

Week Three: Romans 5:1–11

Key Verse

“Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” - Romans 5:1 (CSB)

Key Principles

- Being justified by faith brings many blessings to our lives, many of which can change our lives now.
- The gospel brings us a hope of a glorious future—eternity with God, living a perfected existence.
- God’s love for us, as demonstrated most clearly in the gospel, is a love like no other.

Read

As gospel-believing Christians, there are two mistakes that we can make that inhibit our ability to live lives of faith. The first is to see the gospel only as an abstract or theoretical idea, meaning that it never truly affects our emotions, attitudes, and affections. When we walk in this erroneous way of thinking, we do not actively talk to the God whom we proclaim. We may say we have peace with God because we know that God no longer feels like our enemy. But we don't enjoy the relationship that comes from having peace with a living God.

The second mistake is to reduce the gospel to a set of feelings. In this scenario, peace with God becomes something that we feel in our gut when we are confident, but when life throws us curveballs, we begin to doubt whether God has removed his blessing from us. We mistake feelings of anxiety as a sign that God's love is something beyond our reach. In contrast to both of these approaches, the gospel is a set of unchangeable facts that changes everything, completely, for those who trust in Christ. This reality is what we find in Romans 5:1–11, where Paul explains the many ways the gospel affects us now and in the future.

The words "since we have been justified by faith" are a great summary of Paul's argument from Romans 3:21 to the end of Romans 4:25. In 3:21–4:25, Paul explains how God brings justification to sinners, crediting Christ's righteousness to us. We were enemies of God and our future should have ended with God's wrath, but Jesus Christ earned us peace with God and a future full of hope and glory. Our present reality is marked by God's grace. This grace means that we are saved now, fully reconciled to God and able to live a life in relationship with him. It also means that we will be saved in the future and

will live with our Redeemer for all eternity.

How exactly does a knowledge of these facts begin to change our lives, our minds, and our emotions here and now? All of these great facts of the gospel give us a tremendous, over-whelming **hope**, which Paul describes in 5:2–5. For Paul, this **hope** gives us joy (5:2, 11). It makes us steadfast in the face of difficult or changing circumstances (5:3–5). It helps us see beyond the brokenness in our lives to a better future and a truer spiritual reality. Sometimes in our culture, we describe **hope** as something that is uncertain, but the **hope** that the gospel brings is rock-solid and sure. We aren't placing our **hope** in things that pass or change. Romans 5:2 tells us that "we rejoice in the **hope** of the glory of God" (emphasis added).

But what exactly does it mean to "rejoice in the **hope** of the glory of God" (5:2, emphasis added)? It means we joyfully look forward to the glory of God being revealed to us and in us because God has already justified us and reconciled us to himself (5:1). It means that we can be confident—even in the midst of suffering—that God will reveal his glory in us on the last day. This **hope** we have in the gospel is a 100-percent guarantee, as God's glory is unchanging and eternal. He has proven his trustworthiness in the ways that the gospel fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. So, when he tells us that heaven is our future, we can have an unshakeable confidence in that future!

To be clear, this **hope** is not naive but battle-tested. It's not the type of **hope** that is wished for merely at the beginning, rather, it is the type of **hope** that endures through suffering and builds character. Tim Keller remarks:

[T]he benefits of justification are not only not diminished by suffering,

they are enlarged by it. In other words, if you face suffering with a clear grasp of justification by grace alone, your joy in that grace will deepen. On the other hand, if you face suffering with a mindset of justification by works, the suffering will break you, not make you.¹

At the core of this hope is God's love. Verse 5 says that hope does not put us to shame because God poured his love into our hearts. When we realize how much God loves us, the other circumstances of our lives begin to fade into the background and we are transformed. In the gospel story, God did something for us that we could not do for ourselves, much less for others. Look at how God's love goes way beyond what we could ever do or imagine:

- God sent his only Son to die for us (Romans 5:1, 6, 8–10).
- Christ had to shed his blood in order to save us (Romans 5:8–11).
- Jesus died for us while we were God's enemies (Romans 5:6, 8, 10).
- He then promises that we will have a great future living with him in perfect paradise (Romans 5:2; 8:17–25, 30).
- And in the meantime, he offers us friendship and reconciliation (Romans 5:1–2, 8–11; James 2:23).

