

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Third Sunday After Trinity, June 21, 2015**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)  
Hymns: 375, 372:1, 389, 373:1-5, 391.  
Lessons: Isaiah 9:6-7, Romans 8:15-28. John 20:18-26.  
Sermon Text: Romans 5:1-5.  
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Paul's letter to the Romans up until this fifth chapter contains about two and a half chapters detailing the sinfulness, the unrighteousness of all people. In the middle of the third chapter Paul begins speaking in great detail of the forgiveness of sins and the righteousness, the perfection of God that is imputed to all mankind by justification because of his love for mankind.

Those chapters may be summarized by these words from Romans 3: ***"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*** (Romans 3:23-24 NIV)

Today we begin a chapter that talks about the way that

**"WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST"**

- 1. This peace comes through Justification.**
- 2. This Justification comes from Christ and gives us access to God's grace.**
- 3. As a result of this we can rejoice!**

Look at what we have and have received as a free gift with no strings attached!

We have received God's justification through faith. Paul has spent many verses telling us about this so far in Romans. He started right in chapter one, before cataloging all the wickedness of mankind by saying ***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."*** (Romans 1:16 KJV)

Then in chapter four, starting with Abraham, hero and father of the Jews, he tells us ***"What does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.'" (Romans 4:3 NIV)*** Paul spent the 25 verses of chapter four telling how Abraham was justified by faith, not by doing what the Law of God demands. In fact, as you heard in the first words of this sermon, all mankind has been ***"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*** (Romans 3:24 NIV)

And because we have been justified by faith and believe that, we have peace with God. Do you remember what Justification is and means?

Justification is God declaring us "Not Guilty" in capital letters. The very word itself is the picture of a judge, the righteous judge, the true God banging the gavel, giving us full pardon for our sins and assuring us and all mankind that their sins were paid for by Jesus Christ. And that fact, that assurance is the sure hope and the certain possession of all mankind as their very own, if only they will believe it.

So if we have peace with God, what about all the wars and fighting on earth? God makes it clear that we have peace with him. This is described by Paul in Philippians as ***"the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."*** (Philippians 4:7 KJV) Any peace among men must flow out of the peace that an individual has with God. Unfortunately, even Jesus himself told us ***"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."*** (Mark 13:7 NIV)

So what about the peace that our sermon text speaks of? This peace is not just a feel-good kind of emotion in the heart of the believer. This peace is real and it exists apart from the believer because it is a peace that comes from God. He created and provided it, for it is a peace that comes ***“through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

The sinner can do nothing to create that peace. If we look to the verses for our next sermon, we see that we were ***“powerless”*** and ***“ungodly”*** (Romans 5:6), ***“sinners”*** (Romans 5:8), ***“God’s enemies”*** (Romans 5:10). Our situation was hopeless, but God reconciled us ***“through the death of his Son”*** (Romans 5:10). The reason we now have peace is because of God’s having brought about a reconciliation. God’s power sent his only-begotten Son to reconcile God and man. In words from next Sunday’s sermon, we are told unmistakably that ***“when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son.”*** (Romans 5:10 NIV) This power is real. It is there for the sinner to accept by faith. God is now not angry with us. Our sins no longer separate us from God. In fact, in his love, God has adopted us as his children and so we have peace with God.

In addition to the great gift of peace with God, there is another blessing springing from the sinner’s justification, and that is ***“access”*** to God. The believer is free to come to God’s throne of grace with any and every petition. Paul points out that all of this is possible by our connection with Christ, ***“through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.”***

Instead of hostility or fear and anxiety, there is now a tranquil peace in the life of the believer, marked by continual, unhampered access to God.

But that’s just the beginning. There’s more: a glorious hope for the future. Paul continues, ***“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”*** What we have now is just a tiny foretaste of the unspeakably greater joy of sharing in the glories of heaven and of God himself.

Let’s compare hoping for something with the accomplishment, with receiving what you have been hoping for. Think of how happy you are when you receive something you’ve wanted for a long time. Think of how happy you are when you accomplish a difficult task.

But Paul tells us that the Christian rejoices in hope. We rejoice in hope.

Does that happen much in your life? Rejoice in the hope of something? I don’t think so. We – perhaps because of our sinful flesh wanting things – don’t rejoice in merely wanting something.

