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DATE: March 22, 2026
SERIES: The Gospel Is
MESSAGE: Our Peace and Hope
PASSAGE: Romans 5:1-11
SPEAKER: Mark Mathewson

Good morning. I'm not up here very often, and many of you might not know who I am, so Ryan Harmon asked if I would say a little bit more about myself. I've been on staff since 2006. I'm the theologian in residence, and I help our church think deeply and accurately about the Bible, theology, other matters related to our faith. I also have the privilege of meeting each week with our residents to discuss with them what they're learning in their seminary courses.

And another thing that I do here is I work with our Spanish speaking congregation. And perhaps until Courtney's prayer this morning, you might not have realized that we have a Spanish speaking congregation that meets here every Sunday at 10:45am in the Chapel. About 80 to 100 Spanish speakers gather from about a dozen different countries, and they are part of our church, and I'm privileged to be able to work with them. We'd love for you to come visit sometime, if you have a chance. Even if you don't know Spanish, come, they will welcome you and you can enjoy, again, participating in the vibrant worship of our God.

July 26, 2019, I woke up with some pain and discomfort in my right shoulder. I thought maybe I'd slept on my shoulder and my arm wrong, but a bit later as I was getting ready for work, I noticed that my right arm was twice the size of my left arm. So, of course, shortly thereafter, I'm on the way to the emergency room wondering what are the doctors going to find? What's the verdict going to be?

Well, after some tests, the ER doctors came back and said, you have a blood clot in your shoulder, and we need to get you to a vascular surgeon right away. So, I go to the vascular surgeon, and she's able to get rid of that blood clot, but then I also needed a couple of surgeries subsequently to correct one of the underlying problems that caused that blood clot. Then, of course, there was recovery time. And after all of that, there came the day my vascular surgeon said, declared, you're healthy. The problem is fixed.

Imagine now that I left her office and continued to live as if I still had the problem. Imagine that each day, I return to the emergency room to check and see what my problem is. Imagine if I stayed in bed instead of going to work each day, just recovering from my surgeries. Now, we would think that that is odd, right? I've been declared healthy. The problem is solved, but yet I'm living as if it's not. Similarly, Paul tells us in Romans 5 that, if one has responded to the gospel by giving their loyalty to Jesus, they've been declared to be in a right relationship with God. And if that's true, that's not just a mere statement, a mere fact about us, but it's something that should result in us living like people who are justified. And that's what we want to talk about this morning.

We come now to a transition point in the book of Romans. Up till now, chapters 1 through 4, we spent some time understanding what justification is. Paul's been telling us that it's this declaration of being not guilty and being in a right relationship now with God. He's also told us why we need justification. It's because of our sinfulness. And he's told us how we come to be justified, and that is by giving our loyalty, giving our faith, to Jesus.



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But now Paul is making a shift. And in verses 5 to 8, he wants to now talk about what the results of justification are. What difference does it make? What difference should it make? And so the shift we begin here, in the first 11 verses that we want to consider this morning. So, I'm going to read those first 11 verses and then we'll work our way through this text. I'll be reading from the new international version this morning.

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we now have been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 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! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

So in this transitional section, Paul is reflecting back on what he's previously said. Because we are justified, there are certain things now, that result from that. And we're going to look at three here in this passage this morning.

And the first is that we have peace with God. Now, we need to say a couple things about this. First, Paul is not saying that we have the peace of God, although that's can be true in some instances. But peace of God would be a subjective feeling that I have. Paul's not thinking about that in this passage. He's saying we have peace with God. We have an objective reality about us, that we are no longer God's enemies. In fact, we're family now, and this is a truth about us.

But beyond just the fact that we are not God's enemies, this word peace has, again, a more significant meaning. And remember, Paul is a Pharisee, and he comes from a background of the Hebrew Bible. And in the Hebrew Bible, that word peace, and we sang it this morning, is shalom. That is more than just not being enemies with somebody, but has this deep sense of well-being. And so having peace with God means, yes, I'm part of the family and not an enemy, but I have this deep-seated sense of well-being, of flourishing now as a human.

