

## **THE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION**

This morning we're going to continue building a solid case for justification by faith alone, that is, being forgiven by God and assured a ticket to Heaven because of His grace responding to our faith. Then we'll move on to Romans chapter 5 where Paul goes on to tell us the benefits of such justification and salvation.

Let's turn now to Romans 4:13-18:

*13 It is clear, then, that God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was **not based on obedience to God's law, but on the new relationship with God that comes by faith.***

*14 So if you claim that God's promise is for those who obey God's law and think they are "good enough" in God's sight, then you are saying that faith is useless. And in that case, the promise is also meaningless.*

*15 But the law brings punishment on those who try to obey it. **(The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)***

*16 So that's why **faith is the key!** God's promise is given to us **as a free gift.** And we are certain to receive it, whether or not we follow Jewish customs, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe.*

*17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who brings into existence what didn't exist before.*

*18 When God promised Abraham that he would become the father of many nations, Abraham believed him. God had also said, "Your descendants will be as numerous as the stars," even though such a promise seemed utterly impossible!*

There are probably billions of people in this world who believe in a variety of religions that are built around the idea that that you can save yourself, have your sins washed away, and gain Heaven by going through a bunch of ceremonies, religious rites or rituals. For example during the celebration of the Kumbha Mela, a religious event in India among Hindus, people sit on beds of nails, walk across broken glass, sit on hot coals, pierce their tongues with knives, stare at the sun until blinded, shave and count every hair from their bodies to throw into the Ganges River (each hair represents a million years they'll get in Heaven), and commit suicide in a spiritual offering in order to appease their gods and get in good standing with them.

In His day Jesus faced a very sophisticated type of religion that was in effect no different than the kind of Hinduism we just described. It was the religion of the Jewish Pharisees who believed that by external rights like circumcision and other religious works, they could earn their way into Heaven and have their sins forgiven. You see there are only two kinds of religion in the whole world:

- 1) The religion of divine accomplishment, Christianity. The accomplishment being Christ's death on the cross.
- 2) The religion of human achievement.

Those two categories cover every religion that exists.

Salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and Heaven are not available to people through religious ritual, ceremony, self-sacrifice, or religious works of any kind. It is only by the grace of God and through faith by a person in the work of Jesus Christ on their behalf that they are given righteousness and saved. That is the only way one can be saved. There is no other way.

You might ask, “*Well, aren't an awful lot of those people **sincere** about the good things they do?*” The answer to that question would be a resounding, “yes.” They are probably very sincere about what they do but that won't change the fact that without faith, they're on their way to Hell because they are also **sincerely wrong** about what it takes to get to Heaven. You simply can't earn your way in on your own. In today's lesson we're looking at the fact that the Jews believed they were saved first by circumcision, as we learned last week, and also by keeping the Law of God.

Before getting into this let's just take a quick overview of where we've been. First of all you may remember that Abraham was not made right with God by circumcision because he wasn't circumcised when God declared Abraham to be righteous. In fact, Abraham wasn't circumcised for another fourteen years after being declared righteous. Secondly, Abraham could not have been declared righteous by keeping the Law of God because the Law of God wasn't given to Moses until 430 years after Abraham died. And yet these are the two things the Pharisees maintained would provide a person with salvation. How is it that Abraham was declared righteous and saved? Look back to verse 13 that we just read. Abraham simply believed God. He was justified and made righteous by believing God's promise (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6), which makes it a gift from God by His grace (an undeserved favor or blessing).

It's no different than when God comes to you and says, “*Here's my promise. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work, I'll give you eternal life.*” If you say, “*By faith I accept that gift,*” then you're saved.

