

**Trinity Sunday**  
**June 12, 2022**

**Scripture:** Romans 4: 23 – 5:5

The main theme of Romans is righteousness. Romans is a book of logic and Paul puts forth many arguments. The reading for today is a conclusion of an argument. Paul starts putting forth his facts in chapter 4 and the conclusion of his argument is in chapter 5. To study those beginning verses, we need to see what was being discussed before.

In the lectionary for today the Romans scripture is just Romans 5:1 – 5. This winter I participated in a study of First Peter with a book and video by Jen Wilkins. One of her phrases that stuck with me was, when you see Therefore, you need to ask what the therefore is there for. Romans 5: 1 begins with Therefore. We need to see what it is there for.

In chapter 4, Paul is talking about Abraham, and how he was justified by faith. These verses are talking about how Abraham believed when told that he would have a son, even though both he and Sarah were old. This faith was counted to him, or he was given credit for it, as righteousness, or rightness. But this is also for us who believe in God that raised Jesus from the dead, and we are given credit for it as rightness.

This then brings us to THEREFORE. Or because of this rightness, we are now believing by faith. And because of this rightness we have some benefits. The first one listed is peace with God through Jesus. Not the world peace this is individual peace, we have tranquility of our soul, and nothing in our daily lives should upset us. You notice I said should, there are some days when I listen to the news, or look at my to do list and my commitments, peace is not the first thing that comes to mind. Should it, Yes. In John 14:27 Jesus said “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled” In this world right now that peace of God or peace from God is very hard to come by. Every day, every hour it seems, there is something worse happening. We need to claim that peace that is promised to us by God. Claim it, hold onto it, rest in it. It is one of our many benefits as a Christian.

Peace with God also means that we are no longer guilty; we shouldn't feel that we are persecuted because of our past or present, for lack of a better word, sins. The things that we try to do but know that we could do better. Everything is now alright between our soul and God. We have peace.

Because of our faith we have also obtained access into this grace. Access means prayer. We can come before the throne of God anytime with anything. This is another one of our benefits that we need to claim and use. This spring in the Bible study about women of the Bible, we studied Esther, who literally took her life in her hands to enter into the court of the king. We do not have that fear; we can come and bring anything!! This also leads to our peace as we do not have to carry our burdens alone, we can turn them over to God. Remember my to do list, my shoulders and my brain can only hold so much. God doesn't have that problem. He can handle all of our worries, concerns, and requests. He can handle it all. We don't have to.

We rejoice in the hope of God's glory. This is a sure thing not an iffy thing. The child of God has a blessed hope, we have a future! I know when we listen to the news it is rough, even heart breaking sometimes. But as Christians we know there is a future, we need to individually see what our role is, but we should rejoice in our future and in God's glory. Another benefit.

So, besides rejoicing in God we also should rejoice in sufferings. Who here enjoys suffering, says come on Satan bring it on, I can handle it with God? Any one, anyone!!! Me neither! We should be happy suffering knowing that it produces endurance. No amount of suffering can separate us from the Lord; instead, trials bring us closer to the Lord and make us more like Him. It says in John 16:33, "in this world you will have tribulation". We should accept suffering and use it to grow ourselves and to grow closer to God. In the time that Romans and the epistles were being written, becoming a Christian almost guaranteed suffering. Paul was explaining how it can help the Christian to develop his/her faith. Our suffering is at a different level, not necessarily easier or harder just different because of our times. Is this easy? No! It is harder to see something good coming out of this, but I was also taught and believe that when you are experiencing major suffering, is also when you draw closer to God and grow in your faith, at least in my experience. There are many types of suffering physical,

emotional. Some are easier to see than others, but they are all just as real. Do I enjoy going through any of them? NO!!

When I first wrote this, and I was thinking about this scripture, it was before this latest round of mass shootings. Do I know what to say to those families who have lost a loved one, no, do I know the reason for their loss, no, BUT I do know there is a loving God who is there to hold and comfort them.

This suffering produces endurance, also translated patience. Endurance and patience are good character traits. We need to endure our suffering with patience. Be patient and trust God. We know He will be there on the other side of this trouble. So, suffering produces endurance, and endurance character. When I see the word character all I can think of is Pride and Prejudice, where Elizabeth Bennett is trying to sketch Darcy's character. Character is defined as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. So suffering should improve our collective characters, which is not a bad thing. If we improve our character, it should bring us to being more like Jesus. It strengthens our hope. Our hope does not disappoint, because it is from God. It is real, may not be seen but it is real, it is our faith. So that should give us joy and hope in our troubles. Trouble produces fruit. Reminds me of the fruit of the Spirit Gal 5: 22 & 23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." These are not bad character traits.

Therefore, (I couldn't resist!) Let me recap our benefits that we have through Jesus. We are declared right by our faith, and we have peace with God and in God. We also have free access to God with prayer, and we can rejoice in our lives because even suffering is a benefit that can improve our characters and we have a sure hope in Jesus.

God's love has been made real for us in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit. It has been poured into our hearts. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity Amen

- Candy Iwanicki