

May 26, 2024

“Reconciled to God”
Lesson 3

Romans 5:1-11

Intro

Today’s lesson from Romans 5:1-11 is rooted in what Paul said regarding salvation in Romans 4 (see last week’s lesson for more). Paul argued that the true basis for a relationship with God is trust in His promises—in other words, faith. Chapter 5 is continuing the development of Paul’s ideas on this. One of the key new ideas he develops deals with suffering in the lives of believers. In the Old Testament, prophets at times showed that suffering was God’s judgment on sin. But Paul boasted about his own sufferings, thinking of them as opportunities to imitate Christ. Becoming like Christ calls for us to understand several topics from God’s perspective: suffering, reconciliation, friendship with God, and our ultimate deliverance from sin and death. These are the topics Paul addresses in today’s lesson.

Read Romans 5:1-11

1. vs. 1: Because God accepts us based on our faith and trust in Jesus’ work, we have been justified
 - This means two things for us
 - First, our sins are wiped away and we are clean in His eyes
 - Second, it begins a transformation of our lives towards being more like Jesus
 - This justification produces peace in our lives
 - We have no fear any longer towards God or towards man
 - God is at peace with us, so now we too can show peace to all, especially believers

2. vs. 2: We gain access to God’s grace through the work of Jesus Christ
 - It doesn’t happen because we were born Jews, or because of good works
 - We have faith in God’s offer of mercy to us despite our sins
 - Because we have accepted this offer of grace, we *stand* in it
 - We are solid and confident in what God has done and said
 - We “boast in the hope of the glory of God”
 - The glory being referred to here is the glory to us of Jesus’ work on the cross
 - This allows the church to live joyfully and confidently
 - We boast in our expectant hope that God has forgiven us and gives us new life

3. vs. 3: The word “glory” here in most translations really means “boast” in Greek
 - Paul is saying that Christians should celebrate even while unpleasant things happen
 - Sufferings aren’t little annoyances; they are devastating experiences
 - Paul reminds his readers that hardships allow for God’s grace to be revealed
 - Troubles and pain should not diminish our joy in Christ
 - Paul says that suffering produces perseverance—in other words, endurance
 - Our boasting in these conditions is not about how well we have done
 - Our boast is in God’s work in our lives both eternally and in the present situation

4. vs. 4: The list here is not a progression of one thing to another
It is instead a recognition of the relationship between all these qualities
Being willing to endure hardship strengthens a person's character
This makes it possible for a person to hope for a better future
- The idea behind the word "character" is being tested to determine or improve one's mettle
Character should be understood in a positive sense
This person has a high level of integrity developed under difficult circumstances
5. vs. 5: God has vindicated us, made us righteous, because we have accepted His gift of grace
As we have placed our hope in this, there is nothing that can shame us
We may suffer, but we still and always have God's approval
We cannot be shamed in any way that lasts
God's love is "poured out" through the Holy Spirit
Think of the way the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Acts
Our hearts are the place of thinking and reason in the Old Testament
This is how Paul is using the word—he is not referring to emotion
God promised to recreate Israel's heart so they could live in harmony with Him
See Jer. 32:39, Ez. 11:19, and Ez. 36:26
Paul is speaking to both Jews and Gentiles here
He doesn't speak of observing the Law, but of dwelling in God's love
The obvious response for us to love God in return
6. vs. 6: Paul reminds the Romans of three things here
First, Christ died for the ungodly
We were incapable of overcoming death on our own
We were people whose lives fought against God, causing us to be sinners
Christ's death was God's way to pay for our sins, which we couldn't do
Second, Christ's death happened at the right time
God brought Christ into the world at the best time to accomplish our salvation
Rome had made roads to make travel easier for their armies
Those roads also made it easy for the gospel to spread
Third, humanity is described as powerless
As with the first point, we are not the ones who make spiritual realities happen
Christ suffered patiently and voluntarily to accomplish our salvation
His followers are to follow His example of being weak so that God can be strong
7. vs. 7: It's not entirely clear what the distinction is between a righteous and a good person here
For both, it is a rare and uncommon thing for one person to willingly die for another
Even if that other person is righteous or good, dying for another is a huge choice
8. vs. 8: Christ's death is completely opposite of what happens in verse 7
In vs. 7, there are times that one chooses willingly to die for another
This other person is more often someone good

However, this verse says Christ died for *sinners*

We had done nothing for Him, and were not good people but sinners

Yet Christ chose to die for us despite who we were

Christ's death isn't similar to one who dies for another like in vs. 7

There is no parallel because there is no reason for Christ to die for us

We were strangers and enemies to godliness, yet He died for us anyways

9. vs. 9: Paul uses the phrase "how much more" both here and in vs. 10

He tells us that we have been saved from death by Christ's sacrifice

If Christ can do that very hard thing, "how much more" can He save us from God's anger?

The first thing is the more difficult of the two, says Paul

God's anger (wrath) is justified because we have sinned against Him

But Christ's death is substituted for the death we owe for having sinned

His death ended the alienation between God and us; we now have peace with God

10. vs. 10: Paul notes that Christ's death reconciled us to God, even though we were enemies of His

Now that we are no longer enemies, we are saved through Christ's life

We take on the life of Jesus, thinking and acting like He did

We participate in the life He has brought about through His death on the cross

We experience Christ's life in our own lives

11. vs. 11: In vs. 3, Paul talked about us glorying in our sufferings

Here we glory not in sufferings, but in the mercy shown us by God

This mercy isn't just to us—it's to *all* who believe in Christ's work

The joy we feel in this is because of Jesus, our Lord

He is the author and basis for why we celebrate (boast)

God's reconciliation with us means not counting our sins against us

This doesn't mean he pretends they didn't exist

He refuses to let those sins define our relationship with Him any longer

Application: The early Christians had to re-think what defined an action as honorable or shameful.

Christ's death on a cross was seen as shameful by the Romans, but because of what it accomplished, it was seen as honorable and worthy of praise by believers. So these early believers were able to endure persecution for their faith because by suffering, they could imitate Jesus. They believed that the One who raised Jesus from the dead would raise them as well. This hope allowed them to face public disgrace and all types of strife with generous hearts and confident minds. We can have the same mind and same actions as these early Christians. God's word never changes; if He says that the early Christians could be saved by their faithfulness to God through accepting Christ's death as paying for their sins, we can have the same today. And just like Christ, we also will be raised from death because of our faith in Jesus' work.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for taking away our sin and shame through Jesus' death on the cross.

Thank You for welcoming us into Your family. We are humbled and grateful for this honor. In Jesus' name, Amen.