Now I would like to place before you for your consideration something that I find fascinating and believe to be verified by various passages in the Bible. When God was making His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, He says in verse 3: “*And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*” What does this mean exactly and did Abraham understand the meaning? I believe Abraham somehow knew that this promise from God involved the coming of a messiah, a savior, a redeemer, which would eventually be Jesus. Why do I think that? Look at John 8:56:

*Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”*

Abraham understood that there would be a future time when the Redeemer would come. That Redeemer would be a direct descendant of Abraham that would redeem all nations, tongues, tribes, and people by faith; and all those sons and daughters of faith would be the descendants of Abraham. Further evidence can be found in Galatians 3:16:

*God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child—and that, of course, means Christ.*

So when God made the promise to Abraham the promise was for the eventual coming of Jesus Christ, and it is in Christ that all people are blessed. Paul writes in Galatians 3:29:

*And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

Now the promise that all the world would be blessed through one of Abraham's descendants back in Genesis 12:3, could only come true because Jesus was a direct descendant of Abraham, and all who put their faith in Jesus become one with Him and therefore Paul can say in Galatians 3:8,9:

*What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would accept the Gentiles, too, on the basis of their faith. God promised this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."*

*9 And so it is: All who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.*

Therefore, we should now see clearly that because of the promise made to Abraham of the coming of Christ, that anyone who believed God and the saving work that would be done through the coming Christ, either before or after His coming, would be saved because of faith. If there's anyone who has a question about this let's stop right now and clarify any confusion that we've created in your minds.

We'll wait until we get to Romans chapter 8 before we get into the detail of our being fellow heirs with Christ in all that God gives Christ. But I want to let you know right now it means that all believers inherit the world and will one day rule over it with Christ.

Now before moving on I just want to make a couple of comments about God's Law. So let's take a look at Romans 4:15:

*for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.*

This is the reason a person cannot be saved by keeping the Law. The main purpose of the

Law is to show you that there is no way for you to measure up to God's standard for behavior on your own. You can't know that you're doing something wrong if you don't have some standard to measure yourself against. If you have any doubts about not being able to keep the Law on your own, just read through it very carefully and that should wipe away those doubts. You see, if there aren't any rules, you can't break any rules, right? But when God reveals one of His laws, it just reveals the evil in the human heart. We'll look at this in more depth in chapter 7. The Law, therefore, makes it evident that people are not able to keep it. This fact then justifies the wrath of God for all those who don't. The Law was given to make evident the evil of the human heart, to prepare people for the coming "seed" of Abraham, who was Christ. Through the Law they should have recognized their total inability to be saved by their own efforts and their need for someone to intercede on their behalves in order to save them. They should have recognized their need for a Savior. Thus Paul continues to write in Romans 4:16-25:

*So that's why faith is the key! God's promise is given to us as a free gift. And we are certain to receive it, whether or not we follow Jewish customs, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe.*

*17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who brings into existence what didn't exist before.*

*18 When God promised Abraham that he would become the father of many nations, Abraham believed him. God had also said, "Your descendants will be as numerous as the stars," even though such a promise seemed utterly impossible!*

*19 And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though he knew that he was too old to be a father at the age of one hundred and that Sarah, his wife, had never been able to have children.*

*20 Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.*

*21 He was absolutely convinced that God was able to do anything he promised.*

*22 And because of Abraham's faith, God declared him to be righteous.*

*23 Now this wonderful truth—that God declared him to be righteous—wasn't just for Abraham's benefit.*

*24 It was for us, too, assuring us that God will also declare us to be righteous if we believe in God, who brought Jesus our Lord back from the dead.*

*25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God.*

Now we'll move on to Romans chapter 5.

## **ROMANS 5**

I sincerely hope that as we look at the first eleven verses of chapter 5, you will find yourself rejoicing in the finality of your salvation. Now this is a subject that has been hotly debated in theological circles over the years. There are those who have maintained that a person could lose their salvation once they received it. Some of you, based on your backgrounds, may believe that a Christian can lose his or her salvation. Sometimes we hear the term, “*backslide*” applied to such people. The term “backslide” is also used to describe a person who still believes but does not live a Christian life. But the belief that one can lose their salvation makes a person’s salvation **conditional**. In other words your salvation is only good as long as you satisfy the requirements to maintain it, and if at any point you fail to live up to the standard, God snatches it back.

