

## **The Amazing Benefits of Justification (Part 1)**

Romans 5:1-11

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*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher*

*Countryside Bible Church*

We come for the first time to Paul's fifth chapter in this magnificent letter to the churches in Rome and really to a new section of the letter. As I thought about what's in the passage we will study together this morning, I was reminded of an event that happened several months before Sheila and I were married. Sheila's mom, like all moms of the bride, embarked on a journey to find the perfect mom's dress for the wedding day. And for reasons that I and most of the men here don't understand, what delighted her most when she found it was not that she found it, but yes, you guessed it, that she found it on sale. This was like a wonderful thing, so she paid for the dress and the clerk draped it in the dark plastic bag that was the custom for that particular shop, and Mom took the bag and was gleefully on her way, having been able to check one more thing off of the wedding checklist.

A few days later Sheila's dad saw, in their closet, this unopened bag that had been hanging there since she got home. It hadn't been opened since the clerk had tied it together and Dad decided that he needed to take a peek at what she had billed as the mother of all bargains. And so, he untied the plastic and he pulled it up off of the garment, and he was absolutely shocked. And he covered it back up and he waited until the evening when Sheila's mom got home, and he took her in the closet, expressed his concern, pulled the bag off, and Sheila's mom almost fainted. Because inside of that dark plastic bag was not the moderately priced, on sale, aqua green mother's dress that she thought she had purchased, but instead there was a genuine mink coat worth several thousand dollars. Now Sheila's dad, not being one to miss an opportunity, made some joke about maybe it being a bit much for an afternoon wedding.

When you think about that, you could say she got a whole lot more than she bargained for. We use that expression, often we use it negatively but sometimes we use it positively, when the outcome of the events in our lives surpass our wildest expectations. We got so much more than we bargained for. That's really what Paul wants us to see today in the passage we come to.

We've been studying the doctrine of justification as Paul has explained it in these first four chapters of Romans. Today, he comes to the benefits of our justification and what he wants us to understand is that we have received so much more than we ever bargained for, in justification.

Now, before we look at the text itself, let me just remind you of the flow so far of Paul's letter. It begins with an introduction in the first 17 verses of chapter 1, Paul introduces himself, he introduces those to whom he writes, and in verses 16 and 17 he introduces the theme of the letter, which is the gospel. He wants them to understand the gospel he preached because he'd never

been there, didn't found these churches, they had never met him, but he wanted them to support him in his new missionary endeavor in Western Europe. And so, they needed to know first-hand the gospel he preached. And that's why we have Paul's letter to the Romans.

Now, having introduced it in the first 17 verses, beginning in chapter 1 verse 18 and running all the way through chapter 4 verse 25, is the first major section of this letter. We've called it, *The Gospel Explained*. Paul lays out, he explains the gospel that he preached and at the heart of his gospel was justification by faith alone. We've just concluded that section, *The Gospel Explained*.

Today we begin the second major section of Paul's letter to the Romans and I'm going to call it, *The Gospel Experienced*. Because in these chapters, chapters 5 through 8, Paul, now having explained justification, explains the security of our justification. A lot of people think when you get to, particularly chapters 6, 7, and 8 of Romans, that Paul leaves justification, he leaves salvation, and begins to talk about sanctification. Well, that's not entirely true. He does touch on the themes of sanctification, but that's not his main point. His main point in these chapters, chapters 5 through 8, has to do with the security of the person who has been justified. He doesn't change themes, he's still talking about the gospel, he's still talking about justification, but he is showing us the absolute security of the person that has been justified.

I can't improve on the way Martin Lloyd Jones says it in his commentary. He says this, "Paul is showing and demonstrating and asserting the certainty, fullness, and finality of this great salvation. He is giving us a picture of the utter absolute security of the Christian man." That's the point of these verses, of these chapters, chapters 5 through 8. It permeates it. He begins in chapter 5 verses 1 through 11 by outlining for us the immediate benefits of our justification. Let me read the text for you that we will be in the next couple of weeks, Romans 5:1-11:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while 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.