But another thing we should note is that this isn't just something I have, but Paul's going to make it clear this is something that I stand in. It's a new reality that I live in. It's not just a mere fact about me, but it's something that should cause me to live differently, that I stand in this realm or the sphere or this new reality of being one of God's family. And being able to experience, again, this deep-seated sense of well-being. And so he says, this is because of the Messiah Jesus, and what he's done for us. And it's through him, he says, we've gained access by giving our loyalty to Jesus—we have access into this grace that we now stand.

And what's this grace that he's talking about? Well, here grace doesn't mean going easy on someone or you know, not demanding too much of them. The word grace means gift. And so what is this gift I stand in? It's this new reality of being at peace with God. So because of what Jesus has done, because now I have been declared to be in a right relationship with God, not only is it true



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that I have peace with God, but it's something I should live in, I should stand in. This is the new realm or new state in which I live.

As wonderful as that is, there's something else. Not only do I have peace with God now, but Paul goes on to say, at the end of verse 2, that we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Now, probably many of you are using a New American Standard Bible, and I think it has "celebrate." And that's okay, but I think that's too weak of a word here. My translation has boast, and that probably doesn't fit too well in our context because we think boasting is bragging. But I think the idea here is that we have joyful confidence. Joyful confidence in the hope of the glory of God. Well, what is this hope that Paul is talking about? What is this glory of God that we hope in?

Well, I think it's this: it's the glory that we, as humans, lost at the fall. We were created as God's image, but he also shared his glory with us. We originally were intended to live an incorruptible life in communion with him, but because of the fall, that's been lost. The image hasn't been lost, but the glory has. But because we've been justified, Paul says, we have this joyful certainty that one day, that glory will be fully restored in us. And it's a hope that is certain. So we can be joyfully confident. What's more, I think the idea is that we stand in, we live in, joyful confidence because we know of what our future is going to be. The restoration of that lost glory now will be ours, and we'll share once more in the fullness of that glory. And so we have that hope as people who are justified.

And again, it's not just a truth about us. It's something I need to stand in, I need to live in, as a person who's been justified. I need to live like that and not as I formerly lived. But there's still more. And here, Paul sounds like those commercials, you know, that are pitching you something and say, ah, but yet there's more. Paul says there's more here. And that is we can also have joyful confidence in our suffering. And that sounds very odd, especially in our culture, right? That we would have joyful confidence in suffering. Why is that?

Well, Paul says, it's because of where that suffering leads and what that suffering indicates. So notice we can have this joyful confidence in our suffering because we know that that suffering can produce perseverance in us, which builds our character, which should lead to hope. And what hope is he talking about? I think it's that hope of the restored glory. But how does that work? How can my suffering, you know, lead to joyful confidence in this hope that I have? Well, I think it's because in the midst of my suffering, I understand that God is even at work in that to use those sufferings, to, again, grow me, ultimately, to the place where that glory is restored. And so we can have this joyful confidence even in our suffering.

And he says, we know that that hope is something that does not put us to shame. In the ancient culture, to suffer was often considered a shameful thing. I must have done something wrong to do that. Paul says that's not the case. Our suffering should be an indicator, again, of that future glory that is in store for us. And so we can even have this joyful confidence and notice it's not just a declaration of a truth about me. Right? But it's a reality I stand in. So I should live and stand in this new reality of having joyful confidence even in my suffering because I know God is using that to ultimately restore his glory in me. And of course, evidence of that is God's love. Paul says, the love that has been poured out in us through his giving of the Holy Spirit.

Well, we might wonder, how can I be so certain of God's love? How can I be so confident about my future hope and about the fact that I am in this family of God, and I'm no longer his enemy? Well, Paul takes that up beginning in verse 6. He says:

6 ...at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for [us] the ungodly people.



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Now, when Paul says at the right time, this is something I used to think was chronological time or at some point in history, but I don't think that's what Paul is saying. I think he's saying at the right time, in other words, when humans were at their lowest, right? When we could do nothing for our condition, God steps in to do for us what we can't do, and that is to save us. And so Jesus died for those who are at their end, and that is all humanity, as we've seen already in Romans.

And so, Jesus died for the ungodly. And Paul says, you know, it's very rare that someone might die for a righteous person. In other words, think of somebody that you might see or admire because they're an upstanding citizen. They engage in fair business practices and so forth. We admire those people, but my guess is there's not very many of us who would be willing to die for that person, even though we might admire them. So Paul says, yeah, that's not likely.

