

We Have Peace With God

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're looking this evening again at Romans chapter 5, and the first verse of the chapter, we began looking at it this morning. We looked at the first part this morning, therefore since we have been justified by faith.

And we took some note of those things that involve justification, and particularly how justification is the attributing of righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, onto our account so that we are seen and regarded by God in his righteousness as fully accepted in God's sight.

And we saw how that was related to various things such as forgiveness of sin and faith and also the grace of God from which this benefit and blessing flows.

So now we're looking at the other part of the verse, the second half of the verse, which of course is very closely connected. Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we're looking not only at what is involved in that peace with God that's mentioned there, but how it is actually related as well to being justified, to having this justification, and therefore it's connected with this peace with God.

[1 : 3 0] So let's look first of all at what this peace of God is. What is this peace of God that is mentioned here in the verse? We saw this morning looking at justification, that in order to understand justification and what it is, you have to begin at condemnation.

You have to begin with what Paul deals with, the early part of Romans there, the condemnation that marks us as sinners prior to justification, because of our sin and as the effect of our rebellion against God.

God holds us in his condemnation under his wrath as these early chapters of Romans show. So we begin to understand justification by first of all looking at condemnation and then working towards what the Bible tells us is justification involving forgiveness of sin.

Now for peace with God, you have to begin with alienation or separation. Because our sin hasn't just brought us under condemnation in the eyes of God, our sin has actually brought us alienation from him.

A separation from God and from God as the source of life for us. But it's not just a neutral kind of separation, because again in Romans and elsewhere, Paul tells us very clearly that this separation or alienation actually involves enmity.

[3 : 0 7] It involves hostility and it's an enmity and a hostility not just from our side towards God. It's a hostility and enmity from God towards us as well.

God has a hostility toward us. And that hostility has to be dealt with and is dealt with as God deals with it through the death of Christ.

And as he deals with it, he removes that hostility. And that's in fact what you come to in the Bible to read of as reconciliation.

And you can see in verses 10 and 11 of this chapter here in Romans that that's exactly what he's saying. If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Reconciliation.

[4 : 11] The peace that God has produced through the death of Christ, we receive for Christ's sake. We receive that reconciliation along with our justification.

It's a separate, different, distinct concept. You mustn't think of it as exactly the same as being justified. Because it has its own background, as we said, in alienation, in separation, in hostility, in enmity.

And reconciliation is putting an end to that. Whereas justification has as its background our condemnation and the wrath of God.

And our sin against him is done away with in his forgiveness. And he gives us the righteousness of Christ. We have that attributed to us.

So that peace with God that's mentioned here is actually not, perhaps we think of this when we read of it, as the peace that you feel in your heart. And that's not primarily what it means.

[5 : 18] It's not peace in feelings of peace or a sense of peace in your heart. It's actually just the removal of this enmity that's a big barrier and a block between us and God.

It's not something that takes place first and foremost in your heart. It is when you receive this peace. It is when you reach out by the same faith by which you are justified and receive Christ and receive the peace that's in him.

But first and foremost, it is a peace that is set by the death of Christ as a peace in him that's offered to us in the gospel.

It's that removal of enmity, that removal of hostility is now actually gone. But you remember this morning that we saw that justification is not just the removal of this record of sin that is against us and it's stamped by condemnation on God's part.

It's not just that he removes that, he replaces that. He replaces that with his acceptance, with the righteousness of Christ. And it's the same thing with regard to our alienation and this hostility and this enmity.

[6 : 34] It isn't just that God takes that away and deals with it and it's gone. He actually replaces it with friendship. With friendship being on the best of terms with God.

And that's really what God has in view with this reconciliation. It's not first and foremost a subjective thing. It's not something that he begins in your heart.

It's something that has to begin elsewhere before you can then come to receive it. And that's what he's telling us now. Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has set up justification and reconciliation for us in the person of Christ, in his death particularly. But now then you see, as you need to take this Christ by faith in order to be justified personally on personal terms.

