

Deep Peace from Trust in God

Thomas Robinson, *Gospel of God's Grace for All of Us* 12, March 15, 2015

Romans 4:20 – 5:5 (ESV adapted)

²⁰ No unbelief made him (Abraham) waver concerning **the promise of God**, but he grew **strong** in/by his **faith** as he **gave glory to God**, ²¹ fully filled/convinced that **God was able to do what he had promised**. ²² That is why his faith was "*counted to him as righteousness*." [Gen 15:6] ²³ But the words "*it was counted to him*" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who **believe/trust in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord**, ²⁵ who was **handed over because of our trespasses and raised because we are to be declared right**.

5:¹ Therefore, since we have been **declared right from faith(fullness)**, we have **peace with God** through our **Lord Jesus Messiah**, ² through whom also we have also obtained **access by faith** into this **grace** in which **we stand**, and **we boast in hope of the glory of God**.

³ Not only that, but we **boast** in our **suffering/tribulation**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**, ⁴ and endurance produces **tested character**, and character produces **hope**, ⁵ and **hope does not put us to shame**, because **the love of God** has been poured out in our hearts through the **Holy Spirit** who has been **given to us**.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faithfulness into faith, as it is written, "*The righteous from faith shall live.*" [Hab. 2:4]

Romans 4:13, 18

¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring (seed) that he would be heir of the world did not come through law but through righteousness of faith. ... ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "*So shall your offspring be.*" [Gen 15:5]

Romans 8:18-19, 22-24, 26

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed for us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ... ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. ... ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the very Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD (Yahweh), when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... ³³ I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ ... for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest, ... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

⁴ ... We wish ... that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Genesis 12:2-3; 22:17-18

^{12:2} "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

^{22:17} "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven ... ¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth (arets) be blessed"

The Story of God Connecting our Lives to His

The world is always in pain. Some is just part of a world with sharp edges, earthquakes, disease, gravity. Most pain is created or magnified by us humans, from personal hurts to global structures. In the Bible is the long, ongoing narrative of God taking human life seriously and leading us out of self-inflicted pain and into God's own eternal life.

Paul shows how God unites righteousness (*dikaio-*) and faith(fullness) (*pistis*) in his own actions by reaching out to a human, Abraham, in making promises that establish a right relationship across worlds (God – human) and by faithfully fulfilling the promises. In response, Abraham is called to faith/trust (*pistis*) in God's promise that God counts as righteousness and begins a personal journey and one across generations with God.

That story travels through centuries of human brokenness, made clear by the Law, and reaches a climax in Jesus – human, Israel's Messiah, God himself – who is the bridge for God to reach into human life and brokenness with his own faithfulness, take our sin and suffering on himself, and create a new realm for human life, new promises and power.

The Heart of God's Purpose in Jesus

In 5:1-5 is a focused summary of what God whole work is about. Paul will develop it in the rest of his letter (esp. ch 5-8), but this is the vision that unites it all from Abraham on.

It centers in Jesus and the impact of the event of his life, death, and resurrection – God present at work, breaking the grip of sin and death, opening the promise of new life. We are called to trust God's faithful work and recognize ourselves there – sin and new life.

We are declared right with God and Peace breaks out – Shalom, pax, reconciliation – God's great promise to Israel, more than Caesar can give. A peace across worlds, secure in God. Not an internal feeling, though that may come, but a new reality. A peace through all that Jesus has done. A peace that open doors to a new realm of life, my life linked to God's.

That realm is called "Grace" – the gift that God in his love desires to give to his creatures. The gift we fight by our anger, greed, violence, self-deception. A gift open to every person God created, all classes, races, genders, no ethnic boundaries. We stand and receive.

All boasting in ourselves is gone, but confidence in God soars. We're still us, but we see what God can do and hope breaks out. We may even be restored to glory God intended for us in creation, the glory broken by rebellion, being God's true emissaries in his creation.

Living this Purpose as a Faulty Human in a Broken World

Paul's thought soars, but he has gone through too much – imprisonment, beatings, anxiety – not to take human suffering as seriously as God did in the cross. But because Jesus took so much suffering into himself on the cross – the ultimate expression of God's self-giving love – even 'tribulation' can be transformed. Paul is not saying that suffering is in itself redemptive, it automatically does some good. It doesn't. It can create bitterness and despair. But within this realm of peace and grace defined by Jesus, even pain changes.

It links us to Jesus and the astonishing promises of death defeated, resurrection life created. It challenges us to endurance that tests us and breaks our self-deception. As Paul later says (8:18-26) it becomes like the pain of childbirth, seemingly unbearable but filled with anticipation and new life. It becomes hope because it is strengthened by God's promise.

God stays with us in his Holy Spirit, his own life given to us. The very heart of everything, "the love of God" – God's love for us / our love for God – is poured out in us. Life united!