

Benefits of Justification by Faith

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[0 : 00] What I'm doing this morning, as indicated in your bulletin, is to kind of give you a review or overview of the first 11 verses of Romans chapter 5.

This is something unlike that which we usually do, and I particularly do not look forward to it each time, because there is such a wealth of material to take in such an abbreviated amount of time. And those of you who have been with us for the past 88 studies so far in the book of Romans, consisting of as many hours, know that we do not move all that rapidly. But for the benefit of review and for the benefit of new people who are coming in, who might like to kind of get caught up with this as to where we are, they say, I understand you're preaching in the book of Romans. Yes. Well, we were there a couple of Sundays, and we would like to know what you said about all of the verses before. Well, that's fine. All you need is a cassette tape recorder or player and 90 hours and sit down and listen, and you can get it all.

And that just completely shakes people up, understandably. That's just not practical to do that. So what we have done is condensed the material as we have gone along, and thus we have created a longer Romans and a shorter Romans.

[1 : 17] The longer Romans is what has been available Sunday after Sunday, week in and week out. And as I've said, we've got a little less than 100 studies in it. And the shorter Romans consists of the same material, the first five chapters, or the first five and a half chapters, four and a half chapters of the book of Romans.

But they will be consolidated into just five tapes, and that way it isn't so intimidating or so discouraging to those who might like to get caught up with us.

But the very nature of a consolidation, of course, requires some superficiality, and that is all there, unfortunately. So if we may please let us read together from the New American Standard.

I will be reading, you follow in whatever translation you have, the first 11 verses of Romans chapter 5. I've broken it up here, rather than take the entire chapter, because that which has to do with verses 12 through 21 is really based on a completely different theological concept than the first 12 verses or 11 verses.

So I do not feel that it would be wise to take the whole chapter and thus try to deal with two major themes instead of one. That's why we're breaking it up this way. The apostle says, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we exalt in hope of the glory of God.

[2 : 50] And not only this, but we also exalt in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance proven character, and proven character hope.

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. 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.

And not only this, but we also exalt in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Now, these verses shared with you deal with the conclusion which Paul has reached from doctrinal information that he has shared in the preceding chapters.

[4 : 15] We will not go back and glance over those chapters, but I would serve them up to just refresh your memory. In verses 1, chapter 1 and verses 16 and 17, Paul says that God's righteous judgment is declared.

It is as though God has a divine vendetta against man, and war is declared in those two verses. The basis for that, the divine rationale for God's impending judgment upon humanity, is found in Romans chapter 1, verses 18 through chapter 3 and verse 20.

It deals with man's rebellion and his degeneracy. It talks about the religious man as well as the irreligious man. It talks about the sophisticate as well as the heathen.

And the conclusion that is reached is that God has consigned all under judgment, for all are guilty. None have any excuse. All are justly condemned by a holy and righteous God.

That's bad news. That's the lay of the land until Jesus Christ comes on the scene. And then Paul begins dealing with the glorious subject, which is the theme of this epistle, the righteousness of God and how man obtains it.

[5 : 30] We have looked at the example given by Abraham, how that Abraham was justified by faith. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. This is a purely gracious act on the part of God.

It has nothing to do with human merit. It has nothing to do with human desert. It has nothing to do with human works. It has nothing to do with human goodness or human morality or good intentions or anything else.

This justification is achieved by faith. It is received by faith. It is realized by faith. And that simply means by believing. You know, I've been toying with the idea of writing a book, not a book, but a booklet or a kind of tract on this passage of scripture.

And the reason I have, and this is the first time I've ever really felt this way, but the reason I have is because this one great area, justification by faith, is at one and the same time the most important and the most misunderstood doctrine insofar as man is concerned.

It is, of course, inseparably linked with the subject of grace, and there is no greater area of misunderstanding among human beings than the subject of grace. The reason I've been so enamored with it, I think, is because it is so terribly important and at the same time so terribly misunderstood.

[6 : 50] And I've even decided on a way to begin this little article that I planned to write. I don't know if this will ever come to fruition. You know, the best laid plans of mice and men. But this is my intention at this date.

I should think that I would start it out with something like, it's too good to be true. That's exactly the way most people perceive this. When you go to the scriptures and you lay out before someone who has never really been exposed to the truth of God's grace, what salvation really is, and how it is achieved, almost without exception, the first response to the human heart is, oh, that's just too good to be true.

That's too simple. There's got to be more to it than that. It can't be that easy. And these are all predictable reactions. But the point of the matter is, friends, it is true.

It is good. And it is true. And it is what God has done in Christ. This justification by faith is God's provision. It is God's remedy.

