

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Links in the Chain of Security: Peace and Grace

Scripture: Romans 5:1-2

Code: 90-185

We've been having a series here on Sunday nights. We have been going through the 8th chapter of Romans and talking about the security of our salvation and having finished the 8th chapter of Romans, I now want to draw your attention to Romans 5. Romans 5 is another great chapter on the matter of the security of salvation. This of course is a discussion that has gone on through the years. People have debated the issue of eternal security and the perseverance of the saints for many, many years. The issue of once being justified, once being saved, once being regenerated, always being saved has been crucial to the debate of theologians.

In spite of all of the years of discussion and in spite of all of the attempts of biblical clarity, some have continued to teach that maintaining salvation is dependent upon an individual's continued obedience. For example, the Salvation Army handbook on doctrine sums it up. It says this, "some truly converted people have fallen from grace and the danger of doing so threatens every Christian." For many, salvation is conditional on a person's ability to maintain certain works of righteousness. If we fail salvation may be forfeited. This is not without its serious implications. Say nothing of fear and doubt and questioning that comes into the heart of people who live under such a threat.

The Apostle Paul addresses himself to the permanence of salvation as we noted in chapter 8 of Romans but he also does it here in chapter 5. And amazingly, this particular portion of Scripture, chapter 5, in the first few verses is often ignored in the defense of the doctrine of security. While in fact, it is one of the most convincing of all passages of Scripture because it speaks so directly to the issue, as does the 8th chapter.

Now in the fifth chapter, the best way to see how this defends the eternality of salvation, it is to see a series of links as it were in a chain that ties the regenerate person eternally to God. There are a number of realities, which demonstrate the security of saving faith, the security of salvation. And we're going to see the links in this chain unfold as we approach this wonderful passage. And it really does not take a lot of background. It doesn't take a lot of introduction. We can sort of dive right in just grasping the initial statement that opens the chapter and then beginning to consider the specifics that come behind it.

Look at the beginning; verse 1 "Therefore having been justified by faith". Now that is the premise. If you have been justified by faith, if you have been declared righteous through faith, in other words, if you have been genuinely saved, if God has sovereignly pronounced you righteous by imputing to you

the righteousness of Christ through faith, if God has accomplished his regenerating work in you that is the premise upon which Paul builds his case. In other words, if you are truly saved, if you have been declared righteous by putting your faith in Jesus Christ, you have laid the appropriate and necessary foundation and you are held in that relationship eternally.

And he begins to put the links together in the chain that connect you to the eternal God permanently. First one is in verse 1, the second half of the verse - Peace with God. "Therefore having been justified by faith" (that's a past reality) "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now in chapter 3 and verse 21, and we won't go into it, but in chapter 3 verse 21 all the way to the end of chapter 4, Paul has been talking about being justified, being declared righteous by faith. That's been his theme, that you cannot be righteous by keeping the law. You cannot be righteous by some ceremonial means but as verse 22 of chapter 3 says, "the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe." And he goes on to define justification, which is God declaring you righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. He goes on defining that and illustrating that all the way to the end of chapter 4, using as the most notable illustration of that Abraham who is known as the father of faith.

So justification, which is another way of saying being just or being right with God, being righteous before God is the initial reality laying the foundation of a relationship to God and it carries with it a whole host of things that show us the eternity of this relationship. Since we have been justified by faith, the first one, we have peace with God. Now that is a very important thing to understand. We have as a present possession, a present possession. We currently have peace with God.

Now let me hasten to say here the peace he is talking about is not psychological tranquility. It is not emotional security. It is not feelings of confidence or well-being. It is not subjective at all. It is not even talking about the kind of peace you feel or the kind of peace you sense or the kind of peace you experience. It is talking about an actual relationship that can be defined as a relationship of peace. You see justification by faith, that is God declaring you righteous, God declaring you just, that very act of God establishes a new relationship between you and God. Whereas before you had been at war, you had been the enemy of God, you are now at peace. That's the issue here. It's talking about an objective peace.

The issue is not your attitude of confidence. It is not your emotional sense of well-being. It is not the absence of fear and doubt. It is not the presence of tranquility. That's not what he's talking about. What he's talking about here is a relationship of peace rather than animosity. You have ceased to be an enemy of God and you have become a child of God. You have ceased to be a hater of God, and you have become a lover of God. You have ceased to be a child of Satan and become a child of God. You have been passed out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear son and the relationship of animosity has been dramatically altered and become a relationship of intimacy and loving fellowship.

