

**Frontlines**  
**Week 4: Guilt**  
**Romans 5:1-2**

Types of Guilt

- Rural guilt
- Survivor's guilt
- Parental guilt
- Financial guilt
- Guilt for what we've done
- Guilt for what we haven't done
- Guilt because you're exhausted
- Guilt because you're not exhausted enough
- Guilt because you think you're too much
- Guilt because you think you're not enough
- Guilt for feeling guilty about so many things

Guilt might be one of the most universal experiences. We all know what it's like to feel guilty for something we've said or done, or didn't say or do. And we usually think of guilt as a negative emotion, and it definitely can be, but in a way, **guilt can be a gift.**

It's a signal that something's not right. We know our actions or words left a wound. We didn't do what we said we'd do, or did what we said we wouldn't do. We lied to someone, lost our temper, betrayed trust, hurt someone. Guilt can be a warning light on the dashboard of our soul that we need to make it right. We need to reach out to someone and ask for their forgiveness.

Guilt can be a gift in that it spurs us on to do the next right thing. **But, it can also be a burden.** Unresolved guilt can settle into our soul and eat away at us. It can leak into other relationships and change the way we act around people.

Guilt becomes a burden when it stems from trying to live up to the unrealistic expectations others put on us, or that we put on ourselves. The mom who feels guilty for taking an hour to herself. Feeling guilty for resting on a Saturday afternoon instead of working around the house. Maybe you look at your current situation and are like, "This is NOT where I wanted to be in life."

Guilt can be a gift, but it can also be a burden. It can motivate us to do the right thing or make something right, but it can also leave us feel like we're drowning in regrets and shame. So, what can we do with our sense of guilt?

**Deny it** – "I'm fine." Nothing is wrong. Didn't do anything that bad.

**Justify it** – “If you only knew what they did!” I was under a lot of stress. We try to make ourselves feel better and that we were in the right.

**Numb it** – Stay busy, keep scrolling, shopping, drinking, bingeing, working.

**Outperform it** – Be better, do more, work harder, prove my worth and try to please everybody.

**Punish ourselves for it** – If I just feel bad enough for long enough, my guilt will go away. Beat ourselves up.

If you’ve tried any of these coping mechanisms to get rid of your guilt, you know they can’t actually take it away. They might be able to distract you from it for a little bit, but eventually, the guilt will come flooding back. But, the Gospel offers a better solution for our guilt:

**Grace.**

You see, the Gospel is honest about our sin. Romans 3:23 says that we’ve all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We’ve all gone our own way and done our own thing and acted outside of how we were created to live. And our sin breaks our relationship with others, but it also breaks our relationship with God.

And justice is demanded for our sin. Our actions added to the brokenness and pain of this world and something needs to be done about it. And we can try to fix it ourselves, but Scripture says that God did it for us. Jesus took our guilt to the cross so we don’t have to carry the weight of it anymore.

We can be motivated by it to do the right thing, but we don’t have to be burdened by carrying it around with us wherever we go. We don’t have to try to deal with it ourselves. We don’t have to live up to unrealistic expectations, hoping we can earn the approval of others. Jesus took our sin, our shame, our guilt to the cross so we don’t have to bear it anymore.

That’s grace, and **grace lets me lay down what Jesus took up for me.**

Our text today as some of my favorite words that speaks to this...**Romans 5:1-2 (READ)**

Verse 1 says that, through faith in Christ, we have been justified. I love that word. The New Living Translation says, “We have been made right in God’s sight.” And that’s really what the word **“justified” means. It’s to be made “just as if I’d never sinned.”**

And the Apostle Paul isn’t saying that this will happen ONE DAY, he’s saying that, if you are in Christ, this is who you are today, right now. The text says that you **HAVE** been justified. We **HAVE BEEN** made right with God. Which means, we **ARE** justified and we **ARE** made right with God.

