

Main Idea: In Romans 5:1-5 we see three results of justification that have to do with our standing. We who are in Christ are *standing in grace*.

- I. We have peace (1).
- II. We have access (2a).
- III. We have joy (2b-5).
 - A. It affects our attitude towards our future hope (2b).
 - B. It affects our attitude towards our present trials (3-5).
 1. Trials produce patience.
 2. Patience produces character.
 3. Character produces hope.
 4. Hope produces confidence.

Make It Personal: If I am in Christ I am standing in grace.

1. I need to grow in my understanding of what I have.
2. I need to appropriate what I have.
3. I need to share what I have.

Scripture Reading: Romans 5:1-11

I read this week about a teacher who gave her second grade class an assignment. That night the students were to go outside and count as many stars in the sky as they possibly could. The next day she had each student stand up and tell how many stars they had counted. The numbers varied from child to child: one said 79, another 213,110. Finally one little boy stood up and reported that he counted 10 stars. The teacher was surprised at his answer and asked him how it could be that the number of stars he counted was so much smaller than all the other children? He shrugged his shoulders and said, “Well, I do have a really small backyard.”²

I think I’m like that little boy, I think most of us are like that little boy, when it comes to the subject of God’s grace. God’s grace is amazing—any Christian would say amen to that. But the reality is that it’s far more amazing than we often think. We see ten stars...and miss ten trillion.

That’s what our current series is all about, “Amazing Grace.” We’re looking at some of the great grace-texts in the Bible, like Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Timothy 1:8-10, Titus 2:11-14, and others, nine so far. We’ve learned that we have grace for salvation, praise God for that, but we also have grace for sanctification, and grace for service, and last time grace for suffering.

Today we’re going to look at another cluster of stars and see that God has given us *grace for standing*. The Bible talks a lot about *standing*. And falling, for that matter.

“My brothers, stand firm.” 1 Cor 15:58

“Stand firm in the faith.” 1 Cor 16:13

“Stand firm, with the belt of truth around your waist.” Eph 6:14

You say, “That’s my problem. I’m not sure I can stand. I’m weak.” I have good news for you, my Christian brother and sister. “We have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand,” says Romans 5:2.

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous message on this passage, see the Romans series in the 90s.

² <https://www.graceorning.org/sermons/sermon/2011-06-19/this-grace-in-which-we-stand>

We are standing in grace. That's today's text. What does that mean? We get "standing," but what does it mean to *stand in grace*, and what are the implications? This morning, we're going to gaze at Romans 5:1-5 and see three results connected with standing in grace.

The last word of Romans 4 is the word "justification"—"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." We who know Jesus Christ have been justified. Justification is a great theme in the first chapters of Romans.

-2:13, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

-3:20 "Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

-3:24 "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

-3:28 "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."

-4:5 "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly."

The point is this. If we have believed in Jesus Christ, we have been justified. Justification is the act of God whereby He declares a sinner to be righteous based on the merit of Jesus Christ. Justification is linked to Christ alone. A person is justified by faith in Christ, not by personal achievement or performance. God justifies the ungodly. God declares undeserving people to be right with Him. It's amazing, yet true. If we know Christ, we have been justified by God.

Yet this raises an important question. So what? What difference does justification make in real life? Suppose your neighbor says to you, "I'm not interested in Christianity. It's all pie in the sky, by and by. I want something that will make a practical difference in real life. I'm interested in results."

Can you answer his objection? What are the implications of being justified? Paul gives us a vivid answer in Romans 5, so vivid in fact that British pastor Martin Lloyd-Jones preached 26 sermons on this chapter alone!

I want to narrow the focus to one very powerful implication. It's the one Paul mentions in verse 2, and develops in the first five verses. According to verse 2, we are *standing in grace*, and according to Romans 5:1-5 we have three benefits connected with our standing.

I. We have peace (1).

Verse 1 begins, "Therefore." Chapter five is a pivotal chapter in Romans. Biblical scholars have debated whether chapter five finishes out the section of Rom 1-4, or begins the new section of Rom 6-8. In a sense, it does both. In ch 5, Paul pulls together the truths of chapters 1-4, and says, "Therefore. In light of what I've just said, here is the bottom line. Here are the implications."

Verse 1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice that word "justified." It's actually a participle which summarizes the truth of chapters 1-4. We have been justified. It's an aorist participle which means this event took place in the past. It's a passive participle which indicates someone else justified us, that of course was God.

Here's the first result of justification. People who have been justified have peace. What is peace? Last week I heard about the bloodshed in Sudan and know there is a need

for peace. I hear about the rampant rise of domestic abuse in our country, and know there is a need for peace in homes. But what kind of peace does Paul have in mind? Peace with God.

