

CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY AUGUST 16, 2026
ROMANS 5:1-11

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ARE YOU SECURE?



We all want security. True story: As I was preparing this message, I looked for a joke about security so I could then say, “We all want security,” but ironically, by clicking the link to the jokes, I allowed 5 viruses into the computer. So, I would give you a joke about security, but it’s just not secure.

Life can be hard, full of insecurities like computer viruses. We often ask ourselves questions like: will we have enough to pay the bills, will our vehicle make it on this trip, will the stock market crash, or for that matter, will we ever see gas for less than \$3 again, there is one thing we can have security in, and that is Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1-11

Now up until **chapter 5**, Paul has laying the foundation for what we just read. A quick refresher of what Paul has been saying so far is important to understand what he is saying here.

To begin with, pastor Duane noted a few weeks ago, that Paul is bridging the gap between the Jews and the Gentiles in the Roman church. According to the historian Suetonius (120AD), the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in 49AD over their constant disputes with others over a figure by the name of “Chrestus,” which almost certainly is a misunderstanding of Christos, which is the Greek word for Christ. These disputes were likely infighting among Jews and gentiles over Jesus. When he died in 54AD, of all people, the infamous Emperor Nero allowed them to return.

Well, what is it like when a bunch of Jewish Christians come into the church which has been only gentiles for the last 5 years? I can just imagine they walk into the fellowship hall to the smell of bacon. Can you imagine what a law following Jew—even those who came to believe in Christ—would think when the gentiles served a ham at Easter?



The most Kosher (that is, ceremonially clean) day of the year is defiled with a pig. The Jews, in their Jewishness, see that as an attack against God and offensive to the non-Christian Jews. Well, within a year or two, the apostle Paul gets wind of this while in Corinth, and writes a letter to the Romans. Remember that, according to **Galatians 2**, Paul had already disputed similar matters with Peter. **Galatians 2:11-14**

The set up of Romans carries this back and forth between the Jews and the Gentiles. Picture you have 2 sides of the church, Jews on the one, gentiles on the other. Chapter one, Paul opens up by presenting the Gospel. **Romans 1:1-5**



Then, Paul goes on to tell the Romans his affection for them, and how eager he is to visit them. Then, as pastor Duane noted, you get Paul's main idea of the book. **Romans 1:16-17**

Then, Paul begins ripping into the gentiles of the world. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." He goes on to say that these people knew God, but did not worship Him or give Him thanks, so God gave them up to impurity, they were darkened and confused, didn't know up from down, they had their feet firmly planted in mid-air.



About this time, you can picture the Jewish side of the crowd cheering Paul on. Then Paul says, in **Romans 2:1**, "Therefore you have no excuse, oh man, everyone of you who judges another, because you, the judge, practice the very same thing." All of a sudden, the Jews begin dropping their pointer fingers. Paul goes on to say that the Jews rely on the law, and boast in their special relationship with God, but as they point fingers at others, they themselves are thieves, adulterers, idolaters, and dishonor God by breaking His law.

Chapter 3, Paul shows that whether one is Jew or Gentile, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” He then shares that there is no cause for boasting in their works, but only in faith. Then he turns to Abraham in **chapter 4** to illustrate that faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness, and so it would be credited to everyone who has faith that God raised Jesus from the dead.

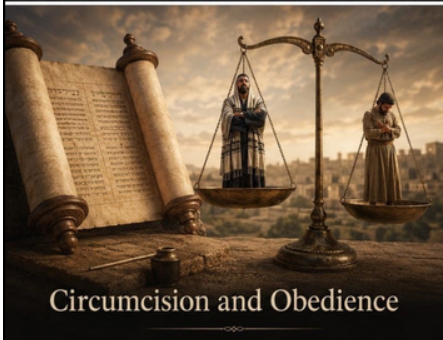
And from that foundation, Paul then lays out one of the most assuring Scriptures in all of Romans.



Boasting in the Law



Hypocrisy Exposed



Circumcision and Obedience



Circumcision of the Heart

Verse 1: So now, Paul has removed all cause for boasting, whether Jew or Gentile. It is not by works that anyone has done—whether a good conscience or the Law—but faith in the work that Christ has done. Remember Paul’s main idea for Romans. **Romans 1:16-17**

Paul has been laying out the means by which God makes people right with Him, and that is faith in what Christ did. Once we are made right with God, we have peace with Him! Now, we often think of peace in the sense of reconciliation, lack of war, tranquility, and all of those things are implied here, but the Hebrew and Greek terms for peace have the added element of wholeness, that is, restoring what is lacking, as well as, oneness, being united with the one Whom you have peace with, being of the same mind, having the same mission. We see that oneness, that unity, that wholeness in **verse 2**.

Peace is the Greek word *eirene*, and its root comes from a verb meaning “to join” — to bind separate things into one. Knit back into one whole.