So also with this reconciliation, with this peace. It exists in Christ for us. We tried to illustrate that this morning with justification by using the illustration of a building or a room that has all the electricity already set in it and everything's in place and the power is actually there and the main fuses are in.

[7 : 56] But you need a switch in the wall and you need to press the switch and you need to turn it on for all of that light to come on. And it's the same with regard to this peace of God as well.

God has brought about this peace. God has this reconciliation for us. It exists in Jesus Christ. It's there in his person. He has achieved it for us.

He has actually stood between us and God. He has taken our sin to himself. And in taking it to himself, he has dealt with this problem, with this alienation, with this separation, with this hostility, with this enmity.

And God is now saying to us effectively, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5, I have this peace for sinners. And when you believe in Christ, the peace that exists in him, this peace with God, it actually becomes yours personally.

You receive it as you receive Jesus himself. So that that peace that you experience inwardly. The peace from knowing that your sin has been covered.

[9 : 07] The peace from actually having God's enmity and your enmity dealt with. So that there is no longer the barrier between you that once existed. The peace that comes from knowing that is the peace that accompanies your receiving of justification, of forgiveness, of acceptance with God.

And there tonight is the first question for us. Do I know this peace for myself? Have I come into the possession of this peace?

Is there really peace between me and God on a personal level? You see, it's not the same as knowing that there is forgiveness with God. Or that there is peace with God. That he has brought about reconciliation.

Or knowing that all of this has come about through the cross of Christ, through the death of Christ. It's a great thing to know that. It's a great advantage to know that.

We should thank God that we are in a position where we know that. Where we know it from having his word read and proclaimed. But it's this important switching on of the power, isn't it?

[10 : 20] That's really what makes it personal. And you remember this morning that we noted from the way the confession of faith describes what faith itself is.

While it involves believing things to be true that are not seen just because they are actually spoken about and written in the word of God. You believe things that you cannot see with your eyes.

Contrary to somebody who doesn't have this faith. Nevertheless, the primary action of faith is accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ for salvation.

And it's the same faith by which you are justified that actually operates too in coming to know this peace of God.

As you believe in Christ. As you accept and receive and rest upon him. So the peace that's in him comes into your life.

[11 : 28] You're making living contact with God's reconciliation. You're saying of it. I accept these terms wholeheartedly that God has set out for my peace.

And as I accept them in Christ, I enjoy them in Christ. I rejoice in them in Christ.

That's this peace with God on these two levels. Ending with our personal enjoyment of it. From what God has provided in this peace that we have in Christ.

But then there's peace along with justification. How are these actually related? Well, they're related not so much that justification comes first.

And then our reconciliation or our enjoyment of peace comes second. Or as a fruit of that. There's a sense in which that's true. Because logically, being accounted righteous is something that precedes our being in peace with God.

[12 : 39] But in actual fact, they're really pretty much side by side. Where the one exists, the other exists. Where you have justification, you have reconciliation along with it.

And in fact, you don't have anything like this wherever you find in the ordinary sense in this world. Somebody that's accused. Let's think of an illustration, first of all, from what happens in a court case.

Which really is pretty much the background to what Paul's language is in terms of our justification. We are accused. And we are accused rightly. And we are condemned by God.

And we stand in the dock before him. And God then takes our sentence of death. And he puts it onto Christ's record.

And he takes it. And he's made sin for us. And he comes to be condemned. And as Paul says in Galatians, he's made a curse. Because God has taken the sin of his people and placed it upon him.

[13 : 38] And he bears the penalty of it. And that's why he died. The death he died. It is the penalty of sin. The sin of his people. But then you see, where the judge then says, I don't find you guilty anymore.

In fact, I find you righteous. And you can think of that sometimes, perhaps, in the ordinary sense, you will find a judge saying, you're not guilty. You're free to go.

But seldom, however, does a judge go so far as to say, not only are you free to go and guiltless of this matter, but I know you now to be positively righteous.

