

**Title: Peace with God**  
**Series: Romans: Living Free**  
**Date: 1/31/10**

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** So sorry for the delay in adding discussion questions to this outline this week! Hope it's still helpful to you.

This is a slightly abridged version of Pastor Dan's sermon notes for your own personal study, with the addition of possible discussion questions to use in your life group meeting. Please review these notes well in advance of your meeting, add your own questions and direct the discussion as you see fit. The key to a good discussion is to keep it simple, to ask several "open-ended" questions and to give opportunity for everyone in the group to contribute.

**Introduction:** The bottom line in the human condition is man's relationship with God. Everything of true importance ultimately flows out of that connection, whether good or bad – e.g. marriage, addictions, mental health, and personal wholeness.

I do not want to oversimplify anyone's problems today but Romans teaches us that when we suppress the truth about God we ultimately sink in a whirlpool of narcissism where the Lord ultimately has to 'give us over' to our own passions.

The good news is that the gospel of Jesus Christ rescues us! **The lifeline to a drowning sinner is the rope of grace.** On one end of the rope is God (His election) and the other end is you (your faith). In between the two ends is the rope of grace.

Chapter 4 shows us the sole ground for this lifeline - our salvation (i.e. justification) as faith in God's saving action through Christ. Abraham is the perfect model of faith – he believed God and His Word and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

**Text: Romans 5:1-5** – Ask a group member to read the passage or read it together (slowly) as a group.

## I. The New Life

*Therefore having been justified by faith...*

**Justification is not an end in itself but rather a doorway into a new life – one that is characterized by peace, grace, hope and love**

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** It is striking in this passage that the result of saving faith in God not only secures our "legal" justification (pardon) before God, but it results in a very real, tangible experience of God Himself that touches us deeply at an emotional level. We experience peace, grace, hope, love.

→ Can someone share your own story of what happened to you when you *first* put your faith in Christ? How did you experience these qualities at that time?

## A. Peace with God

**Romans 5:1** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

**1. Peace with God is the first gift you receive upon being reconciled to God.** Peace with God gives us inner tranquility and security instead of guilt and angst - since the tension in the relationship between the Creator and His creatures has been reconciled.

The enmity with God has been resolved. His wrath of God that Paul spoke of earlier has been resolved. Harmony has been restored.

- **Romans 5:9** *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*

**2. Jewish understanding of ‘peace’.** The concept of *peace* was well known to God’s people in the Old Testament. It summarized all of God’s blessings for His people.

In its OT context peace has the definite idea of material, spiritual, social and national blessing.

- **Psalm 72:1-7** Peace involves justice for the poor, blessing children, and God’s presence.
- **Psalm 85:8-13** Peace is linked to salvation, glory, and land yielding it increase.

**3. ‘Peace’ in a NT sense.** Now that we are made righteous by faith in Christ, we receive the OT promises of peace in a deeper way. Peace can now be thought of as a state of ‘**fulfillment**’ or ‘**satisfaction**’ or ‘**harmony**’ – peace is far more the absence of hostility. When you are at peace your heart’s desires are met, your relationships are meaningful and your future secure.

Peace is a result of **restored trust**. Peace with God does not merely mean that we are no longer fighting God *but rather that we trust Him* (and that He also trusts us).

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What is the difference between *peace* and *trust*? Why is this important?
- The idea that at the root of the biblical concept of peace is a *mutually restored trust* between us and God is powerful. In other words, it’s not a trust that just runs one way. Not only do we trust God, but He trusts us! Let’s reflect on this for a moment. How does this knowledge that God trusts us – He trusts you - impact you? How should this effect the way we live our lives?
- How might this distinguish Christianity from other religious faiths in the world? How might this impact how we share the gospel with others?

**4. The promise of a Covenant of Peace.** Ezekiel prophesied about the day the Messiah would come and initiate a New Covenant – a covenant where God would take out our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. It would be called a covenant of peace.

**Ezekiel 34:25, 27** *I will make a covenant of peace with them and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.*

*I will make them and the places all around My hill of blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there will be showers of blessing.*

In the covenant of peace are **showers of blessings!** This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit! It is like the song, “It is beginning to rain”!

## 5. The peace of God is in sharp contrast to the world’s peace –

- **John 14:27** *Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

The world’s peace is always temporary, conditional on circumstances and not satisfying.

Peace *with* God results in the **peace of God** – a peace in all of life’s anxious situations.

- It is powerful when someone can honestly say, “I’m at peace with God”

### DISCUSSION QUESTION:

→ Since I have peace with God through faith in Christ, how should that impact my need for approval, my need to control circumstances and people, or my fear of the unknown? Share an example from your own life.

## B. Access to the Throne of Grace

**Romans 5:2** *Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

**1. Grace as a royal court.** The language suggests an Eastern court where you can come into the King’s presence only if you are entitled to do so are when invited by the King Himself. Through Christ both happen; 1) We are invited by Jesus Christ since it is ‘through’ Him that we have peace with God, and 2) we are now righteous through faith and thus entitled to come before a perfect and holy God.

- **Hebrews 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

We have access through faith into the **infinite resources of God’s favor**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What a powerful image – the royal courtyard of grace! How have you experienced the grace of God in a time of need?
- Where do you need to experience God’s grace today?