Such a belief fits into what we could categorize as a **works righteousness perspective**. In other words we have to do good works in order to keep our salvation. If we do bad things, it is taken from us. Now we’ve just learned in chapters 3 and 4 that salvation comes **by God’s grace through our faith**, and that faith is all that is necessary to receive eternal salvation. Now the doctrine of **salvation by faith** is quite new to the Jews to whom Paul is writing in Romans. They have been brought up from childhood to believe in a **works righteousness perspective**, that by doing good works they get the favor of God. This is exactly how all world religions outside of Christianity are structured, on the goodness of humankind, people living up to some religious code or standard.

So when Paul tells them that salvation is a free gift that is given by God’s grace which is unearned and undeserved, and that this grace is given a person when they have faith in God and Jesus Christ, and on that faith alone, people find that very difficult to understand. It’s difficult to understand because people are works oriented, aren’t we? People are into human achievement, they are into self-righteousness, lifting themselves up by their own bootstraps. This leads most people to the personal philosophy which says, “*I’m a good person, I’m religious, I do my best, I believe, I even go to church a few times a year. God would never send me to Hell.*” If I was the wagering type, I’d give you odds that you’ve heard that statement any number of times.

It’s very hard for people who have been brought up and taught to understand that they get into God’s kingdom, or Heaven, by being good, or ethical, or moral, to hear someone teach that getting in is only a matter of faith. I’ll guarantee you that someone will ask the question: “Does that mean that you can become a Christian and then just do anything you want? Doesn’t your salvation at least somewhat depend on your obedience?” That is exactly the issue Paul addresses in Romans 5. After we study the first eleven verses of this chapter, you will be assured that if you have **truly come to Jesus** as your Savior, you will belong to Him forever. Let’s now take a look at verse 1 of Romans 5:

*Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, **we have peace with God** because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.*

The first reality that affirms to me as a believer that I’m eternally secure in my salvation is that **I’m at peace with God**. When you come to believe in Jesus, you’re saved, and

having entered into that salvation you are brought into an eternity filled with blessings. One of those blessings is that we are secure in that relationship because we have **peace** with God through what Jesus has done for us.

The word translated, “*peace*,” in this verse does not refer to a feeling but to a relationship. Now if we have peace with God because of our salvation, what did we have before we were saved? We had conflict, or one might even say war with God. Jesus has dramatically changed our relationship to God. God was our enemy, and we were His enemy. But because of our justification by faith, the war or conflict between God and us is simply over.

Now you’ll hear people argue over this because they miss the point of the verse. They’ll say, “*Hey, I’ve never been at war with God. I like God. I’m religious. I don’t have anything against God. I believe in God. I’m concerned about what He thinks and I certainly don’t see myself as His enemy. I don’t see myself as striking blows against God’s kingdom. I don’t see myself as opposed to His divine plan, purpose, or will. How can you say I’m at war with God?*” But the Bible tells us that before you come to Jesus, you’re at war with God.

Well, the real issue is that God is at war with you and you are God’s enemy if you haven’t received Jesus as your Savior, and that was confirmed back in Romans 1:18-20

*For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness **of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth.***

*19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*

*20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So **they are without excuse.***

God does not look kindly on those who reject His Son and pursue other gods, and other gods can refer to other religions or to such things as money, sex, power, clothes, pride, or whatever other desires we put in first place in our lives ahead of God. We might look at a couple of other passages to see how God feels about those who reject or disobey him.