The unregenerate man is the enemy of God. He hates God and God is angry with him. It even says in the Psalms that God hates the wicked. He is at war with God and God is at war with him and according to Ephesians 2 he is the target for the eternal wrath of God. God is the enemy of Satan and God is the enemy of sin and since every unsaved soul is in sin and under Satan, God is at war with that soul. In fact, this very portion of Scripture reminds us of that in verse 10, "if while were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son." We are under condemnation. We are the enemies of God and the enemies of righteousness. And God is angry with the wicked and the Scripture indicates that God will act destructively against them.

Psalm 7:11 says, "God judges the righteous and God is angry with the wicked every day." Peace with God means the war is over. Peace with God means God is no longer fighting us nor we him. He is not our enemy any longer. Peace with God is the new status. It's the new estate. It's the new definition of our relationship that flows out of reconciliation. And that takes us, doesn't it, into 2 Corinthians 5 where the gospel is called the Word of Reconciliation and gospel proclaimers are called ministers of reconciliation. And we go around and we say be reconciled to God. It is the peace of reconciliation that we're talking about. Our sin paid for in full on the cross by Jesus Christ propitiates or satisfies the justice of God on our behalf and God in his great mercy accepts Christ as our substitute, treating him as if he lived our lives and treating us as if we lived his by imputing his perfect righteousness to us.

Justification, reconciliation - they are really indistinguishable. They are distinguishable as terms but they're indistinguishable in terms of reality. Having been declared righteous we are therefore reconciled to God. This peace then is the definition of the new reality of a person being made right with God. It is the opposite of Romans 1 "being under the wrath of God." God's wrath towards us, which would ultimately consign us to eternal hell is removed. Why? Because it has been fully satisfied since Jesus bore in his own body our sins on the cross. The wrath of God was satisfied as he punished Jesus as if he committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe.

God's justice being satisfied, Christ's righteousness being granted to us, we entered into peace with God. It isn't through anything we did or can do. Please notice verse 1, "it is through our Lord Jesus Christ." All spiritual blessings are in Christ including peace with God. That is a spiritual blessing of monumental significance that like all other spiritual blessings in the heavenlies are in Christ. Because of our relationship to him, we enter into that peace. 1 John 1:9 says "he keeps on cleansing us from all sin." Romans 8:1 says, "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ." Romans 8 says, "no one is able to come before God and successfully condemn us. No one is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." We have entered into a relationship of permanent eternal peace with God because our sins have been paid for and the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. That is the peace with God.

By the way, that is to be distinguished from the peace of God, which is the sense of tranquility and joy and confidence and freedom from anxiety that comes to an obedient believer. This is the great initial link that the Apostle Paul identifies in this unbreakable chain. Listen to what Psalm 37:24 says, "The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord holds him with his hand." That's a great confidence isn't it? We stumble. We fall. We will never utterly be cast down because the Lord is holding us with his hand. In fact, in Ephesians 6:15 where Paul is defining the armor of believers, he says there feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. He calls the gospel the gospel of peace. That is to say that it is the gospel, good news, by which men can be reconciled to God. Good news by which men come from being the enemy of God to being the intimate friend of God. Good news by which people stop the war and enter the realm of peace. That's why in Ephesians 2 Christ is said to be (this is a great statement) our peace. He is our peace.

Beloved, when you were saved, justified, made righteous, when the righteousness of Christ was imputed to you and on the basis of that your sins were forgiven and you were reconciled to God, you entered into a secure relationship of peace with God that can never change. There can never rise any sin for which Christ has not already paid the penalty. And God doesn't look at you and see you. He sees you clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God is satisfied with Christ's sacrifice for your sin. His wrath has been expended and you have permanent and eternal peace with God. That's the first marvelous, marvelous link in the chain that holds us eternally.

Do you remember in Hebrews 8:12, the writer of Hebrews is quoting out of the Old Testament, quoting from Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah, kind of bringing it all together. And in Hebrews 8:12 he says this, "for I will be merciful to their inequities and I will remember their sins no more." And that is the definition of the new covenant. The new covenant is a covenant in which God's justice has been totally satisfied by the death of Christ so that he will never again take account of any of our sins in so far as they might rise to sever our relationship to him.

