

The Secure Standing of the Justified

Studies in Romans

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Bible Text: Romans 5:1-2

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I was thinking there is a sermon illustration in the special Dunbar music we heard tonight. And that is I can... I will give you the interpretation before the illustration. That is that you are dealing with young Christians. Give them time to grow and don't jump to too many conclusions. You will be too hard on them too soon.

I thought of that as I listened to the two sisters play because every time I hear them my mind goes back to a night that Joan and I were over at the Dunbar's and Kara had just gone... I don't know if it was a quarter size violin. It looked like something out of a Barbie house, you know, one of these wee tiny things. And I don't know if you know this about Ed Dunbar—and if it moves you to give him a hard time, feel like it. Feel free to do it. I remember him saying to me around that time, “Pam likes to play the piano. I don't like to hear her play. She can sing, but don't play because she hits wrong notes and I don't like wrong notes.”

Do you remember that, Ed? Yeah. You would just love to be his student, wouldn't you? Well, you know, a little child learning to play the violin hits a few wrong notes. And even when she doesn't hit the wrong notes, they sound wrong.

You know, a violin at the beginning sounds like a cat having a fit at a high octave, you know? And but I encouraged. She doesn't remember this, but I actually encouraged Kara. Keep at this and one day you will be maybe as good as I am.

But... and I can't play at all. But good illustration. Just take time. She grows and a beautiful piece of music tonight, beautifully played, one of my favorite hymns and certainly very encouraging to hear. But keep that in mind when you are dealing with young people.

Most of my life the ministry was spent working with young people and I always find that far too many people want teenagers to be old men when they are just kids and they set much higher standards for their teenagers than they set for themselves very often and, of course, that it makes it difficult for the teenagers.

So first sermon here and gone. We trust the Lord will bless that lovely music to our hearts.

Tonight I have what will be something I want to leave with you as an item for prayer and it is on behalf of our brother Dr. Allison and his wife Charlene. Dr. Allison just flew out to his own church again last night to be able to preach today and will be flying back into Greenville tomorrow. Charlene has been with the doctor, has discovered an abdominal mass. The ultrasound does not look very encouraging at the moment and so on Tuesday she will be having a scan and the doctors will be taking it from there.

Obviously this is a very tough time for the family and we know that they will appreciate your prayers for them and we trust that you will keep them very much before the throne of grace and even as we meet here tonight that as we pray for the meeting here we will be praying for our brother Mark as he labors in Malvern. It is a very difficult time for a preacher to have to minister to others and he is certainly having to do that at this very time. So do keep him before the Lord and pray that the Lord will intervene and that, indeed, if it is his will this will turn out to be more of a false alarm than anything else. There is something to be dealt with, but we trust that you will keep Charlene very much before the Lord. The Lord's grace is sufficient. Mark was saying that today as I... or, I am sorry, yesterday, as I was talking to him today. And Charlene was saying much the same in different words, that the Lord's grace is sufficient and that the Lord does carry his people through.

So we trust you will keep them much before the throne of grace in your prayers.

Now we are turning this evening to Romans chapter five. I am almost afraid to announce that after all the badgering and bantering. But we are reading Romans five and should I keep you here till midnight we will get to some part of Romans five though Dr. Barrett has wondered if that is possible.

This is a great chapter. It is one of the pivotal chapters of the Bible. I have deliberately taken the early part of Romans at a very slow pace for the good reason, as I will show you, that it is the major exposition of the book and its major theme. But I would like to have about a year to do Romans five just because it is such a pivotal chapter of the book and one of the most amazing and outstanding portions of all the Bible.

But I don't have a year to do that. That is one thing that I am only a year younger than Dr. Barrett so you can see I don't have too much time left. So I have got to be careful about taking up years here and there. And so we will have to do it a lot more quickly, but we are going to read tonight the first 10 verses of the chapter, though I am not attempting to deal with the first 10 verses. Sorry, the first 11 verses. But this is the first great section of this chapter. So let's read the Word of God tighter, but first, before we do that, let us take time to seek the Lord's face in prayer as we commend the Allison's to the Lord and we might also remember Jesse Larson goes I think tomorrow, is it, Phil? No? He told me it was Monday. He is already there. Anyway, he is now in purgatory going in for his

Marine boot camp training. So I trust you will keep Jesse and much more his mom before the Lord in prayer at this time.

And at Memorial Day, though we are remembering the past, it is also good to remember the thousands of young men whose lives are at this moment in danger and who are having the very grieving experience of having to bear the brunt not only of the fire of the enemy, but of the cynicism of so many people back home. So I trust that you will at this time keep all these things before the Lord and in your heart as we now seek the Lord's face in prayer.

Let's all pray.

Our gracious Father in heaven, we do thank thee that we have boldness and access with confidence by faith in Christ to the throne of grace. We thank thee that we have boldness concerning Christ's entering in to the holy place. We thank thee that his entrance was an entrance of triumph even as we have been reminded already today and we are glad that there now is a man in glory, a man who has earned his place there and, thank God by his merit, has earned a place for us with him. We rejoice that we can come before thy throne to lift our petitions to thee. And, oh Lord, we thank thee that thou art love. We cannot plumb the depths of that wondrous statement, but thou art love. And we praise thee for the love wherewith thou hast loved thine own people. What a love it was that would send the darling of thy bosom to Calvary's cross to save our souls. And we thank thee that since thou hast given Christ for us, thy Word clearly teaches us and we thank thee for this logic of faith that he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

So, therefore, Lord, we come to thee to pray for some of these all things. We do pray that thou wilt remember the national situation. Have mercy, oh God, upon the nation. Thou doest see the morass into which we have fallen and we pray that thou wilt give genuine repentance on a wide spread scale and a genuine seeking after God and reverse, oh Lord, even in our day much of the curse of apostasy and liberal theology, secularism and humanism. Lord, we pray that thou wilt visit the land again. We ask thee that thou wilt take our thanks for the grace of God that has plotted the course of this and our western nations through times of war and trouble. We pray, Lord, that thou wilt continue to do that. Remember those who even now stand in mortal danger. Have mercy, oh Lord, we pray. We think of some attached to the Free Churches and, Lord, we realize that there are many, many, many others, but these are some we know. We pray for them as even tonight they would stand in the place of danger that thy hand will be upon them.

Bless Jesse as he would go for training and even here in the homeland. Give him a good testimony there. Sustain him by the grace of God. We ask thee, Lord, that thou wilt also remember especially our brother Mark and his dear wife and family. Lord, we pray sustain them and give them much comfort in the knowledge that our God is on the throne and he is in control and he does all things well. Minister great grace, oh Lord, grant that thy hand will be upon our sister. We pray that Charlene may know the touch of God. Lord, thou art able to go in and grant her thy healing grace. We pray for her and for

Mark and we pray Lord that thou will be their strength and their stay. Bless Hannah and bless the rest of the family.

And now, Lord, as we turn to thy Word, we confess we need thee. Save us from the sermon of a man and give us a message from God. Fill me with thy Spirit, Lord. Grant the anointing of thy gracious power and make thy Word an effective Word in every heart here this evening to the glory of thine own great name. We pray though the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Romans chapter five, the first 11 verses of the chapter.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.¹

Amen. The Lord will add his own blessing to the reading of his own precious Word for his name's sake.

By the end of Romans chapter four the apostle has reached the end of his major exposition of the main theme of his book. You remember back in chapter one and verse 17 he announced that theme.

He had already said in the previous verses:

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.²

¹ Romans 5:1-11.

² Romans 1:16-17.

That is a wonderful text and a wonderful theme. If you remember how we stated it then that God has provided a perfect righteousness in Christ for guilty sinners, a righteousness which they receive by faith alone, a righteousness on the ground of which they are fully justified before God.

Now that is the theme that Paul has taken. In the sections that follow he has been expounding that, elaborating upon it, making it absolutely clear what his message is. He has shown the need for such a way of salvation. Both the Gentiles and the Jews all guilty before God. And then he showed the nature of this way of salvation and justification starting at chapter three verse 21 and running right through the end of chapter four this has been his great burden to expound this way of justification by means of an imputed righteousness.

The apostle does something that I think very few commentators take time to note. I was interested to note that John Brown of Edinburgh bases the entire outline of his fairly large book on the epistle of Romans on this outline of how Paul deals, how he sets forth his teaching here that starting in chapter three verse 21 he makes a series of statements, very pithy statements that he goes on to explain more fully and, indeed, you will find as you take these statements that the rest of the exposition takes them up one by one and begins to expound them.

It is amazing when you read some of Paul's commentators they can come to some odd conclusions. Some of them will talk about the great logic and then others will say there is no logic here. Paul is just carried away. Well, I always get worried when pinheads talk about an inspired apostle being carried away.

But actually starting at 3:21 you will notice he gives you nine different characteristics of this method of justifying sinners. He says, first, it is without the law. Then, second, he said it is witnessed by the law and the prophets. Third, it is by the faith of Christ. In verses 21 and 22 he makes it clear that it is manifested to all. And then it takes effect on all them that believe. It is unto and upon all them that believe. The sixth thing he makes clear is that in this way of saving sinners by this free justification, God treats all men, Jews and Gentiles, in the very same way. For, says Paul, there is no difference, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."³

And then you have those rich statements in chapter three verses 24 and 25 and 26 in reference to man. This way of salvation is—and the proper word is—gratuitous. In reference to man, it is marked by gratuitousness. He has justified us freely. And I am not going to rehash what I said back then. But then in reference to God it is marked by graciousness, because he has justified us freely by his grace. And then the climactic statement is that it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."⁴

³ Romans 3:23.

⁴ Romans 3:25.

And it is in this way that God can be just and yet he can justify the ungodly who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this is how the apostle Paul sets out the steps that he is going to take. He gives you a map of an extended sermon. This is how he is going to be expounding his message and, indeed, how he, as we have seen, I trust, has expounded.

On the basis of these things he comes to some wonderful conclusions. If this is true, and it is, then there is no ground of boasting. He was a Jew. And he knew his own people. And he knew how boastful they were.

I don't want to get off on a tangent here, but some people have asked me if I would not be dealing with this. The answer is: No, not at the moment. But there is a new theory that is sweeping... maybe that is too strong a word, but it gives the appearance, at least, of sweeping some parts of the reformed camp and that is this so-called new perspective on Paul.

Be very, very careful when you get in the 21st century new perspectives on something as basic as the doctrine of justification by faith, because you will find in almost every instance—I am tempted to say in every instance, for I certainly don't know of any exception to the rule—that it is not a new perspective. And it is my opinion—those in that camp will disagree with me, but I can't help that they are wrong—it is my opinion that this new perspective is nothing more or less than a protestant restatement of the doctrine and dogma of the Council of Trent. And that is a very serious statement to make about reformed theologians. But the reality is that they want to deny this, that the problem that Paul was dealing with was the boastfulness of the Jews and their dependence upon works religion. They want to take their... the Jews as simply being wrapped up in their nationalism rather than their works religion.

Well, without getting into the whole thing, I will say this to you, that Paul says there is no boasting. And he was talking about boasting in works. If you are under the wrath of God and there is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God, if you are plunging down by your own merits to an everlasting pit of destruction and God enters in and provides a righteousness that has absolutely nothing to do with anything you have ever done in your life or ever will do in your life, a righteousness that is perfectly, fully, finally accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and which God reckons to you in union with him, imputes to you, places to your account, then obviously you have nothing to boast about in yourself.

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?”⁵

No, because as he goes on to say in the next chapter, if you work for something you deserve the wages of what you have worked for. You deserve as a reward. You deserve as something you have personally merited what is coming to you. If you have worked for it and you get it, then it is yours by your personal and merited right.

⁵ Romans 3:27.

So there is no boasting, but by what law? Not the law of works, but by the law of faith. Faith in Christ says there is no boasting.

Then he has a second conclusion and it is to emphasize that this righteousness may be received only by faith and by faith only. There is a little nuance there, but I want you to get it. Cover all the bases.

You see, because of Trent the Roman Catholic Church to this day would still believe you are saved by faith. And this is one of the fuzzy areas of evangelicals and Catholics together, one of the areas that they are using to blur the issues, to promote ecumenical unity.

You could go to the pope of Rome himself and he would say, “Yes, I believe in salvation by faith.” But he does not believe in justification by faith alone, nor does he believe in justification by an imputed righteousness as distinct from an infused righteousness received by faith alone.

Third conclusion? This great salvation, this justification by imputed righteousness is equally needed by all men and it will be suitable to all men whether Jews or Gentiles.

And the final wonderful statement in 3:31 is that it does not make void the law of God, but it establishes it.

And Paul was very keen to make that point because his Jewish objectors attacked his message by charging that it diminished and it dishonored the law. Paul says it is the very opposite. You are the people who are boasting of the law, yet you are the very people—as he has shown in chapter two—who dishonor the law.

Where is the law kept?

There is a beautiful picture of this in the Old Testament. Remember Moses coming down from the mount and he had the tables of the law in his hand? And he came upon the apostasy, the scene of apostasy in the children of Israel. There was the perfect law of God in the hands of man. And what happened to it? It was broken. He smashed it.

Now what happened then? The Lord gave two more tables, written with the finger of God. And they were kept intact and perfect where? Inside the ark of the covenant.

Deuteronomy 10 gives you this beautiful picture. That ark is Christ. The entire typology of the tabernacle points you to Christ. What a picture in the hand of man a broken law, a dishonored law. But in the perfect obedience of God’s dear Son incarnate you have the perfectly kept law of God.

And so by his obedience and then by his oblation, by his life and by his death, by his meeting the precept and then by his paying of the penalty, the Lord Jesus Christ has honored the law of God.

Now Paul's whole point is this is the only way God ever saves sinners. There is no other way. It is not one of the ways. It is not a particularly good way. It is God's way. It is the great goodness of God to give us the only way. And he goes on to illustrate that in chapter four using Abraham and showing, if you remember, how that Abraham was justified because God in his grace led Abraham to faith in the one who raises the dead. And then he imputed righteousness to him upon the exercise of that faith.

And that is where we came to in chapter four verses 23 through 25 when it says:

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.⁶

Delivered on account of our offenses, raised again on account of our justification. Therefore...

“Therefore being [or having been] justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷

If you have still got the outline notes that I gave of the book of Romans way, way back. You will notice that I titled chapter five, “The Product of Grace,” because it deals with the great consequence of God's action in justifying believers by imputing to them this righteousness. Indeed, I believe that you can look on this as the overriding theme of everything that follows in Romans that is this one great consequence looked at in various ways.

And, as I have said already, chapter five falls into two parts, the first 11 verses and then 12 through 21. Most commentators say that chapter five verses one to 11 deal with the fruits of justification. He has now dealt with justification. Now we have the fruits of justification: peace, access, joy, assurance, the knowledge of God's love.

Some less more, some less, but that is the area, the fruits of justification. And then they start a new section at verse 12 and many of them start here the doctrine called sanctification. In fact, it is all very neatly packaged. You have condemnation. Then you have justification. Then you have sanctification. Then you have glorification. And then you run up against a brick wall, because you have got chapters nine to 11 and in most of these outlines that comes in sort of parenthetically the problem of Israel. Though why on earth the problem of Israel should suddenly put its nose into this particular argument they haven't quite worked out and after that practical matters.

⁶ Romans 4:23-25.

⁷ Romans 5:1.

Superficially it is something to be commended. But especially in chapter five I think it is disastrous to start at chapter five verse 12 by talking about the doctrine of sanctification because it misses the whole point of one of the most profound passages in all the Bible. I think it is far better to see that there is... now this is not a chapter that is dealing first with the fruits of justification as such. It is now focusing our attention on the one great consequence of justification. It is the assured security of those justified by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you start with that in your mind and go through all that follows in the book, you will see that it does stack up very, very simply.

The first 11 verses of chapter five, the justified stand secure in the assurance of final salvation. That is the great truth of these opening verses of chapter five. If you are justified you are secure in the assurance of the final salvation.

Chapter five verse 12 through 21 makes the tremendously important point that this security lies in the reality of the believer's union with the Lord Jesus Christ by whom—to use the language of verse 20, 21, by whom grace super abounds over sin and reigns in righteousness to eternal life of the justified.

Chapters six and seven deal with an objection that this doctrine leads to Antinomianism or loose morals and from two different aspects chapter six and then chapter seven Paul is dealing with that objection and showing far from it, the very opposite is the case that this way of justification gives victory over the power of sin and it gives victory over the pollution of sin.

Now in chapter eight he returns to the great argument that he has taken up towards the end of chapter five and he shows that because they are justified, believers are exempt forever from the wrath of God.

Remember back in chapter one he said the need for justification is what?

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”⁸

That was the need. He has gone through all this time showing how God has met the need and now he is telling you the result.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”⁹

And therefore, those exempted from wrath are assured of the graces of sanctification, adoption and glorification and that is that... we heard something of that passage this morning in Romans chapter eight. That is such a wonderful statement of the ultimate security of the believer starting at chapter eight verse 28.

⁸ Romans 1:18.

⁹ Romans 8:1.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.¹⁰

What a wonderful statement. Is it any wonder, we say, if God be for us, who can be against us? God is for us. What can be against us? Who can be against us? Who can derail this mighty program of grace?

The answer is: no one.

Is there one to condemn? Well, it is certainly not God for he justifies.

Who can accuse the believer? Certainly not Christ for he died. He rose. He ascended. He intercedes.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”¹¹

Paul gives you the answer.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature...¹²

That is a very big thing, any other creature, anything in all creation. Just in case I haven't mentioned it. There is nothing in the world. There is nothing in outer space. There is nothing in hell. There is nothing in heaven. There is nothing among angels. There is nothing among devils. There is nothing among men. And there is certainly nothing that God has ever done or allowed to be done that can rob us who are justified of that love of God in Christ unto all eternity.

You will see, therefore, right through chapter eight, assurance, security, that is the product of grace.

Now what about these problem chapters in chapters nine through 11? Well, they are not a problem at all. It is dealing with the problem. Bu the unstated objection is: Hold on a second, Paul. You are talking about the security of saints. You are talking about this inalienable position of the people of God in union with Christ. Hold on a second. What about Israel? Israel was God's covenant people. And yet what security did Israel have? They have fallen. They have been cut off. How can you believe what the Bible says about Israel and then talk the way you are talking about full and final security?

¹⁰ Romans 8:28-30.

¹¹ Romans 8:35.

¹² Romans 8:38-39.

And Paul sets out to answer that. It seems a formidable argument, but it is not. For in actual fact, he says, God's purpose according to election stands and the promises of God are totally and entirely fulfilled.

Chapters 12 through 16, the so-called practical chapters. I don't like the doctrinal and practical division of books. I think that is a man made thing that is an insult to God because there is nothing more practical than doctrine and there is nothing more doctrinal than some of these so-called practical things, but for want of a better word, this practical portion, 12 through 16, starts with another therefore.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren..."¹³

Either on the basis of what has just been said at the end of chapter 11 or, as some thing, with some justification, what has been said throughout the whole doctrinal portion, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..."¹⁴ And so on down through all the duties of believers.

And what is he saying? He is saying that how the assurance of eternal salvation in union with Christ affects your life in this present evil world. There are consequences to being a Christian. This is not head stuff.

Dr. Barrett mentioned this yesterday in talking to the students. This is not just filling people's heads. I am a Calvinist. I am a reformed... and I had better stop. I am Reformed, comma, and I am a Presbyterian, not a Reformed Presbyterian. I am a Free Presbyterian. You want to know the difference, ask Mike, because he has preached on this.

But with all that, there is something I abominate. And that is a good word to use. I abominate it. And that is the tendency in this day of spiritual weakness for people with big opinions of their own intellect to take these great truths and analyze them to death and theorize and philosophize in a way that puffs up the head, but does not melt the heart. And I will tell you. If your theology doesn't make you holy, it will carry you to hell.

Understand that. If your theology doesn't touch your heart, it has only filled your head with a diabolical perversion of God's truth. And yet that is what is happening to an alarming degree. People who can spin finely woven theories that get into every little nook and cranny of every real or supposed argument.

I have often told people I read very little. There are a few exceptions. But I read very little of 20th century Calvinism. Why? Because I am sick. I am sick at heart. I have read these things in former time and I have read again and I have come. When I come to a writer and I look at him and say even if I agree with him intellectually it... there is nothing there, nothing there to challenge my heart. There is nothing there to lead me to Christ. There is nothing there to focus my faith on the Son of God. There is nothing to

¹³ Romans 12:1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

fire the soul when I hear and read the same people mocking those who don't dot there I's and cross their T's. They are Pietists. Somehow or other that is a crime nowadays.

Whitefield would have been a Pietist. Well if he was a Pietist, God help me to be a Pietist.

None of these people has ever moved anything for God. Yet they are willing to dismiss as Pietism the ministry of some of the mightiest men who have moved generations for God.

I want you to understand where I am coming from here. The doctrine I am preaching about assurance, security, is the Pauline doctrine of assurance. It is not this facile trivialization of truth.

Oh, the current security of believers and a believer is defined as any reprobate who has ever made any pretense at a decision or walk any aisle. And we have eternal security for people as bad as the devil himself and it is unreformed and unregenerate. I don't believe that.

But I believe that there is a final, full, irreversible, untouchable security assured to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and that far from making them careless will make them holy.

That is the product of grace that Paul is talking about here.

Now I want, having taken time to go into that sort of lengthy analysis, I want you just to grasp this truth of the assurance and the security of believers, because it is not a motif that I am imposing on the text. It is Paul's own chief idea. And I like it because here you see Paul the pastor.

Paul was a many faceted man. He was a great theologian, obviously. He was a premier writer even in the bulk of writing for the New Testament. He labored more abundantly as an evangelist and church planter, but here you see him as a pastor and you see him as a physician of the soul. He has just expounded deep theological truth, but he wants it to get down to the practical level. And so he touches on this, one of the most sensitive issues. And yet one of the most vital issues with which a Christian has to deal and that is the matter of assurance.

Now even our depleted crowd tonight, I guarantee in a little assembly like this, I guarantee you that right here and now you have people, saved people who are having problems with assurance. I don't know any preacher has ever gone anywhere preaching on the doctrine of assurance without somebody being there saying, "That was just for me."

And especially when they are facing trouble in life, more especially when they are facing the approach of eternity. And Paul therefore is drawing our attention through the bulk of

this great epistle to the security and the assurance of believers and the basis. He keep on bringing us back to the basis of that security and that assurance. He is setting before us such a view of the gospel that will carry us triumphantly through life all the way to glory in the secure knowledge of our acceptance with God because we are in union with Christ and have his righteousness imputed to us.

Now with all that said, we are ready to begin looking at chapter five.

The first two verses... I am to going to deal with all these... the words of these verses, but the first two verses obviously introduce the whole.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.¹⁵

Now I want to point out one thing right at the beginning so that you will see the reason why I am taking things as I will tonight and, God willing, in the couple of nights to come. I say that because I am going to deal with this, these first 11 verses maybe in, oh, seven or eight main points. And obviously you don't want to be here when I do that all in one service. So but I want you to notice something because this is critical to all that I am going to be doing.

It says in verse two, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."¹⁶

And the appearance of that is that we have been justified. We have received peace with God. We will come to that in due course.

Now here is something else in addition that we have received. And so you have got this sort of chronological even, or maybe logical would be better, but it looks chronological. We have got justification by faith. We have got result of peace with God and then we also have access to God.

Now the doctrine of access to God in prayer is one of the wonderful, wonderful blessings of God's people. But it is not primarily what Paul is talking about here.

If you watch it carefully you will find that there is good reason for translating this as a present tense. There is good reason for that, but it is not a present tense. It is a perfect tense.

Now without getting into the details of grammar, if you remember in whatever language you are dealing with, a perfect tense speaks of something done in the past whose results are continuing today.

¹⁵ Romans 5:1-2.

¹⁶ Romans 5:2.

And so he says, “By whom also we have [had] access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.”¹⁷

Let me just try to define very quickly some of the terms here before we get into what is the major message of it. The word “access” carries the definite article, “the access.” Again, there is good reason for seeing it as access, because it is something that we did get and we still enjoy. But the actual word itself has more of the idea of an introduction. What Paul is saying is we have had the introduction into grace. And, of course, we still have it. So that is where the idea of access comes in. We don’t lose it.

But there is here the idea of the introduction. This grace is the basis of our justification. It is God’s favor toward us whereby he treats us according to the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have had the introduction into this grace, this basis of our justification. And in this grace we stand. And, again, it is a perfect. We have stood and we continue to stand. The idea of standing is not to be upright. The idea of standing here is to stand firm, to stand sure, to stand secure.

Notice, again, the idea of security here. There is this standing secure. I think it can well, simply be translated, “We have been established. We have had the introduction into this grace, the basis of our justification and in this grace we have been established.” That is the message and that is the meaning.”

The message then, we have been introduced into a new standing before God on the basis of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

I want you to understand that because there is more confused thinking even by learned men when they are dealing with Romans, there is more confused thinking by failing to recognize that Paul in justification is dealing with a standing or, if you want, a status.

Now I have said we have a lot of things I want to say in this, but the main thing and the first point of the whole message that will carry us through all these verses is this, that believers in Christ have a secure new standing, a status before the Lord. Understand that.

We are not talking at this point about a new character. Oh, we do get that. Sanctification is real. But sanctification is not the basis of justification. Justification is the basis of sanctification. So we cannot deal with one without reaching the other, but we mustn’t confuse them. I am not talking about a new character. We are not talking about a new state of mind. We are talking about something much more fundamental. We are talking about a new legal status, our standing before God.

And notice it is a new standing. We have the introduction to it. In other words, it was not our natural status before God, nor was it one into which we could find our own way. It was not something we could produce. It was not something we could even obtain. We needed an introduction. And, as many have pointed out, Paul makes it clear here you can’t have an introduction without an introducer. And the one who has introduced us is

¹⁷ Ibid.

the Lord Jesus Christ and that is why twice in these verses he says, “Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access...”¹⁸ or we have the introduction.

You see, he alone can present us to God. Time forbids that I go through the New Testament showing that.

Jude 24 speaks of the ultimate presentation of God’s people and he alone is able to present you faultless. It is Christ that does the presenting. There is no place in the religion of the New Testament, there is n place in the gospel message for Cain’s religion of man bringing the works of his hands on the basis of which he presents himself to God.

I have mentioned Romans 12 even for Christians. When they are told to present their bodies to God it is by the mercies of God that they are thus exhorted. What does that mean? It means on the basis of all that you have in Christ and as we were reminded this morning from Peter’s statement, our sacrifices are acceptable to God not because they are offered by Christians, not because of the best we can do, not because they are even particularly useful or successful. You think of everything you have ever done. Have you prayed? When you have prayed has there been sin, unbelief, wandering thoughts, things that are unworthy of God? Certainly there has. What makes your praying acceptable to God? Through Jesus Christ. That is what does it. He presents us.

Ephesians 2:13. It speaks of us being in Christ. We were one time far off, but we are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Colossians takes up the same thing in verses 20 through 22, the same very idea, different words, but it is Christ who does the presenting. This is a new standing. It is also a gracious standing. The plan, the provision, the purchase, the power to obtain are all of God.

As some of the old Puritan theologians and many sense like to draw fine logical distinctions in the types of causes that you have in justification. The moving cause is what? It is the grace of God. The meritorious cause, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ and his perfect obedience. But the instrumental cause, you see, we will deal with that more fully later, but it is a gracious standing.

I would like you... I want you to get it through and never forget it because it will bless your heart when you come to pray and you come to worship. It will also set you free when you seek to evangelize and go to the ungodly, the unclean, the hopeless, the helpless and the people you look at and you say, “Why even bother?”

Remember it is all of grace. He justified us freely by his grace.

Chapter four verse four he deals with that again. He justifies whom? The ungodly, not people who could work for it. If you work for it you have earned it. This sets you free.

¹⁸ Romans 5:1-2.

You can go to anybody with the gospel. You can face the most unpromising situation and you know you have a God who is able to save to the uttermost. His salvation is gracious.

It is a firmly established standing. Notice that carefully.

“By whom also we have had this introduction by faith into this grace wherein we stand or wherein we are securely established.”

We are securely established in a right relationship with God.

Now that introduction that Christ made it has already taken place. But as a result we continue to stand. That is the great thing about Christians. That is why the old puritans didn't teach the eternal security of the believer. They taught the perseverance of saints.

Well, we take the idea of perseverance as, you know, you just screw up your courage and this is something I hate, but I have to go through with it anyway. That is a perversion of what they meant.

What they meant was, first, that God perseveres in his grace to us. He doesn't give us up. And as a result we go on with God.

You know, American churches tonight are populated to a large degree with candidates of the lake of fire who have been told that there are Christians and then there are unsaved people and in between this whole amorphous glob of people who are just carnal Christians...

Now unlike some reformed, I believe that there is such a thing as a carnal Christian, but I believe that most of the people who are being told that they have eternal security even though they are carnal Christians are people who have never been born again. They haven't been saved.

I want you to see this very, very clearly that God's people go on with him. Now they are not perfect. They are not sinless, though they wish they could be. But something radical has happened. They are standing secure in the grace of God. They are not restraining the grace of God. They are not making the grace of God a cloak for their own malicious living. They are standing in that grace.

It is a firmly established standing.

As Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 15:1 he spoke of his gospel wherein ye stand. Christians, true Christians stand in the gospel.

There are certain things that Christians can't do. I have heard it said and I have talked to you about people who have said this to me.

“I am saved and I can do anything but go to hell.”

No you can't, because if you are saved there are certain things you can't do. It is impossible. For example, a Christian, a truly justified man is firmly established in this grace. He stands in the gospel. And he is never going to deny that gospel. No saved man can ever denounce Jesus Christ.

Didn't Paul say that writing to the Corinthians? You cannot by the Spirit call Christ accursed. And if you don't know the Spirit, he says in Romans eight, you are not saved. You are none of his. There are certain things a Christian cannot do. A Christian is firmly established in grace. He is firmly established in the gospel. A Christian cannot go back to a doctrine of works.

That is why I wonder about these people who say they were Baptists or Presbyterians and they were evangelicals and they were this and they were that and the other thing and they go back into Romanism. And some of them tonight are parading their way around America attacking the very gospel that they once professed to believe and upholding the unholy perversions of Roman theology.

And I have to say. I do not believe that a man who has ever been genuinely saved can go back to a gospel of works. Certain things a Christian can't do. Why? Because he is firmly established in the grace that gives him justification. He is firmly established his stand in the gospel. This is a new standing, a gracious standing, firmly established standing.

Well, thank God, it is a legally perfect standing and that is what Christians need to focus on and we will be focusing on as we apply and as Paul leads us through the next verses to apply this truth to the very trying circumstances of life.

We have a legally perfect standing. We are justified.

Do you realize that the judge of heaven and earth has already given his verdict on every believer in Christ? Do you realize that? Justification is a judicial verdict rendered by the judge from the high court of heaven. Acquitted of all charges.

Paul uses slightly different language in Colossians chapter two when he is talking about the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. What has happened to them? They are blotted out. They are gone, acquitted of every charge.

Now you just take that and run with it the next time you are in battle with the devil and the accuser of the brethren is roaring in your ear. Remember what God has said. God justifies.

Fully acquitted of all charges.

The law satisfied, but it is voice no longer raised against us, now that law that once called for our destruction is a witness for our acceptance. For the law satisfied. Guilt is removed. All liability to punishment, gone and we are to anticipate something toward the end of the chapter. We are constituted righteous because of the imputed righteousness of Christ and therefore received into total acceptance with God, total, unreserved, acceptance with God. We will see that more fully when we come to discuss the meaning of peace with God. This is a legally perfect standing.

We were singing that hymn tonight, “Complete in Thee.” What a wonderful statement, “Complete,” nothing lacking, nothing missing, “Complete in Christ.”

Is Christ perfectly righteous? Is there anything in Christ that would leave him unworthy of heaven? Has Christ earned as the man Christ Jesus has he earned the full reward of glory? Then every believer in Christ has not something like, but has identically the same reception as he has on the same basis as he hath received it. For what he did in this he did as the head of his people on their behalf. It is a perfect legal standing. And therefore it is complete and unalterable. We stand. We have been established.

I leave you with the words of Isaiah, a beautiful statement. Chapter 45 and verse 17.

Israel... I realize there are prophetic overtones here, but there is certainly great gospel truth.

“Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.”¹⁹

And that is what I call eternal security.

This is Paul’s theme: the standing that believers have in Christ.

Let me ask you tonight, first. Do you know anything about this in your own experience? Have you ever come into faith in Christ? You have quit hanging on to the filthy rags of your own righteousness. There is a poor, guilty, hell deserving sinner. You have cast yourself upon the grace of God and received as his gift righteousness unto life eternal.

If you have never got to Christ he is the one you need to get to. If you are still foolishly trying to present yourself to God you need to come to the great introducer, the great presenter. He can bring you in. This whole idea of introduction in some classical texts has the idea of introducing into the royal presence chamber. Well, it is a much higher introducing here into the very presence of the King of glory. He can bring you in.

So if you have never got to Christ, it is time to seek him while he may be found. And if you are saved, I want you to understand the basis of all your Christian thinking and then late on your Christian acting is to understand the fundamental truth of what it is to be a Christian, to be justified, to have a new, perfect, established, unalterable standing or

¹⁹ Isaiah 45:17.

status that is legally perfect before God on the basis of which I can face life, death, judgment and eternity.

Think it through. With that, my friend, if I understand Paul aright—and I think I do in this—that is the foundation of everything that you will be asked to endure in life or in death or ever asked to do for God in your service for Christ.

The key to all is knowing your full justification and how to argue from that and act upon that in the situations that we face in this world.

May God bless his Word to all our hearts. Let's seek the Lord's face in a word of prayer.

Let us all pray.

In just a moment the meeting will be over. Let me repeat to you that if you are not saved you are in the best place to be saved, in God's house. You are among God's people. People are praying for you. And if the Lord has spoken to your heart about getting rid of the rags of your own righteousness to be clothed in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, then we implore you to come to Christ.

Mr. Brame and Dr. Barrett and I are here as your servants of Christ's sake and we would be happy to open God's Word with you and point you straight to him.

Father in heaven, bless thy Word we pray. Make it effective in every heart. We ask, Lord, for any who are not saved. There are people here tonight who need to be saved. Lord, we cannot cause an anxious thought. We can tell them in words that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them. But they care not. Only God can cause conviction, an anxious thought, a desire to be rid of sin and guilt and be reconciled to God and justified freely. Only God can do this. Lord, we pray, take thy word and write it upon hearts to bring the lost to Christ. We pray, our God, that thou wilt instruct those of us who are saved in the glorious beauties of the gospel. Help us to think as Christians ought to think. Help us, oh Lord, to address the challenges of life through the gospel, to apply the truths of what it is to be in Christ to every situation. Oh Lord, we pray hear us and bless us abundantly.

We look to thee, Lord, and pray now that as we separate one from another thou wilt take us our several ways in safety. We pray that the beauty of the Lord our God shall be upon us and we ask, oh Lord, that thy fear, that beginning of all knowledge and wisdom will reside in our hearts.

So hear us now and grant that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit our Comforter may be our portion both now and until the Savior either calls us home or comes again in all his glory. We ask giving thee thanks in Jesus' precious name. Amen.