**Joshua 23:16:**

*If you break the covenant of the Lord your God by worshiping and serving other gods, **his anger will burn against you**, and you will quickly be wiped out from the good land he has given you.”*

**Isaiah 13:9-13:**

*For see, the day of the Lord is coming—the terrible day of **his fury** and **fierce anger**. The land will be destroyed and all the sinners with it.*

*10 The heavens will be black above them. No light will shine from stars or sun or moon.*

*11 “I, the Lord, will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their*



*sin. I will crush the arrogance of the proud and the haughtiness of the mighty.*

*12 Few will be left alive when I have finished my work. People will be as scarce as gold—more rare than the gold of Ophir.*

*13 For I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move from its place. I, the Lord Almighty, **will show my fury and fierce anger.***

That's a prediction of what's going to happen in the end times. And in Ephesians 5:3-6 Paul writes:

*Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people.*

*4 Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.*

*5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is really an idolater who worships the things of this world.*

*6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the terrible anger of God comes upon all those who disobey him.*

The Bible has no shortage of passages expressing God's feelings about sin and those who embrace it. There are many more passages that can be found in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and if you're still not convinced, read the book of Nahum. But believers can have peace with God. If you haven't yet accepted Christ as your Savior, there is no way of softening the terror that awaits you, unless it is the reality that you can come to acceptance of Jesus at any time. But don't forget, none of us know when we're going to die and then it's too late. But for the believer God's wrath has been satisfied. What was it that satisfied His wrath? It was the perfect work of Jesus. God poured out His fury toward sin upon Jesus on the cross. That's why it says in Colossians 1:20-23:

*By him (Jesus) God reconciled everything to himself. **HE MADE PEACE WITH EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH BY MEANS OF HIS BLOOD ON THE CROSS.***

*21 This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions,*

*22 yet now **he has brought you back as his friends. HE HAS DONE THIS THROUGH HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS IN HIS OWN HUMAN BODY.** As a result, **he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless** as you stand before him without a single fault.*

*23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand in it firmly. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed by God to proclaim it.*

When you receive Jesus as Savior and are **justified** or **saved**, several things happen:

- **RECONCILIATION** with God occurs immediately
- **SANCTIFICATION** begins its lifetime process to make you more like Jesus, which will lead to
- **GLORIFICATION** in eternity or Heaven with Christ.

Jesus has not only reconciled us to God initially, but He maintains that **reconciliation**, and that is His high priestly work according to 1 John 1:7:

*But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, CLEANSSES us from every sin.*

This is a promise of **continual cleansing** of our sins. Once we're saved, we're still going to sin occasionally, but that isn't counted against us because Jesus is our advocate before God and His blood keeps washing away any record of our sins in Heaven's ledger. We are at peace with God forever because every sin we ever commit has already been paid for by Christ. So there is nothing that can take away our salvation once we believe, as is confirmed in 1 John 2:1:

*My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. **But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely.***

There's a connection here that also makes a lot of sense. When you love Jesus, you really do invite a relationship of peace with His Father, don't you? I mean, if you want to get on my good side, love my children. When we love the Son we gain the love of the Father. We are now a friend of God, a son or daughter of God, a brother or sister of Jesus. We are in the family and God is at peace with us. Hebrews 10:17 reads:

*Then he adds, "**I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.**"*

For someone to say a person can lose their salvation is to say that the work of Christ was both not sufficient when He first came and is not sufficient today as He continues to protect us. Now let's continue in Romans 5:2 (NRSV):

*(It is Jesus)<sup>1</sup> through whom we have obtained access to **this grace** in which **we stand**; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.*

Paul is expressing great joy and triumph as he writes this verse. Grace has allowed us to come directly into the presence of God without sin. Because of God's grace we are now seen by God as fulfilling the Law because we are united with Christ who kept it perfectly.

