

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 11TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

BLESSINGS (ROMANS 5:1-5)

"...PEACE WITH GOD..."

St. Paul brings the last few sections together by talking about the benefits of being made new in Jesus. In Rom. 3 we see the injustices of humanity separate us from a just, holy God. But through faith in Jesus, we are restored.

- A loving, personal relationship is what God intended for humanity. Through Jesus we have a harmonious relationship with God.

"...OBTAINED ACCESS..."

We cannot know God as finite humans. It would be like a human trying to converse with an ant. But God made himself known! Why? Because of ultimate, transcendent love.

- **The incarnation (God in flesh) is the only way to know him. That's why Jesus is the only way. Through faith we can know "the hope of the glory of God."**

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Like a great infomercial, St. Paul tells us the further benefits of being a part of God's family in Jesus.

Our afflictions take on new meaning because of Jesus. We don't celebrate affliction, we rejoice "in our afflictions."

- This world is not yet fully restored. There is suffering. Yet we identify with Jesus and rely on Him (endurance).

"ENDURANCE"

The beauty of suffering and affliction is it reveals Who God is within us. If we are not found in Jesus, we cannot endure difficulties.

- **Yet, when we are made new, God refines us. If you were put to the test, what would it reveal? What is your true character? When we are in Christ, it becomes hopeful for those around us.**

"HOPE"

As Jesus follows we know there is more to this world than what meets the eye. Suffering is not the end. We have hope for this life and the next. Hope is a distinctly Christian value.

- **When we come to faith in Jesus, The Holy Spirit fills us. There is a divine love with our Creator, and it gives us peace, hope, and love within. And that's what we pour out.**

DIVINE LOVE (ROMANS 5:6-11)

"...CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY..."

God loves humanity so much that He died for all people at their worst. This level of sacrifice is unprecedented. We all know the concept of sacrificing for others (like helping to move).

- Giving our time, energy, and lives for others is hard – even for those we like! Yet, Jesus took on death for the worst version of us. That is divine love!

"...GOD PROVES HIS OWN LOVE..."

God's proof of this love is the cross. As if God had to prove His love, the incarnation was the greatest risk and ultimate act of sacrifice. God came to earth and died a criminal's death.

- **Risk and sacrifice for those who can give us nothing back is true love. As C.S. Lewis says, "to love is to be vulnerable." We are called to this love.**

"HOW MUCH MORE..."

God's love didn't just save us from the consequences of sin, but for much more! We often reduce God's love to a one-time act for our sins. We are saved from sin for renewal!

- **Jesus' act of love took place to change the world! When we believe, God changes and motivates us to change and motivate others. That's a Christian.**

"...WE ALSO REJOICE..."

Because of such love and renewal, we celebrate. When we are helpless, broken, liars, unjust, and selfish, God seeks reconciliation and connection with us. That's absurd. Who loves like that? We rejoice in a love like that!

- **Jesus set the example for us and that's what we are called to. We are called to reconcile and love just like that through Him.**

CONTRAST (ROMANS 5:12-17)

"...DEATH SPREAD TO ALL PEOPLE..."

- St. Paul reiterates a point he has made several times: humanity has all been affected by sin. Like a bad infection, it's infiltrated the human hearts, minds, and actions. Even before we knew what sin was, we sinned.

- This makes the previous point about God's love that much more poignant. God wants to help heal us.

"...ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION..."

The person Paul identifies as the culprit for humanity's plight: Adam. In Genesis we read Adam directly disobeys God, despite being created for connection with God.

- **Death and relational consequences started with the dissent from our Creator. That's what Adam did. Is it fair? According to basic leadership it is.**

"...THE GIFT IS NOT LIKE THE TRESPASS..."

St. Paul contrasts Adam with Jesus. However, it's not quite a contrast, because they are not the same! Everyone was cursed with sin, but God's gracious renewal is a gift!

- **Love is not forced. That's why the curse of sin is so bad – we are forced into its consequences. The beauty of a gift is it's free, given in love, and chosen.**

JUSTIFICATION IS BETTER THEN CONDEMNATION

And who wouldn't want to choose the gift that God is offering? Paul sets out in Ch.'s 1 and 3 (and we can see in life) that sin erodes humanity. Yet, God's gift in Jesus changes everything.

- **Justification is what happens. This means we are "set right," and then through God's Spirit in us, we can help set God's world right too. The compass for a broken world.**

"...THE OVERFLOW OF GRACE..."

Again, Paul makes clear that this justification is for "those who will receive" it. God will not force anyone. God's hope is for everyone who will submit to King Jesus. They will be poured into and used for His renewing work.

- **Are you submitted to Jesus? Or are you a slave to the curse? Have you received the gift that can overflow through you?**

EVERYONE (ROMANS 5:18-21)

"...FOR EVERYONE..." (EVEN OUR ENEMIES)

There are some theologies, ironically centralized in Romans, that only some are destined to be saved. Paul makes clear that God's renewal salvation is available for everyone! This includes those we write off.

- This shouldn't surprise us because that was God's promise to Abraham: "all nations will be blessed." Gen 22:18

"...THROUGH THE ONE MAN'S OBEDIENCE..."

Everyone will be saved who obeys like Abraham did. It's the obedience seen fully in Jesus. Jesus is the only way to be saved, and His obedience, even unto death, is our guide. It's His work that has made a way for us.

- **To live the life of Jesus, we must be submitted to His cross. Are we living a life of obedience to King Jesus?**

"GRACE MULTIPLIED" AND "WILL REIGN..."

The life of obedience in Jesus is not easy but has glorious results.

- **First, the way of Jesus multiplies. The way of Jesus multiplies grace, peace, goodness, reconciliation, and renewal. Second, it offers victory over death. Jesus defeated the one thing that haunts us all: death. We have hope for resurrection.**

BENEFITS

- Do we recognize the blessings of being Jesus followers?
- God's ways are the best way for humanity. To live as God intended is what it means to truly be human.
- Are you experiencing peace? How about hope? Even when life isn't going well? How is your character? Is it consistent?

OBEDIENCE OR DISOBEDIENCE

- What we saw in Adam, the first image bearing human, is disobedience to His divine Creator. But then we see obedience (which is faith) by Abraham.
- Jesus' act of obedience made a way for all of us to be able to live pure lives too.
- Are we living in obedience to Jesus? Are we submitted to His Words and ways?

GOD LOVES YOU

- God came to earth and died for sinners.
- Yet, God loves us so much that he doesn't want to leave us where we are. You are saved from sin for a purpose: to make disciples and change the world.
- Have you entered halfway to The Kingdom? God loves us and wants the best for His Creation. God wants to do through us!