

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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Privilege of Access

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore being justified out from faith, we have peace with God by means of our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have possessed the privilege-of-entrance into this grace in which we have stood; and we might-(for-ourselves)-be joyfully-boasting upon hope of the radiant-splendor of God.”

Romans 5:1-2

“Because by-means-of Him we... possess the privilege-of-entrance in one Spirit to the Father.”

Ephesians 2:18

“In whom we have the boldness and privilege-of-entrance in confidence by means of the faith in Him.”

Ephesians 3:12

“Having therefore, brethren, confidence unto the entrance of the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ which He inaugurated for us, a freshly-killed and living way through the veil, that is, of His flesh, ²¹ and a great priest over the house of God, ²² we might-(for-ourselves)-be-drawing-near with a truthful heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts having-been-sprinkled-clean from an evil conscience and our bodies having-been-washed with pure water.”

Hebrews 10:19-22

I was reading through Romans 5 the other day in my Greek NT, and I was impressed by the strong verb tenses. The passage is much more powerful and vivid in the original language than it is in most English translations. Some of the things people argue about, or struggle over, simply disappear as you come to grips with the strong language used. **Even the first verb “being justified” has hidden nuances** that were meant to communicate more to us than we are able to discern in most translations. Greek has the capacity to communicate the type of action, whether it is ongoing, or if it happened at a point in time, or if it happened with ongoing effect. The form in Romans 5:1 emphasizes that we were justified at a point-in-time. **Justification took place in an instant**, the *moment* we truly trusted in Christ. **For us, it experientially originated “out from faith”.** This language emphasizes the *source or origination of the justification*. By contrast, Romans 5:9 states that we are “justified by His blood”. This language indicates the *method* God used to justify us. Romans 3:24 also gets at the *means* or *way* in which God brought about our justification, “being-justified freely by His grace by means of the redemption-price which is in Christ Jesus.” Other passages also refer to faith as a key ingredient by which justification comes, e.g., “through faith” and “by faith” in Gal. 2:16. Galatians 3:24 also says we were justified *out from* faith, emphasizing the *experiential source* of our right standing before God. Interestingly, the word for “justify” in *this* passage is *also* a point-in-time action. God justified us when we trusted in Him. **Is faith really the source of our justification? Actually, God is the One who justifies, not our faith.** He, His grace, is the actual source and basis for us being redeemed. **Why is faith so important?** The reason for this language becomes more apparent in the last half of Galatians 2:16, “...we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified *out from* faith in Christ and not *out from* the works of the Law; since *out from* works of the Law no flesh will be justified.” Just as he wrote in Romans 4:2,3, “For if Abraham was justified *out from* works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’” **God was looking for faith, ...to see that we are looking to Him, His grace and His word of promise, not depending on ourselves or our performance... , as the basis for our acceptance with Him.** As Habakkuk observed, “The righteous will live out from faith” (2:4). **The faith has no virtue or power in itself. It just clearly focuses on the real source of salvation, God.** Any hope for being justified, acquitted, or treated “‘just-as-if-I’d never sinned” comes from *God’s mercy and grace*, provided through Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross for our redemption. **When God sees our trust in Him alone as our hope, He counts us to be righteous.** In that sense, we are justified *out from* faith. Faith trusts in God’s love, and says, “God, I need *You*.” A works mentality looks at others and says, “I’m doing better than most. God, *I* got this.” What does God’s Word say to *that*? “...out from works ...no flesh (*no one*) will be justified.”

Being justified-in-an-instant by faith, we now possess peace with God. God’s wrath is turned away from us. **We, who had been estranged from Him, have now been reconciled to Him** once again, through Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:17-21). **We also have possessed (and still possess) the privilege of access to Him.** The Greek verb tense describes action that happened in the past with ongoing effect. *We received* this privilege of access, and it is *still* ours! Look again at the passages at the top of this sheet. **We have access to the grace, to the holy place, to the Father Himself!** **We are given the privilege to enter into His presence at any and all times.** In the book of Esther, if you entered into the king’s presence uninvited, you would be put to death, unless the king extended his golden scepter toward you (4:11). This is the way it was with kings in the ancient world. You did not just burst into the king’s presence without prior clearance, and an invitation from him. Even in our modern world, you cannot get in to see a president, or a head of state, simply at *your* whim. There are levels of security, protection and protocol that must be dealt with before you can have an audience or an interview with someone of such importance. Yet, **Paul is telling us**

that we have a *carte blanche* pass into the presence of the Holy King of the Universe!! Not only are we permitted to approach Him, but He *delights in* our coming. As a Father whose face lights up when His children come into the room, He receives us gladly! This is because *we have been given (and still have) access to the amazing, Christ-bought grace, and we-have-stood in it* (and the repercussions of that choice continue to affect us and our relationship with Him. From God's point of view, we are *still* standing in that grace!)

