

### ***The Journey***

***5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.***

So so far in Romans, we have dealt with the doctrine of sin in which everyone of use are sinners and there is nothing we can do that can save ourselves or rather, there is nothing that would make us right standing with the holy, just and righteous God in heaven. Then we dealt with the doctrine of salvation in that our salvation is simply we repent of our sins and our sinful nature and we believe upon the name, honor and reputation of Jesus Christ. It is simply a matter of faith alone. Not faith and 'oh I hope I did enough to please God so he would let me into heaven'. No. Faith alone.

So now, you have this faith. Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit into your heart whereas Holy Spirit, brings the lunchpail, some leather work gloves and begins to go to work on your heart and begins to transform your life from the inside out.

That gracious, merciful and beautiful work of the Holy Spirit is what we called ongoing sanctification. It is the thought that while we are justified before God by our faith in life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you and I know, I mean really really know and know well that doesn't makes us instantly perfect. But guess what? It will. In the end. Because it isn't the work we do for ourselves but rather the work of Jesus Christ in our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit that makes it possible for us to be perfect standing before God at the end of our lives here on earth.

Also, I don't know verse 5 where Paul writes '***hope does not put us to shame***' jumped out at you like it did me but I promise you we will deal with that at the end of the lesson tonight.

This is entire passage, all five verses, hits really close to my heart and is very personal. Sure it might be a great verse to hang on the wall but when I heard this 2 years ago, it stuck with me like lint on a cheap suit. For any of you guys who know what you are called to, not just vocational ministry, but whatever your career or goal is at the moment, this might resonate with you.

It was a couple years ago where God laid a calling upon my heart to be a pastor, to go and preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and raise and train up disciples. So of course, being like any fresh convert, I am all like "I WANT TO DO IT NOW!!!". I talk to my friend Zach who basically laid out some verses to get me pointed in the right direction. He busts open this passage and upon reading this passage, I suddenly realize it is not my ultimate goal to be in vocational ministry to be a pastor to be a church planter to have my own church. None of those things could be my end goal. My end goal has to be the kingdom of God and to stand with God to have my salvation completed by God before God.

Our ultimate goal is not graduating from school so we can get the great and awesome job so we can have lots of money to purchase things we really don't need. Our ultimate goal is not

having the husband or wife which will fix what ails us. Our ultimate goal should not be to have children so that we will now feel that "real love" that we have been denied all of our lives.

Or to quote C.S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*, he writes, "Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, p26)

There is nothing wrong with any of those things in of itself even sex, drink and ambition but making those things our ultimate goals is a bit like idolatry or if we were really honest, really prideful since we are counting these ultimate goals here on earth can do for me and accomplish my dreams and fulfill my wants and hopes moreso than God of the Bible. Like making it the ultimate goal of making lots of money when it is God clearly says that He is our provision and portion. Or to make a saviour out of our spouse so that he or she will cure and fixes us when Jesus Christ is our Saviour and He alone is good and He alone heals and makes whole. Or to raise up and exalt children above all others so that they will love us forever when that type of love you are looking for only comes from God because God is love.

Our ultimate goal should be to right standing completely whole before God when we all actually get home. So if this is not our home, what earth for us? In the meantime, we are simply aliens for the moment, missionaries on this earth until we get back home according to 1 Peter 2:11. Only to be proven further by what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33 Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you.** Our ultimate goal is not here on earth but it is His kingdom. I believe once we have that proper perspective, then everything under the sun, things like graduating from school, getting the big paying job, fancy car, marriage, kids, retiring, gets put in its proper place i.e. a distant 2nd place compared to God and his will and his kingdom.

Think of it this way, who is the ultimate missionary? Jesus, right? Jesus Christ lives all eternity in holiness, knowing about evil but did not have to tolerate sin. When sin did appear in the presence of God in the form of pride in one angel named Lucifer. Lucifer and those angels who rebel against God were promptly defeated and cast out of Heaven and fell to earth.

Jesus Christ knew of his mission to earth and knew all the things he needed to accomplish in order to serve the people most effectively. Like, if you were a missionary to China, you should change your dress, learn the foods, the customs, the holidays, the people, the culture, the subcultures, the language and the local law. So if you are a missionary to China, you better be loving some Chinese food.

In the same way, churches are essentially town with a town and cities within cities that is not of the world but in the world to love the city around them and to serve the city. The church is a counter-culture to the city but it doesn't separate itself from the city. Like you go to plant a church in the backwoods of Arkansas, don't think for a moment that your hard rockin' worship music is going to go over well because it might not. Your worship band might just consist of a steel guitar and maybe even a banjo. Just saying.