But the hope that Jesus Christ gives us is different. It is hope in a sure thing – unless we “blow it” through unbelief and rejection.

We are rejoicing, we are happy ***“in the hope of the glory of God.”***

People in Rome may have seen the glory of the Roman Empire, or even the glory of Caesar himself, as he traveled through the streets of Rome, much as we might see – or more likely – see pictures of the motorcade of the president.

They – and we – could see earthly glory. But it does not last. Everyone must die. Gold decays and every earthly treasure does not last. Jesus himself told us ***“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.”*** (Matthew 6:19 NIV)

Paul speaking from God here by inspiration is talking about hope of a treasure far greater than anything on earth. Paul is writing about the hope that the believer in Christ has ***“in the hope of the glory of God.”*** The glory of God is something so great and so grand that we really have difficulty imagining it. Places in the Bible try to describe God’s glory. We have pictures from Mount Sinai and from God’s appearance in Solomon’s temple. We have descriptions of God’s glory in the Psalms. We have pictures from the book of Revelation. But rest assured that God’s glory is grand and we will share in that glory in heaven!

We often think of eternal life as something we will enjoy after we die and leave this earth. But doesn’t the hope of that glory in heaven give us joy even now? Oh sure, we have pains and troubles. We have illnesses and aches and terrible things happen to us and our loved ones even now on earth.

But what would life be without this hope, this sure hope? Later in this letter to the Roman Christians Paul said ***“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”*** (Romans 8:18 NIV)

All creation groans because of sin, waiting for the redemption of the believers on the last day. Romans also assures us ***“We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for***

*what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" (Romans 8:23-28 NIV)

And how does this all come about? Do we do it? Do we accomplish it? No. It is Justification. God has done it. Remember that justification is God declaring us "Not Guilty" and that fact, that assurance is the sure hope and the certain possession of all mankind. It is their very own, if only they will believe it.

With that verdict standing behind us and assuring us, we have hope. We have been set free and get to walk out of the prison of sin, death, and the power of the devil, not with a cardboard suitcase or a plastic bag for our possessions and \$2.00 or nothing in our pocket, but we walk out of the prison of sin, death, and the power of the devil with the assurance of a grand and glorious eternity.

That is what justification means. ***"We have been justified through faith."*** Justification is ours merely because of believing it. And God the Holy Ghost even gives us the faith!

As a result of this, we can ***"also rejoice in our sufferings."*** Think about how hard it is to rejoice in sufferings. When we are suffering, we are hurting. We are not happy. We may be angry. We may even want to curse. We may even want to curse God for permitting this to come upon us.

But we can ***"rejoice in our sufferings"*** because suffering is not the end of it. Listen to what God tells you: ***"we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."***

When we suffer, we have a couple of choices. We can give up. Or we can persevere. I think you know you can't persevere by yourself, you can't endure by yourself. God gives us strength.

Suffering, with God on our side and working for us, produces perseverance. We endure. We 'put up with' suffering even if it is only for a time. Perseverance produces or creates or works character. Character produces or creates or works hope.

So we come full circle back to hope. But sometimes it takes a long time or a long way to get there. The Word of God reminds us that ***"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."*** (Acts 14:22 NIV) But we can continue to hope in the sure glory of God because we know it will be ours in all its completeness.

***"Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."*** Think of how God poured out his love into your heart.

Not just spiritually, but materially, in earthly ways. Christian friends, who become and are your Christian family. A roof over your head. Food and clothing. People who care and share. Fellow Christians who pray for you. Oh yes, we may not have every earthly thing we want. You may have been the last family on the block to get a DVD player or cell phone. But God has provided you with what he wants you to have – in an earthly sense. He takes care of you.

But, because you are gathered in church, and in church the preacher should always talk about spiritual blessings, we can't forget those things such as God's love. This is shown to us by the Holy Spirit, who gives us faith. God's love forgives our sins, all of them. We don't have to pay for them ourselves. God's love gives us the hope of heaven, and not only that, God's love gives us heaven.

Next week we'll talk a little about how God did all this for us through Christ dying. But until then, remember ***"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** Be at peace with God. Know your sins are forgiven and you have the hope, and not just the "hope" but the assurance of heaven through Jesus Christ. May that be your joy this week. Amen.