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Now, go back to the verse 1 and notice how Paul begins this section in this fifth chapter, “Therefore, having been justified by faith.” Look at that expression, “having been justified by faith.” That phrase sums up the entire message of chapter 1 through verse 18 all the way through the end of chapter 4. The message is justification, the good news that sinners can receive a right standing before God and His justice as a gift, by God’s grace. A gift that is extended to us by grace alone, and a gift that is received by faith alone, and a gift that is based solely on the work of Jesus Christ alone.

Every sin that you and I commit, let this sink into your mind, every sin that you and I commit, however small, insignificant it may appear to us, carries enough guilt to bring on us the eternal curse and wrath of God, every sin, every single one of them. If you lived your entire life and only sinned once, it would be enough to inherit the eternal wrath and curse of God, because God’s standard is perfection.

But God has promised to justify the believing sinner, the ungodly. “To justify,” we looked at that word, Paul explained it to us in the first four chapters. It means to declare someone righteous, to declare them to be right before the bar of God’s justice. It is not a process, you are not being justified. Notice how Paul puts it in verse 1, you, if you’re a Christian, “have been justified.” It is an event that occurred in the past and its reality continues.

You can’t overemphasize those words, “having been justified.” If you’re a Christian, that describes you. You have been declared righteous before God, not because you are righteous, but because Christ is righteous and He stands in your place. It is a legal decision by God as judge that has already happened to the one who believes in Jesus. And it’s not something subjective that happens inside of you, it is something objective that happens in the courtroom of heaven. It’s a decision, a legal decision God makes about you.

And again, let me just remind you, in justification God does three things, we looked at this. Number one, God credits our sins, plural, to Christ. In other words, He puts every sin that every person who would ever believe in His Son would ever commit, in the account of Jesus Christ. Every thought, every attitude, every foul action, every lust, everything, He puts it in Jesus’ account and on the cross He satisfied His justice against the sins of those who would believe by punishing Jesus for those sins. He died in our place as our substitute. That’s the first thing He does in justification.

The second thing God does in justification is He credits the righteousness of Jesus Christ to us. He takes that 33 years of perfection, every righteous thought and attitude Jesus ever had, every right word He ever spoke, every righteous action He ever committed, He takes all of that and He puts it in the believing sinner’s account and He treats that sinner as if they had lived that life.

The third thing God does is, in light of His crediting our sins to Christ and satisfying His justice on the cross, and in light of His imputing the righteousness of Christ to us, He forgives our sins and at the bar of God's justice the gavel comes down and He says, "Righteous." Not because you're righteous, but because Christ is righteous. You wear His righteousness. God sees you through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's justification.

Now, when we come to chapter 5, Paul has finished his explanation of that. That's why he begins, notice, with the word "Therefore." Paul now wants to show us the consequences, he wants to show us the blessings, the benefits that are ours because of this change of standing before God.

It's important to realize that justification is not an end of itself. No, God's purpose in changing our standing before Him is to bring us into a relationship with Him. This is where the, sort of, courtroom scene breaks down a little bit, because in a normal court room the judge brings the gavel down, says "Righteous," right before the law, and the defendant walks out the front door, the judge walks out the back door, and they never see each other again. The judge doesn't care about this person, doesn't enter into a relationship with him. But in justification, God the judge brings the gavel down, says "Righteous," and walks from behind the bench, embraces us, and adopts us as His children and takes us home. That's our God. That's justification. It's to bring us into a relationship with Him, that's why He does it.

Now, notice that Paul consistently uses the first person plural pronouns in this passage. You can see it there in verse 1, "**we** [emphasis added] have peace with God through **our** [emphasis added] Lord Jesus Christ." He uses "us" later as well, so he includes himself here. He's bringing us on a journey with him. As one writer puts it, "Paul invites us to join with him in celebrating the marvelous benefits conferred on the justified believer." In fact, in these incredibly rich verses that we're going to study together, Paul identifies for us seven amazing benefits of justification, seven amazing benefits of justification.

Here's what I want you to understand, if you are in Christ, all of these blessings are yours. And God intends that your knowledge of these blessings bring great comfort to your soul, that the knowledge of these things would bring confidence in His presence, that they would bring security. In fact, Romans 5 is really just the first stanza in a wonderful hymn of security that reaches its crescendo in those fabulous verses at the end of Romans 8. So let's look together then at the amazing benefits that are ours because we have been justified by faith.

