**THE FRUITS OF FAITH**

August 8, 2021

Romans 5:1-21

Key Verse 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In the last passage we learned the faith of Abraham as an example of justification. He simply believed God against all hope and it was credited to him as righteousness. Remember that justification takes place in the mind of God. It is not something a believer feels. We know that it took place because the Bible says so. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to have faith to believe. However, when we believe, it affects our lives. What are the practical benefits of justification in the believer’s life? It is a wonderful new life with peace, joy and the love of God. But many people do not claim this new life by faith. So they remain bound by the thoughts and habits of their old life. This does not please God. God sacrificed his one and only Son Jesus Christ so that we may live a new life in him. May God help us to claim this new life by faith. What are the fruits of faith?

**First**, we have peace with God (1). Look at verse 1. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In this verse Paul exclaims that we have peace with God as an immediate result of justification. The antonym of “peace” is war. We were at war with God. In Genesis 3, Adam disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and broke his relationship with God. Since the fall of Adam a hostile relationship with God existed. As a result, we lived as the objects of God’s wrath (1:18, 2:5). However, through justification our status with God was changed from the objects of wrath to the objects of blessing. “Peace with God” means that we are no longer at war with God. We are no longer enemies of God. God’s anger toward men subsided. Hostility with God ended through our faith in Jesus and a new relationship as children of God started. God began to look at us who are justified through faith in Jesus with a smiling face. We began to enjoy God’s favor as his holy children.

When you are at war with someone such as your wife or a close friend, your hostility makes you uneasy and restless all the time. We don’t have peace in our soul. Likewise, when we are at war with God, we are restless all the time. Some people try to fix their anxiety problem with drugs and others try to forget their guilty feelings with alcohol. Beer and marihuana are popular among people who want to get out of their anxiety. Ever since Canada legalized marihuana, I see many marihuana shops on the Bloor St. However, people cannot have peace as long as they live as the enemies of God. Peace is not a mere good feeling but a matter of restored relationship with God. Feelings swing like a yo-yo. But we need assurance that the hostility with God is gone. Look at verses 10. “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

When we have a right relationship with God, God keeps us in perfect peace (Isa. 26:3), for the fruit of righteousness is peace (Isa. 32:17). Jesus promised this kind of peace in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” If we have peace with God, we can enjoy such peace in our souls. We are no longer restless wanderers. If we have peace with God, we can have peace with others also. One social worker told me that many who have trouble in their relationship with their families and others have broken relationship with God. Because they are at war with God, they are always restless and vent their anger and frustration at others.

**Second**, we have gained access to God through Jesus Christ (2). Look at verse 2a. “Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.” In the Old Testament people could not approach God because of their sins. Only priests were allowed to enter the Holy Place to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. If others attempted to do so, they were killed immediately. Sinners did not have any access to God. But in the New Testament Jesus became our access to God. We can come to God through his Son Jesus. During the American Civil War, one soldier lost his father and brother in the fighting and he needed to return home to help his mother to farm the land. President Abraham Lincoln was the only one who can grant him exemption from the military service. So he went to see the president to ask. But when he arrived at the White House, he was refused entry by the guards and he was sent away. In despair he went to sit in a nearby park. As he was sitting, not knowing what to do, a young boy saw him dejected. The child asked him, “What is wrong?” The soldier poured out his heart to this child. Then the boy said, ‘Look, come with me,’ and the dejected soldier went back to the White House. None of the guards seemed to stop them — even the generals and the high-ranking government officials stood to attention and let them pass through — and the soldier was amazed. Finally, they came to the Oval Office. Without knocking the young boy opened the door, walked straight in, and there was Abraham Lincoln, standing there in conversation with the Secretary of State. The moment they walked in, Abraham Lincoln turned to the boy and said, `Todd, what can I do for you?’ And Todd said, `Dad, this soldier needs to talk to you.’ The soldier had access to the president, through the son. That is what Paul says. We have access to God through the Son, through Jesus. Jesus takes us into the presence of Almighty God. Although we have no right of ourselves to go into God’s presence, through Jesus, through what he has done for us on the cross, through the blood of Jesus, we have access to the Father. What a great blessing it is!

**Third**, we glory in our sufferings (2-5). Look at verse 2b. “And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” Here boasting refers to joy at its highest level, a kind of a confident joy, not a superficial one, not an emotional one. Knowing that we are at peace with God, knowing that we stand in grace, we have no fear for our future. What could go wrong? We can confidently boast in the security of our eternal glory. We live, then, with the hope in the confidence of heavenly glory. Look at verse 3a. “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings.” Romans 8:18 says, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” Paul says that no matter what goes wrong in this life, no matter how much you suffer, you can’t compare it with the glory that will be revealed in us. But in reality, no one likes suffering. We don’t like suffering. As soon as we hear the word “suffering,” we are ready to run away like a 100-meter track runner. We are happy to hear the word “blessing” but we close our ears when we hear the word “cross” or “suffering.” If we protect our children from suffering, we spoil them and they give up easily when a small suffering comes. At the same time, they develop a bad character. Suffering provides an opportunity to develop a true character.

