

Salvation: God's Love Forever

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, June 16, 2013

'Having Been Justified By Faith . . .'

THE 'WHY'
OF
SALVATION

In our last study, we introduced the subject of the "when" of salvation. We stated that our salvation can be viewed in terms of its "past-tense", "present-tense" and "future-tense" impacts. And we began by considering the "past-tense" impact of our salvation--an impact that is accomplished by "justification".

THE 'WHAT'
OF
SALVATION

Justification is what we might call a 'legal' declaration from the highest possible court. Through our faith in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus on the cross, God declares us "no longer guilty" in His sight; and more than that, He declares us 100% righteous. It involves a legal declaration (Romans 8:33) of genuine righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21) by imputation of Jesus' own righteousness to our account (Romans 5:18-19) by means of faith as opposed to works (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:19-25). The wonderful result of 'justification by faith' is that when God looks upon us in Christ, He no longer sees the guilt of our past. He only sees us as new creations who are as righteous in His sight as His own Son (2 Corinthians 5:17). What great news this is! We are no longer the prisoners of our past! We are free to follow Jesus in complete newness of life (Philippians 3:12-14).

THE 'HOW'
OF
SALVATION

But that's not all there is to say about the impact that 'justification by faith' has on us. This morning, let's look at Romans 5:1-11, and at what it tells us of the seven ongoing blessings of being declared righteous in God's sight by faith.

THE 'WHO'
OF
SALVATION

I. PEACE WITH GOD (v. 1a).

Paul writes, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." The peace that is spoken of here refers to 'an end of hostilities'--peace between two parties that were at odds with one another. Every man or woman alive today needs to have peace with God. And one of the great blessings of justification is that of finally having genuine peace with God. We're no longer in a state of enmity toward our Creator. As Hebrews 10:22 invites us, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

THE 'WHEN'
OF
SALVATION

II. A PERMANENT STANDING OF FAVOR BEFORE GOD (vv. 1b-2a).

Paul writes that we have this peace with God "through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand . . ." The verbs that are used here--"have access", "stand"--are in the perfect tense in the original language. This indicates a completed action. We now have permanent access through Christ to the grace of God by faith. We can always come to Him for His favor. And what's more, we will *always* be in His favor. He will never be hostile toward us again. We now live in the condition that Jesus promised to bring about for us when He said, "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (John 16:26-27).

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THE 'WHERE'
OF
SALVATION

III. HOPE IN THE GLORY OF GOD (v. 2b).

In this state of grace, Paul writes that we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." One of the truly great blessings of being justified before God is that we now have a whole new outlook. Our prospect is that of being sharers together with Christ in His eternal glory (1 John 3:2; John 17:22-23). And this prospect is one that is certain and sure (Romans 8:28-30). "Justification" and "future glory" are

THE 'WONDER'
OF
SALVATION

bundled together now in a 'packaged deal'. Because the first has been accomplished, the second is now absolutely sure to follow.

IV. JOY IN TRIALS (vv. 3-4).

In the context of our justification by faith, Paul goes on to say, "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." Because we are now righteous in God's sight, we know for certain that times of trial are not the outpouring of God's wrath upon our sin. Jesus already *experienced* God's wrath for us. Rather, trials are things that our sovereign God permits to come upon us in order to make us grow into the glorious image of Christ that He has predestined us to share. You can compare this passage with James 1:1-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-9. For us, what begins with tribulation always ends in hope. Every trial brings assured victory in its tow.

V. CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S LOVE (vv. 5-8).

Of the hope that we have in times of trial, Paul affirms in verse 5, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." This speaks of a confident assurance in God's great love for us. This love is something we can 'objectify', "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (vv. 6-8) As Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for His friends" (John 15:13).

VI. SALVATION FROM GOD'S WRATH (vv. 9-10).

Paul says, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Because God's grace to us when we were His enemies is a greater act of grce than when we are His children, Paul's words "much more then" means that this an argument from the greater to the lesser. If He so loved us when we were still sinners, then He will surely spare us from His wrath against sin when we have been reconciled to Him. In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Paul said, "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." To sinners formerly condemned before a holy God, no declaration could be more wonderful to hear!

VII. EXULTATION IN GOD HIMSELF (v. 11).

As if all these other realities were not enough, Paul adds this: "And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." Of all the blessings that come from being declared righteous by God, this is, by far, the most wonderful of all! We will exult in the very Person of God--forever and ever--through the One who made it all possible by His death for us. We will eternally rejoice before the Father with the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. As Jesus told His disciples, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

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A believer was once pressured by a member of a cult to believe its teachings and join its organization. This Christian responded, however, in a surprising way.

He told the cult member all the things that the Scriptures say he had as a result of being justified by faith in Christ; and then asked him, “You got anything better than that to offer me?” He waited . . . but nothing better really *could* be brought forth!

Look again at the list! What more could be added to it? What could be better than what is now already ours in Jesus Christ--“having been justified by faith”?

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.