

Romans 5 – Abundance of Grace

In this chapter, I get the feeling that Paul has got all his preliminary discussions out of the way and now begins to launch into the ‘meat’ of what he really wants to write. He has dealt with law and faith, Jew and Gentile, and has brought his readers to the point where they can appreciate **how** they have been put right with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He has mentioned grace a few times¹ in this letter already, but now it becomes a major theme.

“*Therefore*” he writes in **5:1**, so what he writes now hangs on what he has already written, and this chapter overflows with the wealth of our inheritance “*having been justified by faith*”. We could start making a list . . .

- 1) Peace with God (**5:1**) Peace means the absence of conflict and also a sense of oneness. We could not have this in any other way, as Paul has already shown, but only “*through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
- 2) **5:2** Our introduction and access to grace (see **3:24**). This just the start; lots more to come!
- 3) Hope in the glory of God – what does he mean? It’s something to exult in, glory in, even boast about – that’s the basic meaning of the word. And then Paul gets a little side-tracked, but it’s a good side-track . . .

Here’s something else to exult in, he says: the pressure and affliction that we get! Why? Because the Lord uses it to move us towards that glory he just mentioned. See the ongoing process in **5:3-5**. Perhaps the other side of the coin to **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**. Both passages are talking about sharing his glory!

‘Sufferings’ = pressure, affliction. ‘Perseverance’ = patient endurance, ‘hanging on in there’. ‘(Proven) character’ = tested and approved. And back to hope, which does not disappoint us, disgrace us or put us to shame. Why? Because of the Holy Spirit pouring the love of God (God’s own love) into our hearts. (See **Ephesians 1:13-14**)

4) **5:6-11** When we were completely helpless (completely without any strength), just at the right moment, the Messiah died for the ungodly (= not revering or worshipping God). Paul includes himself! Who would dare to die in someone else’s place, even for a really good person? But Jesus the Messiah died for us, demonstrating the love of God towards us, before any changes in our lives took place!

We have been justified (made right in the sight of God) in and through the shedding of Jesus’ blood, so we are rescued from God’s anger which would otherwise have come our way. This is about real peace with God again, as in **v.1**.

And if God reconciled us to himself through the death of Jesus while we were his enemies, says Paul, how much more shall we be saved in and by his life! This is not just looking **backwards** to a time when we first entered into new life. He is talking about **now and into the future**, being saved by his life. The Greek actually says **in** his life! More of that in later chapters . . .

As if that was not enough, now that we have received (=taken to ourselves) the

¹ **Romans 1:5,7, 3:24, 4:4,16** and now 5 times in this chapter – and more to come!

reconciliation that is ours through Jesus, we can exult, boast and glory in the God who gave it to us! (Same word from **v.2 & 3**)

5) **5:12-21** Paul takes the rest of this chapter to compare Adam and Jesus! Adam's failure introduced death, and death went through all mankind because everyone failed in the same way. But Adam is still a 'foreshadowing' of Jesus, because the actions of each of these men have deep and lasting results for those who follow on. **1 Corinthians 15:22** is the verse that we may remember, but that is talking only about future resurrection life. Here Paul is writing about a reconciliation with God that is already accomplished, the **gift** of righteousness in God's sight, the abundance of grace **and** a future of 'reigning in life' through the One, Jesus the Messiah! And I don't think that only means after our physical resurrection out of death, but now, in our ongoing present-day physical existence! We shall see more of what he means in later chapters.

The Gift

The Greek word is *charisma*, VERY closely linked to the word for grace, *charis*. We use 'charisma' these days to describe someone's overflowing abilities, but its basic meaning is a free gift, a gratuity, and Paul uses it repeatedly here to emphasise God's overflowing generosity to undeserving recipients – US!

God's gift to us is a direct result of "*the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ*" (**5:15**) and this is a gift with many different aspects . . .

Reconciliation. Just like any human reconciliation, the restoring of our relationship with God to the way it was always designed to be. As we have never experienced anything except estrangement from God before, have we really appreciated what the reconciliation means? (**5:11**)

Life instead of death. (**5:15**) Reversing the results of Adam's failure. Adam and Eve were barred from the tree of life. We have been given free access to it! (See also **Revelation 22:1-5,14 & 2:7**)

Justification instead of Condemnation. (**5:16 & 18**) These two are opposites. Perhaps that helps us to understand the real meaning of justification?

Reigning in Life. (**5:17**) – instead of being reigned over by death, our inheritance is to reign in life through the Lord Jesus. Now – as well as later!

Disobedience and Obedience. (**5:19**) Adam's wilful disobedience and Jesus' obedience to the point of death (See **Philippians 2:8**). Totally contrasting results for all mankind!

Grace in Abundance (5:17 & 20)

As we have seen before, the effect of the Jewish Law given to Moses (and, in fact, any law) is to show up sin and failure. As a result, more 'falling to the side' (literal meaning of the word translated 'transgression', 'offence' or 'trespass') takes place. BUT more failure is met by more grace, abundantly – more than is needed!

The Reign of Grace

Sin no longer reigning in death, but grace reigning "*through righteousness into eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (**5:21**)

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