



God. Self. Others. Trials. Purpose.

WEEK 1
Peace With God
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.”

(Romans 5:1-3, NIV)



INTRODUCTION

In these opening verses, the Apostle Paul articulates a foundational truth of the Christian faith—the profound impact of justification through faith in Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that because of our faith, we are justified, declared righteous, and reconciled to God. This justification brings about a transformative peace with God, a peace that transcends human understanding and provides a firm foundation for the believer’s relationship with their Heavenly Father.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.”

Paul highlights the access to God’s grace that is made possible through faith in Jesus Christ. This grace not only justifies and reconciles believers but also

empowers them to stand firm in their faith. Furthermore, this access to grace gives believers hope—a hope that is anchored in the promise of sharing in the glory of God.

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Paul acknowledges the reality of suffering in the lives of believers but offers a perspective that contrasts with the world’s view. Instead of despairing in suffering, Paul encourages believers to find glory even in their trials. He explains that suffering, rather than being a cause for hopelessness, can actually produce perseverance, shape character, and ultimately lead to a deepened sense of hope.

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

Paul affirms that the hope of believers will not disappoint or shame them because it is founded on the unchanging love of God. He emphasizes the outpouring of God's love, which is made known to believers through the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. This love is a source of strength, comfort, and assurance, sustaining believers through all circumstances.

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

Paul highlights the timing and purpose of Christ's redemptive act. He underscores that Christ's sacrificial death took place precisely when humanity was powerless to save itself. Furthermore, he emphasizes that Christ's death was not for the righteous, but for the ungodly—the very ones in need of reconciliation and redemption.

"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Paul contrasts human expressions of love and sacrifice with God's

demonstration of love through the death of Christ. He underscores the extraordinary nature of God's love by highlighting that Christ died for humanity while they were still in a state of sin and rebellion. This act serves as a powerful demonstration of God's love and grace toward undeserving humanity.

"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

Paul reiterates the significance of justification through the sacrificial death of Christ. Believers are not only justified but also saved from the righteous judgment of God's wrath through Christ. Paul emphasizes the magnitude of God's love and grace by pointing out that while humanity was once considered God's enemies due to sin, they have been reconciled to Him through the death of His Son. Therefore, believers can be assured that having been reconciled, they will also be saved through the resurrected life of Christ.

“Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Paul emphasizes that the reconciliation made possible through Jesus Christ becomes a source of boasting for believers. This boasting is not in themselves but in God, through Jesus Christ, who has facilitated the restoration of the broken relationship between humanity and God. Believers can now rejoice in the fact that they have received reconciliation with God through the work of Christ.

In these verses Paul gives us a comprehensive view of the impact of Christ’s redemptive work on believers. He underscores the transformation that takes place through justification by faith, leading to peace with God, access to His grace, and a steadfast hope anchored in His love. Paul also addresses the paradox of suffering, highlighting its potential to produce perseverance, character, and hope. Moreover, he magnifies the unparalleled demonstration of God’s love through the sacrificial death of Christ for humanity, emphasizing the transition from being enemies of God to being reconciled and saved through Christ’s life.

DAY 1 | WEEK 1
Peace With God
By: Dr. Jody Ray

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

(Romans 5:1, NIV)

PEACE WITH GOD

DAY 1 | WEEK 1

In a world filled with turmoil and uncertainty, the longing for peace is palpable. Recent global events have underscored the profound need for reconciliation, harmony, and a sense of security. From geopolitical tensions to social unrest, the quest for peace resonates deeply with people from all walks of life.

Amidst this backdrop, the message of Romans 5:1 shines with enduring relevance. Just as the world seeks peace on a grand scale, individuals yearn for personal peace – an inner peace that transcends the chaos of the world. This verse reminds us that true peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a deep-seated assurance that comes from being justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

As we navigate the complexities of our modern world, the promise of peace with God offers a profound anchor – a source of hope and stability that transcends the temporal challenges we face.

This verse invites us to consider the transformative power of faith and the profound implications of being reconciled to God through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Going Deeper

In this fifth chapter of Romans the Apostle Paul addresses the profound transformation that takes place when we embrace the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Before coming to faith in Christ, we were, in a spiritual sense, enemies of God. Our sinfulness and rebellion against His will separated us from Him, creating a chasm that we could not bridge on our own. However, through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, our status has been radically altered. Through faith, we have been justified, declared righteous, and acquitted of our sins. As a result, we have been reconciled to God and have obtained peace with Him.

It's important to understand the magnitude of this transformation. By nature, we were at odds with God, because we are born with a disposition to sin. The Psalmist wrote, "For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5, NLT) Our disposition to sin means that we are born with the innate desire to please ourselves and be our own gods. That rebellious sin nature sets us at odds with our Heavenly Father and makes us an enemy. An enemy of God is the person living in rebellion against God and His will. This rebellion against God is characterized by disobedience to God's commands and a rejection of His authority.