God was fully satisfied with the penalty being paid by Christ. And if God was not fully satisfied, Christ would need to die again and again and again or they would no peace exist. But at the time of salvation, you entered into a permanent relationship of peace with God not based on your merit but Christ's; not because of what you did but because of what he did not because you've maintained a perfect life but because God has imputed the perfect life of Christ to you. Such a powerful reality.

I was speaking at a theology conference on Friday night and I said you know if I had been God, I always wanted to find the shortest distance between two points, you know, which is a straight line and make everything simple and I suppose if it had been myself planning this whole redemptive thing, I would have had Jesus come down on Friday, die, rise on Sunday and maybe return on Monday. you know simplified. Why be here 33 years? After all it's 33 years of absolute silence, isn't that quite

remarkable? Isn't it remarkable that God, the God of the universe lived on the earth for a 30-year period before he launched his ministry at the age of 33. He lived on the earth for 30 years. We don't know anything after his birth except one little tiny vignette when he was 12 years old and he went down to Jerusalem with his family for Passover and he got left there and he was in a conversation with the doctors in the temple and he was aware that he had to be about his father's business. That doesn't have a lot of practical implications for us nor does it tell us anything quite remarkable about him. Certainly nothing divine is implicated there other than that he was identifying his father as God.

And you wonder what about all those other years. I mean it just seems remarkable that nothing was ever said. I mean there could have been some incredible things said. There have been apocryphal things written when Jesus was a little boy he made breakfast. Breakfast you know. I mean if his father couldn't square off a corner, he just squared it off. And if a bird had a broken wing, he just gave it a new one. All apocryphal things but one does stretch to wonder what it was like to have God in your house for 30 years and God in your neighborhood and the Bible says nothing about it. And you ask the question, why did he have to live that whole life? Why did all that have to go on and the answer is very simple. He had to live a complete life so he could fulfill all righteousness. He had to live a full perfect life so that that perfect life could be imputed to you as your imperfect life was imputed to him.

God treated him as if he lived your life so he could treat you as if you lived his. It's an incredible reality isn't it? And therefore you have entered into peace with God not because of what you've done but because of what God has done in Christ in granting you his righteousness. That peace is an unbreakable peace because the justice and wrath of God has been fully satisfied at the cross. There's a second link in this chain and this is as far as we're going to get tonight. We're having such a great time tonight, we didn't leave much time for the preaching but that's all right. You're going to come back and so am I.

There's a second great link. Go back to Romans. This one, this could literally launch us permanently into orbit. Verse 2 "through whom" (that is through Christ) "also we have obtained our introduction by faith" (listen to this) again he says it's "by faith and it's through Christ into this grace in which we" what? We stand. This is one of the great statements in all of the Bible. This truth is so rich, its boundaries are untouchable. Its boundaries are unreachable. It is infinite. It is vast. It is profound. Everything that is said in that opening part of verse 2 is just loaded with treasures. Through whom, the antecedent of that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything is because of him. We have peace with God because of him. We stand in grace because of him. The second link is standing in grace. Standing in grace. The key thought is the mediation of Christ brings us all these things. Through whom (through Christ) we have obtained our introduction or literally our access (I love that translation). We have access it says into this grace in which we stand. The word access, here translated in the NAS introduction is a monumental word. It's a staggering word. It's a shocking word. In fact, I wish the NAS translators had stuck with the word access.

It refers to access to God. Through Christ we have access by faith into God's realm where grace abounds. You understand what that would mean to a Jew? Through all the history of Judaism, the Jews knew God as one who was separate, who was distant, to whom they had no access. You remember don't you that God dwelt in the holy of holies and who alone could go in there? The high priest. And how many times? Once a year. And he had to make sure he was cleansed and he had to do all of the things necessary ceremonial and make the sacrifice before he could go in there and he had to wear little bells on his robe and in case the bells stopped tinkling, you knew he was dead because God struck him dead because he'd come in there in an impure way.

I mean the idea of access was foreign to that system. There just was no access. The way God set it up, the people were kept at great distance from God, which was to demonstrate their utter sinfulness. The whole Old Testament system of sacrifices, both in the tabernacle and later on in the temple was to demonstrate that God was inaccessible. God was not available. And the high priest could go in once a year. The Jews could get so close. The men could get a little closer. The women a little further away. The gentiles a little further away but God was really not accessible.