Here, the concept of already/not yet emerges. We are already saved, but not yet glorified. We are already in God’s kingdom, but we do not yet see it. We are already co-heirs with Christ, but still run out of resources. Immortals yet to die. Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege, yet we look to a future sharing of His glory. And for that we need faith.

Now, at first glance, verses 3-5 can seem to be a little out of context, like a note meant to be in parentheses, but with the context in mind, the potential for persecution, as was seen from the “disputes” discussed as being the reason Claudius expelled the Jews, and Paul’s encouraging the Jews to become more like Gentiles, maybe the idea is that they should be ready to suffer persecution when they fully embrace and live out justification by faith alone. **Verses 3-5**

Verse 3: Notice the connection Paul is making from **verses 2 to 3**, in that he says we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory, and we can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials. The words confidently and joyfully (in **verse 2**) are actually one word in Greek: *Kauxaomai*, and it means to boast, exult, or rejoice in. This is the same word that **verse 3** translates as rejoice. Essentially, Paul tells the Romans that we boast in, exult in, rejoice in the future sharing of God's glory as well as in our suffering, our trials, our problems.



While sufferings and problems seem to be an odd source of rejoicing, Paul then goes on to tell us why. **Verse 3b-5**

Endurance which produces strength of character, and that strength of character improves our confident hope—our security—in salvation. Now, the Greek text doesn't include the word "salvation" there, and almost seems to put the emphasis on this list of things (endurance, character, hope) as our security in knowing that we are saved, but we were already told. **Verse 1**

It is by faith in Jesus Christ's atoning, that is sin canceling sacrifice, that gives us security. So how does endurance, which brings about character, bring confidence in our hope of salvation? Because these are indicators that you are walking with Christ. Indicators that the Holy Spirit is leading you, and God will never disappoint you! But it is very important to note that these qualities are not what save you or keep you, just like Abraham was not counted righteous after he was circumcised, but before. Can you imagine if God had said to Abraham, "Abraham, the sign of the covenant will be circumcision. Have yourself circumcised." And Abraham replied, "What for? I'm already justified." I mean, we think we get persecuted when we are stared at funny at church and the store, but poor Abraham. God was gracious to tell him that his descendants could have it done on the 8th day after birth, but Abraham was 99. He is going to remember that day for the rest of his life!

But Abraham had walked long enough with God, that he knew he could trust God. Do you know that you can trust God even in your suffering? I mentioned this a couple of Monday nights ago, but I have a friend from Burma. He came to seminary in the US, and he and I became good friends. We graduated in May of 2020, and his plan was to stay an extra year to be able to work, then he was going to go back to Burma, meet his then 3 year old daughter whom his wife was pregnant with when he came to the U.S., spend a year or two there, then come back to work on his PhD. Well, that was set for May 2021, but in February 2021 there was a military coup that threw their democratic leaders into prison and took over the country. The people resisted, so the military began air striking and terrorizing the people. I used to preach and do Zoom Bible studies with that church. Midnight our time was 9am theirs.



To get a sense of what it was like, on one particular study, I asked what the biggest obstacle to Christianity was, and a girl about the age of 15 began to speak. I don't speak Burmese, she doesn't speak English, so I listened for about 3 minutes before my friend began to give her answer. She said, "Yesterday, there was an airstrike on a crowded market. Many people died. A Christian doctor was there, and overwhelmed by the amount of casualties he decided to begin helping the youngest. Then, the plane circled back, struck again, and killed the doctor. Where is God?" she asked.

Imagine a 15-year old girl asking such a question. Here in the US, she isn't even able to drive. The answer I gave her was that He was in the doctor who died alongside the people. In Burma, Buddhism is the dominate religion and they teach that the answer to suffering is to act like it doesn't exist, but how do you do that with bullets whizzing by your head? Christianity teaches that the answer to suffering is to enter into it with the suffering. For even God Himself did not sit idly by when His people suffered, but He came and suffered alongside them. That is literally what the word compassion means. Two Latin words: Com-with, Passion-suffer: to suffer with.

But just a couple weeks ago, I was prepping for the Monday night study, we were in **Matthew 6**. Jesus says: **Matthew 6:25-27**

I asked my friend, "How does someone in Burma read this passage?" He went on to tell me that the people in Burma suffer daily. They may go days without food, are persecuted for their faith, and often have to hide in the jungle. He then told me that worry kills the soul long before hunger kills the body. Worry kills the soul long before hunger kills the body.

Every Sunday, 12am our time, 9am theirs, I would come onto the Zoom meeting and would see such joy in their faces, such loving devotion, such amazement that the God of all creation had pity on them. Had loved them.

Brothers and sisters do you trust God with your suffering? It produces endurance, which produces character, which builds your faith and will never disappoint because God never fails. Whatever you might face, a relationship with God is more precious than anything you could ever lose, and as you go through sufferings and learn this, God shows up every time.