However, because of His grace and mercy through the sacrifice of Jesus, we have been welcomed into His presence as beloved children. God took the initiative in pursuing peace with us by sending Jesus Christ. Jesus lived a perfect life thereby becoming the perfect sacrifice for our sins, His crucifixion paid for the sins of all who would trust in Him, and His resurrection guarantees our justification before God. Because of this marvelous act of love the enmity and separation caused by sin have been overcome, and we are now invited to experience the peace that comes from a restored

relationship with our Heavenly Father.

This peace with God is not merely the absence of conflict; it is a deep and abiding sense of harmony, security, and wholeness in our relationship with Him. It is the assurance that we are no longer defined by our past, but by the grace that has been lavished upon us through Jesus Christ. It is the confidence that, through faith, we stand justified before God, fully accepted and loved.

DAY 2 | WEEK 1

Justified by Faith

By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.”

(Romans 5:1-2, NIV)

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

DAY 2 | WEEK 1

As we dive into the profound truth of being justified by faith, I want you to consider for a moment the incredible gift of grace that God has bestowed upon us through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:1-2, the Apostle Paul highlights a foundational aspect of our relationship with God: justification through faith.

Justification is a legal term that signifies being declared righteous or acquitted of guilt before God. It's not something we can earn through our works or efforts, but rather a gift of God's grace that we receive by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. This act of faith is the key that unlocks the door to reconciliation with God and restores our broken relationship with Him.

The verse reminds us that through faith in Jesus Christ, we have peace with God. Real peace – lasting peace – as peace that gives us comfort and strength. It's also a peace that gives us confidence in the sovereignty of

God and the hope of eternal life. It's the peace that surpasses all understanding and transcends our circumstances, anchoring our souls in the unshakable love of God.

As we reflect on the significance of being justified by faith, we are called to embrace the reality of our new identity in Christ. We are no longer defined by our past mistakes, shortcomings, or sins, but by the righteousness of Christ that covers us completely. Our standing before God is not based on our performance but on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

This truth should fill our hearts with gratitude and amazement, motivating us to live lives that reflect the transformative power of God's grace. It challenges us to walk in faith, trusting in God's promises even when circumstances seem bleak. It encourages us to extend grace and forgiveness to others, just as we have received forgiveness from God.

Here are five key aspects of what it means to be justified by faith.

1. Not by Works. Justification by faith emphasizes that our standing before God is not based on our own efforts, good deeds, or merit. Instead, it is a gift of God's grace that we receive through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our righteousness is not something we can earn but is imputed to us through Christ's sacrifice.

2. Faith in Christ. Justification by faith requires placing our trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. It is through faith in His finished work on the cross, His death and resurrection, that we are justified before God. Our faith is how we appropriate the righteousness of Christ.

3. Imputed Righteousness. When we are justified by faith, God credits to us the righteousness of Christ. This means that we are seen as righteous in God's eyes, not because of our own goodness, but because of the righteousness of Christ that covers us. Our sins are forgiven, and we are declared not guilty before God.

4. Peace with God. Justification by faith brings about reconciliation with God. Through faith in Christ, we are no longer enemies of God

but are brought into a right relationship with Him. This reconciliation leads to peace with God that we discussed on Day One of this study and opens the way for intimacy and fellowship with Him.

5. Transformation. While justification is a one-time event that occurs at the moment of salvation, it also initiates a process of sanctification in the believer's life. As we continue to walk by faith, the Holy Spirit works in us to conform us to the image of Christ, producing fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

You may not have thought a lot about it – but you should work to make being justified by faith a central theme of your thoughts about yourself. Allow the truth of justification by faith to permeate every aspect of your life, shape your thoughts, words, and actions. Rest in the assurance of God's unconditional love and mercy, knowing that you're in His hands for all eternity. Let your life's testimony to the world be the incredible power of faith in Jesus Christ, who has made peace with God possible for all who believe.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Why should the truth of justification by faith have a radical impact on how you live each day?

2. Which one of the five key aspects of justification by faith were you least familiar with? How does this truth shift your thinking about your relationship with Jesus Christ?

3. Take a minute and write a short paragraph or two telling the story of how you came to know Jesus Christ.

DAY 3 | WEEK 1
A New Identity
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!”

(2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV)

A NEW IDENTITY

Day 3 | Week 1

I love 2 Corinthians 5:17! As a matter of fact, I consider it my life verse. I love this verse because the Apostle Paul reveals a profound truth about the transforming power of being in Christ.

Being “in Christ” is a powerful concept that Paul frequently uses in his letters to describe the intimate relationship between the believer and Jesus Christ. Being “in Christ” goes beyond a mere physical or superficial connection; it signifies a deep, spiritual union with Christ that has profound implications for the believer’s identity, position, and life.

