

A Study in Romans

Chapter 5

Paul's thesis on the gospel of Jesus Christ takes a decisive turn in chapter five. Up to this point, his focus has been on the power of the gospel to deliver people from sin and God's wrath and to put them into a right relationship with God. Now Paul turns his attention to what comes after we are justified by faith.

Two things in particular in chapters 5–8:

1. certainty that our justification will lead to final salvation, and
2. the power God gives us in our continuing struggle against sin.

Seventh-day Adventists understand the importance of sanctification in our ongoing journey of faith in Jesus. Salvation does not end with our justification. It continues with God's deliverance from the power of sin, changing our character into Christ's likeness and preparing us to live with Him throughout eternity. Salvation does nothing if we are not changed by it.

There are three aspects to salvation (three Ps):

1. *Justified*. Saved from the PENALTY of sin. (Christ's death)
2. *Sanctified*. Saved from the POWER of sin. (Christ's life)
3. *Glorified*. Saved from the PRESENCE of sin. (Christ's return)

Our sanctified life in Christ is discipleship. He is our Master; we are His students. We are enrolled in the school of Christ. NOTE: Justification and glorification are instantaneous; sanctification is a lifetime journey.

(The Review and Herald, July 11, 1882) He who is seeking with diligence to acquire the wisdom of human schools should remember that another school also claims him as a student. Christ was the greatest teacher the world ever saw. He brought to man knowledge direct from heaven. The lessons which He has given us are what we need for both the present and the future state. He sets before us the true aims of life, and how we may secure them.

In the school of Christ, students are never graduated. Among the pupils are both old and young. Those who give heed to the instructions of the divine Teacher constantly advance in wisdom, refinement, and nobility of soul, and thus they are prepared to enter that higher school where advancement will continue throughout eternity.

This is the EXPERIENTIAL aspect of salvation. Every day we are either growing in our relationship with Christ OR dying because we are moving away from Him.

Therefore...

(Romans 5:1–5)¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.³ And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

(1) “Therefore”

Paul transitions his argument from justification by faith to the results of the new status that God has given us in Christ.

(1) “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

Once we have been reconciled to God, we have peace. The English word “peace” carries with it a negative connotation: the absence of hostility. But the Jewish conception of peace (*shalom*) was very positive. It carries with it a sense of harmonious well-being. There is a personal holistic sense of healing that pervades the one who has received peace.

(Isaiah 32:17–18)¹⁷ The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.¹⁸ My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

This does not mean that peace does not include the absence of anxiety that exists in the mind and heart of someone who is separated from God. You cannot have lasting peace unless you have been made right with your Creator.

(2) “we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand”

Faith gives us “access” to God’s grace. It is the grace of God that causes us to have peace in the mind and heart.

(The Desire of Ages, p. 303) The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension.

When we exercise faith, trusting in God to give us grace, we receive some essential benefits.

A) We receive God’s mercy and forgiveness.

(Hebrews 4:16) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

B) We receive divine strength to live in obedience to Christ; a life of purity and godliness.

(Romans 1:5) Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.

(Hebrews 12:28) Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

(1 Peter 4:10) As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

C) We receive power to witness for Christ. Jesus sends us to preach, teach and baptize people who are willing to listen and respond to the call of the gospel.

(Acts 4:33) And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

(2) “rejoice in hope of the glory of God”

The verb “rejoice” (*kauchaomai*) has the idea of both taking confidence and experiencing joy.

Hope here is not “wishing” for the glory of God, but having a tangible hope that faith will bring to fruition one day—the promise that He will bring us to glory.

(3) “we also glory in tribulations”

Paul quickly adds that we also “glory” in tribulations. The same word *kauchaomai* is used here, meaning “rejoice” or “exult.”

