**ROMANS 5:1-11 Peace that results in Joy 14th Sept 2025**

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For 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 reconciliation. (Rom 5:1-11)*

As part of the South Rd. project Richmond Baptist Church building was compulsorily acquired and listed for demolition. However, when the demolition contractor came to the old Church building he refused! Point blank, despite no religious convictions, he would not bulldoze it! My guess is, he was terrified of God. Despite not ever thinking about Him, nor necessarily believing in Him, he wouldn’t, couldn’t take the chance! Perhaps fearing – “Who knows what may happen to me if I did!” As a result another contractor had to be brought in! The building has now gone and as far as I know the contractor is still alive! We may smile at this. But my guess is, that for many, possibly even you, somewhere deep within – we fear God. Not in the Bible sense of “in awe of God”. But the horror movie “fear”, terror of God. We suspect that if we step out of line, or do something really bad, then God will get us good! Smite us terribly.

Surely you have heard someone half jokingly worry about being struck by lightening if they enter a church building. Or perhaps you have felt it yourself. God is out to get you! Certainly this was a problem for me growing up. It’s what motivated me, every time there was an “altar call”. If there was an opportunity to come to the front, to make a commitment to God – I would be there! Anything to ensure I could escape His punishment.

Mind you, this wasn’t helped by the dominant gospel message we heard. “We are sinful, evil. God is going to punish us. So repent and believe and so escape his punishment and an eternity in Hell!”

Who remembers the movies – “A thief in the night” or “A distant thunder”? Wasn’t this the underlying message? In order to escape God’s just punishment we must accept Jesus. It was Jonathan Edwards, way back in 1741 who used this same approach – to great effect - when he preached a sermon titled “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”.

Now of course there is truth in this! But here Paul seeks to overturn this emphasis. To help us understand that God’s fundamental attitude towards us, despite what some of our songs suggest, or we may feel - is not anger, wrath or judgement – but love, compassion and grace. That while our rebellion of God means we deserve His punishment, His desire and longing for us is not to condemn us

But to restore us

To welcome us

To embrace us with His love.

As Jesus said of himself: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (Joh 3:16-17)*

“Therefore” writes Paul…

Therefore, as a consequence of being saved by God’s Grace through the faith we have put in Him…. “We now have peace with God”.

Here Paul reminds us that Jesus came to reconcile us to God. To fix any enmity or restore the brokenness in our relationship.

Do you remember a time when you were at odds with someone close? Do you remember how uncomfortable, awkward, disconcerting it was, perhaps still is! Didn’t quite know how to engage with them. If you saw them on the street, would you make eye contact, cross and walk on the other side or stop and chat pleasantly pretending nothing was wrong?

Or perhaps it was worse, is worse. Complete breakdown of relationship, animosity and longstanding bitterness. I know of families who are split and never associate. And it’s been like this for generations. So bad, that if a member on one side decides to make connection, be reconciled to one on the other side – they too are shunned!

But our sin and the response of God is not like this. God is not offended at our actions. He is not bitter because of our behaviour. His pride has not been hurt or his honour discredited. This is not the reasons our relationship with Him is disrupted! It was outright rebellion. It was disobedience and our choice to ignore Him, reject Him, live as if He didn’t exist! This is the essence of our sin! We want to be God, to be the ones in charge, to determine what is good and right and pleasing for us to do.

Think of it this way - consider your driving. You refuse to accept that the government should have any say in how you drive. You can drive how you want, where you want, at any speed you want and in any way you want. They have no right to tell you what to do! And so 100km/hr through the back streets is normal, running red lights is a daily occurrence, driving on the wrong side of the road – well why not? Your taxes paid for that side too!

