless of what happens in the world, regardless of what happens in Washington D.C., Christ sits on the throne. Regardless of what happens with the stock market, Christ still owns cattle on a thousand hills.)

Peace with God means we don't have to live in a panic. We have, instead, peace.

So verse 2 says "we boast (or have confidence) in the hope of the glory of God."

We rejoice when life is up, and we rejoice when we're down.

And so here's what that means – verse 3 – we glory in our sufferings, because they working glory for us.

Just because we're righteous before God doesn't mean we won't have trials in this life.

Dealing with suffering and trials is part of what it means to be human, because we live on a planet that has absolutely torn and battered by sin.

The hard news is that suffering is inescapable – but the good news is that in Christ is becomes meaningful.

All Christian will go through suffering, but here's what we have to understand – suffering is the only path to glory. It was true of Christ, and it is true for all of us.

- Romans 8:17 says we are his children and his heirs if "we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

- In Acts 14:22 Paul said, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

Suffering leads to glory in the end, but it also leads to maturity in the present.

Suffering is productive in our lives if we respond to it in faith and not in anger and bitterness (which is counterproductive).

But if we embrace suffering, it will make us wiser people.

When you go through a hard time, do you find someone’s that’s never been through anything tough in life for advice? If you’re having marital issues, do you find a newlywed couple – “Hey, how do we do this?” (They’re like – “we’ve been married 37 minutes – we don’t know – we haven’t even eaten the cake yet.”). No – when you’re having marital issues, you find that couple that’s been married 40 years. “I know you guys have been through it. How did you work this out? And their wisdom from their trials is passed down to you. There’s a reason why God puys is through the things he puts us through. It makes us wise, more dynamic people. And we learn through trials that the Christian life is tough, but God is with us.

I think here of the words of Corrie Ten Boom (who survived the Nazi concentration camps): “I never really knew that God was all I needed until he was literally all I had.”

It was Martin Luther who said, “I credit the devil . . . and all my other persecutors with my deep knowledge of the word. Through the devil’s raging they have turned me into a fairly good preacher, driving me into the gospel to depths I never would have reached without their afflictions.”

So here’s a question – are you cursing your suffering, or are you embracing it?

You need to realize that suffering is necessary to grow and mature you. Here’s how . . .

Suffering produces perseverance (or endurance)

What is perseverance? It is the ability to keep going when you see no immediate benefits from your faith. It means “to remain under” or when the storm us raging, “to stay put without jumping ship”

Maybe you’ve had this season when you say – why do I keep praying, why do I keep studying the Bible?

What God is doing is producing in you the ability to keep going even when it gets hard.

Suffering produces perseverance – and perseverance character.

What is character? Character is something that makes you distinct. It is the quality of confidence and poise that comes from having been through a challenging experience. It’s the temper of a veteran as opposed to that of a new recruit.

(For instance – a basketball team that is new to championship playoffs often times plays poorly, especially at the end, because they have not been in that position before. Whereas a “tested” team knows how to handle pressure. (Some of you are being tested today!)

Suffering produces perseverance – perseverance produces character – and lastly he says character produces hope.

What is hope?

Hope is the confidence that God is working all things for good, and one day will make all things right in the resurrection.

(I love what D.A. Carson said, “There’s nothing I will go through in this life that won’t be fixed by a good resurrection.”)

(We just get sidetracked so easily in this life – we make big deals out of things that don’t even matter – and one day the things we get so worked up about will all seem so small and insignificant. I remember a season going out to a local nursing home and sitting in circle with a group of 80 and 90 year olds – it was a week I was upset because one of my boys (when in grade school) didn’t get picked for a particular football team . . . they had been through so much – loss of spouses, loss of children and friends, breast cancer, financial loss, health problems – the lost goes on and on).

But when they spoke, they didn’t dwell on their losses, they talked confidently about their hope.

Hope in Christ is something you can rely on. It will never disappoint.

And you’ve got to love verse 5 . . . “And hope does not put us to shame (or disappoint us), because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit . . .” (This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the book of Romans).

What’s he saying? That when we live by faith in the midst of our trials, we can literally feel the presence and love of God poured out into our hearts.

God’s love is something we feel, it’s something that sustains us and gives us hope. It’s the calm assurance that come what may, God is with us. The world may let us down, but hope will not disappoint.

Next part – 6-11

Look back at verses 6-8 – what’s he saying?

You might see a firefighter rushing into a burning building to save someone, or a soldier going behind enemy lines to rescue a buddy.

But rarely, if ever, will you find someone love another human being so much they would lay down their life to save a terrorist or a murdered. (No one would ever do that).

But Paul says, “That’s exactly what Jesus did for you.” Because you know who did something like that? You and I did.