For example, being “in Christ” means...

1. Union with Christ. Being “in Christ” means that believers are united with Jesus in a spiritual sense. This union is established through faith in Christ and is made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit. Just as a branch is connected to the vine,

believers are connected to Christ, drawing their life, strength, and sustenance from Him.

2. Identification with Christ.

Being “in Christ” involves a profound identification with Jesus Christ. When believers are in Christ, they are identified with His death, burial, and resurrection. This identification signifies that the old self, with its sin and brokenness, has been crucified with Christ, and a new creation has emerged.

3. Positional Truth. Being “in Christ” also speaks to the believer’s new position before God. In Christ, believers are declared righteous and justified, not based on their own merit or performance, but on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. This new position grants believers’ access to God’s presence, love, and grace.

4. Transformation and Renewal.

Being “in Christ” results in transformation and renewal.

Believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out their new identity, growing in holiness, love, and obedience. The old ways of thinking and living are replaced by a new way of life marked by faith, hope, and love.

5. Security and Assurance. Being “in Christ” provides believers with security and assurance of their salvation. This union with Christ is unbreakable, ensuring that nothing can separate believers from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. It offers comfort and hope in the midst of trials and challenges.

2 Corinthians 5:17 points to the radical change that occurs in the life of a believer when they surrender to Jesus and enter into a personal relationship with Him. It signifies a complete shift in identity, purpose, and destiny.

As followers of Christ, we are called to embrace our new identity in Him. The old self, with its sinful nature and brokenness, is crucified with Christ on the cross, and a new creation is born. This new creation is not merely a patched-up version of the old self but a completely new and redeemed individual, infused with the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

Our new identity in Christ is characterized by forgiveness, redemption, and restoration. The chains of sin and guilt that once bound us have been broken, and we are set free to live in the fullness of God’s grace and love. We are no longer defined by our past mistakes or failures but by the righteousness and mercy of Christ that covers us completely.

This new identity brings with it a sense of purpose and hope. We are called to walk in the light of Christ, shining as beacons of His love and truth in a world filled with darkness and confusion. Our lives become a testimony to the transformative work of God, drawing others to experience the same life-changing power that has touched us.

Today, embrace your new identity in Christ with gratitude and humility. Lay aside the burdens of your past and step into the freedom and joy that come from being a child of God. My prayer is that you live each and every day in the light of His grace, reflecting His love to those around you, and by how you live points others to the hope found only in Jesus.

DAY 4 | WEEK 1
Imputed Righteousness

By: Dr. Jody Ray

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

(Romans 3:20-26, NIV)

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

Day 4 | Week 1

In these verses the Apostle Paul unveils the profound truth of imputed righteousness, which is a foundational theological concept in our understanding of God. Imputed righteousness speaks to the way God credits the righteousness of Christ to believers who place their faith in Him. This passage invites us to meditate on the incredible gift of grace that God offers us through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

As you think about the idea of imputed righteousness, we are reminded of our desperate need for a Savior. Paul makes it clear that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, highlighting the universal condition of humanity's sinfulness. Despite our best efforts, we cannot attain righteousness on our own, we stand in need of a righteousness that comes from God Himself.

The good news proclaimed in these verses is that God has provided a way for us to be made right with Him. Through faith

in Jesus Christ, we can receive the gift of righteousness that surpasses anything we could achieve through our own works. This righteousness is not earned but freely given by God's grace to all who believe in His Son.

Imputed righteousness is a demonstration of God's love and mercy towards us. It shows His willingness to forgive our sins, cleanse us from unrighteousness, and clothe us with the righteousness of Christ. When God looks at us, He doesn't see flaws, failures, and sin but the perfect righteousness of His Son covering us completely.

I don't know about you, but I think that's good news! Because of this marvelous act we can walk in assurance of our standing before God and through the power of the Holy Spirit have a life worthy of this gift we have received.

Let's break down the key points about imputed righteousness based on these scriptures from Romans chapter 3:

1. All Have Sinned. This passage begins by emphasizing that all humanity has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This means that no one can attain righteousness before God on their own merit or through their own efforts.

2. Justification by Faith. Romans 3 explains that righteousness received through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. It is not something that can be earned but is a gift of God's grace. This underscores the principle that justification by faith alone, apart from works of the Law.

3. The Atoning Sacrifice of Christ. Verse 24 highlights that believers are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This redemption is made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, where He paid the price for our sins and reconciled us to God.

4. Imputed Righteousness. In verses 25-26, God presented Jesus as propitiation by His blood, demonstrating His righteousness and justifying those who have

faith in Jesus. God's justice is satisfied through Christ's sacrifice, and His righteousness is imputed to believers who trust in Him.