At some stage there will be a consequence - either a nasty accident or a heavy fine, probably a loss of licence and even jail could all be a result! It’s not that the government is offended by your actions, but your actions were wrong. You caused havoc to other road users and broke the law. As a result some form of punishment is appropriate, and it would be wrong for it not to occur. Just imagine how you would feel if this had been someone else and they had caused an accident that killed a friend. Wouldn’t you want justice!? Paul understands that it is our refusal to live according to God’s intention that is the essence of our sin. That requires justice. Which, as we saw in chapters 3 and 4, has now been achieved through Jesus. Therefore he now states: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Or as the CEV puts it: *By faith we have been made acceptable to God. And now, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we live at peace with God.*

That is – that which was once broken – is now fixed. While we deserve the consequences of our rebellion – alienation from God, His judgement and condemnation. Now, because of what Jesus has done and that we have put our faith in Him - We are made right with God. Justified and reconciled. Pardoned and restored.

There is a wonderful story in the OT that illustrates this just so well. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan and grandson of King Saul, born into the royal family, his life was drastically changed due to his grandfather’s disobedience of God and enmity toward the future King David. To make matters worse, both his father and grandfather were killed in battle, and upon hearing of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, Mephibosheth’s nurse tried to flee the retribution that would inevitably follow! However, as she fled with the infant in her arms, she dropped him. As a result, Mephibosheth was crippled and could no longer walk. So now, the only surviving member of the previous oppressors, is now a crippled infant, living as a refugee in Lo-Debar, an isolated and desolate place, in fear for his life. But, he was lucky to be alive!

However, David was a man after God’s own heart. So when at last he became King, he learned of Mephibosheth’s existence and summoned him to the palace! Can you imagine his fear? Convinced he was about to die he is brought into the king’s presence, where David, instead of having him killed as most would anticipate,

Extended to him great kindness

Restored Mephibosheth’s inheritance

Included him into his household as a family member

Giving him honour and dignity, hope and a family.

To put it in Paul’s terms “He was justified”. Given back all that was lost and restored into that to which he was born.

This is what God has done for us through Jesus. Although once we were his enemies now by grace through faith it is now fixed!

We are given a new status.

Restored to our created place as God’s children.

Recipients of God’s kindness

not because we deserved it, but because God is gracious.

This is God’s predisposition to all. He is not angry with us, looking for an opportunity to smite us! But rather as His Son demonstrated He cares for the downtrodden, binds up the broken hearted and reconciles the rejected.

Consider the poor woman caught in the act of adultery, most likely set up as a pawn to trap Jesus by the religious elite the story is found in the beginning of John 8. We know nothing of the man who we assume was also involved; he seems to have escaped scot-free. But she, as an object lesson, is dragged into the town square and thrown at the feet of Jesus. Ashamed, scorned and fearing for her life. After all, despite the injustice of the situation, she knows she deserves death. It’s the penalty the law demands! And Jesus is given the responsibility to fulfil the law and announce the punishment!

But He finds another way. God always finds another way. He, like God, wants no one to perish – all to experience life – as he intended it! And so turns the tables on her accusers!

And the woman is restored: *“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”(Joh 8:10-11)*

You see, God’s dominant predisposition toward us is kindness. It’s mercy. It’s grace.

Think of the blind beggar we read about in Luke 18.

Hearing Jesus is passing by he calls out *“Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!”*

The disciples, assuming, like everybody did,

that this man was blind because he deserved it.

Clearly, a just punishment by God, blind because of something he did…

They tell him to be quiet!

But not Jesus. He stops. He addresses the man. He demonstrates his compassion, kindness and love. And then heals him, restores his sight!

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.  V1*

And this changes everything. For the woman caught in adultery – it not only meant escaping the death penalty, but a restoration of dignity and a reason to turn her life around.

For the blind beggar – we are told: “*Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.” Luke 18.43*

And Paul tells us here that joy, rejoicing, praising God, is a consequence for all of us, because of what Jesus has done.

*And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God… V2*

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our suffering… v3*

*More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ… v11*

And with these three things in mind, I want to finish by suggesting 3 things that you can do to bring you more joy, 3 ways to allow the peace with God that is now ours – to cause us to rejoice.

So let me share 3 Habits to cultivate Joy

1. **Consider all that God has done**

In v2 Paul writes: *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Because of what Jesus has done we have a firm foundation that is rock solid. Something unshakeable upon which we can live our life. To put it another way: Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we are brought into a place of undeserved privilege and favour with God.

