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Romans

...but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,... Romans 4:24

"But also for us" is tied to the previous verse which explained Genesis 15:6. Abraham simply believed God's promise and it was accounted to him for righteousness. This written account of that declaration, according to Paul, "was not written for his sake alone." In other words, what the Bible records about Abraham serves a another purpose which is that we too enter into the same state of righteousness.

And how will it occur? "It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." We learn that our justification before God comes to us by an act of faith, just as it did with Abraham. The record of Abraham's reckoning has been given to show us that the same thing will occur to us in the same way. The only difference between what occurred in Abraham and what will occur when we believe is the difference in what is known.

Abraham was given a promise and without wavering he believed. We have been given the account of Jesus and we are asked to believe it. This is the good news and it is the foundation of our faith. There are two things to note about it. First, Paul calls Jesus "Lord" and secondly he notes that He has been raised from the dead. He will call these to mind again in chapter 10 -

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (verse 9).

After this, he will explain how this process works - "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (verse 10).

The pattern is set in the Old Testament and it continues and is confirmed in the New - there is only one way to be saved and works are excluded from the process. It is by faith, and faith alone that God bestows righteousness. We are to have faith that "Jesus is Lord." This means that He is the divine Son of God - fully God and fully Man. And we are to have faith that God raised Him from the dead; He has fulfilled the law on our behalf.

Life application: What does your denomination require of you? Do they say you can't eat pork? Do they say you must observe a Sabbath? Is there some other work that they tell you is necessary for you to prove you are saved? If so, it is time for you to find another place of worship. The Bible is clear, but we misunderstand. Call on Jesus as Lord, believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved. Nothing else is required. Now, go share this good news.

...who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Romans 4:25

This final verse of chapter four explains the marvel of the finished work of Jesus. He "was delivered up because of our offenses." Sins committed by the fallen sons of Adam must be punished. God cannot arbitrarily overlook sin without violating His own righteousness. Every sin must be punished. And the punishment must be perfectly executed. Therefore, there are only two possibilities -

1) Punishment in the one who commits the sin. A finite sin committed against an infinite Creator requires an infinite punishment - condemnation and eternal separation.

2) Punishment in a perfect Substitute. An animal cannot substitute because it is in a different category. Another person born from man cannot substitute because that person bears Adam's sin. Thus Jesus is the only acceptable Sacrifice apart from option 1. He was born of God through a woman. He is the God/Man.

Jesus was delivered up for the sins of the world and, as Paul has clearly laid out, the justifying work of His sacrifice can only be received by faith. There is nothing we can do to add to what He has done for us. This is why Abraham is used as the preeminent example of this. Abraham looked forward in faith to the coming Messiah -

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." John 8:56

Is it really that hard to believe? The answer demands an affirmative. Very few in proportion to the total number of people in the world today have grasped the truth that an itinerant preacher in the little nation of Israel came to redeem the world. They reject the premise and rail against it. The only hope of their salvation is shunned because of an inability to perceive the marvelous workings of God.

However, Paul doesn't finish with the cross, but he completes the gospel by stating that Jesus "was raised because of our justification." God declared us "not guilty" through the cross of Christ. All of our sin was heaped upon Him and He bore the punishment for what we have done. But Christ also carried our sins away. They were removed "as far as the east is from the west."

Therefore, where sin is removed, there is no longer punishment for sin. After bearing our punishment, He came back to life because it was impossible for death

to hold Him. The wages of sin is death; He never sinned; therefore, He came back from the grave. He was "raised because of our justification."

In one fell swoop, God removed our sins and raised us to new life through the work of His Son. This is exactly how Paul portrays the cross and the resurrection - as a single, unified whole. They together are the work of Christ on our behalf. Now, as is recorded in 1 Corinthians 15, the victory has been realized -

"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (vs. 56, 57)

Life application: There is one and only one way to be reconciled to God the Father - through the work of Jesus Christ. God has shown us what is acceptable and He alone has done the work. Now by simple faith in what Jesus did, we stand justified, holy, and righteous before God.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1

Paul begins chapter 5 with "Therefore." What he has explained throughout chapter 4 is summed up in today's verse. This includes the following three concepts which are contrary to justification by faith alone. He explains they have no bearing on our declaration of righteousness -

4:1-4:8 - Works where wages are due

4:9-4:12 Circumcision in the flesh

4:13-4:25 Obedience to the law apart from faith

Based on these three topics, Paul proclaimed at the end of the chapter, "It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."

