

The Benefits of Justification Part 1

By David Harrell

Romans 5:1-11

In the providence of God we have now arrived at Romans chapter five and here we will begin a study on the benefits of justification. Let me read the first 11 verses to you this morning that we will examine more closely.

Romans chapter five.

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 dare even 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.¹

Several year ago I received a phone call from a pastor and he said, “Dave, I really need your help with one of my lay leaders who is battling depression. It is a constant debilitating sorrow for him and I fear that something bad is going to happen unless he gets some help. He has been to psychiatrists for a number of years and has been on a variety of medications, but he has found no relief and I fear that much of what he is dealing with is a spiritual problem.”

So I agreed to speak with the man. He came and I asked him to interpret what he thought was going on and he told me that what he was dealing with had nothing to do with his marriage, had nothing to do with his family or his career. All of those things were really quite good. But he said, “My problem is that I believe that I have lost my salvation.”

He says, “I can’t talk with my psychiatrist about these things because they don’t understand the Bible and they have said that these are spiritual issues. You need to talk with your pastor about them.”

¹ Romans 5:1-11.

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I asked him, “Why do you believe that you have lost your salvation?”

And he went on to explain that it was not because of any particular sin. There was nothing really that egregious in his life, but he was aware of ongoing sin in his life that he felt was debilitating.

It was interesting. He believed that salvation was a gift from God, that we receive it by grace alone through faith alone. But he was convinced that salvation must be maintained by works. And he felt like he simply was not up to the task.

I was struck by how well he could articulate his theology. He had gone to a school and graduated from a school that taught these things. And I recall him saying—and this is a paraphrase—“My sin betrays my lack of faith in the Word of God, my lack of love and rebellion against him and I fear that I have apostatized without necessarily stating so publicly.”

And he went on to say that in my opinion, according to Hebrews 6:4-9, there is no recovery; a passage, by the way, he has terribly misinterpreted.

So he believes that a believer can lose his salvation and he also believed that we are unable to have any absolute assurance of our salvation. He believed that we can close our salvation if we fall into what we called willful sin or apostasy.

Now, of course, this is held by Wesleyan theologians. It is kind of classic Arminianism, free will Baptists, Nazarenes and so forth.

He said, “If a believer could never lose his salvation and had absolute assurance that he was saved no matter what, it would be a license to sin.”

And then he went on to give me illustrations of how many people he knows that believes that you can't lose your salvation and that you can have absolute assurance, but their lives were absolute contradictions to their love for Christ.

So he lived in constant uncertainty with respect to his standing before God. I spent hours trying to reason with him from Scripture, but he remained unconvinced and increasingly he saw me as a heretic even though we remain friends.

After several months the counseling relationship was over. He left his church which, by the way had changed its theology to agree with ours. And three years later I received a call from his pastor who told me that he had committed suicide.

Now, please don't hear me say that everyone who believes these things will take their life. There are many very godly people whom I love that hold various forms of Arminianism and they truly love Christ. Although I would say that they like this man are missing out on many of the glorious blessings and benefits of justification, benefits that when you really understand them you understand that we are not only justified solely by

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the power of God, but our salvation is preserved by the same. If preserving our redemption is dependent upon our faithful obedience to Christ, we are all doomed. We are all doomed. And Paul has made it abundantly clear in chapters three through four that man is justified solely on the basis of God's grace through faith and not of works, by his power alone.

Are we to therefore say that salvation is granted by the power of God, but it is preserved by the power of man? Dear friends, if I could lose my salvation, I undoubtedly would do so. My flesh is so sinful. On my own I have no power to protect what God began by his power. To combat these presumptuous beliefs and this debilitating doctrine, Paul gave great comfort to the church at Ephesus when he said in Ephesians one beginning at verse 18:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.²

Beloved, do not be deceived. It is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe that preserves our redemption. It is not our puny little power. Our salvation is preserved, as Paul says, in accordance with the working of the strength of his might, not ours.

And this is precisely the direction the apostle Paul is going to take us in chapter five. Here the Holy Spirit reveals to us through his inspired apostle nine magnificent benefits of our justification, justification being that divine gift whereby through God's grace he imputes to every believer the righteousness of Christ and declares us to be righteous and treats us as such. He wants us to understand that this transforming gift is not merely some initial blessing that stands alone in and of itself, but justification is rather a blessing that encompasses all that God gives the redeemed by the blood of the lamb.

I might say that this is the Gibraltar of our faith. This is that rock upon which our salvation is anchored. Justification proves that we are eternally secure, that we will persevere when tested which will give assurance to every believer that he has eternal life.

