

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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What Comes With Justification?

by Dan Trygg

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our access by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Romans 5:1-5

The first half of the first verse sets the stage for this entire paragraph, "Therefore, **having been justified by faith, we have...**" Paul begins to describe the benefits that accompany the new standing we have before God. The foremost and most important benefit is that **now we have peace with God**. We were once considered children of wrath by Him, because of our sin (Eph. 2:1-3). Now, because we have claimed the redemption price of the Lamb, Jesus' death for our sin, we are no longer objects of His wrath. The debt and offense of sin has been removed, so God does not perceive us as enemies any longer. Instead, we are His friends (Jn. 15:13-15), and He actually *delights* in us, because we have believed that Jesus came from God, and we have chosen to love Him (Jn. 16:26,27). **Note that the peace we have with God is "through Jesus Christ". We haven't made the peace, Jesus did!** Only He was able to offer a sacrifice that was satisfactory and sufficient to purchase peace (propitiation - Rom. 3:25). We have only aligned ourselves with Him, and have accepted Him as our Peace (Eph. 2:11-18).

By means of Jesus, and His sacrifice, **we now have access to grace, ...and even to God the Father**. Before, we did *not*. We were *excluded* from God's presence and *had no hope of finding acceptance* with Him. **Now, through Jesus, all people, no matter what race, ethnic origin, gender or class, can have access to the Father** (Eph. 2:11-18; Gal. 3:28). What does this mean? This word picture is taken from the royal court of most kings of that time. You could not just come to visit the king. Most people were never permitted into the king's royal throne room. Only a matter of supreme importance to the interests of the king or the country would warrant being granted an audience with him. In the book of Esther, for anyone to come into the king's presence without being invited was punishable by death, unless the king chose to spare him by lifting his scepter toward him. Even Esther the queen was afraid of entering into his chamber without being called for, because she was afraid that he might not acknowledge *her* (Est. 4:11), ...his own wife! With that background, we can appreciate better what Paul is saying here. **In Christ, we have free access to the King of the Universe! He will always welcome and acknowledge us, and even be favorably inclined toward us, because of Jesus**. Proverbs 3:32 tells us that *God is intimate with the upright*, and Psalm 25 indicates that He is willing to teach the humble, and *He even shares His secret counsel with those who revere Him*. **None of this would be possible if it were not for the sacrifice of Jesus' life on our behalf**. Just as the veil of the temple, which separated the most holy place from the common people, was torn from top to bottom at the time of Jesus' death (Matt. 27:51), in the same way Jesus opened the heavenly throne room to all of us who trust in Him. **By the blood of Jesus, we can come openly and boldly into God's presence in prayer, knowing with full assurance that He will accept us and hear our concerns** (Heb. 10:19-22). Once again, the offering of Jesus' life was a gift, an act of grace, which God *freely* gave to us. **By faith we have obtained access to this grace, and it continues to be our privilege**. The Greek verb tense indicates that the grace *has become ours*. We didn't just *get it* at the point we believed, but *we stand and remain standing* in this grace.

The next phrase is kind of interesting, "and **we exult in hope of the glory of God**". I don't know about you, but I don't use the word, "exult", very often. The NIV renders it as "rejoice", but that doesn't quite grasp the whole meaning, either. The word basically means to "boast". In a context like this, it also takes on the flavor of joy and delight. In other words, we could translate it as, "**we take delight in, and love to talk about, the hope of the glory of God**". **What does this mean? Remember, the word "glory" had occurred earlier in this book? It means "radiance, splendor, majesty"**. The first time was in 1:23, where **people had exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the likeness of corruptible people or creatures**. Another way of translating this verse is that "they altered the glory... into an embodiment in the likeness of *perishable* people or animals." In other words, *they died*, spiritually. **They lost the imperishable radiance of God's glory within them, and became mortal**. Interestingly, Paul says that the very things being patiently sought by those approved by God in 2:7 are those lost in Romans 1:23,24, "glory, honor and incorruptibility." The apostle returns to this concept in 3:23, "...for all have sinned, and *lack* the glory of God". **The loss of the radiant glory of God within us is a key aspect of our "brokenness", caused by sin**. This gives us some context for understanding 5:2. **What we were lacking, we now have an opportunity to partake of, once again**.