It isn't yours. You didn't think it up. You didn't activate it. It is God's doing. And God has done it in such a way that man cannot interfere with it.

[8 : 07] He can take it or he can leave it. But he cannot enhance it. He cannot detract from it. He cannot improve upon it. It is something that God has provided and laid out for your consideration.

Here it is. Take it or leave it. Now, you cannot do anything else with it. But take it or leave it. And that's the way God has left it. That is justification by faith.

We've looked at that great theme. Justification by faith is the language of the law court. And there is one specific area about this that I really want to drum home to you.

And that is we are talking in terms of a divine legality. It has nothing to do with the way you assess it. It has nothing to do with the way you feel about it. God did not ask you to pass judgment upon the plan.

God says this is the way it is. The language of the law court means that God has devised a plan whereby the guilty, condemned sinner can stand before him completely free, completely forgiven, completely justified, completely assured that he is in God's good graces, and it is all on the merit of

Jesus Christ.

[9 : 18] And God has done all of that. And this plan that he has devised is called justification by faith. It is predicated upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The only reason God can make this plan available to you is because Christ paid the bill for it. God, therefore, is free to maintain his own integrity and his own righteousness and offer this to you. It's the most wonderful transaction anybody has ever heard of. This is what Paul describes as the good news. This is the gospel. This is good news. The bad news has preceded, you see, in chapter 1 and 2 and 3.

And the good news is what God has done about the bad news. And that's good news. It is justification by faith. It is not performance-related. It is not performance-related.

It has nothing to do with your ability or inability insofar as morality is concerned or goodness. It is a legal thing. You have all heard of instances, I'm sure, where individuals have been found by a court of law not guilty.

[10 : 24] They were as guilty as sin. Everybody knew they were guilty. But through one mishap in justice or miscarriage of justice or technicality of the law or whatever, the verdict was handed down, not guilty.

The courtroom may go, oh, and the people may be indignant and the press may be up in arms and there may be editorials written about this great miscarriage of justice. Here is a man that everybody knew was guilty and the court set him free and he's back out on the street again.

That's terrible. And so it is. So it is. Insofar as humanity is concerned and human relationships is concerned, we don't like to see that kind of thing. But be that as it may, when that person walks down the street, everyone may look at him and say, oh, so on, so on, so on.

And talk about him behind his back and he's really guilty. He really did that. But what matters? What is it that really counts? It's not what everybody else says. All that really matters is what that court said.

That's the legality of it. And the court said, not guilty. But he is guilty. Not guilty. Now that's exactly what happens insofar as you and I are concerned in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

[11 : 39] There is no miscarriage of justice involved. We are not acquitted on the basis of a technicality. We are acquitted on the basis that we are guilty.

No question about it. But our substitute took the punishment that our guilt deserved. We had a stand-in who was willing to die in our place and pay the penalty for our sins.

Therefore, God had nothing against us and he set us free. He set us free even though we were guilty. Because Jesus Christ died in our place.

That's the great theme of the gospel. That's justification by faith. Immediately someone pops up and says, well, I don't know that I deserve that. Granted, we don't deserve it. There has never been a human being, walk the face of the earth, who deserves that.

That's what makes this thing so wonderful. That's what makes grace grace. You don't deserve it. And God did it anyway. And what does that do? It puts a neon sign around the grace and goodness of God.

[12 : 40] It doesn't make you stand out. It doesn't light you up. If anything, we can shrink back in the shadows and we push Christ and the cross of Christ to the forefront.

And we hold that up and we say, here, he's responsible. This is what's responsible for our salvation. We are nothing. We are enemies. We are without strength. We are helpless.

We are alienated. And Paul goes on to describe all of that in this chapter. And it is designed to highlight Jesus Christ and the glory of God. And while we're shrinking back in the shadows, as it were, we are rejoicing and we are benefiting from all that God has provided for us.

It's a wonderful, wonderful concept. So justification by faith is the language of the law court. It is a legal righteousness. It is a divine, not guilty.

Wonderful, wonderful. Can you not imagine the fear and apprehension that would be resident within a man's heart when he's on trial for his life?

[13 : 47] And he's sitting there in the defendant's chair. And the word comes in. The jury is ready. The jury is ready. And the chamber door opens to the jury room.

And all the jury files out. And they take their seats in the box. And the judge says, Has the jury reached a verdict? And the foreman says, We have, your honor.

Would the defendant please rise. And the defendant stands. And oh, that heart in him is just pumping and thumping and just about to beat out of his chest.

And there is a pail of silence that comes over the court. Everyone in the jury is trying to be expressionless. And the sweetest music and the sweetest words that that man could ever hear. We find the defendant not guilty. There's a big sigh of relief. Well, God has found us not guilty.