Now I want you to notice in verse one he says, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have..."³

It is a present tense verb, "we have" indicating that what follows is already our possession. Ah, so the question is: What is it that we have presently? And Paul is going to delineate a list of eight things.

² Ephesians 1:18-20.

³ Romans 5:1.

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If you will also notice in verse nine he says, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be...”⁴

Well, this is exciting, because of our justification we not only have something in the present, but we also shall be something in the future. And Paul will add yet another infinite blessing to his list.

So my outline for these 11 verses is readily apparent. Paul has given it to us. We shall examine nine benefits of this divine gift of justification that every believer possesses. We will look at it in two ways. One, what we have in the present and, two, what we shall be in the future.

And I pray that this will bring clarify and comfort to any of you who might be struggling with fear concerning your eternal security, concerning the assurance of your faith. This is really a needless concern for all who have been justified according to Romans 3:24 as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Now I might also add before we look closely at the text that these are profound truths that speak to every person’s life. The applications are everywhere. Sadly, some of you have little concern for spiritual things and so you need to listen up very carefully. And I say this with utmost love to you because it is a matter of great concern for me as well as the other elders of this church.

Some of you have a reputation of kind of hanging around the periphery of the church. You never seem to get involved. It is almost as though you have an attitude that says, “Hey, don’t put any expectations on me. Don’t get too close to my life.”

For you, being part of the body of the Church is really not much of a priority. It is as though for some of you you see this as a community center rather than the most precious assembly on earth that Christ has purchased with his very blood. For some of you, you will never miss a pot luck dinner, but you have no appetite for the Word. Some of you will be first in line for pizza, but you will disappear when it comes time to pray. This is indicative of a spiritual problem, my friend.

As a result, like a physical couch potato whose muscles gradually begin to atrophy, your spiritual life is doing the same. Exercising your spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ for whatever reason seems to be too onerous for you. You are too busy. It is not that much of a priority. After all, for some of you because you really don’t love Christ who is the head of this body, there is really no sense of urgency to serve.

So, you become uninvolved, you become unaccountable, you become unteachable and unfaithful and you begin to forfeit earthly blessing as well as heavenly reward.

⁴ Romans 5:9.

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And you say, “Well, you know, pastor, that is really not me.”

Let me tell you how it usually goes. You hang around the periphery, the first thing to go is Sunday school. Before you know it, Wednesday night services are not that big of a deal. Of course, you don't have time for Sunday night services because you have got to get ready for Monday. And you really don't have time to really serve in the church because your life is so busy, you know, kids, career and everything. And then before long you will find any and every excuse to miss a Sunday morning service. And if you are really honest, if you look at your private life, there is really no sign that you love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. And there is really no evidence in your private life that you love others as much as you love yourself. There is certainly no thirst for God. He is not your greatest delight. And then if you are honest, you begin to look around and you see that your marriage is not what it should be even though you don't want to admit it. Your family is not what it should be even though you don't want to admit it. Sin is like termites that get into the house and they begin to eat everything up and you don't realize it, but beneath the veneer of all of your religiosity things are deteriorating and eventually your house falls apart.

For some you have grieved the Spirit. You have quenched the Spirit. And, frankly, a close examination of your life would reveal that there is virtually no fruits of the Spirit growing on the vine of your life.

So, my friends, if this is you, you have sown the wind and you will reap the whirlwind. And as your pastor I warn you in love that you need to get right with God. And the way to do that is to wake up before the consequences of divine chastening are so severe that it brings great sorrow to you and to your family. It is time to either follow the Lord or deny him. The battle we wage is glorious and the enemy we face is far more formidable than you can ever imagine. So, beloved, get serious about your calling. Get serious about your faith. Get serious about your sin. Get serious about your love for Christ. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold without you realizing it.

And you can do that by beginning today, by asking the Holy Spirit of God to help you understand these great texts that he has given us in order that we might enjoy fully the benefits of our salvation, that we might become more conformed to the image of Christ.

So be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger as James tells us in James 1:19. Some of you may feel that anger right now, that seething resentment, that sense of, ok, why does he have to do this? The answer is because I love you, because the Spirit of God has prompted me to do so for your joy and his glory.

Don't silence your conscience. Humble yourself before the Word. Don't reject it.

James went on to say, “For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”⁵

⁵ James 1:20.

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So, by God's grace, let's humble our hearts before the Word this morning and examine our hearts and we will all grow together.