We murdered his son – it was our sins that sent Jesus to the cross. And how did he respond to that? He looked down from the cross at the face of his accusers and said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Jesus loved us – not because we earned it or deserved it, because he loved us in spite of ourselves.

And in verse 11 he says that it’s this same Jesus that we have “reconciliation.”

What’s that? Again, it’s peace - peace between two parties that were at odds.

All of us, we went to war with God – and how did God respond?

God sent Jesus to die for us, to make peace with us.

Here’s something I know - You’ll never be more like Christ when somebody else is trying to mix it up with you, and instead of mixing it up, you make peace.

You operate like a softball glove – you absorb the blow and keep playing the game.

God wants us to have peace – and he wants us to live at peace with others (that’s what Romans 12-16 is about). But before we get to that – we have to understand how peace with God was lost.

#### How was peace with God lost? 12-14

Verses 12-14 kind of makes our heads start to spin a little – but here’s the basic idea:

In the beginning, Adam - the first human being ever created - chose to defy God’s authority and reject his clear command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Remember Genesis 3? God says to Adam and Eve, you can eat of any tree in the garden, but you must not eat of that tree.

Can you imagine? You have it all, but what is the one thing they chose to focus on? The one thing they were told not to.

But here’s Adam – and what does he do? He commits cosmic treason. Because when God spoke to creation – “let there be light” – the world came into being. The creative process began. When God spoke to the man Adam, however – he rejected it.

And because of Adam’s choice, the dark force of death descended on creation and on humanity to effectively undo that which was created good.

Think about it – everything obeyed the voice of God. But there was this one creature in the cosmos that had the audacity to look at the God of creation and say, “No! I’m going to do what I want to do!” It was man.

And in so doing – verse 12 – when the man rejected God’s clear command, death descended to all people as a result.

So we have two problems – we have a sin problem, and we have a death problem.

To which you may say, “Well, that’s not fair – I didn’t choose that.” That’s true to some extent.

But in all of our lives there are lots of things I didn’t choose – I didn’t choose my height, my hair color, my receding hairline – since high school. (Like you, I didn’t choose the tendencies passed down to me that aren’t always so good).

But the reality is there is a sin condition passed down to us generationally – and it explains to a large degree what’s wrong with us.

(I read an article this week – about Carlsbad Caverns. Who’s been there? It asked “What’s the big deal about a bag of Cheetos?” I love Cheetos.)

It told the story about trash that gets dropped by the visitors to the park that has to be cleaned up daily (even though the rules are “no food in the cave.” And just recently someone broke the rules, ate most of the Cheetos, threw the bag down – and as a result the processed corn made soft by the caves humidity triggered the growth of mold on the cave floor and on some nearby cave formations – and it had to be cleaned.

Then they noticed when they found the bag, that cave crickets and insects organized to eat the Cheetos and started spreading contamination around the immediate area.

And so here is this pristine environment – but because of someone’s trash, the creatures and the environment experience the effects of someone’s recklessness.

That’s what Adam’s sin did to you and me!

God made Eden – this perfect world – totally uncontaminated – but Adam’s sin brought death and destruction to a world that was made perfect for you and me. And today we feel the effects. (There’s no escaping it).

Paul says, “in this way death came to all people.” THINK COVID. We tried to avoid it, right? We wore the masks – we got the vaccine. But in the end – it infected us all, even though we didn’t deserve it. And the effects for most was sickness, and the effects for others was death.

(And although you can get a vaccine for lots of things – some of them work and some of them don’t – there is no vaccine for sin). It’s a very human problem. That’s what Paul is saying.

Congressmen go out and pass laws to try and fix humanity – but try as we may, no law fixes it – and often it makes things worse.

And we say things like, “If we could just deal with all the bad people and stick them somewhere, things would all be better.” But the problem is – evil isn’t just over there – it’s in all of us, because we’re evil too.

And so Paul deals with a question in verse 13 that some were asking when he talks about the time between Adam and Moses: here it is - if the law of God – the 10 Commandments – wasn’t given until the time of Moses (about 2500 years later) – how could the people from Adam to Moses be sinners? How could they be lawbreakers – because people had not yet been given the law?

And Paul says – well, people were sinning before the law came along. So how? The earliest people didn’t break specific commands of the law because they didn’t yet know what those commands were – but nonetheless, they turned away from God because of their own selfish desires – which is in essence, is sin.

(Think, for example – of Cain killing his brother Abel).

The earliest people didn’t have the law, but sin was still in the world. The law itself only made their offense known and amplified sin.

Think about it - have you even been driving down the road, cruising through some small town – and you get pulled over. The officer says, “Do you know how fast you were going?” “No sir, I didn’t see any sign.” “Well, it was right back there.”

Whether you saw the sign of not – whether you were aware of the law or not – you were still a lawbreaker. The officer just amplified that for you.

Even though the law was not given until Moses, something else was there that demonstrated that we are all sinners – and what was that? Death.