[15:02] Why? Because he found Jesus Christ guilty. Think of that. Guilty.

Christ? Guilty. He who knew no sin. How could he be guilty? Because he who knew no sin was made sin for us.

And there on that cross, he took all the punishment, all the condemnation, all the wrath, all the hell, all the justice that God had to pour out as a guilty, guilty man.

And then God looks at you and says, there's no punishment left. Christ is born at all. You're not guilty.

The innocent one took your guilt in your place. That is justification by faith. That is the basis. That is the cornucopia that we have described, out of which several good things issue.

[16:12] You've all seen a picture, I'm sure. Maybe you have one. A little basket-type weave thing. I don't know what kind of material that is. It looks like straw or something.

You see them plunked around as settings for Thanksgiving tables. A big horn of plenty and the fruit and things and the nuts and the grapes hanging out of it.

The cornucopia. God has a spiritual cornucopia. The basket in which all of these good things are held is justification by faith. Because when you have that, that's your cornucopia and God has filled it with all kinds of good things and the apostle goes on to enumerate them.

They become his by way of spiritual fringe benefits. The first one is peace with God. Notice that, if you will. Therefore, having been justified by faith, that is, having been declared righteous by God on the basis of what Christ did, we have a number of things.

First thing we have is we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This means the war is over. Paul says, now there was war. In verse 10, he says, if for a while we were enemies, we really were enemies.

[17:25] We aren't anymore because we've been justified by faith and the war is over. Spiritual hostilities have ceased. And there is now peace between us and our God.

The objective truth of this is here whether it is believed or not. And that is very important. Very, very important. Someone says, well, I sure don't feel at peace with God.

Well, if you've been justified by faith, Paul says you have peace with God. If you are not appropriating that, if you are not realizing that and reckoning upon that and benefiting from that, I'm sorry.

I'm really, truly sorry. Because it is yours to experience. It is yours to enjoy. If you do not have it, the fault does not lie with God because he's provided it.

How do you know he's provided it? Simply by believing what God has said. He says we have peace with God. Can you believe God? If we believe men, and most of us can find some man that we can believe, John says the testimony of God is greater.

[18:34] If you can believe what some trusted confident can tell you, and you can act upon his word as being one who has integrity and will not deceive you, can you not believe what God has said?

God has said we have peace with himself because we have been justified by faith. And the appropriation of that peace is dependent upon your acknowledging the objectivity and the reality of it, and that will result in a subjective reality.

But the subjective is based on the objective. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the only way it's available because he is the only way through whom we have been justified by faith.

This whole thing really highlights the person of Christ. Look at verse 6. Christ died. Verse 8. Christ died.

Verse 9. By his blood we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. Verse 10. We shall be saved by his life through the death of his son.

[19:44] Verse 11. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. You see what Paul is saying here is that God just doesn't know how to do anything except through Jesus Christ our Lord. When it comes to spiritual realities for you and for me.

God has confined himself to everything that he intends to do and has done and will do for you through Jesus Christ. That's just the way he operates. That's his modus operandi. All through the Pauline epistles.

Especially the Pauline epistles. It is through Christ. In Christ. Of Christ. By Christ. To Christ. For Christ. This man is just saturated with the person of Christ. And well he might be.

Because he is before all things. And by him all things do consist. He is the Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end. The author and the finisher of our faith.

And there is no one else eligible or acceptable to be looked upon that way. And then secondly he says we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace. Which means access to God.

[20 : 44] Christ is our mediator who brings us face to face. This is the idea of an introduction.

When we believe on Jesus Christ as our personal savior. One of the first things he does in the spiritual sense is he introduces us to the father.

And this implies a third party. And the Greek also uses a word that indicates a face to face relationship. It is as though the son is standing here. And you are standing there.

And the father is there. And he introduces us to the father. And the father to us. And he does this through himself. And the relationship that we have with him. This is a face to face situation. And Christ is the one who makes the introduction.

Furthermore it is in the perfect tense. Which indicates that the access is ongoing. We have continual access with the father. Not just a one time thing. But the door to the court of heaven is always open.

For those who are his children. It's always open. I'm reminded of the story of a boy riding his bicycle down the street. And from all appearances he just looked like a little ragamuffin.

[21 : 45] And he pulled up his bicycle to the front entrance of this great big prestigious bank. Just a multi-million dollar institution.

And he walked out and got there. And parked his bicycle and walked in through this big revolving door. And walked into this huge lobby. Great big columns.

Marble everywhere you looked. Highly polished teller's desks everywhere. And executive offices off to the right and to the left. And just a really massive institution.