The first is found in verse 1, "we have peace with God," "we have peace with God." Notice how Paul puts it, "Therefore, having been justified by faith," if you have experienced what I've described in the first four chapters of this letter, he says, if you're in that group, if you've believed in Jesus, if you've repented of your sins and put your faith in Him, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, notice what Paul does not say. He doesn't say, "we have the peace of God." He says that in other places. He says that in Philippians 4:7, he says, "Now may the peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." That's not what he's talking about here. No, it's not something subjective that happens inside of you. That's important, we need that, right? We need the peace of God when troubles and trials come, to calm our hearts, but that's not what he's talking about in this verse. Instead, notice what he says, "we have peace with God." Literally, the Greek word that's used there, the Greek proposition, could be translated as "peace toward God" or "peace in regards to God" or maybe the best way to translate it would be to say, "we have peace in our relationship with God."

Just to make it clear that this is the kind of peace he's talking about, he comes back to this later in this paragraph. Notice down in verse 10 he says, there was a time when we were God's enemies and "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." Verse 11, "through Jesus Christ we have now received the reconciliation." So, he's not talking about some feeling you have in your heart, he's talking about objective peace with God. It's reconciliation. There is peace between God and the justified sinner.

Now, if you're thinking with me, and I hope you are, immediately that should send a cold shiver down your spine. Because, if now that I've been justified there is peace between me and God, then what does that mean was true of my relationship with God before justification? It means that God and I were in a state of war. God and I were in a state of war. Now, as rebellious sinners we feel that, right? We are hostile toward God. We put other gods in God's place. We refuse to acknowledge Him as God. We worship ourselves or something else. We make ourselves His enemies. As James says, "whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

So, we were hostile toward God in that way, but that wasn't our worst problem at all. By far the more troubling problem is that God was hostile toward us. I think one of the most frightening verses in all the Bible is Psalm 7:11. Listen to what the Psalmist says, in the context of God as judge, he says this, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Think about that. There isn't a day of an unrepentant sinner's life that passes, whether it's a good day or a bad day, whether he's relatively good or whether she's particularly bad, there isn't a day that goes by that God isn't angry with the person who refuses His offer of Christ.

You know, we speak of countries being at war, but before that happens there are some things that normally happen first. You know, if, first of all, if there's tension then one country will cut off its diplomatic ties with the other country and will close its embassy there, but they're still not at war. In order for there to be war, what has to happen? One of those countries has to declare itself to be at war with the other. Do you understand that's what Paul is saying? He is saying that before you came to Christ, or if you're not in Christ this morning, God has declared Himself at war with you.

Paul has made this clear in other terms already in this letter. If you go back to chapter 1, you remember, verse 18, “for the wrath of God is,” literally, “being revealed.” Right now, today, “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” You say, how do we know God’s wrath now? Is it like tornadoes or ...? No, no. When God unleashes His wrath, no one is spared.

Now, what is His wrath today? His wrath is abandonment. Read the rest of Romans 1. When God shows His wrath today, you know what He does? He just lets the sinner get worse. He just removes some of the restraint and lets him get worse. Listen, this morning if you’re not in Christ and if you want to know if you are at war with God or He is at war with you, you want to know whether or not you’re living under His wrath, just ask yourself this, are the sins in your life taking a greater hold in your life? If they are, that is part of the indication of God’s wrath of abandonment. He is giving you to your sin. There’s still hope for you, the rest of the message will show that, but understand, that’s what that is.

But that’s not the only expression of God’s anger, go over to chapter 2. There’s an expression coming in the future, not just today, verse 4, Paul says, “do you think lightly of the riches of God’s kindness and tolerance and patience?” Don’t you understand “that the kindness of God,” He intends, excuse me, to “lead you to repentance?” “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart,” he says, listen, the kindness of God is intended to lead you to repentance, but you are stubbornly resisting that, you are unrepentant, and he says, in verse 5, “you are storing wrath for yourself in the,” future, “day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” that’s in the future. Yes, God is angry with the wicked every day and it accumulates. The more they live in rebellion, the more they take His good gifts, enjoy them, but refuse to submit to Him, the more they store up the righteous wrath of God. It’s coming.