Before we were justified freely through faith, sufferings produced in us restlessness, sleeplessness, fear, misery, and darkness—the character of Satan. Sufferings made our lives meaningless. Sufferings snatched away what little joy we found in such things as eating and sleeping. To our annoyance, suffering never ends. But to those who are justified by the blood of Jesus, sufferings are spiritual ingredients for spiritual growth. Why? Look at verses 3-4. “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” In the past, sufferings made us negative in our view of man and the world. But after we are redeemed and justified, God made us positive toward sufferings. Not only do we have a positive attitude toward sufferings, but also we can enjoy them. The more we suffer, the more we think of Jesus, who suffered and died for us, and we come to love Jesus with many tears. 2020 Tokyo Olympic games ended today. Many athletes suffer so much in training. But they do not think of them as sufferings. They glory in their sufferings because of their hope of Olympic glory of gold medals. Usain Bolt is an Olympic legend. He won a gold medal in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m in three Olympic Games. He trained so hard that he threw up at the side of the track. One sprinter who had the opportunity to train with Bolt, said, “I saw him on the ground during quite a few sessions hollering in pain, not wanting to do another rep. But each time he got up and completed the rep.” [Here a rep (repetition) is when you perform the full movement of an exercise from start to finish.]

**Fourth**, God’s radical love for sinners (5-11). Look at verses 6-8. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” These verses tell us about God’s love for sinners. It is divine; it is expressed to us when we were powerless, ungodly sinners. In other words, there was nothing in us that merited this love. God’s love is beyond comparison to human love. In any human relationship, there is always a degree of wrong in both sides. For example, in my relationship with my wife, I cannot be 100% right even though she is clearly wrong. But with God, God is always 100% right. We are 100% wrong. When we feel that we are 51% right in a relationship, we demand that the other person apologize for the wrong. It is very hard to forgive and love that person. But amazingly event though we were 100% wrong, God took the initiative and sent his Son to die for our sins, and thus removed the hostility. Jesus’ death on the cross demonstrates God’s love for us. When we accept this love of God, we can obey Jesus’ command, “Love your enemies.”

In verses 9-20, there are four “how much more”s (9,10,15,17). These teach us the assurance we have in God’s complete salvation. God has already done the most difficult thing. While we were powerless, ungodly sinners, God sacrificed his Son Jesus for us. Thus, we have been reconciled to God. Christ Jesus, who rose from the dead, is sitting at the right hand of God and is interceding for us. Look at verse 10. “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” We need this assurance of salvation because our struggle is not always easy in this world. Some people who served God for many years, suddenly develop cancer. Other people may have a sudden and tragic accident. Still other people may repeat the same mistake or sinful habit. When these things happen, we naturally doubt the love of God and have a sense of punishment. However, we should not doubt God’s love in any situation. We should not look at ourselves. Sometimes, when we make mistakes, we worry that we might lose our salvation. But our salvation does not depend on us; it depends on God’s love and the living Savior Jesus Christ who is able to guide us through to the end. God’s love does not depend on our condition, circumstances or performance.

**Fifth**, the importance of one man. Verses 12-19 look very complicated. But the main point is this: Through the disobedience of one man, Adam, sin entered the world and death came to all men. Through the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, gift of grace came and the many were made righteous.

Look at verse 12. “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.” Adam did not invent sin. Pride and self-centeredness, which are at the heart of sin began with Satan. When Adam sinned, something dramatic happened. It says, “Sin entered the world.” His sin brought a constitutional change into his being. He degenerated from his original creative identity and became different. Unholiness became part of the fabric of his soul. It is like introducing a bad code in a computer program and corrupt the whole system. It is like introducing a bad gene, and it multiplies and spread. Note that it says through one man’s sin, singular, not sins. Not all the acts of sin came in through Adam. He didn’t invent all the acts of sin, but the principle came; the sinful nature, the innate corrupting element entered into the human stream. Adam would then pass it on to all of his descendants. Just as all the offspring of Adam have human characteristics like eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and nose and mouth, so they have the sinful nature as well. Because Adam sinned, death came. Death is not natural to the constitution of man as created in God’s image. Death is an invader, an intruder. Death became the penalty for sin.

Look at verses 15 and 18. “But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!” “Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.” Here we see the reign of grace through Christ. When Adam sinned, he lost his glory and his righteousness. When Christ died for us and rose from the dead, God did not just give us back Adam’s glory and Adam’s righteousness. Rather, he gave us much superior glory of Jesus and His righteousness. What we will gain through Jesus Christ will be infinitely better than what we lost due to Adam’s sin. That is why we rejoice all the more in Christ Jesus. This passage answers the vexing question: Why did God allow sin to enter the world? The answer is that we are better off in Christ than we ever could have been in an unfallen Adam. If Adam never sinned, he would have enjoyed continued life on earth in the Garden of Eden. But he had no prospect of becoming a redeemed child of God, an heir of God, and coheir with Christ. He had no promise of being with Christ and becoming like him. These blessings came only through the redemptive work of Christ our Lord. Man had received more blessing through Christ’s sacrifice than if sin had never entered. God has received more glory in this way.

In this passage we learn that God gave us greater blessings through Christ. If we are in Christ, we receive such blessings and live a new life in him that is full of the spiritual fruits of peace, joy and the love of God. Let us boldly claim the new life God has given us in Christ Jesus by faith.

Big Idea: We receive greater blessings through Christ