

**“Confidence when Life is Challenging” – Part 1:
Finding Hope in the Midst of Difficult Times
Mount of Olives | January 4, 2026 | Romans 5:1-5
Pastor John Steward**

Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father, the coming year is full of hope and uncertainty. Whatever the year holds for us, though, we trust You, and we place every day of this year in Your care knowing that, as in the past, You are with us, caring for us with constant love. Therefore, we place ourselves into Your keeping and dedicate our lives to Your service through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Message Notes

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Study Questions

Read Romans 5:1-11

(ICEBREAKER – getting started)

1. Can you think of a time when you felt utterly helpless? Explain the situation. How did that make you feel? How was the situation resolved? Did anyone intervene? If so, who and how did they help?

(OBSERVATION – What does the text say?)

1. As you read Romans 5:1-11, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?

2. How would you summarize these verses in one sentence?

(INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?)

1. In theology, the word, “justified” can be loosely translated as *“just as if I’d never sinned.”* According to verse 1, what is the basis for our justification with God?

2. Based on verse 2, how do you think Jesus Christ changes a person's standing with God?
3. Read verses 2-3. Based on these verses, what are some reasons that a Christian should rejoice? Are these reasons for which you might rejoice?
4. In verses 3-5, we learn about severe trials, suffering and disappointment. What good things can result from these? Has this been your experience? Please explain.
5. Verse 5 tells us that hope never disappoints. Why do you think this is the case? Describe a time when hope brought you through a difficult situation.
6. According to verses 6-8, how has God demonstrated His love for us?
7. Read verses 7-8. What comparisons can be made between people giving their lives for others and Christ giving His life for all people?
8. Read verse 9. According to this verse, what aspect of Christ's death do you think justifies a person in God's sight? What is significant about Jesus' blood being shed for us?
9. Why is a "blood sacrifice" important (see Genesis 3:21, Leviticus 17:11&14, Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah 53:5, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:22)?
10. According to verses 9-10, how did God remove the barrier between Himself and all people? Knowing that Jesus did this for you, how does that make you feel? Please explain.
11. Read verse 11. How does knowing your relationship with God has been restored and that He even considers you a friend make you feel? Is it surprising to you that God wants to be your friend? Why or why not?

(APPLICATION – What does this mean to you?)

1. Knowing God has demonstrated His love to us through Jesus' death, how does this impact your relationship with God?
2. Knowing that Jesus did something for you that you could have never done for yourself, what can you do to demonstrate that same kind of love for somebody else this week? What can you do for somebody this week to demonstrate the heart of God?