The reason we die is because of sin.

(In Genesis 5, for example – we see people living incredibly long lives – Methusaleh, for instance, lived 969 years – some believe we don’t live that long anymore is because of all the disease in the world and our polluted environment that didn’t exist early on). Sin has increased. I don’t know of that’s true – but I do know that sin brought consequences to a perfectly pure world.

And all of it shows that the principle of sin was there from Adam’s sin onward.

So as a summary – we are sinners, not just by our own choices, we are sinners because we are human. We were born in Adam – we have a problem that can’t be rectified – we were all born into this broken condition.

How do we get out of it?

There's only one way. John 3:3 – you must be born again.

Why? So you can receive a new nature, because the old nature is corrupt.

Its why religion can't fix you. Religion can't give you a new nature, religion cannot change you. Only Jesus can.

And so – verse 14 – Adam was a pattern (a type) of the one to come.

Think about it - both Adam and Jesus were born completely sinless men.

Both did something that had consequences for all mankind.

Adam sinned. And Jesus – lived without sin. Which leads us to the last part:

#### How Peace with God was Recovered (15-21)

15-19

Here we see a series of contrasts in this passage – where Jesus is contrasted with Adam.

- Because of Adam's trespass, many died
- Because of Christ's obedience, salvation was poured out to many to bring life.
  
- Adam's choice brought sin and death to all people.
- But Jesus gave us a free gift that has saving potential for the entire human race.

- The first Adam selfishly disobeyed God and ate from the forbidden tree, bringing the curse of sin upon us.
- The second Adam sacrificially obeyed God and hung on a tree to bear the curse of sin for us.

Jesus conquered death - and one day will raise the bodies of all those who have died in Christ.

Last part: 20-21 (20b – maybe my favorite passage in Romans)

So what's he doing? He's contrasting law and grace.

Paul said, "Look, the law makes our sin clearer and greater by contrasting it with God's holy standard. (It draws clear lines of right and wrong that our sinful hearts naturally want to break).

And when God's standard became known – our trespasses increased. (it's like someone who gets caught up in sin – and you're only focused on your own needs – your flesh, your wants, your self-will takes over and you only see the object of what you desire – but when you get clear-headed, you see that the effects of your sin was about so much more than you – your health, your relationships, your children, your parents, your peace, your opportunities.

He's saying that the more the law showed us our sin, the more we saw the magnitude of our trespasses. (When you get out of self and get clear headed, you see just what a mess of things you made).

But here's the best news yet – and here's hope!

But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. (Don't you love that?) It means literally "grace superabounded!"

You know what are tendency is when someone sins? Our tendency is to push people away. To isolate and marginalize them. (Churches are notorious for that).

But what does God do – where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

Here's Adam and Eve – and they violate the clear command of God in the garden. They break his heart. And when they do, for the first time they feel guilt and shame and are naked before God. And God has every right to push them away and vaporize them in an instance.

But what does God do? Here they are in their nakedness – and God sacrifices animals and makes clothes for them – a covering over their shame and guilt. And all of it points forward to what God would do in Christ when he covered our sins on the Cross.

How beautiful.

And when you feel like you've blown it so bad you can't even lift your head, much less stand in the presence of God or anybody else, you need to know that you are loved beyond measure.

And here is the question I have for you? Have you accepted Jesus so he can pour his love into your heart and you can experience God's Holy Spirit?

Have you been born again so you can know this abounding grace that covers over a multitude of sins?

To know this peace, you have to give your heart to him. You have to submit your will to him. Some of you – your life is just miserable. If you're miserable all of the time, you've not tasted grace.

But if Christ fills your heart, you will be filled with grace.

If you are harsh, judgmental and unforgiving, if you are hard-hearted and bitter, you don't know grace. You're not standing in it. You're not walking in it.

Jesus invites you to lay it all down.

Here's what's great about grace. You can have peace in whatever you're going through. Whether it's cancer, or divorce, or financial hardship. Even death.

It's doing something in your life. And what is that? It's producing endurance and building hope – and that hope can never be put to shame.

The love of God has been poured out into our hearts.

When Adam sinned, the ground that was so pristine was cursed.

God said to Adam,

Genesis 3

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you . . .

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”

Sin came along – and it robbed us of all the joy and meaning in life. (It's how most people live – a pretty miserable life).

And then Jesus came along – and you know what he did to a pretty thorny existence?

He redeemed the thorns of this life by wearing them for us at Calvary (Matthew 27:29).

And my question for you today is – do you know Him?

I pray that the Spirit will pour the love of God into our hearts this morning. When we feel like the biggest failures in the world, Lord that's when your grace shows up.

When we feel like the biggest mess ups – your grace shows up.

When we feel defeated and hopeless – your grace superabounds to us. Grace upon grace upon grace.