There is a hymn called Lord, You are more precious than silver. One of the verses says:

Lord, You are more precious than silver;
 Lord, You are more costly than gold;
 Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds;
 And nothing I desire compares with You.

Oddly enough, Lynn DeShazo, who wrote that hymn in 1982, worked at McDonalds making french fries. She was fasting and couldn't resist the smell of the fries, ate one, and felt remorse for breaking her fast.

Verses 3-5: Paul knew that, for the Christian, sure, the Jew first and the Greek, suffering was sure to come, but when the Christian goes through the refining fire of suffering, his or her faith becomes more precious than diamonds.

Verse 6: I don't know about you, but that is good news. It is a smack in the face to the thought that we have to clean ourselves up before we come to Christ. No my friend, come to Him, come as you are, and He will make you new. While we were still weak, while we weren't seeking Him, while we weren't even born yet, Christ came at the right time and died for us sinners. Just like Abraham. Remember, it was before he was circumcised that he was declared righteous by faith. But even before that, while he was surely living in a pagan lifestyle in Ur of the Chaldeans—or Babylonians—God called him.



A little background about the city of Ur, where Abraham was from, if you took a city wall that was one square-mile and set it around the most populated part of New York City, you would have Ur, where Abraham was from. If you were walking down the street, and a donkey was coming down that same street, you would have to lean back against the wall and suck your gut in in order for the donkey to pass. Tight quarters. More than that, the houses and land were not owned by individuals, but by the Royal palace and/or priesthood. Even the very people of the city did not belong to themselves, they were property of the kingdom. So for someone to just get up and decide to leave was not an option.

Well, you may ask, how was Abraham able to leave? Well, there were three types of people who were free to leave: the royal family, the priestly family, or traveling merchants. Whatever Abraham was, he would have been steeped in idolatry. That is who God called to be the father of faith, the father of God's people.

Who are you? Are you a drug addict? An adulterer? A thief? Murderer, slanderer, fornicator, alcoholic, or even just a guy or gal who works 9-5 without a care in the world, come! He calls you, just as you are. Take from the well of the river of life, for free. More precious than a McDonald's French fry. Perhaps you argue with the voice inside you now, "you'll never measure up, you are worthless." 2 words for you to tell that voice, "Shut up!" Come **Verse 6**.

Verse 7-8: Now Paul goes on, I believe, to anticipate a doubter, "If I wouldn't die on behalf of someone else, how could God die for such a miserable person like me?" Paul really likes those kinds of questions. Sure, among sinners, there is no desire to die on behalf of someone else, but God is different than we are. In fact, one of the biggest contributors to the fact of His holiness is His steadfast, never shaken, love. Holiness is just a big Christian word that just means differentness. God is different than we are, and calls us to be different too.

Are you seeing the point that Paul is beating into our heads? We are not worth saving, but God is so loving, that he makes the unworthy worthy. He could have just started over, created a new universe, but He wanted us, even though we are sinners.

Verse 9-10: Here Paul is telling the Romans, and by extension us, that if God's wrath was satisfied by Jesus' death, how much more, by His life, will we be saved. It was not enough that Jesus died to take away our sins, He was also raised to prove that God will raise us too. That is the point of the resurrection. Just like all of the first fruit offerings in the Old Testament. See, in the Old Testament, there were first fruit offerings which would guarantee a harvest. So, Jesus' resurrection is the first fruits of the resurrection, and because of His resurrection we can bank on our own resurrection. **1 Corinthians 15:20**



Side note here, 3 days after the Passover, the Jews celebrate the feast of First fruits. Jesus was crucified on Passover and rose on the Feast of First fruits. You can't make this up.

Not only that, which is very good news, but we have become friends with God. Once we were enemies, now we are friends. **Verse 11**

So here comes that Kauxaomai—boasting—word again. What did we used to boast in? Well, if you were a Jew, you boasted in your works. If you were not a Jew, in the fact that you were a good person. But you can't read Romans and walk away thinking that you are a good person.

You can't read Romans and think that if you just keep trying. No, **Verse 1**

Now, how does this message apply to me?

-Your Salvation is secure. Your salvation is not based on your works, it is not kept by your works. It is secured by faith in Jesus taking your sins and mine on the cross, to the grave, then His resurrection from the dead, guaranteeing what is to come to those who are right with God by faith, based on what Jesus has done for them. Faith, faith, faith. Do you believe it? It is open to all—come!

-As Christians, we should be ready for persecution. We have lived a relatively quiet life in America since our founding. But times are changing. Persecution comes in all forms, no matter how small or great. It could be physical, it could be spiritual. I came to know Jesus in prison in the state of Indiana about 17 years ago. I remember giving my testimony the first Sunday I was out at church. One of the elders came up to me and said, "That's great, now put on your seat belt." At first I thought he was a Debby downer, but now I know what he means. Satan hates the believer. We go from being an enemy of God and a friend of Satan, to a friend of God and an enemy of Satan.

-Finally, if you boast, boast in Jesus.