So what would God have us understand pertaining to these marvelous benefits that he has given us in our justification?

Well, first, we will look at those things that we have in the present. Notice verse one again.

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶

So the first benefit of our justification is peace with God. Now you must understand that this is referring to an objective peace, not a subjective peace. However, the objective peace will lead to a powerful and wonderful subjective sense of peace as you will understand.

Now if you have not placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have no love for him, if you are not serving him, you are at war with God and he is at war with you regardless of what you think. Paul has spent 67 verses in the beginning of this epistle beginning in verse 18 of chapter one through verse 20 of chapter three explaining the condemnation of man that makes him subject to the just wrath of God. In fact, in chapter five here in verse 10 we read that man without Christ is an enemy of God.

Jesus has declared in John three and verse 36 that the wrath of God abides or rests upon the sinner. He is a child of Satan, Jesus says in John 8:44, a citizen of the kingdom of darkness.

Oh, no, no, no, no, some will argue. God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.

Ah, dear friend, be careful with that popular cliché. That could be very, very misleading. Yes, God loves the sinner in the sense that he has made salvation available to all who will repent and believe in Christ, but it cannot be experienced, this love of God, it cannot be experienced unless they do.

The psalmist David said in Psalm five verse five, “Thou dost hate all who do iniquity.”

D A Carson makes this helpful observation, quote, “Fourteen times in the first 50 psalms alone we are told that God hates the sinner. His wrath is on the liar and so forth. In the Bible the wrath of God rests both on the sin and on the sinner. God's wrath is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against his holiness. But his love wells up amidst his perfections and is not generated by the loveliness of the loved. Thus, there is nothing intrinsically impossible about wrath and love being directed toward the same

⁶ Romans 5:1.

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individual or people at the same time. God in his perfections must be wrathful against his rebel image bearers, for they have offended him. But God in his perfections must be loving toward his rebel image bearers for he is that kind of God,” end quote.

So, indeed, as Psalm 7:11 tells us, God is a just judge and God is angry with the wicked every day. Indeed, he is at war with those who rebel against him.

Ignorant of Scripture and having no understanding of the holiness of God, I hear people say from time to time, “Well, God is just simply too loving to send anyone to hell.”

Well, I ask you. Given the fact that Jesus bore the full wrath of God for the sins of all who would believe in him, perfectly satisfying the justice that we deserve, do you really think that that same wrath will not fall upon those who refuse to believe? Do you think that unbelievers who are in rebellion against God somehow get a free pass? If so, God would owe Jesus an apology, wouldn't he? For there would have been no need for him to suffer and die.

I remind you of what the apostle Paul said in Ephesians five verse six.

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things [referring to the sins that he had just listed previously] the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”⁷

But, dear friends, here is the good news. The good news of the gospel, when a man is justified the war is over. The war is over. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, if you think you could lose your salvation and if you think you cannot have complete assurance of salvation I would humbly submit to you that you do not understand the nature of the atoning work of Christ. You see, the Lord Jesus perfectly and eternally satisfied the wrath of God for all our sins, past, present and future. Because of Christ Hebrews 8:12 says that he remembers our sins no more. God sees us now clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We have been declared righteous and he treats us as such. We are at peace with God, so much so that according to Ephesians two and verse 14 we are told that Christ himself is our peace.

Now think about it. We are united to Christ. Scripture is very clear about that. So God no longer sees our sin, past, present and future. Instead, when he looks at us he sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ, past, present and future.

You see, it is our union, our identification with Christ that secures our redemption, the redemption that he accomplished on our behalf.

⁷ Ephesians 5:6.

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Think about it. Scripture says we have been crucified with Christ. We have died with Christ. We have been buried with him. We have been raised up together in Christ, seated together in heavenly places in Christ. We are hid with Christ in God.

Child of God, don't miss this. This is so crucial. It is our union with Christ that secures our participation in all the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ. Scriptures says that because of this there is no condemnation in Christ. In Christ we are free from the law. We are told that we have the righteousness of God in him.

In Christ we have wisdom, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In Christ he says if Christ is in you, Romans 8:10-11, we will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who indwells you.

We are told that we who are in Christ, if we are dead, we will rise first in Christ. Colossians 2:10 says that we are complete in him.

Now, of course, we all continue to sin. We all know that. Though we are no longer slaves to sin, but nevertheless we sin. But all of our sins have been paid in full. Romans 8:1.