As we are missional minded while we are here on earth and our church is missional within the city they are located so too that Jesus Christ completely missional. Jesus Christ became flesh, born in Bethlehem, to a Jewish mom, adopted by a Jewish carpenter, grew up in the culture, learn the customs, lived in the Roman Empire, basically in the world but not of the world. Jesus Christ did not sin like the rest of the world but served as a counter-culture and counter-religion all for the glory of God. Jesus Christ still participated in the festivals and holidays and parties and went to school, study, worked a day to day job, brought a lunchpail, blue collar, hardworking guy just like some of us guys. But doing all of that, He continue to love, serve, teach, forgave, exhorted, drove out demons, healed, preached, evangelized and eventually laid his life down not just for the city and country he lived in but for all of the world, past, present and future.

Jesus Christ was without sin and never had to tolerate temptation and sin. Yet, he came to earth, face temptation and at the end of his ministry, he became all of our sins. He, essentially, became the our love of money, all of our unrighteous anger, our bitterness, our lust, our perversion, our wickedness, our terrible deeds, past, present and future, so that God the Father would be ultimately satisfied with the perfect one time for all time sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ our Lord. Sometimes I wonder if Jesus Christ prayed what in he prayed in the Mount of Olives wasn't just the fact he would face pain and death but he would have to face pain, endure the crushing, agonizing, horrifying, terrible, painful, awful, anguishing, terrifying weight of sin and then die. For many of us, it is so hard for us to imagine a world without pain, sin, war, disease, hunger, thirst and death but because our faith, that day will come. So too I find it hard to imagine to to live that life and reality that is without sin only, because of your ultimate mission, you would have to grow up in sin for 30ish years only to give that life up. Fortunately, Jesus Christ did do it because I know I could not have done it.

So Jesus ultimate goal was for us to be right standing with the Father in Heaven so that we could have a relationship with the Father in heaven. Jesus Christ had to suffer not just at the trial but His entire life under the brokenness of creation and the weight of the sin in this world so that His suffering produces endurance. Endurance by whom? God the Father . To do what? To do the will of the Father. To paraphrase **Hebrews 10:36**, you are going to need endurance in order to do the will of God. In order to obey the will of God you are going to need endurance and strength. If you need strength, who is your strength and endurance but God the Father.

But then out of that suffering produces endurance which produces character. I promise you, as Christians, you are going through these trials and tribulations so not that we get the grand prize here on earth but remember what is our ultimate goal, our salvation completed before God or to put it in a more tangible way, that our hearts would be exactly like His. Remember back in the book of Ruth, where Naomi's husband and two sons died, stuck in a foreign God-less country with no one but her newly saved daughter-in-law. Naomi openly laments because for some reason that 'God has dealt bitterly with her'. How about Ruth? Loves God with all of her heart but she just lost her husband of ten years and she has no children and there might be a small fear that she thinks she is barren. Yet, Ruth fixes her eyes, what might appear to be Israel to you and me, was I believe in her heart, the kingdom of God. Without the Scriptures telling us, I am quite sure that the desires of Ruth's heart was hopefully be remarried again and to have a child. But she suffers through the death of half her new family, moving into a strange land becoming a stranger, immigrant, an alien but fixes her eyes upon what is the ultimate goal of the One True God of Israel.

Out of that suffering of loss of family, Ruth and Naomi were given endurance by God so that God can go to work on both of their hearts so that they both have the character of Jesus Christ. In the end, God is our provision and He brings together Boaz and Ruth and whether Ruth was barren or not, Boaz lays with her and God conceives in her, giving her a son and Naomi a grandson named Obed. Throughout all of that, not only did the hearts of Boaz, Ruth and Naomi's change but the faith and hearts of the people around them were changed for the glory of God in order for God to do His will which was to bring up a boy name David to be king and in his bloodline through both of David's sons, Solomon and Nathan, would bring forth the Messiah, a Saviour to save all of mankind that is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We must realize that we are strangers in a very strange land. Our home with the Father knows no sin, no hurt, no anguish, no pain, disease or death but we all know all too well that this strange land has all of those things in abundance. But our God is no less God just because He is far away in the heavens and we are here on earth. For God, that He is good and merciful and sovereign, will not waste one tear, one heartbreak, one bit of pain, one bout with disease even one death to change the hearts around to be more like His in order for the glory of His name. That is why if we endure the trials and tribulations here on earth, then the Holy Spirit does a continuing work on our hearts so that we will be more like Him.

There is no way I can sit here and tell you that we won't face hardships. I can't sit here and say that 'if you pray it, you will receive it' or 'if you have enough faith, you will be blessed with health, wealth and prosperity'. There isn't enough money in world to make me give you false hope and then to face God and give an account for not just my life but your life as well. There isn't enough money. But I will say that, even I know that we have seem prayers get answered but I have seen others prayed for, young husband stricken with cancer and died leaving behind a young bride. I have seen a little girl suffer through illnesses where we think the illness is in remission only for the illness to come back full force. I read Romans 5:1-5 to say this, when we go to pray and we pray for loved ones and we pray for the sick and we pray for the hurting, how about for one moment that we are not praying to change God but we pray in hopes that God would change us and the people around us. That is the character that is Jesus Christ.