These verses enlarge our perspective on suffering:

1. *Suffering is a normal part of Christian life.* We should expect troubles from time to time. (Acts 14:21–22) ²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”
(John 16:33) These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
2. *God does not cause suffering, but uses suffering to accomplish His purposes.* The trials of life test our faith and give us substance and strength in our commitment to Christ.
3. *We are to rejoice in the midst of suffering, but not in suffering itself.* No one is joyful about the affliction they are called to endure. But they can look forward to the spiritual growth that comes as a result of that affliction.

4. *Suffering in this context includes all the difficulties of this life.* Everything a Christian suffers through is “on behalf of Christ.” The troubles we face reflect the conflict between good and evil, which in the present age is dominated by Satan and sin. In another sense, it makes sense that a Christian would experience troubles like the rest of humanity. If every Christian had no more troubles, then everyone would become Christians just for the blessings.

(4) “knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope”

Some Christians believe God promised a trouble-free existence now that they belong to God. But we who have been Christians for a while know that suffering is part of our life in Christ. Paul here squashes any idea of a prosperity gospel. He tells Christians that they will continue to suffer, but suffering does not negate the wonderful blessings of following Christ. Instead, God uses our problems to bring us blessings.

We find a similar passage in James:

(James 1:2–4)² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Paul identifies three steps to our progress in spiritual growth. These steps come from the trials and suffering that we endure, not because we are persecuted as Christians in a faithless world, but because we go through troubles like everyone else does. The difference for the Christian is how he/she responds to the troubles that come their way.

These troubles produce:

- a. *Perseverance*. Grit comes from experiencing troubles. When your only option is to endure, the experience builds determination.
- b. *Character*. This develops our character. It makes us Christlike.
- c. *Hope*. A Christlike character solidifies our hope in what we will one day become at His appearing. When you experience God’s grace firsthand, you have confidence that God will continue to fulfill His promises.

God allows troubles to come into our life to prepare us for something that is eternally lasting. To accomplish this, He seeks to make effectual the hope of the new life in Christ that we were promised.

(Colossians 1:27) To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

(1 John 3:1–3) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

God's Love for Mankind

(Romans 5:5–8) ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This section is a springboard from the last word in the previous paragraph, hope. We have great hope in God because of His amazing love for us.

(5) "hope does not disappoint"

The hopes in this world disappoint us most of the time. But hope in God never disappoints. We will one day experience all the things He has promised us.

(Psalm 22:3–5) ³ But You *are* holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. ⁴ Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. ⁵ They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

NOTE: Paul gives two reasons why hope will not disappoint us (v5): 1) God's love for us in Christ, (v5b–8), and 2) God's work for us in Christ (v9–10).

(5) "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit"

The reason given for hope not disappointing us is the love we have in Christ. Not just love of the general kind, but divine love that is "poured out" in our hearts. It is love that we didn't have before we gave our life to Christ.

This love comes to us through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is so important to be filled with the Spirit, which is a continuous filling every day.

When the Holy Spirit comes into our life, the presence of Christ is with us. There are several metaphors that are descriptive of Christ's abiding presence:

- Putting on Christ
- Walking with Christ

- Abiding in Christ

(6) “when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”

One of the aspects of mortal life is our weakness. We are nothing without God, nor is it possible to offer anything to God that could alter our standing before Him.

(Mark 10:27) But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

Having no strength of our own equates to our sinful condition, for “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” God first reached toward us. He created a plan to save mankind before we ever asked.

This also says something about how we come to God to find salvation. It does us no good to clean ourselves up. We need God to do this work for us. It is the blood of Jesus alone that saves us from our sins.

(Matthew 1:21) “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

(1 Peter 1:18–19)¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

(8) “God demonstrates His own love toward us”

It is by dying for mankind, without us asking Him to, that God demonstrates His love for us. While Adam and Eve hid from God after sinning, God came looking for them. With love and grace, He pursued them with words of compassion although they deserved condemnation.

And He pursued us, “while we were still sinners.” We don’t have to clean ourselves up before we come to God. He has already prepared the way for our forgiveness and cleansing. Stop running from Him!