And if you went where you weren't supposed to go and tried to access God on your own, like Uzza did and tampered with holy things, you could be killed on the spot. Uzza, Nadab, Ubihu, Cora, Dathen, Abirum, etc all those people in the Old Testament were killed because they sought to access God on their own terms. And if the high priest who went into the holy of holies once a year wasn't right before God, he would die in there. And he would be buried in shame. You see access was not a word in terms of man's relationship with God. Sinful man had no access. But Christ's death altered that. And of course the monumental thing that occurred to demonstrate that at the death of Christ was the ripping of the veil between the holy place and the holy of holies in the temple from top to the bottom right? When Jesus was dying God supernaturally just ripped that veil to expose the holy of holies to everybody.

And access was made by Christ and that's the glory of the new covenant. In Jeremiah 32:38 and 40, it says "they shall be my people and I will be their God. I will not turn away from them to do them good." In other words, I will continually do them good. "But I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." The believer side of our security is that we have access to God and he will never leave us. He'll never depart from us. So this whole idea of access, we could say a lot more about it but suffice it to say that for now. The whole idea of access is a brand new and glorious and wonderful reality. We have access to God.

Now let me tell you something right now. Access to God is one thing. Surviving it is something else and the Jews were frankly frightened about that. You remember Menoah, the father of Sampson, came home one day and said write the will, we're dead. What happened, Menoah? Well I saw God. I saw God. We're dead. What did Menoah mean? He saw God. God saw him. He saw holiness.

God saw sin. he's dead. People in the Old Testament had a dread of seeing God. Even in the New Testament, the disciples were afraid when the storm came up and they were more afraid when Jesus stilled the storm because they realized God was in their boat and that was enough to panic them.

So it's one thing to say oh isn't that great. Throw the veil open. There's access to God. Isn't that wonderful? No more barrier. There's access through Christ. Fine but I'm not sure I want to go in. I'm so glad for the invitation. I'm glad for the access but I'm not sure I can survive it. And you want to know something? You couldn't accept for one wonderful truth. Go back to verse 2. We have access by faith into this what? Grace. Aren't you glad for that? That's the whole point. You have access into a sphere of grace. That's the only thing that lets us live. We have access into this sphere of grace. It's in this grace in which we stand. Kistemein the Greek. Abide. We live in this spirit.

When you became a Christian, wonderful, wonderful reality - when you became a Christian, you entered into intimate access to God. Did you not? You came into communion with God whereby you became a child of God. You became a member of God's kingdom. You became a member of God's family. You enjoy intimate fellowship and friendship. You became as close to God as is possible for a creature to be. And you came and you had access but you wouldn't survive it one second unless it was an environment of what? Of grace.

We are firmly fixed - kisteme means to stand firm, to abide. We are firmly fixed in a state of grace. And that is the comforting reality. Where sin abounds, what? Grace much more abounds as Paul says at the end of this chapter in verse 20. So it's one thing to say wow, we have access to God isn't that wonderful. Let's go rushing in. You better stop and think about that means. God's not going to throw you out. Why? Because it's an environment of what? Grace. It's an environment of grace. We stand firm in an atmosphere of grace. We are immovable. We breathe the air of grace. We abide in grace. And that's why we are secure, because it's a place of grace. If it was a place of law, we wouldn't cut it. We'd be out of there in a few moments after we arrived. if it was a place of law, we would know no security. If our sins were manifest there, we would be expelled but it is a place of grace. And what is grace? God's unmerited favor and forgiveness to sinners. But how can he do that? Because all the sin was paid for by Christ, that's how.

And because he has imputed the righteousness of Christ to you. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 "For by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God not of works any man should boast." You see your peace - listen carefully - your peace is established with God, purely on the merits of Christ's work. Your grace, your access into this sphere of grace is purely on the merit of Christ's work on the cross. You stand before God in a relationship of peace. You stand before God in an environment of grace. All because of what Christ has done.

That's what makes our salvation permanent. When sin shows up, grace shows up. When sin abounds, grace abounds. This is the immense reality that captures our hearts. We stand in grace.