John 3:36 puts it this way, it says, “the one who doesn’t obey the Son,” the one who doesn’t believe in Christ, “the wrath of God is abiding on him.” It’s over his head like a thunderstorm ready to break loose; wherever the person goes it’s like glue, it adheres to him. This, in part, is why the seeker sensitive movement and its weak gospel is so wrong, because the gospel assumes that man’s chief problem is that man is out of sorts with God, and if I can just convince the guy or the woman to be willing to come into right relationship with God, that’s it, that’s all I need to do. It forgets the reality that God is at war with the sinner. But, “having been justified,” verse 1 says.

Jews taught, by the way, that justification would happen on the day of judgment. God would look at the life lived and He would make a verdict, righteous or unrighteous. Paul says, nope, the verdict of justified has already been reached for the person who has believed in Jesus. God has already reached the verdict and the verdict is, righteous - already - not because of their righteousness, but because of [the] righteousness of Jesus Christ. And therefore, notice verse 1, “having been justified, we have eternal peace with God.” The justified person is no longer at

war with God. Although he was and is a sinner, God is no longer angry with Him. God is no longer unreconciled to him.

And notice, Paul says this peace with God comes “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Let me just say, if you’re here this morning and you think you’re at peace with God and you haven’t been willing to believe in His Son and to submit to His Son as Savior and Lord, you don’t have peace with God because the only way it’s possible is through our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, in Ephesians 2:13 and following, Paul specifically says, “Jesus is our peace,” He’s the one who brings peace with God. Now, let me just say that while what verse 1 is talking about is objective peace, the end of the war with God, the end of hostilities, reconciliation, because we have that objective peace with God, we can also have peace of mind and heart as well, peace of conscience, because we know we’ve been forgiven.

I love the way Hodge puts it about conscience, if you understand how conscience works. Here’s Charles Hodge on conscience, “Conscience is only the reflection of God’s countenance, the echo, often feeble and indistinct, sometimes terribly clear and unmistakable, of God’s coming judgment.” In other words, when your conscience goes off, it’s like a faint echo of what you would hear on the day of judgment, apart from Christ: guilty, guilty, you shouldn’t have done that, you broke God’s law. It’s a faint echo of the day of judgment. But once we have the confidence that our sins have been dealt with, once we know the war is over, once we know we’ve been reconciled, once we know there’s nothing between us and God, even our consciences can have peace.

Now, let me just apply this practically, because I think so many Christians who really do love Jesus Christ, who are trying to love and follow Him and obey Him in their lives, who understand what it really means to be a Christian, I think they don’t live in faith, in what this Scripture says. And so here’s what happens, even the true believer sins and with that sin, immediately begins to doubt and to question his or her justification. I must not be right with God. How could any believer do that? I understand that. We all experience that. Because of one sin we can go back and begin to doubt our standing before God.

I’m not talking about making light of sin, Paul is going to deal with that in Romans 6. I’m talking about when there’s a desire to be holy, there’s a desire to follow Christ, and you sin, you can immediately begin to question justification, have I been declared right with God? Listen, if you do that, if I do that, we are showing at that moment that we have lost our grip, or maybe never had a grip, on the truth of justification. If you have been justified, you have, as a continuing reality, objective peace with God and you are forever justified. God has declared you righteous, not because you are, He knew you weren’t, He declared you righteous because of Christ, and that doesn’t change. There will never be a moment in your life when you are more justified and there will never be a moment in your life when you are less justified, because the righteousness of Christ that you wear is always perfect.

Now, that doesn't mean that we don't have occasional times of doubt about our justification, we do. So, what happens in the life of a true believer? I love the illustration Lloyd Jones uses in his commentary, of a compass. If you take a compass that needle always points toward North, Magnetic North, but if you take that compass and you shake it violently, what happens? The needle can move violently back and forth. If you put a magnet near it, that needle can draw off of North. Our faith can be like that. External circumstances can take our faith and confidence in our justification and cause it to waver, to shake. It can cause it to come off of center. But what happens with the true believer? When that external circumstance is removed, the confidence returns, the needle comes back to center. No, Jesus died for me, He stood in my place, I stand righteous in Him.

