

September 27, 2026

RESTORED RELATIONSHIP: ROM. 5:1-11,18-21

Introductory Activity (adapted from ETB LG, 47)

Ask: Which do you find harder to do: seek forgiveness from someone or extend forgiveness to someone?

Explain: Both seeking forgiveness and extending forgiveness can be difficult. We might not want to seek forgiveness because we do not want to admit we did something wrong, or we might not want to appear weak. Extending forgiveness can be difficult as well, especially if we were grievously harmed or hurt. In our lesson today, we are going to see that God was “harmed” by our sin and yet offers forgiveness to us. We also learn about the benefits of seeking and receiving His forgiveness.

Summarize and Transition: In the first four chapters of Romans, Paul presented, first, our problem: all humans need salvation. Then he presents the solution: salvation through faith in Christ alone by grace alone. Here in chapter 5, “Paul’s style shifts from argumentation to adoration.” (Exalting, 73) He moves from proving a point to rejoicing in the point he has made. Let’s explore the blessings of redemption and revel in the love of God.

1. A NEW PEACE (ROM. 5:1-5)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 5:1-5.

Explain: In this passage, Paul reveals and revels in our new position in Christ. He begins with “therefore.” Since everything I said before about salvation through faith by grace is true, now we can experience the blessings of justification. In verses 1-2 we see the **Timely Blessings**. The blessings are timely because they are revealed in time: the past, present, and future.

The Blessing of Peace: Paul says, “since we *have been* justified.” He is speaking to the Christians in Rome who have already believed the argument presented in chapters 1-4. Their salvation from sin happened in the past. When they experienced God’s salvation, they received peace with God. This peace manifests in two dimensions: the spiritual and temporal.

Guide and Discuss: Before we explore this concept, let’s discuss the question on page 40 of your Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide: “How does “peace with God” affect your life today and in eternity?”

In verse 10, Paul is going to remind us that prior to salvation we were enemies of God. In Colossians 1:21, he will say that we were “alienated and hostile” toward God. At that time, we faced condemnation because of our position. That condemnation was “a declaration of war. Justification means that God declares us righteous, which is a declaration of peace.” (Be, 49) Spiritually, justification is an end to the spiritual conflict between a

Notes:

This Lesson was created using:

- *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* (ETB LG)
- *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* (ETB PSG)
- *Explore the Bible Commentary* (ETBC)
- *New American Commentary: Romans*, Mounce (NAC)
- *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans*, Moo (NICNT)
- *Exalting Jesus in Romans*, Merida (Exalting)
- *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans*, Bruce (TNTC)
- *Be Right*, Wiersbe (Be)

man or woman and the sovereign, holy King of Creation. We are now in relationship with Him. Justification also brings about a temporal peace—a peace in the here and now, everyday life of a believer. "Prior to their salvation, people lived in a state of enmity with God. They suffered from the chaos, discord, and anguish resulting from their own bad behavior." (ETBC, 42) The life of the believer will be marked with a calmness in the midst of life's storms because God is now in the boat and steering us through life. When we live a life guided by godly, biblical principles, our lives will exude the peace of God. As we will see, that does not preclude the presence of storms, but we will have a different understanding of those storms. Justification brings about peace at the moment of salvation, but it also provides blessings in our present.

The Blessing of Access to God: In verse 2, Paul says we now have access to God through Christ, by the faith that has brought us into our current state of grace. We often think of grace as something we experienced (past tense) at the time of salvation. However, Paul reminds us that "we never put grace behind us. We 'stand' in it. We live in it." (Exalting, 75) As people who have obtained God's grace and now currently live in it, we have access to God. Previously, "the Jew was kept from God's presence by the veil in the temple; and the Gentile was kept out by a wall in the temple...But when Jesus died He tore the veil (Luke 23:45) and broke down the wall (Eph. 2:14)." (Be, 50) The picture that Paul paints is one of access to the "presence of a royal figure. All believers now have ongoing access to their gracious God." (ETBC, 42) As Tim Keller once put it: "The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00 AM for a glass of water is a child [of the King.] We have that kind of access." (Exalting, 75)

Discuss: How might Keller's words describing our access to God influence how we approach Him."

Explain: We can bring the big things in our life as well as the small things in our life before the King. We can also come boldly before His throne and *ask* for big things. Like the child who asks a parent for something, we will not always get it. God, like the parent, knows what is best for us. Nevertheless, we can ask.

Justification brings about peace with God and provides access to God in the here and now. It also provides the promise of eternal peace and eternal access. That brings us to Paul's understanding of future salvation.

The Blessing of Hope: At the end of verse 2, Paul says we can "boast in the hope of the glory of God." Here Paul looks to our future salvation. The word boast means rejoice or celebrate. Paul here is speaking of the eventual culmination of our salvation when we will experience glorification. We can rejoice in knowing that day is promised. In verse 5, Paul says that our hope, or confident faith, in that day will not disappoint or cause us shame because of the love of God revealed through the

"Believers have obtained grace and exist in that state of grace." (ETBC, 42)

"A hope which fails of realization does put one to shame, but a hope which is based on the promise of God is assured of fulfillment (cf. 8:24-25)." (TNTC, 116)

presence of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit proves that the day is coming; we can live in confident assurance that it will happen.