Here, peace is not something subjective, but an objective state. It's the opposite of "enmity." Notice v 10, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." To say we have peace with God is to say we are no longer enemies of God. We are no longer alienated from God. We are no longer strangers to God.

So this peace is not an emotion I conjure up, or a feeling a drug can induce. Peace is a condition that is the result of my standing with God. The world offers techniques designed to produce peace. Some people turn to a cocktail or a can of beer or a drug in their search for peace. But those are false substitutes for peace. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."

How can we experience the real thing? The text says, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Notice the world offers a counterfeit peace. Jesus offers the real thing. His peace brings tranquility to our soul. He gives us peace with God. He assures us that all is well between us and our Maker.

Warren Wiersbe offers this helpful insight (527), "Condemnation means that God declares us sinners, which is a declaration of war. Justification means that God declares us righteous, which is a declaration of peace."

My friend, the white flag has been raised. I like the way the Phillips version paraphrases Romans 5:1, "Let us grasp the fact that we HAVE peace with God." Beloved, if we have been justified, peace with God is something we have, right now. It belongs to us. It's like money in the bank. Yet likewise, it does us no good until we live in the light of it.

So when we talk about the results of justification, here is the first. Peace. The second result grows out of the first.

II. We have access (2a).

Verse 2, "through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." AV, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand." To have "access" is a beautiful thing.

Several years ago, while taking a class on "Legal Issues" at Grace Seminary in Indiana, we took a field trip to the court house. I drove separately, and by the time I arrived, the group was already inside, in the legal library. I did not know where that was, so I started walking down a hall and came to a sign that read, "General public not permitted beyond this point." That corridor was "off limits" to me. I had no right of "access." Later, however, after I found the group, we walked right past those signs, following the lead of our teacher. He was an attorney.

When the Jews entered the Temple, they encountered a veil that reminded them that the holy presence of God is off limits to unholy people. There was also a wall in the Temple area. If a Gentile went beyond that wall, he could be killed. Access was a big

deal. Yet when Jesus died, He tore the veil (Lk 23:45) and broke down the wall (Eph 2:14)³. Because of Jesus' death, we have access.

The Greek word for "access" is rather illustrative. It's the word used for introducing or ushering someone into the presence of royalty. By faith in Christ, Paul says, we have access to the King of the universe. In later Greek, this word was used for the place where ships would come in, a harbor, a haven (Barclay, 73). Through Christ, the presence of God has become a secure harbor for us.

In one of H. G. Wells' books, there is a story about a man whose life was falling apart. His mind was so strained with anxiety that he was in serious danger of having a complete nervous and mental breakdown. He went to his doctor. His doctor told him the only thing that could save him was to find the peace that fellowship with God can give. The man responded, "What! To think of that, up there, having fellowship with me! I would as soon think of cooling my throat with the milky way or shaking hands with the stars!"⁴

To many people, God is some far off, disinterested "Force" of fate. But not to those who have been justified. We have access. Eph 3:12 says, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Heb 4:16 says we have access to the throne of grace where we can obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We have access to the very presence of God.

But Romans 5:2 is even more specific. To what are we told that we have access? "We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand."

Let's unpack those important words. We have access to *grace*. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Grace is the key to every resource we need in life (II Cor 8:9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He were rich, He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"). Grace is the key to strength (II Tim 2:1 "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"). Grace is the key to growth (II Pt 3:18 "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ)." We could not live without grace (see: Rom 5:15, 17, 20, 21).

I need this reminder often. I have access to grace. And so do you. We are *standing* in grace. What does that mean?

Grace is the sphere of our new existence. What we don't deserve yet desperately need is ours. Grace upon grace, says John 1, coming our way like ocean waves.

James Boice explains, "By the mercy of God we have been brought into the grace of justification, and that is the grace in which we now have the privilege to stand. Before we were standing outside the sphere of God's blessing, as children of wrath. Now we are standing within that sphere as sons and daughters of God. The point is that we have been made secure in Christ, and that forever. We have entered into grace and now stand in grace with an entirely different status than we had before."⁵

And how do we experience this grace in which we stand? Through *faith* in Christ, says our text. We tap into all of God's benefits through faith, meaning we believe what God says, specifically we put our trust in what God says about what His Son did on the cross for us, and why.

³ see Wiersbe, 527

⁴ Barclay, 72

⁵ <http://www.alliancenet.org/tab/standing-in-grace-part-1>

“Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.”

