



Catalog No. 663

Romans 5:1-11

Tenth Message

Brian Morgan

March 13, 1988

## A NEW HOPE

One of my greatest joys as a parent is giving gifts to my children. I am probably too liberal in that area. One of the gifts Emily and I like to give our children is vacations. I was encouraged to do this by reading Edith Schaeffer's book *What Is a Family?* One of the chapters, "A Family Is a Museum of Memories," talks about creating living memories for your children. Although vacations are costly, require detailed planning and are filled with affliction (especially when you take little ones), they are worth it. We have decided that we are going to invest in them because of the intimacy they promote.

Last year we rented a motor home and travelled to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park. This was my second time driving a motor home. The first time I took it back to its owner in a paper bag. Nevertheless, we had a wonderful trip this time. We experienced adventures such as rafting down the Snake River. We also had surprises. While horseback riding one day, my girls spotted two bull moose no more than 50 feet away. Then we had the joy of watching Jenny catch her first fish. When she flung her line into the river, I think the lure dinged the fish on the head because the hook caught in its eye not its mouth. Anyway, once we pulled it out, it was all of five inches long and weighed but a few ounces, but we proudly ate her fish that night!

We also had affliction. We almost lost our oldest daughter. Walking home after riding horses, Becky and I spotted two paths ten yards apart. I suggested, "You take that one and I'll take this. Let's see who gets home first!" I won, but she never appeared. I retraced our steps and could not find her anywhere. I thought someone had taken my daughter! I went racing through the campground in our 27-foot vehicle looking for any trace of her. We must have looked for an hour and had even called out the rangers and helicopters. As it turned out, she had simply taken a wrong turn and had found her way to the other side of the lake. Once there, someone was kind enough to give her a ride home. Even this frantic moment was worth it because our children will carry these memories for a lifetime.

Think through this scenario. What if this year my children had a committee meeting, approached us when we were planning our next vacation, and said, "Dad, we have decided that the vacations are too costly and risky. Why don't you invest the money instead so that it can make some interest? Then, when you die, we will have it to spend as we please." I would be grieved!

Yet how many of God's children cause grief in God's heart because they merely view salvation as an insurance policy? They think they just sign up and obtain a legal status of forgiveness which guarantees the receipt of assets upon death. While still on earth, they see Christianity as turning a crank to produce religious rituals. For them, there is no surprise, glory, risk, adventure, or joy.

The apostle Paul would be upset to find any Christian in this state, for this is why he wrote Romans 5. He wants Christians to enter into the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to enjoy the

great gifts that begin with our initial forgiveness. The road of life is just opening up for us when we become believers.

As most of you remember, the first four chapters of Romans began as a courtroom drama designed to answer one question: "How can sinful man be declared right before a righteous and holy God?" We went through grueling scenes of cross-examination until all of humanity was found guilty and condemned to judgment under the wrath of God. The good news was that man could be declared right before God through the free gift of grace. Jesus took our condemnation when he died on the cross. Because of his fulfillment of that justice, forgiveness is offered to us as a free gift. Justice has been satisfied, and love has been set free.

In chapter 5, Paul gives us the results of having been justified by faith. The scene now shifts from the courtroom to a palace. Gone are the austere robes of justice, the gavel of judgment and the grueling self-examination. Now we are welcomed into the palace of the King, and we have the new status of sons. Our office is right next door to the King with all of his resources made available to us for living life. The theme of chapters 5 through 8 deals one issue: "How the accused and condemned individual becomes a son destined for glory."

I have divided 5:1-11 into four parts. The first part gives us the three gifts which lead to glory. Then Paul reveals the road to glory. Third, we are told about the assurance of this glory. Finally, we will look at the response in the human heart to this gift of glory.

Let us look first at the gifts of glory revealed in verses 1-2.

### I. Three Gifts to Glory! (5:1-2)

**Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our access by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (NASB)**

The first gift God wants us to open is the gift of peace, shalom. There are two phrases in Scripture used for "peace." There is "peace with God" and "peace of God." One is factual and the other experiential. One is objective and the other subjective. Verse one talks of the objective kind of peace. Since we have accepted God's terms of peace, our war with him is over.