In these two verses, Justification through faith alone by grace alone provides three blessings: **Peace, Access, and Hope**. In verses 3 and 4, Paul shows how justification and these three blessings change our mindset about affliction. Affliction is no longer terrifying. Instead, it is transforming.

Reread verses 3 and 4. (See Notes Box)

Transforming Affliction: The first thing we need to know about affliction is that it is unavoidable. We experience affliction simply through the ebb and flow of life. Believers also experience affliction when they live Christian-ly lives. The second thing we need to know about affliction is that it should be a source of rejoicing. Paul knows that this might seem counterintuitive, so he explains why. For the believer, affliction can transform a person into the likeness of Christ, and that is why God does not remove trials/pains/afflictions from our lives. As Tony Merida writes, "God's priority is not to take away all of your problems; it's to make you more like Jesus." (Exalting, 77) Paul provides a "chain of benefits" produced by suffering. First, the believer who faces suffering in a godly manner will develop endurance or steadfastness to keep living the Christian life. Second, as the believer endures under pressure, his or her character is proven. This *could* mean that his or her character is revealed. However, it seems more likely that through endurance the believer's character is fashioned or transformed. This transformed character will then be marked by hope in the glory of God or faithful confidence in the eternal salvation, peace, and access to God.

Summarize Transition: Paul begins this chapter with the word "therefore" and moves from argumentation to adoration. He begins by outlining just a few of the blessings that result from salvation. Reconciliation with God has ramifications for our spiritual life and changes the way we understand personal suffering. We now live with a confident hope in God's eternal blessings. To help us praise the Lord even more, Paul is next going to return to the reason we can experience such things. In so doing, he is going to once again reveal God's great love.

2. A PROVEN LOVE (ROM. 5:6-11)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 5:6-11

Explain: In revealing God's love, Paul begins with **Our Helpless Estate**. He says prior to salvation, a person is helpless. That word helpless could be translated as sickly. Without Christ, humans are sick with sin. It is "a terminal condition from which humanity [can]not cure itself." (ETBC, 45) The word helpless could also describe "those who were fastened to the executioner's block and incapable of freeing themselves." (ETB LG, 50) Without Christ, humans are justly condemned for sin. However, while sick with sin and convicted of sin, at just the right time Christ died for the ungodly. From humanity's perspective, this was an **Illogical Action**.

Notes:

Romans 5:3-4

³ And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

"Our English word 'tribulation' comes from a Latin word tribulum. In Paul's day, a tribulum was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the grain. The tribulum was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff. As we go through tribulations, and depend on God's grace, the trials only purify us and help to get rid of the chaff." (Be, 51)

Paul says someone might sacrifice themselves for a good person. A person may jump in front of a car to save a child, but a person will not jump in front of a bullet to save a serial killer. Jesus, though, according to Paul's words here, died for the ungodly. Moreover, He died for those who lived as His enemies. Without Christ, a person lives in opposition to Christ, His ways, and His Kingdom. It is for that person, the one who opposes Christ passively and the one who actively rails against Him, that Christ died.

Discuss: How might these truths that Christ (1) died for us to solve a problem we could not solve and (2) that Christ died for us while we were actively opposing Him influence our worship, our evangelism, and our service to His Kingdom?

Explain: Our **worship** should be filled to overflowing with thanksgiving. Our worship should be robust and heartfelt. Our **evangelism** should be powered by a desperation to see others healed of their sin sickness. Our evangelism should be of higher priority than making money, our pride, our fear, our devotion to a hobby, or our to-do list. Our **service** to God's Kingdom should be tireless. One way of defining God's Kingdom is the rule and reign of God in the hearts and minds of men and women, boys and girls. Being committed to tirelessly serving the purposes of that Kingdom means helping people come into the Kingdom; that is evangelism. It also means helping others learn to live rightly in that Kingdom. We do that through our personal ministry to others by teaching them the ways of God through home- or workplace-based Bible studies. We also do that through providing wise, biblical counsel when others seek our advice. Moreover, we are to work for the advancement of God's Kingdom through service in the local church.

So, Paul reveals the love of God by pointing to our **Helpless Estate** and highlighting **Christ's "Illogical" Action** to save us. Lastly, he points to **Our Heavenly Reward Won by Christ**. Here again we see that we were saved, are being saved, and will be saved. We were saved by Christ's death and are being saved and will be saved by His life. When Paul speaks of Christ's life in this passage, he is not referring to the 30-plus years that Christ walked the earth. Instead, He is referring to the life Christ now lives in resurrection. Next week we are going to discuss the practice of baptism. At baptism we often hear the pastor say something like, "You have died to sin and raised to newness of life." We receive a life resurrected from death *because* Christ has already been resurrected. Paul says we now boast or rejoice in God because of these truths. We rejoice because God saved us when we could not. We rejoice because He saved us though we were His enemies. We rejoice that Christ won for us the prize of eternal salvation with Him.