Jesus took our sin, our shame, our guilt to the cross. He took the punishment that we deserved so that we wouldn't have to and His resurrection gives us new life. In the verse right before ours, Paul writes, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." To make us just as if we'd never sinned.

The good news of the Gospel is Jesus taking what He didn't deserve to give us what we don't deserve. And so grace lets me lay down what Jesus took up for me. I can make amends when I've hurt others. I can ask for their forgiveness and make it right. But I don't have to carry my guilt around with me anymore. I've been forgiven and set free from it. I've been justified through faith in Jesus, so I don't have to hide anymore.

Father's Day – Grateful for my dad who helped shape me into the man that I am today. But also grateful for the Spiritual Fathers in my life. Men who have intentionally poured into me as a husband, father, pastor. Helped me grow in my faith.

Bo Barron – Early days of ministry, said something in a sermon that revealed my lack of understanding about God's grace. My words gave the impression that God simply tolerates us. Bo came up to me afterwards and said, "That was an interesting idea you presented. Where did you find that in Scripture?"

We met for breakfast that week and over the next several months, Bo and I walked through Scripture together. He helped me understand grace and what it means to walk in freedom. Our time together shaped the man that I am today and the first verse we studied together was this one. Romans 5:1-2.

Bo helped me understand justification and what it means in the lives of those who put their faith in Jesus and follow Him. And we see two of these outcomes in our text today. First, because of our justification, being made just as if I'd never sinned through faith in Jesus, **we have peace with God.**

In our sin, we are enemies of God, choosing our ways over His. Fighting for our kingdom instead of living in His. But our faith in Jesus brings peace between us and God. The war between us is over, the conflict is resolved. We are no longer God's enemies, He calls us friends.

The second outcome of justification is that we now **have access to the Father.** We can approach God in prayer with freedom and confidence. Our Heavenly Father doesn't merely tolerate us, He throws up the doors and welcomes us. Our faith in Jesus gives us full access to the Father who loves us.

And we stand before Him, not on our own merit and the good things we've done. We stand before Him on grace, God's unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor. And we enjoy every spiritual blessing there is to enjoy through Christ today. Love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness... We enjoy these now, even while we wait for the full glory of God to be revealed one day.

As one commentary put it, "Grace gives a foothold in the door that one day will swing wide to permit the enjoyment of the glorious presence of the Almighty, a privilege to be enjoyed forever-more." (The Expositor's Commentary)

By faith in Jesus, you are justified, made just as if you've never sinned at all. You are at peace with God, no longer His enemy, but His friend. And you have access to the Father, who pours out His blessing on you both now and for all eternity.

In Christ, that is who you are! So, if God is no longer holding your sin against you, then why are you? Why am I? Why do we continue to walk in guilt? Not the kind of guilt that motivates us to do the right thing and make amends for what we've done, but the kind of guilt that weighs on our souls, robbing us of the blessings of a new life in Christ?

I think somewhere along the way, we got this idea that feeling guilty and following Jesus go hand in hand. That you're not doing it right if you don't feel that way. But Scripture says that it is for freedom that you have been set free. Continuing to carry our guilt isn't a sign of humility or a godly life. If anything, it actually diminishes the sufficiency of grace. It's saying that Jesus' work on the cross wasn't enough and that I need to carry my guilt, too.

But grace invites us to lay it down because Jesus already took it up and carried it to the cross for us. And now, we can walk in the freedom of God's grace. We can boast in His glory and good work in our lives, not our own. And we can help others experience the same grace that we've found in Him so they no longer have to carry the weight of their guilt, either.

I want to read Paul's words to us one more time as we close...(READ Romans 5:1-2)

The Gospel doesn't tell guilty people to try harder. It tells guilty people where to find rest. Not rest that we can enjoy someday...when you've finally become a better person, when you get it right all the time, when you've punished yourself enough for the things you've done...the Gospel invites us to find rest for our souls today, right here, right now. And it's all through Jesus and our faith in Him.

Ready to find that rest? To be free from your guilt and shame?

Invitation/Response