Justified by faith (Romans 5:1-2)

Christian Briem · Romans 5:1-2 · November 23, 2025



The doctrine of justification by faith and its glorious consequences is thoroughly explored in the Epistle to the Romans, culminating beautifully in the first section of chapter five.

”Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:1.2).

"Justification" differs significantly from "forgiveness." *Forgiveness* is an act stemming from a person's kindness and goodwill. Although a sin may have been committed against them, they choose not to harbor resentment or remember the wrongdoing. God is a forgiving God. In His goodness, He no longer recalls the sins of His people. As stated in Hebrews 10, ”Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”

In contrast, justification refers to the non-attribution of guilt and liberation from any accusation. While the guilt certainly exists, it is no longer held against the individual. Romans 8, Verses 33 and 34 assure this point: ”Who shall bring a charge against

God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns?" God is the highest court and authority; when He justifies us, who can still accuse or condemn us?

Thus, forgiveness is an expression of goodness, *while justification is* the result of God's righteous judgment. Confident in His forgiveness, I trust in Him. Freed from condemnation through justification, I have no fear of judgment. These two blessings are intimately connected. Since we are corrupt sinners, we need both, though they are not synonymous. The foundation for both is the same: the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God.

We cannot contribute anything to our salvation; God demonstrated His love for us by sending Christ to die for us *while we were still sinners*. What an incredible love! God, fully aware of our sin, sent His only begotten Son to die in our place. We read in Romans 8:32: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32. "Who was delivered up for our transgressions". And also in 1. Peter 2:24: "Who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree". The Lord Jesus took our place in God's judgment, enduring the punishment we deserved for eternity. Can we ever express enough gratitude for this?

God does not allow the debt to be paid twice. Since Christ has borne our judgment, God is not only gracious but also just when He justifies "the one who has faith in Jesus". As the Supreme Judge, if He, who knows everything about us—including our sins and failures—justifies us, who can still blame us? He justifies us not only from specific sins but "from everything," as stated in Acts 13:38-39. How comforting are the words "from everything"! Every believer is justified by Christ from those things "from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." Justification is comprehensive—it occurs once and for all, is perfect, and is eternal because it rests upon the perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Epistle to the Romans presents five significant truths regarding justification:

1. We are justified *by His blood* (Romans 5:9): The blood of Christ is the eternally valid *basis for* our justification.
2. Christ was *raised* for our justification (Romans 4:25): The resurrection of Christ *proves* our justification and confirms that God has accepted His work.

3. We have been justified *by faith* (Romans 5:1): Faith is the *principle* by which we obtain justification. Our own works are not the basis; rather, faith is counted as righteousness.
4. We are justified *freely by His grace* (Romans 3:24): The *source of* our justification is God's grace, not our own merit.
5. It is *God* Himself who justifies us (Romans 8:33): God is the *highest authority* who passes judgment. Who, then, can condemn us?

The first two verses of Romans 5 reveal **three precious results** of our justification. While there are many more results, we will focus on those mentioned in these verses.

The first result is that we have *peace with God.* This peace does not depend on our experiences, feelings, or even our faithfulness. Such foundations would be shaky and would not provide lasting happiness or joy. I cannot rely on my own heart, but I can trust the heart of God. If He has relentlessly punished and judged His own Son for everything I have done—and for everything I am as a sinner—then I can trust Him and believe what He says: that He is for me and has forgiven me all my sins.

My peace does not depend on how deeply I felt or repented of my sins at my conversion or whether I confessed *all of* them (what if I had forgotten even one?). Instead, it is based on the fact that God knows me completely and has pardoned me in Christ.

With infinite grace, Christ offered Himself to God on the cross to demonstrate how He views sin—my sin. God showed this by making Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, as we read in 2. Corinthians 5:21, and dealt with sin as it deserved in His eyes: He judged it (Romans 8:3). Now that all God's righteous demands have been fully satisfied through the death of Christ, the result is perfect peace with God. As the Lord Jesus said, He "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20).

Believers enter into this peace, which has already been established, through faith in His blood. Our consciences can rest happily in the accomplished work of Christ, and God rests with deep satisfaction, resulting in our peace with Him.

This peace with God is the consequence of justification by faith. Everyone who has faith in Jesus and thus knows justification by faith possesses this peace. It is not just a partial peace; true peace is complete and unchanging. Because we have it through our Lord Jesus Christ, it is perfect, eternal, and assured. And what a "lessed truth: we *have* this peace! We are not waiting to receive it; we currently possess it forever, as Christ is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). We have it just like we have "redemption, the forgiveness of sins" in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:14). How God views it is how it is, and it is up to us to hold on "t it in faith and to enjoy it.

