



*Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.*

*"Giving Thanks with a Grateful Heart"*

*November, 2017*

Are you a person justified in Christ? Then you have much for which to be thankful today and every day.

In the first four chapters of Romans, Paul shows that all are sinners in the sight of a God who is infinitely holy. All fall short of His glory, His perfection, His faithfulness, His love, His holiness, etc. Paul has made his point in a logical progression to demonstrate that no one can have right standing before the Living God through his/her own righteous deed, such as keeping the Law. Using Abraham and David as examples, Paul explains that God's way of salvation, of answering how one gets back to the Father after Adam's original sin in the Garden, has always been through Promise, by grace, through faith. (cf. Ephesians 2:8, 9) Paul has admonished the need for salvation and the way God meets that need. What was lost in the Garden in Genesis can be regained, with an improved relationship and on a covenant basis, but it will be by the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promise in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ alone.

In Romans 5:1-11 Paul delves into the blessings of one's justification and the basis for that justification.

Many people put more value on temporal blessings from God than the spiritual blessings. The blessings encompass both. Salvation is a spiritual experience based on the faithfulness of God. It is a bond in blood, a covenant, the new covenant in Christ's blood, and it cannot be broken. Paul will give by means of the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit seven spiritual blessings in order to provide assurance that one who believes in and belongs to Jesus Christ cannot be lost, lose this salvation. The new basis for obedience will not be outward rule but an inward reality.

**1. Peace with God.** The peace secured by Jesus Christ on behalf of His own given to Him by His Father overcomes alienation from God. There is peace with God; the peace of Christ and of God; and peace in God. People do not get the holiness of God and their own sinfulness, that peace with God, restoration to His favor, comes His way, and His way only.

To have peace with God, one must be justified by faith, have the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer (and Creator) and Mediator (through Him).

Before the salvation experience a person is enmity with God. (Romans 5:10; 8:7). He cannot obey God's Law or fulfill God's will. He is totally unable, bent at the core of his being, blind and deaf and dead in trespasses and sins. (Isaiah 48:22; Isaiah 32:15-17) When God declares us sinners, that condemnation is a declaration of war. In Justification God declares us righteous, which is a declaration of peace. This peace is made possible by Christ's death on the Cross, Jesus bearing our sin, bearing the wrath of God, bearing the curse, and bearing the Glory. (Psalm 85:10, Romans 4:15). No one condemned by the Law enjoys peace with God. When

justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone, God declares us righteous. This is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and is in no way a righteousness of our own. Titus 3:4-7.

**2. Access to God (2a)** Access to God comes through Jesus. He brings us into the Presence of God. He makes the way, makes the introduction, mediates the justification, and establishes us as His. His atoning work gains us access, directly to the Father, anytime and anywhere. This access puts us in permanent right standing (justification) in the riches of God's grace. It's a past action with ongoing results (aorist tense). We have access and NOW we have ongoing standing in this realm of God's grace. We're on solid ground by our vital spiritual union with Jesus, the rightful heir. We are co-heirs with Christ because of being "in Christ." Ephesians 2:7; 3:8; Romans 8:31b-35a)

The veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies kept Jews from God's presence. A wall in the Temple kept out Gentiles and warned that any Gentile who went beyond that wall would be killed. Jesus rent the veil (Luke 23:45) and by His death broke down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14). In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles have access to God (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-25). Believing ones are able to come boldly to the Throne of Grace...(Hebrews 4:16). The riches of grace cannot be exhausted. (Eph. 1:7; 2:4; 3:8). The believer's standing is "in grace." The believer is no longer under the penalty of the Law (death), but as we find in Romans 8, the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the Law of Sin and Death. This is by the Law of faith.

Justification has to do with our standing; sanctification has to do with our state. The word "access" here means admission, with the idea of introduction, face-to-face interaction. This is a one-time act of God by which friendly relationship is restored and His favor can thus be disposed toward us.

**Having been justified therefore by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord of us, Jesus Christ, through whom also we have this access by the faith into this grace in which we stand. And we boast/exult in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1, 2**

Do we want to see the glory of God? Do we want to see and understand the radiant splendor of His Being? Hebrews 1:1-3. Do we have a joyful confidence of it? Jesus supremely reflects the effulgent glory of the Godhead. He "shines." His eternal light breaks through all the darkness that keeps someone in spiritual ignorance and bondage.

**3. Glorious hope.** This brings us to boasting, not in our own works of righteousness, but in hope of the glory of God. Peace with God settles the stuff of our past. Having access to God as Father is something we have in the present. This glorious hope is about the future. One day we shall share in His glory. We can rejoice in it (5:2; 5:3, 11). We can exult in the hope. We can live with head held high, boasting because from our vantage point we have the right base of operation (See 2 Cor. 5:12.). We can live with God-given confidence.

As sinners, we had nothing to boast about (Romans 3:27); we fell short (3:23). Christ makes the difference in this. Sinners become saints, holy ones in Christ. In Christ, we can boast, hold our heads high, and live with God-given confidence, in hope of the glory of God. This is not a

boasting in our flesh, in ourselves; this is a boasting in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and being imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. This boasting is, “Look at God!”