Now, I need to say that, sadly, there is also such a thing as false peace. That is, it is possible to think you're at peace with God when you're not really at peace with God. So how do you know? Again, I think, I can't improve on Lloyd Jones, I love this section of his commentary, and he gives a little list, so I'm just going to give it to you because I think it's very helpful. Here are the characteristics of false peace. Number one, if you think faith simply means believing certain facts about Christ and the gospel. If that's all you think faith is, well yeah, I mean I believe Jesus, I believe He was God's Son, I believe He died, if that's all you think faith is, then yours is probably false peace. Because true faith, saving faith, justifying faith has so much confidence in Christ, that it commits oneself to Him. You deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

Secondly, another characteristic of false peace, he says, is if you're resting on your own faith rather than on Christ and His work. In other words, if your confidence is in anything in you rather than solely in Christ and what He's done, if it's in your faith or your repentance or your works or your goodness or your baptism or whatever, if it's anything in you then you're not really a Christian and yours is a false peace.

Number three, he says, yours is a false peace, and this is a very interesting one, if you're never troubled by doubts. Now, why would he say that? Because a true Christian hates his sin and when he sins he is devastated by it, and it brings those doubts because, how could I do this against the Lord who gave Himself for me and saved me, and there's this mental tug of war that takes place. But, on the other hand, a person who isn't truly justified doesn't hate sin so much and so it doesn't trouble him to that degree, and so when he sins it doesn't create doubts, oh no.

I, in fact, I remember one of the most graphic illustrations of this in my pastoral ministry was when I was a pastoring in California, there was a man who for many years, 15, 20 years, it came out, nobody knew, it came out he was literally living a double life every day of his life, involved in the grossest and worst of sins. And I sat across the desk from him, when his wife discovered this I went to his office to confront him, and I pled with him and I showed him the truth of the Scripture and he could not get over the fact that, he said, "Tom, listen, I know I'm a Christian. I don't have any doubts about that." It's because he didn't take his sin seriously.



Number four, yours is a false peace if you're only interested in God's forgiveness and not in personal righteousness. In other words, if you're just into Jesus because you get a get out of hell free card, that's all Christianity is about to you, yours is a false peace, because true believers want to be like Jesus Christ. They want to be personally holy. And if that's not what you want, then yours is a false peace.

Number five, Lloyd Jones says, you know it's a false peace if you take your sin lightly, if you use justification as an excuse for sin or as a cover for sin. Well, it's okay, it doesn't really matter, I'm justified. That's not how believers think, you'll get to that in chapter 6, that's a false peace. If those statements describe you, you have false peace.

On the other hand, if the opposite of those statements are true, then you have true peace. If you understand that faith means embracing Jesus as Savior and Lord and following Him, if you're not resting on anything in you but entirely on Christ and His work, if when you're troubled by doubts because of your sin you always come back in confidence to the gospel, if you are interested not merely in God's forgiveness but in personal holiness and being like Jesus Christ, and if you take your sin seriously, then you have been justified and you have true peace with God. The war between you and God is over, He's no longer your enemy, He's your Father.

The first great benefit of our justification is that we have peace with God. The second is that we stand in God's grace, we stand in God's grace. Look at verse 2, "through whom Christ also," that is, "through whom," that is, Christ, "also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand." Now, that's a fascinating expression that we have to unpack carefully here. Literally Paul says this, "through Christ we have had our introduction." In the past, we were introduced and the results of that introduction continue. Now, the word that's translated introduction here was used in secular Greek for being introduced to someone important. In fact, it was actually used for being introduced in the court to the king.

When I was in college a friend of a friend was head of the General Services Administration at the White House. This was during the Reagan administration. And we were traveling, this group of us were traveling and we came to Washington D.C., and because of this connection we got an extensive private tour of the White House. It was at night, there were no other tourists anywhere to be seen, and we were getting shown through the bowels of the White House and into areas, even got to see, we couldn't go in, but we got to see the Oval Office. It was a wonderful experience.

Now, think about that, suppose you decided that you wanted a private, sort of, back door tour of the White House and you wanted a chance to meet with the President. You can't just drive up to the front gate of the White House and say, I'm here to take as an extensive tour of the White House and to visit with the President. Well, you could, but it wouldn't turn out so well. They might make conclusions about your mental state that you wouldn't find flattering. Instead, we need someone to introduce us.