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”⁸

Now I want you to think of the implications of this with respect to our assurance as believers. Think about this. Paul described it this way to the saints in Colosse in Colossians chapter one beginning in verse 19 through verse 22. He said this.

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, [referring to Christ] and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.⁹

Unless you fall into willful sin or apostasy.

Oh, that is not there? Of course it is not there. And don't you think that if that were truly a possibility that somewhere in Scripture God would have warned us of this?

Oh, I hear the voices. Oh, yes, he has warned us. And then people will offer up some very contrived interpretations of a few texts that languish in serious dispute, that stretch the bounds of hermeneutics to the absolute breaking point, texts beyond the purview of my discourse to you this morning. But, beloved, even as we looked at the text before us

⁸ Romans 8:1.

⁹ Colossians 1:19-22.

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today, there is no way that our salvation could be anything but eternally secure and based on the objective truth of the Word of God we can have absolute assurance.

So here is the good news of eternal security and confident assurance that Paul begins with in verse one.

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰

I cannot imagine what it would be like to live my Christian life without understanding this objective peace. Certainly if you don't understand the objective peace, you will not have the subjective peace, right? For this reason Paul used the analogy of the Roman soldier whose boots were cleated with metal spikes in order to give him sure and solid footing in battle. He warns every believer that we need to be prepared to hold our ground in this great battle against the enemy of the gospel by having our feet shod with the gospel of peace, absolutely, Ephesians 6:15.

You know, think about it. Now that the battle is over, God is on my side. Right? God is on your side. Talk about eternally secure, what do I have to be afraid of? If God is for me, who can be against me? Talk about confident assurance. The Lord of hosts is my strength. And in that whole passage in Ephesians six when you wear that armor, including the gospel of peace, having your feet shod with the gospel of peace, you are going to be able to stand firm.

Without an understanding of the gospel of peace, dear friends, you are going to slip and slide and yield to the lies of the enemy. Every sin is going to push you further back into doubt and discouragement and confusion like the illustration I gave you earlier. I have seen this over and over again.

But when you understand that in our justification we have peace with God, you are going to have sure footing. You are going to stand firm. You are going to stand your ground. You are going to share the assurance of Paul who assured the Philippian saints by saying, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”¹¹

So hallelujah, God is at peace with us. We are at peace with him and all that was lost at the fall is now fully and eternally restored. And it is for this reason, dear friends, that we can silence our accusing conscience when we sin. And we can be assured of our final destination. We have no reason to fear death or judgment all because of the blood of the lamb.

Well, yes, pastor, but such a doctrine is a license to sin.

¹⁰ Romans 8:1.

¹¹ Philippians 1:6.

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Well, I would agree, it is a license to sin for those who have a false profession. It is a license to sin for those who possess a self-manufactured peace with God, the kind of person who has deceived himself into thinking he is no longer at war with God when, in fact, he is. You see, this is the man who will sin with impunity. This is the man who rejects the Word of God, who hears certain passages of Scripture and realizes that it does not really conform with his agenda so he ignores it. He throws it out. This is the man who lives in rebellion against God and then will sin and glibly say, “No big deal. The blood of Christ covers it all.”

And then they smile with smug satisfaction and they walk away as if nothing had ever happened.

I remember dealing with a celebrity woman who was married with several children claiming to be a Christian. She committed adultery with another man and divorced her husband, left her family and when asked how she could justify her decision with her Christian faith, she said, publicly—and this is a bit of a paraphrase, “I was so unhappy in my first marriage, but God wants us to be happy, so he provided a way and for that I am thankful. And wherever there is sin involved in all this, I am thankful that grace covers it all.”

Those are the words of a hypocrite that knows nothing of the meaning of justification by faith.

You see, a man who is truly at peace with God is a man who has smelled the smoke of hell. It will be the man who has felt the sting of the flames upon his skin. This will be the man who knows that were it not for the mercy of God, this would be his eternal abode, a man who is so broken over his sin that he will live in perpetual wonder and awe, that not only would God forgive him, but even go beyond that and impute unto him the righteousness of Christ and declare him to be righteous and treat him as righteous. This will be the man that will sing “Amazing Grace” not as some kind of schmaltzy sentimental song, but it will be the doxology of his soul. This is a man who will live in a constant state of humility, a constant state of wonder, love and praise.

Yes, the true Christian will sin, but when he does, he will quickly repent. He will be broken over his sin. It will not be something habitual and over time he will find in his life an increasing hatred of sin and a decreasing frequency of it.

