

**Died**

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:6-8

While we were still weak, Christ died for the ungodly. God's power and presence is in the life of one who has been redeemed. In contrast, weakness is what identifies one who is without Jesus. The ungodly are weak. This is ironic, since many times, those without Christ seem to present themselves as the most powerful (remember Psalm 2). Yet, even in our oblivious weakness, Jesus came to die for us. While we were still sinners—unrighteous—Jesus died for us. He gave his life for those who rejected, hated, ignored, despised, beat, sinned against, and placed him on the cross. It might be that a person would die for one who loved them, but to die for one who hated you? Death is the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). Every person is a sinner (Romans 3:23). There is no one righteous (Romans 3:10). There is only one way for us to be made right before God—the death of Jesus. For us to be forgiven, Jesus had to die. Our sin had to be punished by death. And so, Jesus hung on the cross, with our sins placed upon him—the sinless for the sin-filled, the Creator for the created, the righteous for the unrighteous—so that he could bring us to God. This is how God shows his love for the world that he created. This is the demonstration of love—Christ died for us. Do you know Jesus? Not do you know *about* him—do you *know* him? Have you realized that his love was offered to you by his death on the cross? Have you found the forgiveness that comes from repentance and acceptance of his life in your life? Have you given your life to the One who gave his life for you?

**Saturday, January 16, 2021****Reconciliation**

*Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.* Romans 5:9-11

“Justification” is the act whereby a believer is declared righteous by God. “Reconciliation” is an exchange. One speaks of a legal type of declaration, the other speaks of the intimacy of relationship. As we have seen, we were enemies of God. The relationship was one of animosity and hatred. Through Jesus we are able to have reconciliation. In 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, we see that this is God reconciling himself to the world. He changes the relationship from animosity to friendship. The death of Jesus allows for this reconciled relationship with God. It is this reconciled relationship that allows us to know the presence of God in our lives. It is this reconciled relationship that allows us to rejoice too, as moment by moment we live in a new relationship with the One we hated. I think that we can take this reconciliation for granted. The cost for this intimacy was the life of Jesus. The power of this reconciled relationship is awesome. How do you live in the reconciled relationship with God? How does it impact your day-to-day rejoicing?



Pastor Chuck Cervenka

**Rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of God**

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.* Romans 5:1-11

Monday, January 11, 2021

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## Justification

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

Please read Romans 3:21-25 today. Justification can be best understood as a declaration of righteousness. God declares that the repentant sinner is righteous in his sight. This does not mean that the sinner is made righteous. Paul makes it clear that we are declared righteous (justified) by faith alone in Christ alone through grace alone. There is nothing we can do to be righteous before God. He is a holy God, and we have sin in our lives that must be forgiven. Our plight is hopeless apart from God reaching into our situation. The one who is not righteous cannot stand before God. The unrighteous is at enmity with God. There is one way that we may obtain peace with God. We must be declared righteous. We must experience justification. The source of our justification is found in God and his grace (3:24). We are justified by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus (3:24). Jesus is our sacrifice of atonement. Faith is the instrument of our justification. Faith is how we receive being declared righteous. The sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient for all to be declared righteous, but only those who by faith believe will be justified (3:25). Are you at peace with God? Have you been declared righteous by God? If not, turn to him today and receive forgiveness and a new life. If so, then what difference does it make in your daily relationship with God as you walk with him in peace?

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

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## Hope

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

Faith gains us access into the realm of grace. Please read Romans 5:12-21. Verse 21 allows us to see that there is a place where grace reigns. It is that realm of grace in which those who have been justified are given access. Paul says that we stand in this grace realm. Before justification, we stand before God in Adam. We are condemned and guilty. We are sinners by nature and by choice. The sin nature has been passed to us. We are depraved. Not that we are as bad as we could be, rather that every part of us has been impacted by sin. After justification, we stand before God in Christ. Instead of standing before God condemned, we stand before him in the righteousness of Christ. The old has gone and the new has come! As we stand before God justified, at peace with him, we begin to see how we can rejoice in this new-found freedom! What was hopeless is now filled with hope. We rejoice in the absolute certainty (biblical hope) of the glory of God. We rejoice in seeing God—seeing his glory and his majesty. We rejoice that we have been set free and that we have the presence of God in our lives. We have been sealed for that moment in time when we will see him face to face. We rejoice in the present and future aspects of being in his presence. How does hope capture you? What is it that you hope in? Does what you hope in allow you to experience eternal rejoicing?

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

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## Sufferings

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*  
Romans 5:3-5

Paul teaches that we can rejoice in our sufferings. The word for rejoice, here and in verse two, is a word that is difficult to translate. It can be translated as “boast” or “glory.” To “rejoice in our sufferings” can be understood as “joyfully confident amid our afflictions.” Paul then goes on to give the reason that we can be confident amid our sufferings—because that confidence, as we go through the sufferings, produces even stronger and greater hope! It is not just hope for the future that allows us to rejoice, it is current hope in the presence of God in our lives in this sin-filled realm. This realm is dominated by Satan and his attack against the kingdom of God and the body of Christ. In that regard, all our sufferings as believers are on Christ's behalf. When we can see that we are suffering as an attack against Christ, we can be boldly confident that Christ will defend us and empower us to stand. It will grow our endurance and shape our character. We will learn to glory in our afflictions so that we can reveal the power of God and experience his presence in even greater ways. This is not easy stuff. This is tough. It is hard to see that our sufferings can produce greater hope in us. But the consequence of not seeing our sufferings this way is that we will slip into doubt, hopelessness, fear, and despair. Through Christ, we can see God working through our sufferings to make us even more confident in the hope of glory, and we can rejoice—even in this sin-filled realm. How do you see your sufferings? How can you lean even more on the love of God and allow yourself to know his presence in your suffering?

Thursday, January 14, 2021

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## Love

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*  
Romans 5:3-5

God's love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit! This is the idea of lavish love. It is an abundance of his love. It is a constant pouring of his love into the lives of those who have been declared righteous. It is this pouring into our lives the love of God that allows us to know that we will not be put to shame when we see him face to face. When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid because they were ashamed (Genesis 3:10). Sin causes us to be shamed before the Lord. Peace with God, though justification, allows us to stand before the Lord without shame. It is real hope—hope that allows us to rejoice in God's glory. Not only have we been declared righteous, but the love of God that we rejected has now been poured into our hearts and the Holy Spirit has been given to us. Consider the truths found in these verses. If you have been saved by God, you have hope that you can be in his presence forever, free from the presence of sin. *You have his love being constantly, abundantly, lavishly, and endlessly poured into your heart—even after you were his enemy!!* You have God indwelling you in the Person of the Holy Spirit. The presence and the power of God is in your life. What is it that you are focused on today? Are you overwhelmed by something? Stop for a moment. Ask God to wash these truths over your heart and your life. Calm yourself in his presence. Sense his love in the very core of who you are. You are a child of God. You are loved by him. He is with you and you will never be put to shame in his presence. You can endure whatever is in your life because of his presence and power in your life.