With justification comes a renewing of the influx of God's glory into our lives, through the Holy Spirit. This is something to not only get excited about; it is something to *crow* about, ...to *boast* about! It is not something *we* have done, so we are not boasting in ourselves. **We are boasting in God and His incredible salvation! Who else, besides followers of Jesus, actually have the abiding presence of God's Spirit come to dwell in their hearts to fill them with His glory? BUT, WAIT!!** The text says we "boast in the *hope of the glory of God.*" That is Paul's language in Colossians 1, as well. There, he describes how God's long-hidden mystery has been revealed to His people, which is "...Christ in you, *the hope of the glory*" (vs. 27). **Why the "hope" of the glory? Because we CAN BE FILLED with the glory now, ...OR we can live a life of shadows**, ...a corruptible, glory-less life that looks little different than the life of non-Christians. God has made the possibility of His radiant-glory available to us NOW. **How can we experience this?** Paul discusses this in 2 Corinthians 3. **There is a radiance that comes with living by the Spirit.** As we get to know God better, and ponder His radiance, *we will be transformed to be like Him*, ...from one degree of glory to another.

"But not only this, rather **we can also boast in our difficult-circumstances**" (5:3). *Why* can we boast? Because we know that **God can use the testings and afflictions in our lives to produce** perseverance, which can bring about proven character, which, in turn, works out **the very hope we have been talking about, ...the glory of God established and made visible in our lives.** This is very similar to what James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, wrote about in his letter, "Consider every joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.⁴ And let endurance have a complete effect, so that you may be mature and whole, lacking in nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4). Note the similarities: (1.) we *will* experience trials or testings of our faith; (2.) testing of our faith produces perseverance; (3.) remaining steadfast under trial produces mature character, wholeness and equipping in our faith. Note, too, that **our response to the trial is critical.** The temptations would be to (a.) compromise our beliefs; (b.) give in to the test and engage in sin; and (c.) give up too soon, so that we do not get the full benefit from the test. **The man or woman of faith will look beyond the immediate test to see the eternal perspective.** They will remember that God has permitted the test in order to strengthen them. **They will rejoice that God can even bring growth and benefit out of such a difficult circumstance.**

We also have the assurance that our hope is sure. We will not be disappointed or put to shame for believing in Jesus, or for remaining true to Him under trial. **How can we know that?** Because God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit which He has given to us. We have an internal witness of God's love, the Spirit, who testifies to us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15-17). He is given to us to be a seal of God's ownership upon our lives, a down payment, or engagement promise that Christ will return to completely fulfill the salvation He has begun in us (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13,14; 4:30; Phil. 1:6). **The reality of the presence of the Spirit in our lives is a guarantee that God will keep His promise to us.**

Verses 6-10 serve as a further support that our hope is dependable. Paul reminds us of the contrast of God's magnanimous grace in light of our absolute *inability* and *unworthiness* to deserve His love or concern. **Christ died for us (1.) while we were powerless; and, (2.) while we were undevoted to Him** (vs. 6). We had nothing whatever to offer God to motivate Him to action to save us, ...nothing based upon any *performance* on our part, or even based upon a *mindfulness* toward Him. In verse 7, the apostle points out that a person may be willing to die for someone whose life was especially good or valuable. In our case, however, **God demonstrated His love for us while we had done nothing good or valuable.** In fact, *while we were still sinners*, Christ died for us (vs. 8)! Verse 10 tells us that *we were even God's enemies* when He sent Jesus into the world to die for us! **Since God, at such great personal cost, showed His love toward us when we were so very unworthy, how much more will He be willing to do to save us, now that we have responded to Him?** If He gave Himself for us totally when we wanted nothing to do with Him, *how much more* do you think He would be gracious to us, now that we have become His children? If He sent Jesus to save us when we were powerless and hostile in mind toward Him, how committed do you think He will be to those who show an interest in following Him? There can be no doubt about it. We can be *certain* that He *will* save us.

Finally, **we take delight in, and love to talk about, God**, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ. **Once we understand the incredible love and grace of God, we cannot help but glory and boast in Him!** He is awesome, and His love is beyond our ability to fully comprehend (Eph. 3:14-19). How can we not boast in and take delight in our Father in heaven, who has loved us with such great love? How can we not brag on our Savior, who gave Himself totally for us, when we had done nothing for Him? In addition to what He has already done for us, we have the further promise from Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" **There is nothing that He would withhold, ...nothing that He will not do, ...no length to which He will not go, ...no price He would not pay, to ensure that those who have trusted in Christ Jesus will be saved to the uttermost, to the complete fulfillment of God's salvation plan** (Heb. 7:25). *Nothing* will stand in His way. **How can we not love Him who first loved us with such love?**