This text also reveals that justification by faith is much more than a legal status! When the accused is acquitted in an ordinary courtroom, he seldom gains a relationship with the judge as a result. In fact, even in the Greek world, "reconciliation" was not considered a religious term because the Greeks never saw a relationship with their gods as a possibility. Thus, this word never appeared in their religious literature.

Paul says we have peace because we are reconciled. As Cranfield says, God "does not confer the status of righteousness upon us without at the same time giving Himself to us in friendship and establishing peace between Himself and us." This is nothing new in terms of

the Biblical view of God. Yet this concept is as amazingly new in our century as it was in the first.

During the plane trip home from Israel while everyone else was asleep, I shared Christ with one of the stewardesses. As we talked, I focused upon this very theme. Having been raised in the Catholic church, she was a religious girl, but her relationship with God consisted of rituals. He was simply to be feared as unapproachable. When I told her about the forgiveness available to her through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, her only response was, "Gee, I could get into that!" She had never heard about this possibility before.

God offers his people a personal relationship because the war is over. But it does not end there. Paul goes on to say that we also have access by faith into the grace in which we stand. This is a permanent arrangement. In the classical literature, this term "access" meant being introduced to someone of a high station. It was used in the Old Testament of being introduced to God so you could stand in his presence. Because God was holy, sinful man could not approach God without a sacrifice, the shedding of blood. There were clear guidelines to be followed, and if a man crossed over these parameters, he would have died!

Now this access and approach into the presence of God is available continually because of the cross of Jesus Christ. His blood was sufficient. Upon his death, the veil in the temple was torn in two, and the Holy of Holies was exposed to all the saints. All the saints are welcomed before God—continually, permanently, daily. We also have access to all of his resources.

I know what this means because I am the son of a doctor. Even though my father was a man of "high station," I knew that I always had bold access into his presence, and I used it quite often. I loved to go to his office when his waiting room was filled with patients. I would boldly march past them into his presence. I was never turned away. Even after I married and moved up here, I could always get through to him on the phone. Being his son means I have continual access to him. We are now sons of God. Having been reconciled, his door is always open to us.

We have peace and we have access to grace. The third gift is that we have the hope of the glory of God. Of all the gifts, this is the one least understood by Christians in our day. Our age is embedded with a deep sense of fear regarding the future. In our politics, we see no candidate who can offer us hope for a new age. Usually, people become idealistic about a new candidate who promises new ideals, but our nation has become cynical. We know that this world is headed for peril and doom. We not only have the nuclear threat, we have rampant drug abuse, AIDS, and pollution. We cannot control our cities, and nations have been taken over by drug barons. There is not much hope in our world.

If we are Christians, we must live in the presence of hope because we are destined for glory. This is certain. What is our hope in the glory of God? "Glory" is an illusive term. The Old Testament idea behind "glory" involved "giving someone or something weight." Something only has weight and substance when it is in accord with truth and reality. Those individuals who live their lives according to truth have moral fiber. When they speak, there is weight behind their words. You can trust them, for you know they are reliable and steady. Above all, God is glorious because his whole being aligns with truth. He does not deviate one iota. There is no sin in his being.

Our hope is his glory, that his moral perfection will be displayed through our lives without imperfection. Do you realize your destiny? When you enter into heaven and graduate from this life, you will be like a diamond which will display the glory of God in his temple. Your life will be a museum of his glory. If our friends could see it now, they would fall down in utter awe. We do not even have the capacity to comprehend this fully, but I am looking forward to that day.

My job involves words; being a pastor, I am constantly speaking. As a result, I must seriously consider the words of Proverbs 10:19: "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable." At the end of each day, I need to confess my sin because I know that I have spoken some words lacking in truth or grace. I am always having to course-correct and to ask for cleansing. I look forward to that day when my speech will be perfect just like Jesus'—full of grace and truth.

Not only will we have perfect speech, we will have gentleness and patience. We will no longer get the urge to yell at someone. We will not be bitter against our bosses. All of that will be gone. Paul says this is not a wish, it is a certain hope. This term "hope" means that it is guaranteed. As we meditate upon and anticipate the heavenly reality, it will strengthen us now. Remember the words of Isaiah 40:31:

**Those who wait [hope] for the LORD  
Will renew their strength;  
They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary.**

We must meditate on this hope. When we do, the life which is to come will impart spiritual life to our souls now.

