

SHAMELESS HOPE

By John Richardson

SCRIPTURE

Romans 5:1–5

[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] 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. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] 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.

OBSERVATION

These verses open with “therefore” which connects our thoughts to the previous content. Believers are justified (a pardon from God), not made righteous, but declared righteous by God. Because believers are justified, they have peace with God (Acts 10:36, Isaiah 32:17)—moved from enemies of God and His kingdom to followers of the Lord God, all made possible by the work of Jesus Christ. Everything in this text rests on the Christ’s work of redemption.

- Paul writes about Christ as the doorway to faith (opening the eyes of the blind) and the substance of faith (the inheritance until we obtain it). Christ is everything. As recipients of grace, believers are now able to stand. Grace is not just a gift from God (getting what we don’t deserve), it is the strength to stand. Grace is the stance we take to worship God (v. 2).
- Paul introduces hope in a very specific way: hope is attached to the glory of God. Hope is the desire for something and the expectation of receiving it. Without proper proportions, hope brings no peace. If one believes nothing lies beyond this life, then hope is swallowed up. If another believes there is something beyond this life but has no expectation of obtaining it, then hope and peace crumble. It is through the work of Christ that one can have hope and peace because Jesus accomplished what man could not (v. 2).
- The hope of glory shared by Paul brings one to this question: How does one arrive at hope? Paul places the first step on the path of hope as joy in suffering. Joy in suffering (knowing that the present pain persists only for a moment compared to eternity) builds endurance. Endurance over time (repeated wrestles with suffering grounded in joy) brings forth character. Character (the establishment of response to suffering) results in hope. Faith is much less like a fly swatter that removes

unwanted pests; faith is the cane in life that helps a man continue to walk with a limp (vv. 3-4).

- Finally, this hope will not disappoint. The love of God has been poured in the heart of every believer through the Holy Spirit. Possessing the love of God and hope of spending eternity with Christ is worth our current suffering. The wrestles of “social distancing” and fear of infection do not compare to the hope of glory that Christ is using to strengthen our faith (v. 5).

OBEDIENCE

How will believers endure this momentary affliction with joy? Christ gives us peace and hope. Are we walking in the proper proportions of hope? Do we believe that God allowed our current circumstances as a chance to press our faith and move us more to the point of trusting Christ?

- This week outline the suffering that you are currently experiencing and how you will rejoice in the Lord, seeing the salvation from Christ, the grace to stand and rejoice for the hope of spending forever with God.
- Measure your hope by looking at the way you respond to people and events around you. Are you giving grace like Christ? Are you moving more toward hope and letting go of the things here that seek to bring peace?
- How will you lead others to hope and peace? Set a path toward praise that starts at the beginning of the day, praise that is not only private. We have a personal relationship with Jesus, but we do not have a private relationship with Him.

PRAYER

Ask God for peace. God has given you Christ (if you are a follower of Him) and He will give you continued grace. Cry out to God in praise in your situations, sharing that you will endure because of the hope set before you.