This is the man who will sing the words of Charles Wesley who said:

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died he for me who cause his pain,
For me who him to death pursued.
Amazing love, how can it be,
That thou my God shouldst die for me?

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My friend, don't be deceived. If it is easy for you to knowingly and to habitually rebel against God, then you have no peace with him regardless of what you believe. You are not a part of the fold of the great shepherd of the sheep. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and they..."¹² what? They follow me.

In 1 John chapter two beginning at verse three we read:

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.¹³

No, my friends, this magnificent doctrine of justification is not a license to sin. It is a deterrent from sin when you understand the glorious truths of it, a deterrent for all who rejoice knowing that they have as their present and eternal possession peace with God.

Ah, but this is only the beginning. Notice the second benefit of our justification and that is we have access to God. Notice verse two.

"Through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith."¹⁴

Here Paul is emphasizing through the grammar that this is yet another blessing that is happened to us once and for all. By implication, once upon a time, we did not have access to God. We could not come into his presence. But at a certain point in time it was given to us. This helps us also understand contrary to the opinion of some that justification, unlike sanctification is not a process involving our works to eventually obtain it, but rather it is a divine act that happened once and forever.

I want you to notice this phrase. We have obtained our introduction.

This translates a Greek verb that means bringing something together or approaching. It has the idea of an admission or introduction. It is that relationship with God whereby we are acceptable to him and have assurance that he is favorably disposed to us. Therefore, we can enter into his holy presence.

Paul used this in some other passages, for example, Ephesians 2:18.

He says, "Through Him we both [referring to Jews and Gentiles] have our access in one Spirit to the Father."¹⁵

prosagwgh (pros-ag-ogue-ay') is the Greek term. We have access.

¹² John 10:27.

¹³ 1 John 2:3-5.

¹⁴ Romans 5:2.

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:18.

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In chapter three verse 12 he says, “In [Christ] we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.”¹⁶

Now you will recall that in the Old Testament no one had access to God. No one could get near him. He veiled himself in blinding light and fire and a thick cloud and so forth. You will recall that when he descended upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, he told Moses to set bounds around the foot of the mountain.

In Exodus chapter 19 verse 21 he says, “Go down, warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.”¹⁷

Now these same kinds of boundaries were put in place in the tabernacle as well as in the temple preventing access into the holy of holies where the presence of the Lord would hover over the mercy seat between the cherubim over the ark of the covenant. And also if you look at the layout of the temple you would see that there would be an outer court for the Gentiles and then a little bit further in there would be another court for Jewish women and then a little further in there would be another court for the Jewish men and the priests. In fact, if you look on the news today and you see the wailing wall there in Jerusalem you will see the men down at the bottom and the women are over on the side. It is the same kind of idea being honored.

But no one could enter into the holy of holies and stand in the presence of the Lord except the high priest one time a year. This is a graphic reminder of how intensely God hates sin. Once a year, Yom Kippur, he would enter briefly to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people. He wore a special garment when he did this. There were bells sown into this garment and if the bells stopped ringing that was an indication, according to Exodus 28:35 that he had been struck dead.

To my knowledge there is no place in Scripture or even in Jewish tradition that that has ever happened. Perhaps it has, but I am not aware of it.

Now, of course, all of this pointed to the blood of Christ that would one day once and for all make atonement for the sins of all who would place their trust in him.

Now, you must understand. The purpose of the final sacrifice of Christ was to pay for all that the rest of those sacrifices pointed to, because the purpose of the penal substitution and the sacrificial system, penal referring to the severe punishment of the substitute, the purpose of all of that was to graphically illustrate the punishment of sin and to demand that the people have an inward identification of that sin.

Now those sacrifices were effective, but they were not expiatory. Expiate simply means to remove guilt or sin. They were effective for temporary, ritual restoration, the cleansing of the flesh according to Hebrews 9:13. But catch this. They could not

¹⁶ Ephesians 3:12.

¹⁷ Exodus 19:21.

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permanently remove the guilt of our sin. That would require a totally innocent human substitute that had perfectly obeyed the law who could die in our place.

Who was that? It was obviously the Lord Jesus. He was the only possible substitute. He offered himself in our place to both expiate, in other words remove the guilt of our sin and propitiate meaning to appease the righteous wrath of God against sin.

Now, what happened when Jesus was crucified in the temple? Solely by the power of God according to Matthew 27 verse 51, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Now, can there be a more dramatic demonstration of the access that we now have as believers into the presence of God? We don't need a priest to take us there. We have our introduction through the Lord Jesus, our faithful high priest.