1 Tim Keller, *Romans 1–7 For You* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2014), 113.

This love is what really captivated the Apostles as they spread the gospel. Paul says God’s love compels us (2 Corinthians 5:14) and John says, “See what great love the Father has given us” (1 John 3:1) as he describes the gospel. God’s affection for us is the reason that we can be safe and secure about our future. Stay tuned for Romans 8 for more about how God’s Spirit will work in us in the areas of love, hope, and a glorious future.

Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question before your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul’s major points. Then, read Romans 5:1–11 in preparation for this week’s study.

Highlight

1. Highlight Paul's conjunctions (e.g. therefore, since, but, because, for, so that, etc.) in Romans 5:1–11.
2. Romans 5:1–11 begins a description of the blessings that God gives believers in the gospel. List out all the blessings that you see mentioned in this passage.
3. Looking at verses 6–11, how does each verse describe the work of Christ in the gospel?
4. Why does Paul point out that Christ died for us "while we were still

helpless” and “still sinners” (Romans 5:6–8)?

Explain

1. According to Romans 5:1–11, how does Christ’s salvation affect us right now in the present? How will Christ’s salvation impact us in the future?
2. Verse 3 says that we “rejoice in our sufferings.” What does this mean? How is it possible for Christians to rejoice in our sufferings without minimizing the pain we feel?
3. There are more first person pronouns (we, us, our) in Romans 5:1–11 than in the first four chapters combined. What does this mean? (Hint: Paul no longer distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles, as all believers are united in Christ.)
4. Paul says that believers have now “received reconciliation” (5:11). What does reconciliation mean in the context of what we have studied thus far in the book of Romans?

5. Paul says that God proves his love for us (5:8). What did God do and how is it proof of his love for us?

6. In Romans 5:1–11, Paul describes the hope we have in Christ. Placing our hope in earthly things will inevitably lead to disappointment, but why will this God-given hope never disappoint us?

Apply

1. How can hope in things God will do bring positive changes to your life right now?

2. Recall an experience of suffering in your life and be prepared to share it with your small group. As a group, take time to enter in and “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). What keeps us from responding to God with the posture of joy and praise found Romans 5:1–11? What would it look like to respond with joy and praise in the midst of your circumstances?

3. How do you know that God loves you? How would you explain God's love to your One?

Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home and together with your small group.

This Week's Prayer Passage: Psalm 40

Read Psalm 40.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- Adoration: Praise God because his deeds are wondrous and there are too many to tell about (Psalm 40:4)! Praise the Lord because no one compares with him (40:5). Praise God because he is a faithful, steadfast, and saving God (40:10).
- Confession: Ask God to forgive you for the ways you have been impatient with him and with others in your life. Ask God's forgiveness for how you have been fearful or felt ashamed about doing his will (Psalm 40:14). Ask God's forgiveness for letting our iniquities overtake our lives (40:12). Ask God's forgiveness for how

we have restrained ourselves from telling others the good news (40:5, 9).

- Thanksgiving: Thank God that he will not restrain his mercy from us, even when we do not bring honor to him (Psalm 40:11). Thank God for making us secure in him (40:2). Thank God that he is trustworthy (40:3–4). Thank God that he has delivered us again and again (40:9, 13, 17), especially in Christ.
- Supplication: Ask God that he would hear our cries when we are in need (Psalm 40:1). Ask that God would put a new song in our mouths when we are experiencing difficulty or going through loss (40:3). Ask God for victory over sins, our own or those of the people around us, which threaten to overtake us (40:12). Ask God that you would see, understand, remember, and rejoice in his salvation of your soul (40:16–17).

who's your **1**NE?

Who's Your One? is about each of us leading one non-Christian to faith in Christ this year. Read back through your notes from this week's study on Romans 5:1–11. How would you share the truths of Romans 5:1–11 with someone who is not a Christian? What words and phrases would you use?

This week, pray for your One. Update your small group's prayer journal with specific prayer points and look for opportunities to build friendships, initiate to the spiritual, share the gospel, and help them make a decision.