All is well with our souls.

In Christ, we are safe from all harm.

The believer’s hope is not wishful thinking but a confident expectation rooted in a historical event in history and firmly anchored upon the assurance that God will fulfill His promises. It is cemented in the character and faithfulness of God. The “glory of God.”

For believers, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God involves an expectation of sharing in the fullness of God’s glory. We have the forward-facing assurance of reaching God’s ultimate purpose for us in Jesus Christ, the anticipation of eternal life, the resurrection of the body and the ultimate redemption of creation. And this is not dependent on circumstances but on the unchanging promises of God. We can rejoice in our secure position with God in Jesus Christ, regardless of what is happening around us.

Therefore, as we reflect on all that God has done in Jesus, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. This transforms our perspectives, priorities, and interactions. It gives us resilience in the face of adversity, cultivates a lifestyle that honours God and an experience of deep and lasting joy.

To know this joy, take the time to consider, to meditate and reflect on all that God has done through Jesus.

1. **Look for meaning**

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. v3-5*

Often our Joy is sapped because what we are doing or going through feels pointless. Has no value. Here Paul reminds us that God is in the business of constantly making us more and more like His Son. And He does that by His Holy Spirit who lives within as we face the struggles of life.

So, if you want more joy, ask: how might the challenges of today help me to become more like Jesus. What opportunities do they give to become more patient, generous or kind?

As you know, I have a back problem that flares up for no apparent reason. For many years when it occurred I would rail against the inconvenience and complain about the pain. Now I choose to see it as a gift.

An unwelcome one and one that is very painful, but it is still a gift.

An opportunity to be reminded that I am loved by God

not because of what I can do, how useful I am or how I can serve.

But because of who He is and who I now am as His child.

It is an opportunity to be reminded that I am not the Messiah.

The world can go on just as well without me.

And it is an opportunity to pray.

To spend time quietly in His presence and rekindle my love for Him

and experience His love for me.

Now none of this is easy. It is a battle and takes effort but it is a gift I now gladly receive. Which helps me find meaning and therefore joy.

1. **Be grateful**

*More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. v11*

I love how Paul starts this last verse. *“More than that.”* With everything else he had been talking about, all the many good things that God has done for us, still there is more.

My guess is that most of us live with a deficit mindset. We spend our time thinking about what we don’t have, what isn’t right, or what could be better. We love to complain, criticise and moan. Not Paul – he was grateful. And he invites us to be grateful too.

In Philippians he puts it this way:  *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.  Php 4:8*

Because if you do: *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Php 4:7)*

So take the time to focus on, be grateful for all that God has done and is doing. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

As a family we have always said grace before meals. Now that my kids are raising their own families, I wondered what that would look like for them. It was a delight when we recently had a meal in one of their homes, they took the time to each share things for which they were grateful.

If you want to have more joy. Practice being grateful. After all there is so much for which we can give thanks to God!

PRAYER

* Gratitude for life
* Gratitude for what God has done through Jesus and the Peace with God that is now ours.
* Prayer for strength, joy and hope as we face life with all its challenges and opportunities.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. What do you think are the major consequences for our world because of our broken relationship with God?
2. When is “fear of God” a good thing? When is it a bad thing?
3. How does God feel about our sin?
   1. What words would you use to describe it?
   2. Is he offended, bitter, disappointed?
   3. How else would you describe the effect of our sin on God?
   4. What effect does it have on us and our relationship with Him?
4. What is the relationship with being “Justified” and having “peace with God”?
   1. Are they the same thing?
   2. How are they different?
5. How does God feel about you?
   1. How do you know?
   2. What difference (if any) does sin or your repentance and faith make to how God feels about you?
6. Paul seems to indicate that we experience Joy because of what God does about our sin.
   1. What reasons does Paul give for this joy?
   2. What other reasons are there? How is this related to the “Glory of God”?
7. Joy is not automatic despite what God has done through Jesus. What are some things you can do this week to be more joyful?
8. Paul begins this section: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* What does this mean for you?