He might still be a rogue in many senses, even though he's found not guilty of that particular issue. He may not be righteous in every aspect of his life, but the person who's justified is.

In terms of God's standard, he meets that standard, she meets that standard in Christ by faith. And God says of them, not only is your record gone, but the record that now exists is one where you're righteous.

[14 : 50] But then you see, just think of that illustration a bit further. In the ordinary sense, a person that's not guilty, or guilty as the case might be, doesn't have a personal relationship with the judge who's presiding over the case.

It doesn't really make much of a difference to the life of that judge, as long as he's kept to the proper rules of justice, and fairness, and equity. It doesn't make much difference to his life, whether that person is found guilty or not guilty.

He's going to answer for his crime, or else he's going to be set free as not guilty. It doesn't really leave any difference or a mark in the life of the judge at all.

The judge doesn't come along and say, now that I've found you guilty, I want to be your best friend. But God does. And that's where the two things exist side by side.

Not only does God say of those who are justified that they're not guilty, and in fact they're positively righteous, but he at the same time says, now I am your best friend, where I once was your enemy.

[16 : 04] Now you're in a personal relationship with me, where you are on friendly terms with me, where you enjoy peace, on your side of our relationship, and where I, for my part, God is saying, I'm on best terms with you also.

That's how the two things, or something similar to how the two things, actually exist side by side. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.

Since we've become, or now that we have been justified, now that we are accounted righteous, we also enjoy friendly terms with God, instead of the enmity and the hostility that we had as lost sinners before we were justified, and reconciled.

And that too is such an important thing. Here is why the gospel, in the proclamation of the gospel, includes both of these things for us. We are constantly, by God, being called to believe.

To believe, with this believing, in which we are, by which we accept, and receive, and rest upon Christ for our salvation.

[17 : 27] But along with that, you also have this call from God through the gospel, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5.

We beseech you, he said, as an ambassador of Christ, as a representative of Christ, which those who preach the gospel are. That's not taking to themselves a position whereby they can arrogantly think of themselves as above others, or in any way superior to others.

In fact, it's the other way about. As Paul says to the Corinthians, we are your servants for Jesus' sake. That's our position. But we are ambassadors for Christ.

In other words, the King has sent us to represent Him. and in representing Him, He has given us this emphasis in preaching the gospel.

We beseech you, be reconciled to God. Accept on God's terms the peace that He has created through the death of Christ.

[18 : 36] Have you done that? Are you not yet on friendly terms with God? Is it your daily privilege to have God as your friend in the ins and outs of life?

Is it something that you're conscious of as you wake up in the morning? That above all your privileges, you have this great God as your friend? Is it something you ought to rest with at night so that you can rest securely that whatever happens through the night, because God is your friend, everything is bound ultimately to be alright with you.

That's why it's so crucial to believe in Christ, to accept Him, to receive Him into your heart, to open your arms to Him and say, welcome, I want to be on friendly terms with God.

That's the desire of your heart, I know it is. And this is the way to it. And this is the only way to it. To believe in Christ. Being justified by faith.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. So, that inner peace in our soul as well as this justification, it sits alongside of our justification.

[20 : 03] It is something that begins in God's creation of it in Christ through His death, but now we come to receive it, it's enjoyed in our hearts. It's an inner peace based on that outer peace that He's created.

But there's something here that we need to be more detailed about because one of the faculties, if you like, of our souls, one of the parts or the components of our soul, we find this is rather difficult for us really to put together, isn't it, how the various parts of our souls work together.

You know that you have your mind or understanding, you have your emotions or feelings, you have your will and you also have your conscience.

And it's your conscience, especially in your soul, that makes a pronouncement as to your relationship with God. The information that comes through your mind comes through to your conscience.

And your conscience, while it is, of course, also affected by sin, nevertheless, it brings out a verdict. And the verdict is either guilty or not guilty, guilty or accepted with God.