One of my favorite preachers and one of the best theologians America has ever had was Jonathan Edwards. The Great Awakening began in his little church in Northampton, Connecticut. Listen to what he wrote about his own life of meditation:

Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve and follow Him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

We are to meditate on this wonderful hope to come, for it can transform us now.

These three gifts—peace, grace and hope—cover the totality of life. Peace looks to the past; access to grace sustains us in the present;

hope points us to the future. What more could you want when you are surrounded by God's gifts?

Even though we are to meditate on these things, Paul knows that we must also be able to face reality. It is one thing to meditate on these things; it is another to live them out in reality. Often when we step off into reality, instead of finding a weight of glory, we discover a weight of gloom or pain. Many times I have asked God to lead me into a wonderful day full of his Spirit only to find myself yelling or becoming bitter in the next moment. Then I wonder, "Is this the correct road? I thought I was destined for glory! But all I have found is a weight of pain."

Paul says we are on the correct road. Now he shifts from the gifts of glory to talk about the road that leads to glory. As we will see, this is pain. Look at verses 3-4.

## II. The Road to Glory: Suffering (5:3-4)

**And not only this, but we also exult in our afflictions; knowing that affliction brings about patience; and patience, proven character; and proven character, hope;...**

Because of television and advertising, our senses have become so polluted that we are the most unrealistic generation of all times. Many of us think that somewhere there has to be the "right person," the "perfect job," or the "ideal environment" where life will be smooth. There must be an Eden somewhere. Our belief in this is revealed when we become surprised by affliction. We are shocked when we find out that the person we married is just as selfish as we are or when the wonderful people we interviewed with are not so wonderful. All too soon we discover that our Eden is filled with weeds.

It amazes me to look at the life of Jesus. He was never surprised by affliction except once, and that was because of the intensity of the pain not because of its presence. Jesus was never surprised because he read the Scriptures. He knew that the Servant's Song in Isaiah did not promise him much in this life. Isaiah 50 told him that he would have influence, speak with people and love them. But the next text revealed that he would be rejected, and Isaiah 53 said he would hang on a tree. Jesus did not come to life with high expectations. He did not have any idealistic dreams of what to expect. He knew the road to glory would be difficult.

This is the theme of this message: Life is tough; God is good. Paul says that God has designed life to be like labor pains. You women know there is not much you can do except submit to them and let them do their work. Unimpeded, they will do what they are designed to do—produce a child. In Paul's eyes, life is characterized by "affliction." This term means "weight." Therefore, anything that weighs on our soul is affliction. And this affliction is to create patience.

Have you ever prayed for patience? This is a dangerous request! "Patience" comes from two Greek words which mean "under" and "to remain." In other words, when the pressure comes, Christians are to remain under it. We are not to run or become volatile. We are not to be resentful or manipulative. Often my first prayer is, "God, get me out of this!" or "Remove this affliction!" These are not correct requests. We are to pray for God's help to remain under our affliction so that we might become steady.

Paul also says that when patience is allowed to do its work, it will produce proven character. Having been attested by God, we will receive his seal of approval. I liken this to how metallurgists purify

metal. What does the goldsmith do to purify gold? In a sense, he prays for affliction! He melts the gold over fire. When the metal is heated, all the impurities rise to the surface. When the impurities become visible, the goldsmith skims them off and reheats the gold to eliminate more. He continues this process until he can see his image in the liquid gold. The same is true for us. When we are under affliction, all of our impurities will become evident. When we remain under, proven character is produced, and we reflect the image of our heavenly Father. As Christians, we become realistic people with steady, reliable character.

Paul ends by saying that the proven character produces hope. Remember this was the initial gift given to us. This gift is now cultivated and deepens through experience. God has designed life so that he can use our affliction to produce in us what he has destined us to become. We can see the fruit now. Because we can actually see the process happening in our lives, we are given an experiential ground for assurance.

Now Paul expands this theme of assurance. He knows how difficult it is to ground our hope solely on subjective reality. Fruit ought to be evident in our lives, but this is often a subjective analysis. If we cast our lot with Jesus Christ, how do we know that we will not be put to shame? How do we know that we will not end up like Dan Jansen, our Olympic speed skater who dedicated his life to the pursuit of the gold but in the final race fell? All of his dreams were shattered in seconds. How do we know that we will not fall short of the glory of God? Are there more substantial grounds for our hope than mere fruit? Paul says the answer lies in the deep doctrine of God's love. This love is revealed in two ways—subjectively in our hearts and objectively in history. Look at verse 5 to see the subjective assurance.