And he turned and walked back through this one corridor. And this guard was standing here.

Looking at this boy and wondering who he was. And what he was doing there.

And if he came with some money from his piggy bank or what. And he started heading for the top flight executive offices. And this guard thought, well he's obviously a little boy who's lost.

[22 : 43] He doesn't know where he's going. He certainly couldn't have any business to do back there. I'd better stop him and find out what's going on. He started following him. And the boy acted like he knew where he was going.

And he just walked back through this maze of corridors. And all at once he started heading for the very top level executive offices. And he was just about to open the door to the president of the bank.

And this man caught up with him and put his hand on the door and said, I don't think you want to go in there, sonny. You better come with me and I'll show you how to get back out of here.

And the little boy, about nine years old, looked up at him and said, Oh, I know where I'm going. And he says, well, I'm afraid you're not allowed back here. You see, this is just for people who have business back here.

You really don't belong here. Come on with me now. I'll show you the way out. The little boy says, you must be new here, mister. This is my dad's office. He knew full well where he was going.

[23 : 43] His dad just happened to be the president of that institution. And he has an open door to his father anytime, regardless. He just parks his bicycle and walks right on in.

And hi, dad, how you doing? He's got a right to be there. That's his father sitting behind that massive mahogany desk. He's got a way of access. And we do too. Anytime of day or night.

By virtue of our relationship with Jesus Christ. And it is legal access, guaranteed continual access, a subjective appropriation based upon an objective reality.

And then Paul tells us we have a standing in grace. Notice the third item in the cornucopia here. Into this grace in which we stand.

We stand in grace and we have a standing in grace. It is a position whereby God can only be kindly disposed toward you. You are immune to divine judgment.

[24 : 41] You have a standing. You have a relationship that becomes yours. It is one of the fringe benefits. Glorious thing. Whereby God has taken you out of the sphere of spiritual endangerment. Out of wrath. Out of judgment. Out of condemnation. He's lifted you up out of there. And he put you over here in the safety zone. Where nothing can touch you. Without his permission. You are immune. To divine wrath. You cannot be touched by the judgment of God. Because he has removed you from that sphere of harm. Wonderful, wonderful thing. This standing in grace. Conveys also the idea that. When all is said and done. And the battle is over. There you are. Still standing. When the smoke and the heat of the battle has cleared. There you are. You are standing. Because he makes us to stand. We have a standing in grace. The standing is not precarious. [25 : 42] We are not standing with one foot on a banana peel. And the other in a grave. But we have a sure standing. It is steadfast. It is steadfast. And unmovable. And sure.

And certain. Because Christ himself is the foundation of it. Then he tells us that the fourth thing we have is a rejoicing. In hope of the glory of God. And we spend a considerable amount of time with that. And I must very superficially gloss over it. But basically Paul is saying we shall share in his glory by ultimately being all that he wants us to be. God's end will be accomplished in that he will be glorified. And we are going to share in it. This hope of the glory of God conveys the idea of the absolute confidence that God's goal will be realized.

There is all kinds of conflict going on around us. There are all kinds of battle lines being drawn. The enemy does come in like a flood. There is a great spiritual warfare that's taking place.

[26 : 44] But there's no question as to the outcome. God's glory is going to ultimately be achieved. We have absolute confidence in that. That leads us to rejoice.

We exult. We rejoice. We boast, as it were, in the absolute confidence of the ultimate glory of God. And he has included us in the picture. He's made us as being part of the plan. This enables us, as Paul goes on to say, not only this, we exult in the hope of glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult or rejoice or boast in our tribulations. Now, the only way you can do that, the only way you can do that and be a sane person is if you know something. You have to know the right things because there are only two kinds of people who can rejoice in tribulation.

One is a Christian who knows the right things and the other is a lunatic. And that's the truth. The unbeliever can't rejoice in tribulation. Now, the believer can act like an unbeliever when tribulations come.

[27 : 56] Many do because they don't know the right things. But there is no unbeliever who can rejoice in tribulations because he cannot see a divine blueprint.

He just calls it the fickle finger of fate. That's all. Oh, why me? Look at how this thing has happened to me. Boy, he can't see any good in that.

And he doesn't anticipate any good coming out of it. He just tries to survive it. That's all by however he can. There's no rejoicing. Just moaning and groaning. That's all the unbeliever can do because he does not know there is a God who is sovereign and behind the scenes working all things after the counsel of his own will.

He doesn't know that. He has no confidence in that. No trust in that. All he can think is how long is this hurt going to last and can I endure it and when will it be over with and all the rest of it.