[21 : 22] Now, if you go to Hebrews and chapter 9 and verses 9 and 14, just for a moment, you can read there as follows in regard to the conscience and how it relates to the blood or the death of Christ.

Remember in Hebrews 9 that the writer is contrasting how the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament could not themselves actually touch the conscience so as to give you a good conscience, a conscience at rest.

And in chapter 9, verse 9, he says about that that these things were symbolic for the present age according to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper.

And then in verse 14 of the same chapter, how much more in contrast to that will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

And then if you turn to chapter 10 and verse 22, you have another reference there to it where on the basis of having this great high priest we draw near to God.

[22 : 44] And he says, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience. You see how the conscience is really so central to our relationship with God.

And how in being justified and having peace with God, our conscience itself pronounces that. you come to have it registered in your conscience.

Think of what happens in many cases where people need to have a burglar alarm installed in their homes. Different kinds of burglar alarms I know, but the kind of burglar alarm where you've got sensors in different rooms in the house and when you switch on the burglar alarm when you go out and the house is empty, if there's any movement within these rooms, the sensor picks up the movement and it sets off the alarm.

You know how that works. Well, you might say that your conscience is God's sensor in your soul that picks up the movement of sin in order to actually pronounce guilt.

Wherever sin is detected and the conscience detects your sin, it pronounces, it sets off the alarm, it pronounces guilty, it makes you feel guilty because you know that what you've done or not done is not acceptable to God.

[24 : 18] But then it goes the other way as well. When Christ actually comes into your possession, it's Christ that the sensor picks up and the sensor of your conscience when it picks up the righteousness of Christ.

Even though as we said this morning you're still conscious of actually sinning against God in practice, yet you come back to this foundational thing of your justification and the forgiveness of all your sins and your justification.

And now having peace with God along with that, when the sensor picks up that movement of Jesus as he exists in your life, instead of setting off the alarm and pronouncing you guilty, it actually switches on a different kind of conclusion, that you actually are accepted with God, that you're a child of God, that God is your father, that you have peace with him, that a relationship of peace exists between you, and your conscience pronounces that, and you enjoy that peace, because your conscience has come to be stilled and at rest.

Paul calls it an evil conscience, the writer to the Hebrews called it a dead conscience, that's the conscience of the person in their sins, that's the conscience of a person not justified, not at peace with God, but that conscience, through what Christ has done, through that being applied, through that being received by faith, that conscience comes, as Hebrews says, to be purged, to be cleansed, to be renewed, because what happens in your rebirth, and you're being born again, and you're becoming to be a new creation, as 2 Corinthians 5 put it, if anybody is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are passed away, the things as they used to be in our relationship with God, they're all away, God has dealt with them, behold, everything is made new, it's a bit like the picture you have of it when Noah came out of the ark, he came out into a new world, a world purged by God, a world where a new beginning was set in motion by Noah and those who came out of the ark, through God's protective care of them, the old world had vanished,

God had destroyed, as far as it was at that time, the wickedness that drew his judgment, that's what happens in a person's life too, in a miniature of that, God comes into your life, he justifies you, he gives you peace with himself, and in that, your old world is destroyed, your old world is gone, your past is no longer a problem to you, your conscience pronounces you that you're a new creation, that everything has become new, that God is your friend, so there's peace with God, and that peace with God sits alongside of our justification, and that peace with God is also peace in our hearts which we draw from our new relationship with God, and it is finally peace through our

[28 : 05] Lord Jesus Christ, now why does he add that, what exactly does he mean that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, because it's the peace especially that he connects with through our Lord Jesus Christ, well it means particularly whatever else it means, it certainly means this, that the peace that has been created for us and that we enjoy through faith in Christ, it's not simply that that peace was created for us through Christ or by Christ's death, it also includes the fact that our ongoing enjoyment of it is through Christ, because Christ is not inactive, Christ died, he rose again, he ascended to heaven, he's glorified at God's right hand, but he's not sitting there inactive, he's ministering, and he's ministering to his people in this world, and he's ministering this peace to their souls, and he's ministering through his

Holy Spirit, our enjoyment of this peace is through his continued activity, through the intercession that he makes for us at God's right hand, where he presents himself and himself as a propitiation for us in his blood, God.

