

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Romans: God's Power Salvation

TITLE: The Peace of Justification

SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:1-5

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The book of Romans is a masterfully written exposition of the gospel of God. Without a doubt, it is the foundation of authentic Christianity and the most articulate, systematic understanding of our faith found in the Bible. Countless lives have been changed by the truth found in this ancient letter, and it continues to change lives today. Interestingly enough, Romans was written to Christians. So, while the good news found in Romans can certainly bring people to faith in Jesus, the actual focus is on how the gospel helps Christians think rightly about God, life, faith, and Christian community. If you want to grow to know God more personal and intimate way, this letter is for you!

The Roman Empire ruled the known world during the first century, and the Empire had its own language. Caesar called himself "lord" and "savior." Others called Caesar "son of God" and "king of kings." When Caesar won a battle, the announcement of his victory was called "gospel." For a Roman citizen, loyalty and allegiance to Caesar and his empire was called *pistis*, which is the Greek word the New Testament translates as "faith." And the banner over all of this is the Latin phrase Pax Romana, which means The Roman Peace. Rome's peace was peace by means of force and violence. However, the Hebrew view of peace was very different.

The Hebrew idea of *shalom* was the fabric of Eden. It's what Adam and Eve inhaled and exhaled as they walked with God in the garden. *Shalom* is about harmony, oneness, welfare, and potentiality—all under God's kind rule. The Roman view of peace needs war and violence, but the Hebrew view of peace is something that God hardwired into creation.

However, in our experience, the peace that we were designed for is often so elusive. Relational peace seems just out of reach. Political peace is just a dream. Financial peace is evasive. Spiritual peace is only intermittent. So what do we do? How do we taste and experience the Eden-like peace God has designed us for? And how should true peace infiltrate every arena of life?

In Romans 5:1, Paul says that because we are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, we now have peace with God. It's the new and unchanging status (or "standing" in 5:2) of our relationship with him. However, how Paul talks about the experience of this peace is unique. He says that we should boast. And this is strange because in the past two chapters, he has condemned boasting, but now he encourages it. Why and how?

Boasting is the act of expressing pride in something. It means to put confidence in a thing or vocalize the value that something has to you. In Romans 3 and 4, Paul downplays boasting because we don't bring anything to our own justification. But now, as we seek to live out of our

justification and right relationship with God, he encourages boasting. This is why he says, “We boast (or ‘rejoice’) in the hope of the glory of God” (5:2). He then goes on to say that we should boast and rejoice in our sufferings (5:3). And this idea of boasting is how we are invited to experience peace with God and with others.

Boasting is the key that (un)locks the experience of true peace.

Meaning, if we do the wrong kind of boasting, we won’t rightly understand and sense the peace that is available in Jesus. But, if we do the right kind of boasting - rejoicing in, delighting in, having humble confidence in the gospel—this right kind of boasting unlocks the door to rich and sweet experiences of God’s peace in your life. And all of these things are ultimately true in and because of the gospel.

Paul writes in Galatians 6, “God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Meaning, the gospel is the supreme focal point of all Christian rejoicing and boasting, and boasting in anything else must serve our boasting in Jesus. Similarly, in Colossians 1, Paul writes that Jesus has “made peace through the blood of his cross.” Jesus took Rome’s peace through violence and crucifixion’ and turned it upside down. He was enthroned as Lord and Savior and King of kings, not by means of force and oppression, but by taking all of our rebellion upon himself. He has won the battle over sin and death, and the announcement of his victory is called gospel. Now, to be a citizen of his kingdom, we owe him all of our loyalty and allegiance—all of our faith. And when we understand happened in the cross and resurrection, peace is ours. And when we boast supremely in Jesus, our experience of God’s peace is tangible and transformative in our lives.

For Discussion ...

1. What are the kinds of things that normally rob you of peace with God? Why?
2. Who is someone you know who knows God’s peace intimately because they “rejoice in their sufferings” like Romans 5:3 says?
3. What do you “boast” in? What should “Christian boasting” look like in your life?
4. What stood out to you the most from this sermon?
5. In what context or relationship in your life does God want you to be a peacemaker?
6. Personally, what is your favorite part of Romans 5:1-5? Why?