Where do we find Him? We find Him in the holy place, in the holy of holies. In the OT, this was the innermost room of the Temple, a place set apart for God. It was a place where no one could go, except that once a year the high priest could enter behind the veil on the day of atonement to sprinkle some blood on the mercy seat. Jesus came to open the way for all of us to approach God. On the day of Jesus' crucifixion, the veil was ripped from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51), and access to the holy of holies was opened for us all. The writer of the book of Hebrews says that the way has been opened to us through the "freshly-killed and living way, that is, the veil of His (Jesus') flesh". It is through the blood of Jesus that we have redemption, and access to the holy place. **God is expecting us to come to Him. He came to us, so that we could come to Him.** He sent Jesus to be that sacrifice, "...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world..." (Jn. 1:29), to justify us, to reconcile us, and to make an avenue of entrance into His presence available to us. He did this so that we could come to Him and grow in a relationship with Him. **Where is the Father? He is in the holy of holies in the heavens** (Hebrews 9:23,24). He dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see (I Tim. 6:16). He is the continual burning; who can abide in His presence (Isa. 33:14)? **How do we come to Him? We come to Him through Jesus by the Holy Spirit.** We have our access in one Spirit to the Father (Eph. 2:18). Jesus taught us to direct our prayers to the Father. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our inner selves that we are children of God, crying, "Abba! Daddy!" (Gal. 4:6) He reveals to us the things of God (I Cor. 2:12). We can worship the Father *in Spirit* and *in truth*, because that is what God is looking for (Jn. 4:23,24). He takes our prayers and makes them acceptable to God (Rom. 8:26,27). **It is important to recognize that the Holy God is not to be sought in the profane, unholy places and activities of this world. We are to direct our attention, through the Spirit, to the Father, setting our minds on things above,** where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1,2).

The passage in Hebrews 10 again emphasizes that God has opened the way for us, so that we might draw near to Him. **Look at all that God has done: He inaugurated an entrance for us, ...a way that was not there before! It was at the cost of the precious blood of His Son,** voluntarily shed on our behalf. **Jesus gave Himself to be the once-for-all, eternal "freshly-killed and living sacrifice"**. He does not need to die over and over again. **The completeness of the "awe-full" price He paid removes forever the need for another sacrifice, and guarantees that sin is paid for.** He cried out on the cross, "*Tetelestai!*" (Jn. 19:30), ...which means "it is finished" or "paid in full". Then, laying down His head, He gave up His spirit. The sacrifice *was made*. Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, **we have been sanctified, set apart as holy, once for all** (Heb. 10:10). **He took away the old covenant, and established the new covenant,** making way for the Holy Spirit to come to indwell those who open themselves to Him. Jesus was not *just* the once-for-all "freshly-killed" sacrifice, however. He *arose*, ...victorious over sin and death..., and *now* sits at His Father's right hand in the heavenlies, waiting until all His enemies are subdued and put under His feet (Heb. 10:12,13). There, at the Father's right hand, He always intercedes for us as our great High Priest (Heb.7:25; Rom. 8:34), and also serves as our advocate (defense attorney), defending and speaking on our behalf before the Judge of the Universe (I Jn. 2:1). **The way into the Father's presence is through the death ("freshly-killed") and resurrection ("and living way") of Christ** (cf. Col. 2:12-15). We enter the holy of holies in heaven through the veil of His flesh, "freshly-killed" but "living". As He described Himself to John some years later, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and *I was dead*, and behold, *I am alive forevermore*, and *I have the keys of death and of Hades*" (Rev. 1:17-19). **The scripture boldly declares to us that through this one offering he has perfected (completed) "unto the whole length, from beginning to end" the ones being sanctified** (Heb. 10:14). Paul put it this way, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion as far as the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

The point of all this is that we would come. God has opened the way for us to draw near, so that we would approach Him and commune with Him. The verb in Hebrews 10:22 is "we might come near" or "we might approach" Him. The word "might" in these phrases represents the mood of possibility. In other words, the possibility now exists that we *can* draw near to Him. One of the implications of this Greek mood is that it can sometimes be an exhortation. So, "we might now draw near (so, let's do it!)". This nuance is often translated into English by adding the words, "let us". **We now have the privilege and opportunity of coming directly into God's presence, so "let us be drawing near". How?** With an *honest heart*, in *full assurance of faith*, ...our hearts having been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water (baptism). (The "having been" aspect refers to a past decision with ongoing implication.) God has removed all shadow and distance, if we come in honesty and faith. **Every obstacle to intimacy with God has been removed from His side. Now, it is up to us. Let us draw near!**