You have that peace established through Christ, but you have it also enjoyed ongoing through Christ. As long as Christ lives, you will enjoy this peace, and that means you'll enjoy it forever, because Christ will never die again, and as he will never die again, and as his ongoing life on behalf of God's people exists at God's right hand, so you even in this world will go on enjoying this peace.

And of course, it never stops at that, it doesn't stop at that, and as it continues through his activity to be enjoyed by his people now, so it is because of Christ and through Christ that this peace will be ministered to them and enjoyed through all eternity.

There are many things about heaven that are precious to us in our thought of it, but this is one of them, that heaven is God's perfect peace.

[30 : 41] That's why the descriptions in the Bible are so often in the negative. Heaven is described, difficult as it is for us to conceive of here even, but heaven is described as a place where certain things do not exist.

There shall be no more death, no more mourning, no crying, no anything to do with hurt. It will all be gone because it will all be perfect peace instead of the hostility that you've had in this life.

And the hostility, although it's now gone, yet you still have things which mean you're not at peace. and conditions and circumstances and providence where life is difficult, where sometimes you can't sleep and you don't have rest.

But God has dealt with all of that so that in the eternity of his people all of that will be gone. what an amazing thing faith is.

It puts you in touch with all of that. It makes the connection with Jesus Christ and so with righteousness in which you are justified, with peace in which you are reconciled, in the prospect of eternity, with no sin, with no guilt, with no presence of sin, with no enmity, with no pain, everything of that, you come into the possession of it through faith.

[32 : 30] Faith in Christ. In the late 1800s in America lived a man called Horatio, Spafford.

He was a lawyer. And in 1871 in Chicago, he had invested heavily in property in the city of Chicago. And there was a great fire in the city of Chicago in 1871.

And Spafford lost virtually everything through the investments in these properties that had been burnt to the ground. happened. And then following that there was a great economic downturn so that recovery from that became impossible for him in 1873.

That's just two years after the great fire. So he planned to travel to Europe with his wife, Anna, and his four daughters. And he planned to leave on a ship called the SS Ville du Havre.

But he was kept back through a development in work relating to some sort of rebuilding after the great fire. And he had gotten involved in trying to help with some of the work involved in that.

[33 : 47] So he had to remain behind and he sent his wife and the four daughters. They had four daughters. He sent them off on the SS Ville du Havre. And in crossing the Atlantic, that ship collided with another ship called the Loch Erne and it sank very rapidly.

And all the four daughters were lost. His wife survived and she sent him a telegram which came to be a famous telegram.

It just had two words on it. A telegram back to her husband in America. Saved alone. And Spafford then decided that he would travel across the Atlantic to go to meet his grieving wife to be with her.

And as his ship passed nearby where his daughters had died, he went to his cabin and he wrote these words. when peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blessed assurance control that Christ has regarded my helpless estate and hath shed his own blood for my soul.

[35 : 22] My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh, my soul. May you and I also learn learn the reality of these great worlds.

Let's pray. Lord, oh, God, we thank you for the peace that your people enjoy, that you have created it so that they might indeed enjoy it.

We thank you that you paid such a great price for it, that you laid down your life on the cross, that we might have that peace. We bless you, oh, Lord, that you sent your son into that terrible world of condemnation, that you sent him to bear your anger and your wrath, our sin and its penalty.

We thank you, oh, Lord, that he entered that darkness of alienation, of separation from God on behalf of his people. We thank you that he has emerged victorious, and that we now come through faith to enjoy that justification and that reconciliation through him.

[36 : 58] We bless you the way that that follows us into all the circumstances of life, so that you teach us also at times though difficult, nevertheless to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Lord, bless us we pray now and pity us, shine on us with your face, and all that we offer to you we pray in Jesus name, Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.