

**Romans 5:1-5** *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Blessed by the Triune God

1. We have peace with God
2. We stand in grace
3. We boast in hope

The boy's name was Jim and the dog's name was Jimmie. Let me explain how that came to be. Jim and Jimmie were born on the same day. The day that Jim was born the neighbors had a litter of puppies, black cocker spaniels, and so the neighbors gave a puppy to the family of Jim who was born on that same day. Jim and Jimmie grew up together. Where Jim was, Jimmie was. And where Jimmie was, Jim was. They were together for eight years. Jim and Jimmie were inseparable. One day, the two of them were playing out in the front of the house, and has had been done a thousand times before, Jim threw a stick on into the street for Jimmie the dog to fetch it. And just as Jim said, "Fetch it Jimmie," a car came barreling down the street much too fast. Fifty, sixty, seventy miles an hour. The wheels screeched. Jim screeched. The pavement screeched. And there was sudden silence. The car door opened. The young man got out. The two of them walked to the front of the car and there was Jim's dead dog. The driver of the car muttered, "I am sorry. I am really sorry. I didn't mean to do it. I will get you another dog. I'll get you another dog, that is what I will do." Jim said, "I don't want another dog." Jim picked up his dog and walked back to the house. Sometimes, you make mistakes that are so bad that you can't make up for them. (Edward Markquardt at [www.sermonsfromseattle.com](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com))

Imagine being that young man. The guilt. The shame. We are him. Every little dirty thought, unkind word, or selfish motive makes us guilty before God. Understand, God is never indifferent towards sin. If we are guilty, we stand under God's condemnation. God could rightly send his angel armies to declare a jihad on us, our families and all we have.

But instead of declaring war on us, God has declared peace. We are blessed by the Triune God with peace. *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Justification is the declaration of not guilty. In the courtroom, we are on trial. We are guilty of all kinds of things. But our defense attorney, Jesus Christ, has stepped in and taking the punishment we deserve. He has already paid the price for our sins with his death on the cross. Paul taught earlier in this letter, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23-24) The Judge, God the Father, has declared us not guilty – justified.

So we are at peace. *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Peace – in Jesus' native language, *Shalom* – is more than just not having troubles or being free from attacks. It has to do more with everything in life falling into place. Some have called it wholeness. It is when there is nothing to disturb our well-being. It is peace with God. Before, there was hostility between God and us. Now we are at peace. We can stand face to face with God and have nothing to fear.

And how did this happen? *through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Would you ever consider doing such a thing as God did? Would you give up your son, would you turn him away from your house so that the drunk driver who killed your daughter can live in his room and eat his food? Not in a million years! And yet this was the length that God went to so that our sins would be forgiven and that we would have full access to him! Why did God do it? Grace!

"People say, 'I hope I don't die while I'm sinning.' People like that don't know what sin is. Of course you're going to die while you're sinning. All of us are far short of what we ought to be all the time (3:23). See, the law tells us how we are to be and not to be, and what we ought to do and not to do. Not being what we ought to be is also a sin. The law demands perfection (Leviticus 19:2). If you're not perfect you're living in sin. But even if you're sinning all the time, you're forgiven all the time. You're living inside the forgiveness of sins." (Siegbert Becker, Commentary on Romans, p. 63) That's justification. That's peace.

God wants you to have that peace. We close almost every service with the blessing in which the Lord says he wants to give you peace. Believe that. We have peace with God and we stand in grace.

Paul goes on, *through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand*. No one of us can just walk off the street in Washington D.C. and enter the president's office in the White House. Only his closest advisors or people who have made appointments to see the president can do this. Access to God is limited also. But Jesus has opened the door to God's undeserved kindness for us, and that door remains open. We have free and unhindered access to nothing less than the blessings of the Lord of lords and King of kings.

So now we stand in grace. God says to us, "You are an ugly person. I can't stand to look at you. Your breath stinks, you're out of shape, and you aren't worthy of me. Here, take this outfit of righteousness and put it on. Keep it on. Take these works of my Son. Take this holiness of Christ. Take my love." That's grace.

Paul says that being justified by faith, we stand in grace. It's like a room. We are in a room and all the walls, the floor and the ceiling are all grace, God's underserved love. That's where we stand now by faith. And so nothing can get into that room that isn't part of God's love for us. Nothing. We stand in grace.

On this Trinity Sunday we see how blessed we are by the Triune God. We have peace with God, we stand in grace and we can also boast in hope.

*And we boast in the hope of the glory of God*. Boasting is not usually the kind of quality that Scripture would promote, but here Paul is not saying that we boast about ourselves. We boast in the hope of the glory of God. Back in chapter three Paul said that we fall short of the glory of God. What we couldn't achieve on our own because we are sinful, we have through Christ. We can boast in the hope of the glory of God, that is, we can be certain of going to heaven.

Paul tells us, *And hope does not put us to shame*. "I could tell you, 'I have a confident hope that when I get home today there will be a Cadillac in my driveway,' but when I get home today there will still be an empty driveway. Then you would ask me, 'Was there a Cadillac in your driveway when you got home?' And I'd have to say, 'No,' and feel like a fool for boasting like that." (Becker p. 64) Hope puts you to shame when it isn't true. But this hope will not put us to shame. It is certain. With faith in Jesus we can boast in hope.

*Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope*. Sadly, the translation isn't consistent. The word for "glory" is the same word for "boast" in the previous verse. We boast in hope, but we also boast in sufferings. Why because we have peace with God and we stand in grace. Inside that room of grace, God let's nothing come into that room that is not part of his grace. So if he allows suffering in our lives, that's part of grace.

Suppose you walked into work one morning and found a pink slip on your desk. How would you handle that situation? Or picture yourself sitting in the doctor's office, and the doctor comes in with a serious look on his face and says, "It's serious. It's the size of a football." How are you feeling about now? Or picture yourself walking off an airplane and there to meet you are two pastors, who tell you that three of the people whom you love most in the world have lost their lives in a tragic car accident. How will you respond? When tragedy strikes, it is not uncommon even for a Christian to wonder if God cares about us.

How should we react to it? Paul says that we can rejoice about it. Why? Well, look what it produces. The word for suffering literally means "pressure." Just as an athlete puts his muscles under the pressure of dumbbells and barbells so that they will develop, God puts us under the pressures of life so that we grow stronger in him, and enjoy more fully the peace and hope he gives us through faith in Jesus. Sufferings, too, are a blessing of the Triune God.

Today, we celebrate Trinity Sunday. We give thanks for our Triune God because through faith in Jesus we can have peace with God, we stand in grace and we boast in hope. *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us*.