The state of salvation is a state of grace. It was with Christ's death and his gracious mediation and the wonderful saving work of the Holy Spirit that brought us into this state of grace, that brought us into this state of peace and it is that which keeps us there. I can't resist commenting on John 17:11, "Jesus prayed to the father. I am no more in the world and yet they themselves are in the world" - speaking about the disciples, those who believe in him - "I come to thee Holy Father, (listen to this) keep them in thy name." Keep them, father. Hold on to them. That was the prayer of Jesus. Verse 15 "I am not asking you to take them out of the world but keep them, keep them, keep them from the evil one." It was the prayer of Jesus. That's a perfect glimpse of his intercessory work.

You wonder what Jesus does as a faithful and merciful high priest? He prays for us. And he prays according to the will of the father. He is able it says in Hebrews 7:25 to save forever those who draw near to God, since he always lives to make intercession for them. When the accuser of the brethren who is Satan comes before the throne of God as he does night and day and he says I see that guy down there. I see that individual. I just want to call your attention, God, that there is a lot of sin in that life. Jesus is there saying, I paid for that. Well what about this? Covered. Well I paid for all of that.

And the father's promise to the son is that he would keep those whom he had given to the son. Listen to what it says in Jude 24 "To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless with great joy to the only God our savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord." God will keep you. Christ will keep you. The spirit keeps you through his intercessory work as we noted in Chapter 8 of Romans. We have been according to Ephesians 1:6 accepted in the beloved one. If it were just us, we wouldn't make it but we're in Christ and as the father accepts Christ, he accepts us because we are covered by his righteousness.

A.W. Pink said "It is utterly and absolutely impossible that the sentence of the divine judge should ever be revoked or reversed. Sooner shall the lightnings of omnipotence shiver the rock of ages than those sheltering in him again be brought under condemnation." And that takes right back to Romans 8:1, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ."

And our maintained salvation is not because of our maintained goodness. It's because of grace, grace, grace, grace. Some people would think that the state of peace with God is precarious. It's not. Some people would think that our state of access to God is precarious. It's not. We're not introduced by Christ into some precarious relationship. We stand in grace firmly, don't we? We abide in grace. He has the divine strength to enable us to keep from falling. He holds us. We persevere.

And when sin does come and it comes, the grace on which we stand provides complete forgiveness because Christ has paid the penalty in full.

Horatio Vonner wrote these words, "Thy works, not mine, oh Christ, speak gladness to this heart. They tell me all is done. They bid my fear depart. To whom save thee, who can alone for sin atone,

Lord shall I flee. Thy pains, not mine oh Christ, upon the shameful tree have paid the law's full price and purchased peace for me. Thy tears, not mine oh Christ, have wept my guilt away into a blessed day. Thy bonds, not mine oh Christ, unbind me of my chain and break my prison doors never to be barred again. Thy wounds, not mine oh Christ, can heal bruised soul. Thy stripes, not mine, contain the bomb that makes me whole. Thy blood, not mine oh Christ. Thy blood so freely spilt can blanch my blackest stains and purge away my guilt. Thy cross, not mine oh Christ, has born the awful load of sins that none in heaven or earth could bear but God. Thy death, not mine oh Christ, has paid the ransom due. Ten thousand deaths like mine would have been all too few. Thy righteousness, oh Christ, alone can cover me. No righteousness avails save that which is from thee. Thy righteousness alone can clothe and beautify. I wrap it around my soul. In this I'll live and die." Great theology.

Yes, Paul says, we have peace with God. And we stand in grace. The first two links in the chain that ties us inseparably to the God of our salvation and at least four more to come. Join me in prayer.

Father, we thank you for this great, great, and comforting and encouraging passage. Thank you for providing for us an eternal salvation. Thank you for coming down and in sovereign grace choosing us and calling us to yourself. Choosing us not to the beginning of our salvation but to the end, that we should be conformed to the image of Christ. We would then become the first-born, the platotocost, the premier one among many who are like him. Thank you for permanent eternal peace wrought not by our goodness but by the work of Christ and for standing in grace. Firmly we abide in heir of grace, in which all our sins are covered, having been paid for by the savior. We fear not the loss of our salvation but like the psalmist, Lord, we don't want to forfeit the joy of our salvation. So call us again by the promptings of your spirit and your word to a life of obedience by which we may enjoy this eternal security as a true and joyful and comforting assurance, which comes to those who are obedient. Grant us the joy that should be theirs who belong forever to you. And we know it comes as we obey and we'll thank you and praise you in our Savior's name, Amen.

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