You see, his death removed the barrier of sin. How so? Think about it. The blood of Christ removed the guilt of our sin. That is expiation. The blood of Christ appeased the righteous wrath of God against sin. That is propitiation. And then for all who believe in him, God imputes the righteousness of Christ to them and declares them and treats them as totally righteous forever and that is justification. And as a result here in this text we read that we have obtained our introduction by faith.

My, this is staggering, isn't it? It is absolutely staggering. How can we possibly live to merely please ourselves given what God has done for us? I ask those of you who hang around the periphery of the church, those of you who really have no personal pursuit of holiness, how can you believe these things and not be moved to serve and to love him?

In Hebrews chapter 10 beginning in verse 19 we read this:

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.¹⁸

Boy, doesn't that just make you want to go out and sin? Of course not. Doesn't that make you worry that maybe you are just not going to be faithful enough to maintain what God began in you? It is ridiculous.

Doesn't this leave you sad because, boy, there is just no way we can really have any assurance of our salvation. My friend, what more would God have to say to give you that assurance? My what marvelous benefits are ours in our justification. We have peace with God. We have access to him. Dear Christian, if this doesn't humble you, if this doesn't

¹⁸ Hebrews 10:19-22.

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By David Harrell

Romans 5:1-11

motivate you and excite you, if this doesn't cause you to serve him in faithful obedience, I don't know what will.

Contemplating these great truths the Holy Spirit brought to my mind an experience that I had several years back when I was teaching in Africa. There we saw many beggars. But there was one beggar in particular in Kenya that I cannot get out of my mind. It was after church on a Sunday morning and even in Africa everybody dresses up to whatever degree that would like for them. They are big on that. And we went in this little car of sorts to the town where they had a few restaurants and this was, for them, the nicest restaurant in town. That is kind of what we do around here on Church on Sunday. We go to a restaurant. And I remember getting out of that vehicle and I looked and there was a man on the ground who was born without any legs. He just had an upper torso. He had terrible deformities in his limbs and even his head and terrifying face. He was almost naked and he was utterly filthy.

He moved about by lying on his belly on a small board that had little wheels attached to it like, what, a mechanic's creeper that you would see in a garage. And I will never forget. Even though he spoke Swahili, he knew enough to hold his little can up to me from a distance and I walked over to him and he kept saying, "Father, please, father, please."

Many times they see white people because there is hardly any there, they see us as father, as a priest, that type of thing. So that was his mindset. And I gave him some money. But I remember thinking them as I do today that I really saw myself in that man, because I was once like him destitute, only I was spiritually destitute. I was deformed and filthy because of sin and without hope.

But even more worse off than him, I was too ignorant and too rebellious to even know it, utterly dead in my sin.

I was unfit to enter into the palace of the king and join in with the others who were enjoying the delicious feast at a banquet table, enjoying sweet fellowship and the eternal blessings and riches of Christ.

But then suddenly one day the King of glory who loved me in eternity past had mercy on me. And by a miracle of grace he reached out his arms in love and he embraced me in all of my wickedness and all of my filth, my insolent rebellion. And he told me that he loved me and that he sent his Son to save me. And then Jesus washed away my sin with his blood. And the King clothed me in the righteousness of this Jesus. And by his power alone he completely transformed me. He made me a new creature in Christ. He adopted me as his son and made me a joint heir with Jesus.

And then Jesus, the one who purchased my redemption, who suffered and died in my place, invited me into the great palace of Jehovah. And he took me by the hand and he introduced me to the most high God.

My friend, this is what Paul is saying in these first two verses.

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“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,”¹⁹ yet another benefit of justification that we will examine next time.

In light of this I penned these words that I now leave with you.

Despite my sin and stubborn pride, the love the Savior came, upon that dreadful cross he died. 'Twas there he took my blame. Oh, what words could e'er express the marvels of his grace. What love imputes Christ's righteousness to such a rebel race? But, oh, to grasp the war is o'er. God's wrath has been appeased. Now justified he sees no more my rebellion and misdeeds. Peace at last through Christ I come through him I stand in grace. Before the glorious holy throne redeemed to sing his praise. What then with so much mercy shown should be my just reply? To live by faith each sin to mourn and serve my God most high.

Let's pray together.

Spirit of God, I pray that you will bring conviction to every heart. I pray that sinners will be converted, that saints will be convicted to the praise of your glory. I ask in the precious name of our Savior, our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Change of Voice:

Let's stand together and close with *Amazing Grace*.

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¹⁹ Romans 5:1-2.

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