Now, as a result of this, he gives his "therefore." Having been justified by faith (what has been explained) "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He is writing to saved believers (those having been justified). Because of this, translators and commentators find themselves in a difficult situation. The word translated as "we have" is the Greek word *echomen* and is explained this way in Vincent's Word Studies -

"The true reading is *ἔχωμεν* - let us have; but it is difficult if not impossible to explain it. Godet says: 'No exegete has been able satisfactorily to account for this imperative suddenly occurring in the midst of a didactic development.' Some explain as a concessive subjunctive, we may have; but the use of this in independent sentences is doubtful."

Actually, the difficulty isn't as great as claimed here. The very premise of what Paul is writing is that our justification before God is one of faith. Paul is of course writing to believers, but he is also writing to skeptics, and unbelievers (his epistles were used as doctrine for anyone to hear). Further, the very premise of his previous words (instruction on what will and won't lead to justification) implies that there are those addressees who are confused enough to need the instruction in the first place.

Some of them are relying on works; some of them are relying on circumcision; and some of them are relying on obedience to the law apart from faith. Paul has been writing to correct them and therefore "let us have peace with God" is instructing them that this corrective action is required. Faith is a volitional act of the free will. When one comes to the table with the presupposition that man doesn't have free will to choose Jesus, then of course "let us" would be a confusing thought in the midst of such instruction. But when we realize that God has granted us this right, it follows naturally that we must exercise the very act that has been explained to us.

Therefore - As a result of what has been said.

Having been justified by faith - You came to Christ by faith and were justified by that same faith.

Let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ - 1) (To saved but confused souls) Continue in that faith and don't fall back on works, telling others that they need to be circumcised, or telling others that obedience to the law is necessary. Instruct them as you have been instructed. 2) (To the unsaved) You now know what will bring reconciliation with God, so have faith in this and don't attempt to be justified by works in order to obtain this state.

This is fully substantiated by the thoughts laid out in the book of Acts and Galatians. In Acts 15:5 it says -

"But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.'"

And again we read this short account from Paul in Galatians 2:11-16 which involves the apostle Peter, a saved believer who was falling back on the law -

"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Paul's use of "let us" here in Romans 5:1 is directed toward exactly such people. They were already saved believers, but they weren't standing on the truth of what saved them in the first place - faith in what Jesus did for them, apart from deeds of the law.

Life application: The Bible is a large book with many difficult issues, but the more we read it and the more we remember what we've read, the surer our knowledge of what it proclaims becomes. It is a book without contradiction or confusion. So if we are confused, the problem lies in our understanding of the word, not in the word itself.

...through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2

Here is the entire thought as is stated in 5:1, 2. Read it slowly and think about what is occurring here -

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

We were enemies of God and outside of His favor when He did the unimaginable. He sent us Jesus. Now we are justified by mere faith in Him and His finished work. Because of this we are implored to have peace with God through Him. He is our peace and so through Him we enter into a new state and a new relationship with our Creator.

But there is more. Through Jesus we have access by this same justifying faith "into this grace in which we stand." The Greek word translated as "access" is used only 3 times in the New Testament and all three occurrences indicate a face to face interactive access. JB Lightfoot describes it as "having audience (direct access)

with God." This is an immediate and continuing blessing of having called on Jesus by faith.

Not only is it immediate and continuing, but it is something "in which we stand." The verb "stand" is perfect, indicative, active - the action is accomplished, it is a fact, and it is on-going. In Christ, we stand; we do not fall. What He has done in us is complete and will not pass away. What occurs here is explained in 2 Corinthians 5:21 - "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." The position we find ourselves in before God is in Christ's standing, not our own. We could as much lose this standing as Christ Himself could. God has favored us, not because of our own merits, but because of the work of Jesus.

But there is yet more. Through this same faith we also "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This is our future benefit and which we wait on as we stand on the surety of what has occurred. In God's mind, this action is already complete. Paul says in Romans 8:30 that those "whom He justified, these He also glorified." We are merely waiting for this final state and as we do, we can rejoice in this hope.

Life application: If you're feeling beaten up because you've failed Jesus, be reassured in today's verse. If you have faith in Him, you are saved, you will remain saved, and you will be glorified for all eternity. What you see as a difficult walk of repeated failure and trial, God sees as already accomplished. He has done the work, have faith in that and let your hope be filled with rejoicing.