We don't move in and out of God's grace. The verb tense of "*stand*" is present and

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<sup>1</sup> Parentheses added.



continuous. We're standing in it and will continue to stand in it. A believer is firmly fixed in an environment of grace. In Romans 5:3,4, Paul writes:

***We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to endure.  
4 And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation.***

The believer is even able to rejoice in the trials he/she must endure in their daily lives. Why? Because we know that no matter what happens, it can't take away our promised glory. It can never take away our hope for eternity and it can never take away the joy that goes with it. So, when trials come, we don't curse God like other people do, but instead we can rejoice even in those trials because dealing with such trials will produce patience within us. When you go through trouble you learn to persevere to endure, and that perseverance produces proven character. So when a person goes through trouble they have the opportunity to develop proven character. That means that many of the flaws in our character are squeezed out. We learn to trust God when we're under trials, stress, and pain. Now you might be asking, "How do I do that? What does it look like?" One way -- not the only way -- is to actually say "Thank you" to God when something goes wrong. "Thank you, Lord, for the flat tire." "Thank you, Lord, that the washing machine just broke." "Thank you, God, that the traffic is so heavy." Now, why should we do this? What are we actually thanking God for? That He is in control of every detail of our lives, and that He can make good come out of these things. It's also a joy to learn of God's sustaining power in the middle of suffering. It increases our faith and strengthens us. It builds our level of holiness. James speaks of this in James 1:12:

***God blesses the people who patiently endure testing. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.***

Salvation does not refine a person's character. If a bitter, angry, and mean person is saved, then they are a bitter, angry, and mean Christian. What salvation does do is to plant within the person the capacity to be perfected. It's after one is saved that the purging process begins. God uses trials and tribulations for this process. So when troubles come into your life you should rejoice. Why? Because they've been sent to develop proven character within you. They are sent to improve you as a person. There must be moral progress in a person because salvation is deliverance from sin. Christ has once and for all offered to God the obedience God requested (Romans 5:19), but that obedience must be reproduced in His followers in the kind of life that glorifies God, a life of discipline, effort, and a steady advance toward perfection.<sup>2</sup> So Satan can hit us with all the troubles he wants, but they will do nothing but strengthen us, because they develop our character if we trust in God. Romans 5:5:

***And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.***

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<sup>2</sup> Caird, G.B.

You will never be disappointed when you trust in God. You will never have to say, “*You know, I put all my faith in that God, in that Jesus Christ, and He deceived me. He never came through and I lost everything. What a deceiver. I’m sorry I ever trusted Him.*”

Why? Because hope will produce the promised glory. Because we stand in grace, we have a promised future glory. That is our hope. We should say unashamedly to anybody on the face of the earth that we are going to be in glory someday with Jesus, radiating the eternal glory of God throughout Heaven. That is our destiny if we’ve received Christ as our Savior. That’s where we’re going. If you put your hope in Jesus Christ, you will never be disappointed. We read in Hebrews 10:23:

*Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for **God can be trusted to keep his promise.***

Verse 5 of Romans 5 also goes on to say that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the resident Holy Spirit who comes to live inside of us the moment that we’re saved. When you believe in the work of Christ, God places the Holy Spirit within you. Ephesians 1:13,14 tells us:

*And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own **by giving you the Holy Spirit**, whom he promised long ago.*

*14 The Spirit is **God’s guarantee** that he will give us everything he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God.*

The Holy Spirit produces in us an awareness of the love of God. This speaks of a **personal**, intimate ministry of God through the Holy Spirit in our lives. God is assuring our hearts that we belong to Him and that He loves us by pouring out that love. Romans 8:14:

*For all who are **led by the Spirit of God** are children of God.*

*15 So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like **God’s very own children, adopted into his family**—calling him “Father, dear Father.”*

The unbeliever feels none of this. The unbeliever senses no connectedness to God, no intimacy with God, and no real communion with God. But for those who know Jesus as their Savior, God has put His Spirit in us, and His Spirit draws us into an intimate love relationship with God Himself. For those of you who already believe, it’s my prayer you’ll feel an increased presence of the Holy Spirit within you, and for those of you who don’t yet believe, it’s my prayer that these great promises of God will make you long for such a relationship. Next time, more blessings. It just never stops.