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The demonstration of love is more important than speaking love. This is the essence of Paul’s description of love.

(1 Corinthians 13:4–7)⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Reconciled to God

(Romans 5:9–21)⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Roman 5:9-11, the Apostle Paul describes the fruits of the death of Christ. That the Lord Jesus' dying for us provided us with privileges.

And in verse 12-21, the Apostle Paul runs a parallel between sin and death by the first Adam, and righteousness and life by the second Adam (Jesus Christ).

Our character when Christ died for us

From verse 6 to 8, we read that Christ died for the ungodly, helpless creatures. We were without strength. We were guilty sinful creatures, and therefore deserving to die, unworthy for such a favor from the holy God. But Christ die for us sinners.

The precious fruits of his death

Justification and reconciliation are the first and primary fruit of the death of Christ:

v. 9: We are justified by his blood.

v.10: We are reconciled by his death.

Our sins are pardoned, and we are accepted as righteous. Christ has done all that was required, and, immediately upon our believing, we are put into a state of justification and reconciliation. We are justified by his blood. Our justification is ascribed to the blood of Christ because without blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22). Read also Lev. 17:11.

v.11: Since we are saved from wrath; we have been justified and reconciled; we are no longer enemies of God. All these produce a further privilege: we have joy in our God. Roman 5:11 gives us the reasons that we have to rejoice in the Lord: and that's because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for us through His sacrifice on the Cross.

Death Through Sin

Death is an enemy, the ultimate one. When God created the human family, He designed that its members should live forever. Death was to be unknown to us.

v.12: In what way was Adam's sin passed on to his posterity? Did Adam's descendants share the guilt of Adam's sin, or are they guilty before God because of their own sins? The Apostle Paul had a whole other object in mind. He is reemphasizing what he already stated: "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). We need to recognize that we are sinners, because that is the only way that we will realize our need of a Savior. Here Paul was trying to get readers to realize just how bad sin is and what it brought into this world through Adam. Then he shows what God offers us in Jesus as the only remedy to the tragedy brought upon our world through Adam's sin.

One of the most glorious aspects of the gospel is that death has been swallowed up in life. Jesus passed through the portals of the tomb and burst its bonds. He says, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Rev. 1:18). Because Jesus has the keys, the enemy can no longer hold his victims in the grave.

v.13-14 "Until the law" means until the detailing of God's requirements in the various laws given to Israel at Sinai. Sin existed before Sinai. People were lying, stealing, killing, committing adultery, and worshipping idols, etc. It is true that prior to Sinai, the human race generally had only a limited revelation of God, but they obviously knew enough to be held accountable. Though they had not sinned against an expressly revealed command, they had sinned nevertheless. They had the revelations of God in nature, to which they had not responded and

thus were held guilty. People in the pre-Sinai world died, as Paul here points out. Death passed upon all. Christ, a different type of Adam, is promised to come.

v.15-17: The word “gift” occurs five times (at least in the NKJV). The point is simple: Paul is emphasizing that justification is not earned; it comes as a gift. It is something that we don’t merit, that we don’t deserve. Like all gifts, we have to reach out and accept them, and in this case, we claim this gift by faith.

v.18-19: The contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam (Jesus Christ).

The first Adam: death, disobedience, condemnation, sin

The second Adam: life, obedience, justification, righteousness

Jesus came and undid all that Adam had done.

“The second Adam was a free moral agent, held responsible for His conduct. Surrounded by intensely subtle and misleading influences, He was much less favorably situated than was the first Adam to lead a sinless life. Yet in the midst of sinners He resisted every temptation to sin, and maintained His innocency. He was ever sinless.” - Ellen G. White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1074.

v.20-21: The greater the strength of the enemy, the greater the honor of the conqueror. Sin reigned unto death. But grace reigns to life, eternal life, and this through righteousness, righteousness imputed to us for justification, implanted in us for sanctification; and both by Jesus Christ our Lord, through the power of Jesus Christ our Lord.