That's what Paul is saying, we have had our introduction. But then what he says next is surprising because we expect him to say, we've had our introduction to God, but what he says is, we have had our "introduction into this grace." What does he mean? Well, obviously, grace is that attribute, that quality in God that delights in doing good to those who deserve exactly the opposite. And he says, we've had "our introduction into this grace in which we stand."

Let's change the wording, because what he's saying is, now, because of Christ, we stand in grace, we have been introduced to a new position. Think about this, before justification what was our position? Go back to chapter 3 verse 23, we had all sinned and we were all continually coming "short of the glory of God." Now Paul says, we stand in grace. We stood in sin, united in that position, and now we stand in grace.

The way Paul puts it in chapter 6 verse 14 is, he says, "we are no longer under law but under grace." He doesn't mean we have no relationship to the law, he's going to deal with that. What he means is we are no longer responsible to try to keep the law in an effort to earn our way into God's favor. We're instead under grace. We stand in grace. Notice again how he says that, "the grace in which we stand." To stand in grace is to be firmly fixed in grace, to be immovable in grace, to be secure in grace. In other words folks, we don't fall in and out of God's favor. Having been justified, we stand in grace. That's how God treats us.

God constantly treats us with goodness we don't deserve and He not only accepts us, He delights to accept and receive us and to bless us. Before we stood in sin and under God's wrath and curse, but now we not only don't stand as His enemies, we don't even stand as pardoned criminals. No, remember the analogy, we're now His adopted sons and daughters. The judge has declared us righteous and then left the bench and adopted us and taken us home. We stand in grace.

Who introduced us into this grace in which we stand? Well, the answer is obvious, but Paul never wants to let us forget it, so he says it again. Notice verse 2, "through whom," he's talking about Christ, "through Christ." Jesus Christ has introduced us to this new position where we stand, we're fixed, we live, we're saturated by, we're surrounded by God's goodness, undeserved.

Let me ask you, as a believer, do you ever think when you've done something good, when you've had a particularly good day spiritually, that you have somehow earned God's favor? Do you ever think you've earned some glorified brownie points on that good day? On the other hand, are you ever tempted as a believer, when you have a day in which you struggle, you don't want to sin, you're committed not to sin, and you make that choice and you sin, are you ever tempted to think that somehow you forfeited God's favor? Listen, that's a lie. What you do neither compels God to withdraw His grace from you or to extend it to you, because grace, by definition, is what you don't deserve. Beloved, understand this, God never, never, never, treats you as you deserve. We stand in God's grace, surrounded by undeserved kindness.

What are the benefits of our justification? We have peace with God. Secondly, we stand in God's grace. And thirdly, we hope in God's glory. Look at this briefly with me, we hope in God's glory. Verse 2 says, "we exult in hope of the glory of God." Now, I don't use the word exult very often, you probably don't either. The Greek word means a joyful confidence. It can be translated, and is in other places, as rejoice, boast, or glory. So, we rejoice, we glory, we boast, we are joyfully confident in hope.

Now, as I've reminded you, when you come to the Scripture, forget the English word hope. It has almost no resemblance to the Greek word because the English word hope has two parts to it, desire that something will happen and some measure of doubt as to whether or not it will. I hope this will happen. That's not the Greek word. The Greek word also has two elements, but it's desire and certainty. So, the English word is desire and doubt, the Greek word is desire and certainty. In fact, J.B. Phillips, in his paraphrase translates it as happy certainty, "we rejoice for what we know is certain, the glory of God."

What does Paul mean? Well, I think he has two ideas in mind. First of all, he means our hope in seeing God's glory. Every true Christian longs to see the glory of God. Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That's our desire, to have a first-hand view of God and all that makes Him glorious. That's what the saints have always desired. That's why Moses, in Exodus 33 says, "Lord, show me Your glory!" And it is what you and I will someday enjoy, because Jesus prayed that it would happen and the Father always hears His prayers. Listen to John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me," that's us, "be with Me where I am," listen to this, "so that they may see My glory." Paul says we rejoice in the certainty that having been justified, we will see the glory of God, as much as a glorified human can see.