Dear Christian friends, let’s be honest with ourselves. We have access to grace, indeed we are standing in it. Do we believe it, and are we living like it? We have everything we need, God’s unmerited help, that insures we will live with Him forever and can live a life that pleases Him now.

Here’s a third benefit for those who’ve been justified and are standing in grace. We have peace, access, and... *joy*.

III. We have joy (2b-5).

Verse 2, “And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” People who have been justified and are standing in grace have reason to rejoice. We have joy. What does that mean? Our joy affects our attitude in two areas.

A. It affects our attitude towards our future hope (2b).

Verse 2 looks to the future. We "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The "glory of God" is our aspiration, indeed our certain hope. We live with the anticipation that one day we will enjoy the privilege of seeing God and seeing God receive what He deserves, the glory due unto His name. We also live realizing that one day we will benefit from that glory and share in it, being transformed into His likeness.

We read about this in 1 John 3:2-3 (AV). "Beloved, NOW are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this HOPE in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

I like how Warren Wiersbe puts it. Peace with God takes care of the past. Access to God takes care of the present. Our hope in the glory of God takes care of the future.⁶ No wonder we have cause to rejoice! We need not fear the future. We have hope. We can rejoice when we think of what's ahead. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

But until then, what happens? Do we just grit our teeth and endure? No. This joy we possess as we’re standing in grace affects us in a second area as well.

B. It affects our attitude towards our present trials (3-5).

Verses 3-5, “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

So in Christ we have not only a hope for the future, but a help for the present. Specifically, we have a concrete help when it comes to hardship.

I am amazed at Paul's attitude towards suffering. If you'll turn to Colossians 1, you'll notice four incredible truths related to Paul's view of trials and suffering. One, it's a privilege to suffer (24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings"). Two, our suffering often benefits someone else (24, "my sufferings for you"; see also 2 Cor 1:5-6). Three, our suffering identifies us with Christ (24, "and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh"; Christ suffered first. When we suffer, we link with Christ in a special way). Four, God uses our suffering to enhance His program in the Church (24, "for His body's sake, which is the church").

⁶ Wiersbe, 527

According to Paul, we need not fear trials. He certainly didn't. Ponder his aim in life, as shared in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings."

Now, plug all of this into Paul's statement in Romans 5:2-3. He says, "We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. NOT ONLY SO, but we also rejoice in our sufferings." Did you catch that? We can exhibit the same action as we face our present trials as we do anticipating our future hope. We can *rejoice* in both.

Let's not water down this shocking announcement. Paul DIDN'T say, "We tolerate sufferings, or we endure sufferings, or we get by in our sufferings." He said, "We [not just *he*, but *we*, all who are standing in grace] *rejoice* in our sufferings."

How can that be? Notice the next word. "Knowing," says the ESV, in the NIV "because we know." We can have joy in trials because of what we know, four certainties. It's like a chain reaction.

1. *Trials produce patience.*

The word "suffering" (AV "tribulation") in verse 3 is a vivid word. It literally means "pressure," anything that "presses in" on us. Figuratively, it denotes oppression, affliction, even tribulation. It can refer to distress brought on by outwards circumstances. It can also refer to trouble of mind, spirit, and heart (e.g. "anguish").

Beloved, we need not fear trials in life. Not because they will not happen. They will. Even to Christians. Christians lose jobs. Christians endure broken family relationships. Christians lose their health. Yet Christians can "glory in tribulations." Why? Because we know that trials *produce* something. That's the word the NIV uses. So does the ESV. In the AV it's "worketh," a word that means "to bring about, to achieve, to accomplish, to produce" (in Rom 4:13 "the law WORKETH wrath").

What does suffering produce? *Hupomone* is the word Paul used in Greek. "Endurance," says the ESV. In the NIV, "Perseverance." Patient enduring.

A Korean Christian once shared that when he and his friends were under great persecution from the Communists, they would say, "We are like nails; the harder you hit us, the deeper you drive us."⁷ That's *hupomone*. Patient endurance.

So here's where the chain reaction starts. Trials produce patience. You say, "But I don't have the strength to endure." No we don't, not in ourselves. But we are *standing in grace*, in an ocean of God's unmerited favor which makes this endurance possible.

2. *Patience produces character.*

That's what verse 4 says. The ESV and NIV use the word "character." The AV says, "And patience, experience." The word is a common Greek word. It's used of metal which has been passed through the fire so that all the impurities have been removed. Remember what Job said? "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold (23:10)."

We rejoice because we know that our trials produce patience, and patience produces character. Thirdly...

3. *Character produces hope.*

No trial is pleasant or it wouldn't be called a trial. But our trials need not blow us out of the water. In fact, as those who have been justified, trials generate hope in us. Trials bolster our sense of anticipation.