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Summarize and Transition: As Paul continues in his adoration of God for salvation, he reveals and revels in God's great love. He does so by reminding the believer of their previous sin sickness from which they have been healed. He reminds the believer of their previous enmity toward God, despite which God saved them. This "illogical" act of Christ makes no sense, but through His work on the cross and His resurrection, Christ won our eternal salvation. All of this is cause for adoration. In the next passage, Paul is going to again reveal the gospel message. However, unlike before, where he did so as an argument for salvation, here he does so in worshipful adoration.

3. A GROWING GRACE (ROM. 5:18-21)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 5:18-21.

Explain: In this passage, Paul reveals the gospel message through three contrasting pairs. He begins by presenting **Two Men** (vv. 18-19). The first man is Adam. Through this willful disobedience, what Paul calls a trespass, Adam infected humanity with the sickness of sin and instigated the worldwide revolt of humanity against the Kingdom of God. Paul's use of the word trespass here is telling. A trespass is "crossing over the line. God told Adam how far he could go, and Adam decided to go beyond the appointed limit." (Be, 56) The second man Paul presents is Christ. Through His willful obedience, what Paul calls "one righteous act," Christ provided the antidote to sin and a peace treaty for rebellious humanity. The one righteous act Paul refers to is Christ's willing death on the cross. It was "the crowning act of Christ's life-long obedience (verse 9), when he yielded up his life." (TNTC, 125) Adam's sin affected everyone, and Christ's work makes salvation *available* to everyone.

Paul next presents **Two Laws** (v. 20): the Law of Works and the Law of Grace. First, he says that "the law came along to multiply the trespass." This might seem confusing. How can the law multiply sin? The OT law does not literally make man *more* sinful. However, as a teaching tool, it *reveals* to man his sin. Imagine with me a young child playing in the front yard of a subdivision. He sees everyone walking around the yard, and when a ball is thrown, everyone chases the ball. Through observation, he thinks it's ok to run around wherever and chase the ball wherever. Then his dad comes to him and says, "Never chase the ball into the street." For the child, this is a new rule, but in reality, it has always been a rule. By stating it explicitly, the father can now hold the child responsible for running into the road. Now, if the child willfully disobeys, he will be disciplined. That is what the OT law did. God's holy standards always existed, but by stating them out loud (or writing them in stone), He reveals man's willful disobedience of them. "The law was never intended to provide salvation but to convince people of their need for it. Law increased sin." (NAC, 145) By contrast, the Law of Grace is revealed in Christ. Paul says that where there is an abundance of sin, there is

"He gave the Law through Moses, not to replace his grace, but to reveal man's need for grace. Law was temporary, but grace is eternal." (Be, 57)

As we saw in previous passages, though, man is culpable for sin even if he is ignorant of the law. The general revelation of God in nature, history, and human conscience reveals sinfulness to man. However, the law makes this sin abundantly clear.

an abundance of Grace. What he means is our great sin reveals God's great grace. "Where sin is abundant and evident, God's abundant grace is seen with even greater clarity." (ETBC, 49)

We see here Paul revealing the gospel message one drop at a time. First, man has a sin problem that can only be addressed by Christ. Not only does man have a sin problem (being born sinful), but he also has a sinning problem (willfully breaking God's law). Next, Paul is going to speak of **Two Kingdoms**: The kingdom of death and the Kingdom of Life. Paul says, "just as sin reigned...so also grace will reign." Sin reigned in death. In other words, sin produced death. Grace will reign (in the repentant sinner) in life. In other words, grace produces life.

Summarize and Transition: Two men. One produced sin. One offers salvation from sin. Two laws. One reveals sin. One releases from sin. Two kingdoms. One ruled by sin leading to death. One ruled by grace leading to life. The gospel. Paul, though, is clear once again in verse 21 that the road leading to life is "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

CONCLUDE

Our lesson today shows us that "Christ died for sinners, making reconciliation with God possible for all." To be reconciled with God means to be in right relationship with Him. That is not possible outside of Christ.

For the sinner currently at war with God, though, this might seem like a solution to a nonexistent problem. You see, as enemies of God (either passive or active enemies), they might not see why they need to be in right relationship with God. That leads us to our challenge this week. Believers are tasked with revealing the need for salvation. We can do this in three ways.

- 1) We should reveal our position in Christ. We do this not by boasting ourselves, but by living in a way that should cause others to rejoice in Christ's work through us. In other words, live the hope-filled Christian life boldly.
- 2) We should reveal God's great love. We do this by boasting in Christ's "illogical" act on the cross and reveling in God's grace to save us. In other words, speak mercifully to and about the sin-sick sinner. He or she has the terminal illness of sin. Then, speak boldly of the solution found in Christ.
- 3) We should reveal the gospel message. Just as the law reveals man's need for grace, we should help people understand the reality of sin and present Christ's solution. In other words, speak the gospel boldly and clearly.

Notes:

"His grace exceeded immeasurably the extent of human sin." (NAC, 145)

"Grace 'superabounded' in that as the reign of sin brought death, the reign of grace brings a righteousness that issues in life eternal". (NAC, 145)