5. Glorification of God's Attributes. These scriptures ultimately glorify God's justice, mercy, and righteousness. Through imputed righteousness, God remains just while justifying those who have faith in Jesus. This demonstrates God's perfect character and His plan for salvation.

Imputed righteousness is the divine exchange where God credits the righteousness of Christ to believers who place their faith in Him. I pray the reality of imputed righteousness transform your heart and mind, shaping your identity as a beloved child of God. Rest in the knowledge of the love God has for you, knowing that you are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and clothed in His righteousness for eternity.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Why is the theological concept of imputed righteousness so important to the Christian?

2. Take a few minutes and write out the plan of salvation.

3. How is it possible for us to be saved and yet still have sin in our life?

DAY 5 | WEEK 1
Dead to Sin, Alive In Christ
By: Dr. Jody Ray

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”

(Romans 6:6-10, NIV)

DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE IN CHRIST

Day 5 | Week 1

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul delves into the transformative power of the Gospel and the profound implications of our union with Christ. In Romans 6:6-10, Paul expounds on the concept of believers being dead to sin and alive in Christ. These verses serve as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the incredible grace and love that God has bestowed upon us through the sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6: “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.” (Romans 6:6, NIV)

Paul starts by emphasizing the crucifixion of our old self with Christ. Our former selves, marred by sin and separated from God, were crucified on the cross with Jesus. This profound act signifies the death of our sinful nature and the breaking of its power over our

lives. Through Christ’s sacrificial death, we are set free from the bondage of sin and no longer slaves to its dictates.

Verse 7: “Because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.” (Romans 6:7, NIV)

As believers, we have died with Christ, and in His death, we have been liberated from the chains of sin. Just as physical death marks the end of earthly struggles, our spiritual death with Christ releases us from the grip of sin. This freedom is not merely a temporary reprieve but a permanent liberation, allowing us to walk in the fullness of God’s grace and love.

Verse 8: “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” (Romans 6:8, NIV)

Our identification with Christ’s death extends to His resurrection. Just as we have shared in His death, we can have confidence

that we will also share in His eternal life. This assurance of living with Christ not only impacts our present circumstances but also shapes our hope for the future. In Him, we find the ultimate source of life, joy, and fulfillment.

Verses 9-10: “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.” (Romans 6:9-10, NIV)

Christ’s resurrection stands as a testament to His victory over sin and death. He conquered the grave, rendering death powerless over Him. In His death, He paid the price for our sins once and for all, ushering in a new era of grace and redemption. The life He now lives is devoted to God, showcasing His perfect obedience and unwavering love for the Father.

As we reflect on these verses, may we embrace the reality of being dead to sin and alive in Christ. Let us surrender our old selves at the foot of the cross and embrace the new life that Christ offers us. Through His death and resurrection, we have been set

free, redeemed, and made new. May this truth resonate in our hearts and minds, guiding us to live in the fullness of our identity as beloved children of God, empowered by His Spirit to walk in victory over sin and to live a life that honors and glorifies Him.

As we navigate the challenges and temptations of this world, let us remember that we are no longer slaves to sin but are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in obedience to God. Our old self has been crucified with Christ, and we are now called to walk in newness of life, bearing witness to the transformative power of the Gospel in our lives.

In our journey as believers, we may stumble and fall, but we can take heart in the assurance that we are covered by the righteousness of Christ. His death and resurrection have secured our salvation, and nothing can separate us from the love of God. When we face trials and struggles, we can draw strength from the fact that we are alive in Christ, united with Him in His victory over sin and death.

Let’s not take this gift of grace lightly but live each day with gratitude and reverence for what Christ has done for us. May we

strive to live holy and righteous lives, reflecting the love and mercy of our Savior to a world in need of hope and redemption. As we meditate on the truth of being dead to sin and alive in Christ, may it inspire us to love God wholeheartedly, serve others selflessly, and share the good news of salvation with boldness and joy.

Romans 6:6-10 reminds us of the profound depth of God's love and the transformative power of the Gospel. Through Christ, we have been set free from sin, reconciled to God, and given new life in Him. My prayer for you is that you hold fast to this truth in times of trial and triumph, trusting in the promise of eternal life and the hope of glory that we have in Christ. Let us live each day as those who are dead to sin and alive in Christ, shining brightly as beacons of His grace and love in a world that desperately need the light of the Gospel.

Questions for further reflection:

1. What does Paul mean when he writes: "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him?"
2. How does Christ's resurrection give you victory over sin and death?
3. How should the fact that you are no longer a slave to sin affect how you should live today?



Mt. Bethel Church
4385 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta, GA
770.971.2880

Visit us at: mtbethel.org

©2024 Mt. Bethel Church, Marietta, GA. All rights reserved.