He says, and you might get some more people, but still very few, who might die for a good person. What's Paul talking about there? I think what Paul has in mind is somebody who is a benefactor. In other words, somebody who has given money or resources to support someone else. Now, for someone like that, who I have a relationship with, they've done a great amount of good for me, I might be willing, under certain conditions, to give my life for that person, but that still would be a bit of a stretch.

But what about somebody who is your enemy? Who is an ungodly sinner? Would anyone be willing to die for them? And my guess is no. I'm not gonna, I'm not willing to die for someone like that. But Paul says, that's what God does that shows the depth of his love. If you have any question about whether God loves us, consider that he died for the powerless, ungodly sinner who was his enemy. And so that should give us confidence that God is working in and through us, even in our suffering, to lead us to that full restoration of his glory.

Then Paul says that because he justified us by the death of Jesus by his blood, how much more will he save us from final judgment? In other words, if God has done the harder thing in making enemies now his family, justifying those ungodly sinners, how much easier will it be for him to save them from final judgment that he will bring upon the world? So if he's done that, clearly he's going to be able to, again, get us to that point of future glory. There's nothing that will derail God taking the justified, and, again, bringing them to that full restoration.

So we can have this joyful confidence in the fact that we have peace with God, we're family, that we are in a place and live in a state of well-being, as part of his family, and that we have this joyful confidence of our certain future, of that glory being restored in us on that last day, knowing that God will not abandon us to the end.

And so this leaves Paul to say then in verse 11, that in the end we can also boast or have joyful confidence in God through the Messiah. Because we're certain of his love for us, and his promise of leading us to that future glorification, we can be confident, joyfully confident, that he will bring the lost sons of Adam, the lost daughters of Eve to the glory that humans once shared with him. And that is something that's not just true of us, but something we should live in. It should make a difference in our living.

I mentioned earlier that Romans 5, 1 through 11, begins this section that goes through chapter 8 of telling us about the results of our justification. What I find interesting is that Paul ends Romans 8 with a passage that reflects what he says here and maybe will help clarify the point that he's making here. I wanna read the last few verses of Romans 8, a passage that you're probably familiar with, but I want you to listen for echoes of chapter 5, 1 through 11 in this passage. Romans 8, beginning with verse 31.



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31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution, or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I’m convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I hope you could hear Romans 5, 1 through 11 in that. The same idea, because of God's love, because of his justification of those who give loyalty to Jesus, there's nothing that will prevent God from our future glorification. And of course, the verse just before the ones we read says, for whom he justified, he also glorified. So we can have this joyful confidence, both in our present peace that we have with God, and the future glory that will certainly be ours.

You know, many who come to faith in Jesus, and who are justified, continue living as if things haven't changed. They think it's just mere information about a new status they have. But Paul is clear, right, that our justification results in living a new life. We now stand in the reality of enjoying peace with God. No longer are we enemies, but we are family who enjoy all of the blessings and benefits, and provisions, and protection, and guidance of being in that family.

And we need to live that way. It's not mere truth about us. We stand in the reality of joyful confidence of our future glory. As we faithfully follow Jesus, we have assurance that he who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it. And we stand in the reality of having joyful confidence, even in our suffering, suffering that we endure in this fallen world. And we know it's a sure sign once more of that glory that awaits us. Suffering need not be meaningless. It need not be ultimately defeating. We have the sure hope that suffering is something God is using, again, to bring about our good.

I think both now, but ultimately in the future, when that glory is restored to us, if you have given your loyalty to Jesus, you've come to him in faith, you are justified. You've been declared to be in a right relationship with God. The question is, are you living like that? Or in my hypothetical example, are you, you know, living with your same problem even though you've been declared to be in a right relationship with God? We need to again, ask ourselves that question. Because justification is not just a mere fact about us, it's a reality that we should live in.

We often talk in our Christian lingo about Christians being “believers,” and that's accurate. I have no issue with that, except in our day, our day's understanding “believers” means something like just merely accepting the truth of something. But perhaps we should call Christians “standers.” Reminding ourselves that this declaration of being right with God results in us living differently, in living in this new reality of being at peace with God now, having this future hope of the restoration of our glory, and having the confidence in that, even in the midst of suffering.

So let me ask you this morning. Are you a “stander?”

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Amen.

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