But Paul is also referring not only to our hope of seeing God's glory, but also to our hope of sharing God's glory. This is our glorification. You see, we were made in the image of God and at the fall that image of God in all of us was marred. Left to ourselves, chapter 3 of Romans says, we constantly "fall short of the glory of God," we don't measure up to what we were created to be. But in regeneration God renewed that image. Colossians 3:10, He is restoring that image in us. How does it happen? Well, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, we look at Christ in the Scripture and as we see Him we "are being transformed into the same image from one level of glory to another." Throughout this life we're looking more and more like Jesus Christ.

But the consummation is still in the future. Turn over to Romans 8. Romans 8:17, he says we are "children and heirs, fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." What's he talking about? Look down in verse 23, it's when we're made perfectly like Christ, body and soul. This is what we were saved for. Look at verse 29, "For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son." And it's going to happen. Verse 30, "all of those He called, He justified" and if He's justified you, someday He's going to glorify you. And it's as certain that it's going to happen

that Paul can use the past tense here, it's like it already happened, "those whom He justified, He also glorified." You're going to be, someday believer, just like Jesus Christ in your moral character, you're going to reflect the glory of God by sharing it.

I love the way John puts it in 1 John 3:2. He says, "Beloved, now we are the children of God," right now, today, "and it has not appeared as yet what we will be." We don't know all that we're going to be, but "We know that when Christ appears, we will be a like Him," there's sharing His glory, "we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is," there's seeing His glory. If you have been justified you can rejoice with eagerness and absolute certainty that you will see God in His glory and you will be just like Him in your character.

Now, this should encourage you in your struggle with daily sin because what happens? We sin, we fail, and we get discouraged, we get downcast. But instead of looking at our present failure, we should remind ourselves to be joyfully confident that the day is coming when we will be like Jesus Christ, we will be fully renewed in God's image, and that should encourage us in the daily battle. That's why 1 John 3:3 says this, "everyone who has this hope fixed on Him," that is, the hope of seeing God's glory and of sharing God's glory, "everyone who has this hope" "purifies himself, just as He is pure." In other words, it's your confidence that you will one day be like Jesus Christ that motivates you to try to be like Him now. We rejoice in hope of seeing the glory of God and of sharing the glory of God.

Believer, you have been declared righteous and with that declaration comes some amazing benefits. You, you believer, have peace with God. You have been reconciled to God, He is now your Father. You stand in grace, God never interacts with you except through the goodness that's undeserved. And you live in joyful anticipation of the certainty that you will be with Him, you will see Him, and you will be like Him. You rejoice in hope of the glory of God. That should encourage you. You need to believe these things. You need to take God at His word, believe the bare word of God, like Abraham. In spite of everything that appears to the contrary, believe what God has said. That's what He's inviting you to do here.

Maybe you're here this morning and as I've gone through all those things that we enjoy in Christ you've realized that you still stand before God as a condemned sinner, that you are still at war with God or, more importantly, God is still at war with you. Understand this, if you will turn from your sin, that's repentance, if you will throw yourself on the mercy of God, if you will believe in His Son, if you will put your future eternity resting solely on what Christ did on your behalf, then God will declare you forgiven. He will declare you righteous, not with your own righteousness, but with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God has promised to give you the right standing before Him as a gift, solely because of His grace, and He'll do that this morning because of what His Son did on the cross 2,000 years ago.

Do you understand that today, this is how Paul describes it, today I stand here before you as an ambassador for Jesus Christ and for the Father. It's as if, Paul says, God is making an appeal to

you through me. I beg you, “on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” Because “God the Father made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” That’s God’s invitation to you today. You can be reconciled to the one who is currently at war with your soul. Let’s pray together.

Father, we are overwhelmed by Your goodness. Lord, those of us who have been justified by faith, how could we ever imagine that along with that amazing gift You would give us such rich benefits. Lord, help us to believe You, help us to take You at your bare word, help us to believe You and what we’ve learned in this passage over our feelings, over our own thoughts.

Father, I pray for those here this morning who maybe came in thinking they were at peace with You, but realized through Your word that they’re actually at war, that You are at war with them. Lord, may they throw themselves on Your mercy today. May they call out to You in repentance, confessing their sin, pleading with You for the forgiveness that’s found in Christ, the righteousness that is found in Him. And may You respond, having already initiated that work in them, and may this be the day when they are adopted by you. We pray it in Jesus’ name, amen.