## III. The Assurance of Glory: God's Love (5:5-10)

**...and hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (5:5)**

Remember the context is still affliction. When the Christian is put in a wilderness, loses what he thinks he needs for life and cries out for help, God hears. In that moment, what opens up to him is God's love which actually transcends the experience. Paul says this love is given without measure. This term "pour out" is used of two gifts—God's love and the Holy Spirit. Both are given to us without measure. Here our text puts both gifts together to bring home one truth to the heart: God loves us.

Secondly, notice "hearts" is plural. This means that the love of Christ is experienced not only in our individual hearts when under affliction, but demonstrated in the entire body of Christ as people learn to care for one another.

My wife and I have experienced this deep love in recent months. Under the affliction of caring for her father who is dying of cancer and her sister who just died last week, a spiritual reservoir of love has opened up to us, flooding our souls through the body here at Peninsula Bible Church. This love has transcended the suffering in ways we cannot even express. Life is tough, but God is good. He is better than life, and his love transcends reality.

Paul says if this does not help us to understand God's love, that he will complete what he began, then we are to look at history. The argument for objective assurance is presented in verses 6-10:



For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Paul asks us to consider what we were like when Christ died for us. He even reminds us because we might not be so honest with ourselves. First, we were ungodly, which speaks of our attitude of arrogance and indifference. We ruled God out of our thinking. We were also sinners, referring to our actions. We fell short of what God required. Finally, we were enemies. This involved an active moral hatred, not just indifference. We were incorrigible. What a description of mankind—inadequate, indifferent and incorrigible! As John Stott says, we were “failures, rebels, enemies.”

What did God do for us when we were in that state? He died. While we were in the state of hatred, the Father gave us his Son. His grief was so great it blackened the heavens, yet he does not want to rule us with his grief. In fact, he never writes about the grief he experienced as the heavenly Father. Instead, he talks about his love. He died, emptying his bank account and going broke on our behalf. His Son even experienced hell.

This was such a difficult thing for him to do that we humans cannot even think in these terms. We might die for a righteous man or a good man, but we would never die for an enemy. God demonstrated his love by dying for us while we were still his enemies.

If Christ did this while we were enemies, how much more will he do the easier thing? What did his death accomplish? His reconciliation turned the ungodly into godly. It turned the sinner into a saint. It turned the enemy into a friend, even a son. Now that you are a son and friend, do you think he will not complete what he began?

Emily and I adopted a child. When she came into our home, she did not have the Morgan name. She did not have access to all my resources. Although she had no future with us, we brought her in and gave her all of that—our name, our home. She even has her own bedroom. Will I not continue to feed this girl now that she is my daughter? God's love works the same way.

Will we be made ashamed because we cast our lot with Jesus Christ? No! We can be assured of God's love. In fact, he so wanted to communicate to our hearts that he gave us the third person of the Trinity to personally bring his love home to our hearts. And he objectively demonstrates his love in the history of the cross.

In our conclusion, the apostle Paul asks how we should respond to such gifts—peace, grace, and guaranteed glory. Look at verse 11.

#### IV. Our Present Response: Exultation! (5:11)

**And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

What does God want us to do in appreciation for these gifts? If we really take them into our hearts, he wants us to sing. This is what “exult” means. In fact, this word in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word “praise.” This passage is a praise psalm. Of the 150 psalms, fifty are lament psalms filled with grief. Yet every one of those laments, except one, also contains praise and exaltation. The point is that life is tough, but God is always good.

Because he is our praise, he wants us to sing. We are to sing on three levels. We are to exult in the glory of God, to exult in our gifts, and to exult in God himself. But Christians learn to sing when they are subjected to suffering. The first stage of our Christian life is to meditate on the glory of Christ in heaven. That heavenly life should cause us to sing. As we go further along our road and are faced with affliction, we are to exult because as we submit and let go we will begin to possess God.

When life is over, we will have God alone—God plus nothing. Having been emptied of our own resources, we can have him fully. Therefore, we can exult in God who makes it all possible. My prayer is that as we sing we will agree with Paul who says in Philippians 3:8:

**I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.**

© 1988 Peninsula Bible Church Cupertino