



5/2/23

I remember being in youth group as a kid, and having Bible drills to see who could get to a passage the quickest...or to be the first to quote a verse. Romans 5:8 was one of those verses to make sure you knew. I've known it for so many years...more than I want to admit. But it wasn't until a few years ago that something finally sunk in about what it says. It says, "But God shows His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." GOD THE FATHER shows His love by letting His Son die for us. I never realized that it was pointing out the Father's love, and not just the love of Jesus. I have been told by several women over the years that they could embrace the love of Jesus, but not the love of the Father...sadly because their dads had used their position as dad to cause harm and not good. But this verse shows me that the love of the Father and Jesus are the same love, same incredible intensity, same generosity, same sacrificial love. Do you know that there is nothing you could ever do to make the Father, Son, and Spirit stop loving you? There is nothing you can do to make our God love you more, because He already loves you to the fullest. That's pretty awesome.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 5:1-11 ~

Vs. 1-2 ~ Romans 4:24-25 tells me that righteousness "will be counted to us who BELIEVE in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our JUSTIFICATION." Therefore, because we have believed in Jesus, not only are we called righteous, but we have peace with God. To have peace with God means that I don't have to fear His wrath or punishment. I don't have to avoid Him because of my unworthiness. I didn't do anything to earn my salvation, and I can't do anything to lose it. All I had to do was believe Him. In fact, whenever I'm struggling to believe that I truly have peace with Him, it is not that He has failed, it's that I am failing to believe Him. I don't need to repent of not being good enough. I need to repent of thinking I should be good enough, and I need to repent of not believing that the sacrifice of Jesus was enough. It is through Jesus and Jesus alone that I have peace with God.

Through Jesus and Jesus alone, I am free to be in God's presence. My faith is all I take with me. He does the rest. With my faith as my only personal tool (which is a gift from Him), I stand in His grace. I have His favor always on me. This is a lasting privilege of always having God's delight resting on me. Just as my grandsons have no requirement for me to be filled with joy just thinking about them, God places no requirement on me to experience His joy over me. If I'm not experiencing His grace, the problem is that my faith is weak. I don't need to expend my energy to earn His favor, I need to grow in faith. I grow in faith by speaking the truth of His word, not relying on my feelings to be my foundation.

Through Jesus, I get to celebrate the glory of God! The Greek word for rejoice means "boast." I get to boast in experiencing the power and presence of the Father because of what Jesus has done for me.

Vs. 3-5 ~ Not only that, but my suffering takes on a whole new meaning. It is no longer something I have to fear...it is the avenue through which I experience the ongoing ever present absolute confidence of God's love pouring into and overflowing from my heart. The word "hope" in the Bible does not mean "wishful thinking." It means "absolute certainty." I experience God's outpouring of His love as the Holy Spirit continually pours it into my heart...and that comes from God growing my character, producing the fruit of the Spirit in me...and that comes as I learn endurance that He promises to help me grow in...and that comes from suffering. Suffering is no longer seen as punishment, but as training. I used to train for triathlons and marathons. I knew that I would have to suffer pain...but that pain would grow my endurance to handle the run...and that made me a stronger person overall...and that gave me hope of finishing the race. Am I more willing to endure for a silly race with a 50-cent medal than I am to endure suffering for the name of Jesus who suffered everything for me, where the reward is peace, grace, hope, and love for all eternity? O Lord, please help me to see my suffering through the lens of Your word!!!

Vs. 6-8 ~ Let me not forget that while I was still weak...in fact, I wasn't even born yet...Christ died for me, the ungodly. I was born into sin with death in my DNA. But Jesus gave Himself for me...even while I stood against Him. Some people are willing to give their lives for a cause, like in war. But the love of Jesus is like being a Jew and giving up your life for a Nazi, so that he could live. Who would do that? That's what Jesus did for me. That's how much the Father loves me.

The FATHER showed HIS love for me, His enemy, by having His Son die for me. I have 2 beautiful daughters. There is no way I would sacrifice their lives for anyone, let alone someone who hated them. Not even if I knew that they would be raised again. Not for an enemy. I can't even comprehend the depth of God's love. But O Lord, please help me to believe it!!!

Vs. 9-11 ~ Because of the blood of Jesus poured out for me, I am justified. I am treated just as if I had the perfection of Jesus, just as if I was the one who never sinned and always obeyed. Lord, why is this so hard for me to grasp??? My head gets it, but every time I'm aware

that I fail You by speaking words I shouldn't speak or acting selfishly...not to mention all the times I don't even realize I've failed You...I fear that I'm just a disappointment to You. And I realize once again that I need to repent more for my lack of faith in Your grace, love, compassion, and forgiveness than even my wrong actions or words.

When I realize that I'm living in shame that You already took away, please help me to:

- 1. Repent ~ Confess my sin and turn away from it.*
- 2. Relabel ~ Call it what it is...lack of faith in Your mercy and grace.*
- 3. Replace ~ Instead of dwelling on my inadequacy, remember and speak Your word that says "There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), and so many others like it.*
- 4. Refocus ~ Instead of focusing on my inadequacy and shame, focus my heart and mind on You and Your goodness.*

O Lord, I will remember and focus on the truth that You have justified me and saved me. I will NEVER face the wrath of God because my sins were nailed to the cross! I have peace with You. I stand in Your grace. I am reconciled to You, not because of what I've done, but because of what You've done. And so I boast, not in myself, but in Jesus Christ and my Father in heaven.

Through Jesus, I have received peace, justification, love constantly being poured into my heart, salvation, hope, grace, reconciliation...and so much more. The only thing I bring is belief. I believe You...and even my faith is a gift from You. So when I'm not trusting these things, instead of trying to do penance or earn Your favor, please help me to look for where I'm not trusting You, and repent of that. Shame never gets me any closer to You. It drives me to avoid You out of fear. Arrogance never gets me closer to You. It drives me to think I don't need Your grace. So I humble myself before You in praise of Your goodness. I "boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV).