

Message Series: Basic Theology, Paul's Epistle to Rome  
Message 4: The Effect of Salvation. Romans 5:1-11  
Pastor Roger Ridley, Gretna Baptist Church – August 5, 2007

Have you ever had someone say to you, “*What’s in it for me?*” I’m sure you have. I know I have on several occasions. It seems to be a concern of most people, even when you are talking about salvation from sin. You can make the need clear, you can make the greatness of God’s offer clear, and yet people will still want to know, “*How does it effect me?*”

In Romans 5, the Apostle Paul talks about this very thing, the effects that salvation has in a person’s life. I’d like you to open your Bibles to the passage with me...

As we study this passage it is my hope that one of two things will happen: (1) if you have never received God’s gift of salvation by faith in His Son that you will want to, and (2) if you have that you will be encouraged with what you have and share it with others.

Listen as I read verses 1-11...

## **I. What We Were**

As we begin this study it is important to understand what we were, or what the person without Christ is.

The Apostle Paul has already made this absolutely clear in the first four chapters, but I’ve discovered in my own life that I need to be constantly reminded, and so Paul reminds us with three descriptions. The first one comes from verse 6...

The word *strength* comes from a Greek word which means *to make you strong*, like a body-builder. I’ve got a younger brother who does that, as a result he both looks strong and is strong, but even if he continued to increase his strength, so that physically he became stronger and stronger, he would still be helpless in accomplishing a relationship with God. That’s the way every person is outside of Christ, and that’s the way we were; without the strength necessary to accomplish a relationship with God.

In verse 8 the Apostle Paul also says we were *sinners*. Recently, a number of young movie and music stars have been in the news for drinking and drug related problems. One had a bad accident while intoxicated, and when the police searched the car they also found cocaine, but instead of admitting her problem

she has been saying, “*I am innocent.*” One of the hardest things for people in general is to admit they do things wrong, or to admit they are sinners. And yet, it is true of everyone, as Paul said back in Romans 3:23, “*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*”

What we often do is compare ourselves with others, and by that standard we sometimes look pretty good. But God compares us with His standard, and so, it doesn't matter whether we are better than the next person, if we don't meet God's standard then we are still a sinner, short of His standard of holiness, and therefore lacking a relationship with Him.

And then in verse 10 the Apostle Paul says we were *enemies* of God. An enemy is someone who is in hostility with or opposition against another. Now Paul does not say God was our enemy, he says we were God's enemies. A lot of people don't like to admit that either. But when we constantly refuse His help, reject His offers of grace, and go against His plan for our lives, it is pretty difficult to say we are not in opposition to Him. Without Christ, our response to God identifies us as enemies of God.

This three-fold description of what our life is like outside of Christ is not a pretty one. It is a description of helplessness, shortcoming, and hostility. That's what we were like and that's what every person is without Christ.

## **II. What We Are**

But there is an opposite, an exciting, unexpected opposite: what we are, or what a person is in Jesus Christ. Two terms say it all: verse 9, *justified*, and verse 10, *reconciled*. Justified speaks of declaring us right with God (we studied this last time in chapter 4), and reconciled speaks of bringing us into a loving relationship with God.

Sometimes I frustrated with by position as a preacher because I know I cannot adequately describe what God is doing, and this is one of those times. I know what God has done, I know what it feels like, and I know what an undeserved privilege it is, but I get frustrated with my inability to communicate it. I was a sinner, and when I remember my past there are things I have never told anybody because I am so ashamed. And yet, on December 20, 1974, when I knelt upon my knees, and went to Jesus Christ by faith, based upon His work at the cross, God declared **ME** righteous, and He brought **ME** into a relationship with Him. Can any of us adequately describe that? I don't think so. Can any of us fully understand that? I don't think so. And yet, God does it, because He loves us, and because of the sacrifice of His Son. In light of what

we were, what we are in Christ is beyond full comprehension.

### III. What We Have

Having been justified and reconciled we can now give consideration to what we have: the blessings we have with salvation in Christ. The Apostle Paul specifically mentions two. In verse one, we have *peace*. Perhaps the most sought after thing in the world is peace. This is certainly true right now with the War in Iraq and the continued tension in all of the Middle East. But the same is also true in our lives personally. We want peace and we will do just about anything for it but somehow it evades us.

I remember that was a driving force in my teen years. My heart was so unsettled about life and somehow I had to find peace. I tried doing drugs and although that brought some initial excitement and pleasure, ultimately it brought death instead of peace. Some of my friends from those days are no longer living as a result. I even tried yoga for awhile, you know, cross your legs and “*ohm*” yourself into oblivion, but that too was short-lived because the tranquility it brought was short lived. I also got to the point when I thought if I just made a lot of money and bought all the things I wanted that would bring me peace, but of course it didn’t. It wasn’t until, by faith, I received Jesus Christ as my Savior that I experienced peace.

The thing I failed to realize in those years was that my unsettled heart or lack of peace was not due to my circumstances but my opposition to God, and when that was settled everything else seemed to fall into place so that I enjoyed peace. Peace with God also meant peace in my life.

Not only do we have peace in Jesus Christ, but according to verse 2 we also have *access*. What that means is that we can freely enter into God’s presence. Hebrews 4:16 says we can go *boldly* to the Throne of Grace.

Several years ago I had a fairly frightening experience. I had been at a Bible Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. I had flown out and rented a car. I also met some friends, all brothers, who flew out in their own planes. After the Conference they asked me to take them back to the airport. They were all shouting directions and in the confusion, seeing an airport, I assumed it was the one they were looking for and turned in. There was a check point with a guard but I just waved and went on past him. Within moments we were surrounded. Had we shown any further persistence of entering in it was a real possibility that we would have been shot. It was not their airport, it was

a military base.

That's the way it used to be for us with God. We could not enter His presence. In the Old Testament, when God allowed access to His presence in the Holy of Holies, even then the High Priest was allowed to enter only once a year, and **never** boldly. If anyone else tried, it meant death. But now, that veil that separated us from God has been torn open in Jesus Christ, and we are invited to enter. That's a tremendous blessing we have! When we have sinned, we can go to God about it. When we are hurting, we can go to God about it. When we are in need, we can go to God about it, and there we will find, not an angry face of judgment, but mercy, grace, and the help we need.

Peace with God, and access to God are two tremendous blessings we have because of our salvation in Christ.

#### **IV. What We Do**

Because that is true, now, as Christians, there are some things we get to do. First, we are able to *stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. The hope referred to in verse 2 is not the same as we often use today. We often hope something will happen but without any assurance it will happen. But the hope referred to here is a confident expectation. We know, based upon the promise of God that it will happen.

The glory of God mentioned here by Paul is the presence of God, and that's what makes our standing so exciting. In Christ we have a place in God's presence! Not everyone can stand in the presence of God. Psalm 1:5 says the ungodly shall not stand, but **we** already do. This is such an unbelievable privilege it is unthinkable that we can be in such a position without rejoicing. I like what the psalm writer says in Psalm 84:10, "*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*"

There is no greater place to stand than in the presence of God!

In verse 3, the Apostle Paul adds something that might be surprising. Not only do we stand in God's presence rejoicing, but being in Christ enables us to stand in tribulation rejoicing. There was a time when I struggled to believe that, but I have now gone through enough difficulties as a Christian to know that when we stand in difficulties we do not stand alone. God is in the midst of them as well. Romans 8, James 1, 1 Peter 1, 1 Corinthians 10, and Philippians 1 all agree that when we go through trials and tribulation, God is there, we are not

alone, and He promises to work in the difficulty for our good.

According to any dictionary, a crisis is a turning point for good or bad. For the Christian, God is there to insure the good. As it says in verses 3 and 4, His involvement provides: the ability to endure, character, and hope.

## **V. What We Shall Be**

There's one more effect of salvation I want to draw your attention to, it concerns what we shall be. Look again at verses 9-10...

*"Saved by His life"* refers to the resurrection life of Christ and the work He is doing in us from now until He comes again. He is saving us right now, setting us apart from the world, conforming us to His image, interceding for us, infusing us with His power, and keeping us with His power, so that, according to 1 Peter 1, we will be ready when He comes, and be saved from His wrath.

If you truly know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior you will never have to hear those terrifying words, *"Depart from Me, I never knew you."* The possibility of eternal life with God instead of eternal damnation alone makes salvation in Christ worth while, but as we have seen in this passage there's so much more isn't there? We are made right with God, we have a loving relationship with Him, we have peace with Him, access to Him, and a standing with Him. And these things only skim the surface because there is still so much more the Scriptures speak of.

Does the salvation, which God offers in Christ, have anything in it for us? Well I hope you have seen in this passage it has everything to do with us. It affects our lives positively in every way!

So, if you have never received Jesus Christ as your Savior, why in the world wouldn't you want to? And, why don't you do so right now!

A

B

C

If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, be encouraged with what you have. Live it and share it with others!