**2. Grace causes ‘rejoicing’.** When we have grace we rejoice for we have tasted of what is to come. Through grace we enjoy a down-payment of the **glory to come**.

*Rejoice* is a word that is translated ‘boast’. Paul used it pejoratively in Romans 2:17, 23; 4:2 of those who boast in the law and in their self-righteousness. Here Paul says boasting is a good thing since it is not focused in our pride but in the grace of God.

Application: Grace is given to us in unusual ways in times of stress – you often hear some say that the trial he is going through is really a blessing in disguise. Can you look back and exult in your trial know that it produces even more hope in God!

### C. Hope that doesn't disappoint

**Romans 5:3-5** - 3. *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;* 4. *and perseverance, character; and character, **hope**.*

*Now **hope does not disappoint**, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Paul describes an amazing process in these verses → *tribulation that leads to perseverance that leads to character that leads to hope.*

- How is it that the ultimate outcome of tribulations and trials in our lives can result in hope? Isn't this contradictory? How would you explain this to an unbeliever in light of the tragic circumstances in Haiti today?
- Can anyone share an experience from your own life where you experienced this same phenomenon? How did this experience develop perseverance and character in you? How did you experience hope in the midst of this situation?
- What does Paul mean when he says "hope does not disappoint"? Can someone share a situation in your life when hope did not disappoint you?

**1. Definition of Hope:** an inner confidence of future goodness.

The Scripture is teaching us that hoping in God will never produces shame or disappointment regardless of anything that happens to you in this life – i.e. tribulations (v3)

- **Romans 10:11** *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame"*

Many today put their hope in that which will ultimately disappoint. Some hope in lottery tickets, some hope in fate, some hope in the occult, some hope in a man or woman – only hope in God will not disappoint

**2. When we bring hope to others, we bring life.** A problem in our world today is that many have simply lost hope. There seems to be so many hurts, problems, sicknesses, troubles, financial woes, family problems, world issues, political concerns, etc that it seems the world is running out of hope.

It is life changing to finally hope in something again. When you are beaten down, defeated and feel totally broken it is hard to hope but as Christians we proclaim confidently, "There is hope in God"!

- *Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him,* **Psalms 42:11**

As followers of Jesus, we do not have a groundless hope, however, as if we only have a slogan about hope but nothing really substantive, rather we have genuine hope because Jesus Christ has proven that He never welsches on His promises – for He rose from the dead just like He said He would!

Application: The greatest training in evangelism can not overcome a lack of enthusiasm. You and I are purveyors of the greatest hope mankind can ever know! What would our world look like if hope was restored to all men?

## D. The Love of God

**Romans 5:5** ...*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*

**1. A promise of a sustained awareness of God's love for you.** Paul knew of what he spoke. He had been beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, flogged and cast out countless meetings – but had experienced that God never left him or forsook him.

“Poured out” is a verb in the perfect tense as opposed to the aorist tense. It is not a past event but a past event that has ongoing effect.

**2. God's love is poured out.** This is Pentecostal language similar to the book of Acts. God's love is not measured out in nice neat amounts – as if not to risk giving you too much! What do you think of when someone answers when asked if it rained, “It poured!”? It means you got drenched!

- **Acts 2:17** *In those days I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh*

God shows us this love first in the Atonement itself

- **Romans 5:8** *God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*

God's love is pouring out today for you in Christ in a way that could be best described as ‘lavish’ which means ‘to expend or give in great amounts or without limit’.

- **1 John 3:1** *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are.*

**3. God's love is to be a vivid experience.** It is not something to be coldly believed in as part of the gospels or even an intellectual certainty of being loved but rather an *actual* experience.

- John Piper said, *God's love for us is not primarily an argument about it, but an experience of it. How can we know that God loves us? How can we know that his love is real and that we are not hoping in a mirage? Answer: God gives an experience of the love of God that is self-authenticating. When it happens, you know it.*

This is why I believe people know when they are saved – they *feel* or *sense* the love of God within them.

**4. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to immerse you in God's love!** It is not in our power to work up this experience. Feeling loved is not the product of good circumstances. It is not owed to a good family of origin or wholesome upbringing - it is from the Holy Spirit. You can't make it happen only the Holy Spirit makes it happen. (But He wants to!)

- There is something deeply wrong when we become so naturalistic that we think people with a traumatic, abusive background cannot really know the love of God experientially. Yes they can!

Application: Revival is not first the conversion of the lost. Revival is first the answer to Paul's prayer in **2 Thessalonians 3:5**, "*May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.*" Today, the Holy Spirit is pouring out the love of God on you and it results in a great joy and deep peace.

**II. Closing.** Justification by faith is the **doorway** to an exciting relationship with God. The Bible teaches that on the other side of forgiveness, reconciliation, salvation, i.e. justification, is a new life characterized by **peace, grace, hope and love.**

Has your salvation experience become stale for you? Open your heart today to the Holy Spirit and ask the Father to pour out His lavish love on you in a *tangible* way. Let the peace of God reign!

**APPLICATION:** Break up into groups of 2-3 and respond to this question: Where do you need a deeper experience of God's peace, grace, hope or love in your life today? Pray for each others needs in these areas.