Many sincere followers of God struggle to achieve the "right relationship with God," as they say. They often think that they must earn peace of conscience through their devoted lives. They mistakenly believe that *they* need to establish this peace. They fail to recognize the value of Christ's work, which was accomplished entirely apart from their efforts. Instead of focusing on Christ and His finished work, they become preoccupied with their fluctuating emotions, inadequacies, and unfaithfulness, rather than on what He has done for them. Consequently, they do not yet truly understand justification by faith and have not fully submitted to what God accomplished on the cross through His Son for their benefit. As a result, they miss out on enjoying the peace that has already been established for them!

Of course, faithfulness in our walk is important. In our daily lives, the *peace of God* should guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, as we read in Philippians 4:7. The Lord Jesus desires to grant us *His peace* in all circumstances (John 14:27). However, we must distinguish these truths related to the Christian experience from the concept of "peace with God."

Consider this: we may have served the Lord faithfully for many years, working and witnessing for Him. Yet, at the end of such a devoted life, we would have no more peace with God than we did at the very beginning when we first relied on Christ and His work!

"Peace be with you!" These were His words of greeting to His disciples on that first day of the week, the day of His victorious resurrection (John 20:19). *Peace* is the first and lasting fruit of His accomplished work on Calvary for all who believe in Him and

His mission.

The second result of justification is that through faith, we have access to this *grace* in which we stand. Grace means favor and undeserved love. Our position before God has therefore undergone a fundamental change. Before our conversion, the wrath of God rested on us as those who did not believe in the Son (John 3:36). Now, however, we stand in the favor of God as those whom He has "made acceptable in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

Through faith, we have entered into the perfect and unclouded favor of God; we have constant *access to* the "grace of God, that is, to God "in His grace. "For through Him, we both – that is: Jews and Gentiles - have access by *one Spirit* to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). Beloved, this is where we stand, and we will continue to stand for all eternity. What an incredible privilege! We are not under the law; we are in grace—existing in the realm where grace reigns through righteousness, leading to eternal life (Romans 5, verse 21).

Nothing can separate us from the love and grace of God (Romans 8:39), and God always perceives us in terms of grace. May every believer take this to heart! Through grace, we have a perfect standing before God in Christ. We can approach Him with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22). This access and standing in grace cannot be increased by our faithfulness or diminished by our unfaithfulness, simply because it is *grace*. At the end of his first letter, the Apostle Peter also speaks of the "God of all grace" and encourages us, stating, "This is the true grace of God in which you stand.” (1 Peter 5:12).

Justification by faith brings a third result that pertains to the future. While peace with God primarily concerns the *past* and our standing in grace describes our *present* situation, this third blessing relates to something *that lies ahead:* we boast in the hope of the *glory of God*. We are not hoping to be justified, to attain peace with God, or to enter into His favor. Instead, we joyfully hope for the glory of God.

When Scripture refers to the Christian's hope, it does not talk about uncertainty—something that may or may not come to pass. Rather, "hope" signifies what we do not yet see or possess, but what we are assured will be ours. Therefore,

we boast in the hope of the glory of God. While we do not have this glory" yet, "we will surely obtain it. As stated in Romans, chapter 8:24.25: "But hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." How precious it is that we wait with perseverance! God's promise of His glory is so firm and reliable that our inability to see it fulfilled leads us only to one conclusion: We wait patiently, regardless of the challenging circumstances we may face.

The only *entitlement we have* to the glory of God is through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, *the ability to* dwell in God's glory stems from the new divine life we receive through the new birth. Ultimately, God's purpose for us is His glory. As stated in Revelation 21, verse 11, "And she had the glory of God," referring to the assembly of God, “the holy city, Jerusalem."

This is indeed God's purpose for us. He has called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, as we read in 1 Peter 5:10. When the time has come, He will bring us to that glory and clothe us in it. Having justified us through the blood of His Son, there is no place too high that He would not grant us for the glory of His Son. Anything lower than His own glory would, with all reverence, diminish the value of His Son's sacrifice in the eyes of God.

This matter is not about what we deserve—we deserve nothing but judgment. It hinges on the value of Christ's sacrifice in God's eyes, and that is infinite. Thus, what we gain from that sacrifice is of infinite significance and importance. God honors His Son by giving those who believe Christ the greatest and highest glory He can offer—His own glory (not His deity). If He were to offer anything less, it would in some way undermine the value and significance of Christ's perfect work, and God will never do that. It is a wonderful and worshipful grace that has irrevocably linked our eternal destiny with His own eternal glory. If He failed to bring us there, He would bring a stain on the atoning work of His Son and the glory of His grace. Let it be said again: He cannot and will never do that.

An elderly Christian woman was nearing death when someone asked her, "After trusting God for all these years, what if He ultimately does not accept you?" With great effort, she sat up and replied firmly, "Then I would lose much, very much. But He would lose even more: He would lose His character."

Oh, God will never be unfaithful to His character; He will never act contrary to His justice and grace! If He loved us when we were utterly unlovable and brought us into His presence, then no matter what happens, we will remain there for eternity.

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