Trials can reveal whether a person is a genuine Christian or not. Lloyd-Jones wrote (61), "The way to test between the true and the false is to observe what happens in

⁷ Briscoe, 114

the hour of crisis, in the time of real need. A faith that does not help us when we need it most of all is not the Christian faith; for this never fails."

I've noticed something over the years. In fact, I see it in letters I've written or received. Last week I received a letter from a friend penned four decades ago. One of the subjects? A trial we were experiencing. As I look back on it, it was pretty small, compared to things I'm facing now. But it was big then.

That's how our Father works. He uses our present trials to produce a patient endurance in us, and that produces character, and that produces hope, so that when we face yet another trial, even a much bigger one, we have developed...*confidence*.

4. *Hope produces confidence.*

Verse 5 says, "And hope does not disappoint us" (AV "And hope maketh not ashamed"). Now we have reached the pinnacle of spiritual maturity. Trials do not "disappoint" a person who has learned the meaning of joy. When we learn to see trials from God's vantage point, trials strengthen our character. They also increase our confidence in God.

Several years ago⁸, Moshe Diane, Israel's great military genius traveled to New Dehli, India. Moshe Diane was the man who led Israel to the miracle victory in the Six-Day war. The press in New Dehli asked Moshe about the incredible win. He responded with these words, "The God Who was, is. The God who did, does."

Hope produces confidence. Have you ever noticed how two people can go through the same trial, yet one goes to pieces, while the other shines like gold? Why is that? It's because the latter has learned to cooperate with God in the process.

God is always doing something IN us as well as THROUGH us. Most of us are too performance oriented. God is concerned with a process. We think, "I could serve God better IF I had better health...or more money in the bank...or..." But God says, "Wait, my child. I know what you are facing, and I've allowed it all to enter your life for a reason. Don't resist Me. Trust Me. I'm using it to shape you, to mold you."

James sums up the process in James 1:2-4, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

So here's the process. Trials produce patience. Patience produces character. Character produces hope. Hope produces confidence. We know this. And because we know this, says verse 3, we can rejoice in our sufferings, strengthened by the grace in which we stand.

And yet there's more. Notice the end of verse 5, "And hope does not disappoint us [ESV, 'put us to shame'], because God has poured out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."

So we don't face our trials alone. We've receive two more resources, the *love of God* (the assurance that He truly loves us, no matter what we may feel in the moment), and the *Spirit of God* (not a force, but a person, the divine Helper Himself).

Brothers and sisters, this is ours, peace, access, joy, the love of God, the Spirit of God, and so much more, because we are *standing in grace*.

Let's make it personal by making an affirmation.

⁸ story told by Tim Kenoyer

Make It Personal: If I am in Christ I am standing in grace.

This is reality. I don't create it. God did when He declared me to be righteous in His sight on the merit of what His Son did.

If you are not a Christian, this is not true of you, not yet. It could become so this very moment, if you will repent of your sin and accept Jesus the Christ as your Savior and Lord. I invite you to do so even now.

If you are a Christian, I urge you to affirm three needs, as I do the same.

1. *I need to grow in my understanding of what I have.*
2. *I need to appropriate what I have.*
3. *I need to share what I have.*

It's a new year. What steps are you going to take this year, this month, this week, to grow, appropriate, and share what you have? Do you have a Bible study plan? Ask your SS teacher for help, if you need it. Scripture memory? We'll talk about that tonight. I urge you to make church a high priority this year, for that's the place God ordained for us to be growing in the understanding of what we have, in the appropriation of what we have, and to begin sharing what we have.

I want to conclude by having us sing a song. It's probably a new song to most. I first learned it at T4G about five years ago, and I've been looking forward to the time we could sing it together.

It's called "The Sands of Time Are Sinking." Anne Ross Cousin wrote the original words in 1857, based on the letters from Samuel Rutherford. This song takes us ahead to the day when we see Christ, and what we'll do when we see Him.

VERSE 1

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of Heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

VERSE 2

The King there in His beauty,
Without a veil is seen;
It were a well spent journey,
Though sev'n deaths lay between;
The Lamb with His fair army
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

VERSE 3

O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, deep well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,

More deep I'll drink above;
There to an ocean fullness
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

VERSE 4

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove;
And always dews of sorrow
Were lustered with His love;
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

VERSE 5

Oh! I am my Beloved's
And my Beloved's mine!
He brings a poor, vile sinner
Into His "house of wine;"
I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

VERSE 6

The bride eyes not her garments,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory
But on my King of grace;
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land.