So what is hope then? Let's continue on.

In the same thought of "the journey to a destination" or "ongoing sanctification", these next six verses, Paul does this little 'cause and effect motion' that reads 'we were this so Christ does this'. Like, 'didn't study in school so we get a lousy grade' or 'we undercook the chicken a tad so we are stuck in the bathroom counting all the tiles for 4 hours straight'.

***From Weak To Godly, Sin to Life, Enemy to Reconciled...***

***6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—***

I must warn you that I am going to make you flip back between Romans 5 and Matthew 9 but I want you to see the connection.

Here, Paul is just simply repeating what Jesus said while he was on earth. Lets talk about a wee little man in a sycamore tree named Zacchaeus in Luke 19 where the Jesus tells him, "Zaccheus, get down from there for I'm coming to your house today" where then Scriptures say which I assume is the lesser known verse of that famous song "Zacchaeus jumped

down out of the tree..." and what, "received Jesus Christ joyfully.

or when in Matthew 9, Jesus walks by yet another tax collector named Matthew and says, "Hey, come follow me." and Matthew does get up and follow him. Then Jesus chills and kicks it (my translation) with Matthew at his house. So then Matthew starts texting it up with his tax collecting friends (because who else is going to hang out with a tax collector) and they in turn bring all kinds of heathens like those who like to party all the time, those who like to get totally wasted, the chicks who like to dress as little as possible and get a little too drunk... all those guys . They come over thinking it is this party because of this cool guy Matthew met named Jesus and his posse. Yet, seriously, instead of a party, the Scriptures read in verse 10 "... [they] were reclining with Jesus and disciples."

Read further starting at **Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"**

I found it funny that the Pharisees insist on doing this passive-aggressive thing with sometimes not asking Jesus straight up but Jesus hears it anyways I like to think because Jesus sees the heart for what it truly is. Jesus replies **"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."**

In other words, Jesus Christ says, "I have called the sick, the dying, the ill, the diseased, the weak, the people who can't save themselves and are in need of a Doctor that can treat what is really wrong with you... your dead spirit.

Paul says in verse **Romans 5:7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—**" links to exactly what Jesus says **"For I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners."** Okay, who is righteous according to what we read a couple sessions ago in **Romans 3:10? "There are none righteous, no, not one."** . And according to **Romans 3:23**, who are all sinners? **"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."** Jesus called us all but if you don't think you need to be saved and therefore self-righteous, there is nothing for Christ to do if you get what I am saying. In other words, if you think you are basically good and don't really think you need to be saved despite what the actual biblical truth might be, then how can Jesus save you?

That is why Jesus partially quotes Hosea 6:6 in **Matthew 9:13** and tells the Pharisees who would know the book of Hosea, **"Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."** or to finish the thought of **Hosea 6:6 "... the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."** Jesus cares not for all the things you have done because you think you could win favor with God. Like, you went to church or you actually sang during worship or attending a home group or even lead a home group. God wants your steadfast love. God wants all of your heart. Once He has your heart, then you will be able to worship with all of your heart. Just like Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac where Abraham calls that place "God will provide" or "God will provide for your heart and soul to worship Him." Without God owning your heart, your worship are like filthy rags before Him. Or to drive the point home, Jesus says it this way in responding to Pharisees whom Jesus saw that they worship another god, money, rather than God but then try to do things to appease God. Jesus responds to their idolatry and attempts to deceive God in **Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."** It

seems to me that if it ain't our hearts, then God really doesn't care for any other thing that we might give Him.

In other words, don't bring your stuff to God but bring your heart to God and then He will then take care of all our stuff.

***8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.***

Paul takes to another level. We just dealt with the legalism of justification by Jesus Christ. But just in case your brain doesn't process like that, how about... we are loved so much by and known so well by God. Jesus Christ is a better best friend than your very best friend. So in case you are not jiving with the legal-ese language of justification, Paul puts it another way...

***10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

... or to put it in another way like back in verses 4 & 5, that out of that character produces hope and ***5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.***

... or to put it in another way, it is our faith in life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ ALONE that makes us justified to God, saved by the wrath of God, reconciled to God, saved by God so that we can rejoice in God as we are right standing with God. That is not just for when we meet up with God in heaven but rather the moment you repented of your sins and you believed and trust in Jesus Christ but that is your life here on earth. Why? because God's love, mercies, affections, might, strength, holiness and goodness have been poured into our hearts like a molten gold so that our hearts will be purified by God to be like God through the ongoing everlasting working and power of the Holy Spirit which is the gift by the Father that Jesus Christ promised He would give us as soon as He got back home. As soon as His mission on earth was complete.