**4. Trials and tribulations work for us. not only that, moreover, we glory in the tribulations, knowing that the tribulation produces perseverance. Moreover, perseverance [produces] character and character [produces] hope. (Romans 5:3, 4)**

When we go through persecution, affliction, distress, and tribulation, we experience pressure and feel hemmed in. We feel internal pressure and feel restricted and without options. We feel and see no way of escape.

Justification brings us into right standing with God. It is a declaration of righteousness based on the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us by faith in the Promise. Believers go through tribulation (Jn 16:33), but these trials work for us and not against us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:35-39) Trials bring us closer to the Lord and sanctify us such that we are conformed to the [moral] image of Jesus Christ. We become what we behold, and we become what God has declared us to be.

Suffering builds Christian character. So we endure under this pressure, especially as God enables us to remain steadfast and wait patiently under the many challenges He providentially allows to come our way. We are forged, and tested by this trials with the result being proven character, what is “tested and true.”

Here’s the pattern: tribulation –endurance/patient waiting for—proven character—hope.

Trials purify us and separate the chaff from the wheat. Our English word for tribulation comes from the Latin *tribulum*, a heavy piece of timber with spikes on it used for threshing the grain. It is when God sifts and sorts, separates, and sanctifies.

**5. God’s love.** Proverbs 13:12 says that hope deferred makes the heart sick, but as we go through trials of sanctification, we find our hope fulfilled according to God’s nature and ways. The love of God has been poured out into our hearts.

**Now hope does not make ashamed, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, the One having been given to us. (Romans 5:5)**

Love (Romans 5:5), joy (Romans 5:2), and peace (Romans 5:1) begin the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22, 23. God proved His love. He keeps proving His love through the Holy Spirit given to us. The Spirit sustains us. Faith (Rom. 5:1), hope (Rom. 5:2), and love (Rom. 5:5) combine to cause us to persevere and endure in the trials of life. We grow up (James 1:1-4).

**For Christ yet still being with us without strength, according to the right time [Kairos moment], died for the ungodly. Though rarely for a righteous person anyone will die. Though on behalf of the good person, perhaps someone would even dare to die. Moreover God demonstrates the “of Himself love” TO us, in order that while still being sinners, Christ for us died. (Romans 5:6-8)**

**6. Salvation from future wrath.** (9, 10). Moving from the lesser to the greater, if in fact God justified us while we were yet sinners, as the ungodly, by the Blood of Christ, then we will be saved by Him from the wrath. We were reconciled to God through the death of God's Son, and so now having been reconciled, we will be saved by His LIFE. (Romans 4:25; Hebrews 7:23-25)

**Much therefore more, having been justified now by the Blood of Him, we will be saved by Him from the wrath. If in fact indeed, being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of the Son of Him, much more having been reconciled, we will be saved by the life of Him. (Romans 5:9, 10)**

Jesus Christ wrote us into His Last Will & Testament, so to speak, and He wrote it with His Blood. He died and so this LW&T is in full force and effect. He rose from the dead and returned to heaven to further enforce the terms of the inheritance. Christ not only died, but He lives for us.

Note: Christ alive abides in the believer, appears to believers (e.g. Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle John), ever lives to make intercession, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ruling and reigning, and He has the power to subject all things to Himself as Lord of the Universe, e.g.

#### **7. Reconciliation with God (11)**

**Moreover, not only but also we are rejoicing in God, through the Lord [Kurios] of us, Jesus Christ, by and through Whom now we have received the reconciliation, the atonement. (Romans 5:11)**

This is NOW reconciliation and restoration to favor. It results from Christ exactly and precisely exchanging His righteousness (Blood) for our guilt.

This blessing from God is at the core of salvation: how to get back to the Father, how to have the relationship broken by Adam in the Garden restored. People declared war on God (Romans 1:18-32). Bad move. Jesus was sent by the Father to save, to make peace through the Blood of the Cross, through the atoning work of the sacrifice of Himself voluntarily. This is pure grace, totally undeserved, and which absolutely cannot be earned.

These seven blessings of justification should cause us to rejoice in the LORD always. As we understand the Holy Spirit's work of sanctifying us, we will come to rejoice in the various trials we go through as we are being conformed to the moral image of Christ. When we have trials and aren't sure how to proceed, we can still rejoice and with thanksgiving place our concerns before the Living God. We can jump and leap in celebration, exulting because of the joy of Jesus, who daily loads us with benefits.

Jesus tells us to cheer up because He has overcome the world. What overcomes the world is our faith, a faith that comes from Christ and moves into us and back to Christ, as He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, a faith in Him, in the faithfulness of God. We have spiritual blessings that affect our temporal lives and beyond. We don't need money for this; such great blessings cannot be bought. Rather, we are to receive by faith and with thankful hearts.

So let's exult in the blessings of being justified in Christ. They come free to us, as a gift, but they are infinitely costly. Jesus paid this cost. Let's truly from the heart bless the LORD with all that is within us. Let's take some time in the midst of football games, parades, food and family and friends, shopping, and all that, and let's just leap in celebration for Jesus.



Just the Messenger,

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Blessed be the LORD, Who daily loads us

With benefits, the God of our salvation!

Psalm 68:19

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