But the believer can actually rejoice in tribulation. We spent some time dealing with the subject. Why do the righteous suffer?

[28 : 58] Somebody said it just isn't fair. Every now and then I read something in the newspaper by way of an editorial or somebody is on one of the many multitude of rights kicks.

Everybody's rights this, rights that. And many, many times I hear this phrase. It isn't fair. It just isn't fair. This isn't fair and this isn't fair and this isn't equitable and this isn't right.

I have a question. Whoever said that life was fair? Whoever guaranteed us a fair shake?

Either as a human being or as a citizen of the United States. Now I know. I know our founding fathers took upon themselves the awesome task of making sure that everybody as a citizen of this country is treated fairly.

But we all know that is a very clumsy thing to try and enforce sometimes. You do not have to look far at all and you can find a mountain of inequities. There are all kinds of things that are unfair.

[30 : 08] Probably today in a way that we have never realized before we are on an egalitarian kick. Everything has to be fair for everybody. And you realize, of course, while that may be a noble goal, it is really impossible to achieve because you are limited to fallen human beings who are the responsible ones for bringing about what is fair.

And all of these are necessarily besought with their own prejudices and their own special interests. And this is the main reason why we will never arrive at a completely fair and equitable society for all of our citizens.

We just don't have that capability. Now I'm not saying we shouldn't try. I'm not saying we shouldn't have legislation that is designed to make us as fair and righteous and equal as we can be. And the Bill of Rights and the Constitution and all of these things aim at this. And the only weakness that I can see in the Constitution is that men drew it up and men are the ones who have to implement it.

That's its greatest weakness. That's the same weakness of the Mosaic Law. Did you know that? Men didn't draw it up. God did. But God has limited himself to the frailty of human beings to carry out that law.

[31 : 33] And that's where in the law finds its weak place. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.

That's the problem. So don't look for a whole heap of fairness in this world, either as a Christian or as a non-Christian. It may very well not be forthcoming.

The righteous suffer not because it is fair or it isn't fair, but because we live in a fallen world. Now, when Jesus Christ reigns, say, you're going to see a whole new ballgame then.

When the Son of God sits on the throne of David, equity and justice will be dispensed. The knowledge of the Lord will prevail over the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Things will be fair then. The Son of God is going to right the wrongs. But we don't have the Son of God ruling and reigning here now. We have frail man and all of his inequities and everything else that goes with the package.

[32 : 40] But even though we may suffer, and even though we may not get a fair shake, we do not have to allow tribulation to do us in.

We can actually capitalize upon tribulation and use it to our own advantage. Because tribulation produces perseverance or endurance. Your King James says patience.

And the word that is used, tribulation here, secular authorities have defined it as the ability of a plant to survive under the most difficult and hostile conditions.

I'm sorry, that's a definition of endurance or patience, the perseverance, not tribulation. The ability of a plant to survive under the most difficult and hostile conditions.

And when it comes out of that, on the other end, it has survived. It has endured. And it has been strengthened because of what it endured. It has to do with spiritual staying power, such as was found in the early Christians, in Daniel, in Paul, in Silas.

[33 : 44] They all experienced this because of the tribulation. And suffice it to say, Daniel would never have been Daniel without the great difficulties that came into his life.

God used them to make the man. Paul and Silas, and Paul in particular, and the list of things that he suffered as indicated there in 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Paul would never have been Paul if it hadn't been for all the hardship and difficulty that came into his life. They made the man what he was. And God's grace sustained him in all of it.

And the same is true with any number of others that we could go on to enumerate, such as are found in Hebrews chapter 11. Tribulation need not defeat the believer. It can actually serve him.

And then endurance. And we have used the word endurance as being synonymous with patience and perseverance. Endurance produces proven character.

[34 : 44] And your King James says experience. This is the laboratory of life. Endurance realized will show you to have emerged from the test approved.

That's what it means. Tested and approved. You came out of it. The idea is proven character. You want to know what kind of character you have? Well, it will have to be put to the test.

You don't know, and neither does anybody else. I was looking at the illustration of Abraham one time when God told him to take his son and offer him a sacrifice.

And he did. At least he was willing to do so. He was ready to plunge the knife, and God stopped him. And my eyes fixed on a phrase that God used on behalf of Abraham, and it just didn't sit too

well with me at all.

God said, Do not harm the lad, Abraham. For now I know that you, in essence, would be obedient to me by not withholding your only son.

[35 : 59] Now that's a real head-scratcher. I thought God knows everything. Why did God have to subject Abraham to this kind of a test in order for God to find out what Abraham would do?

Didn't he know what Abraham would do before he ever tested him? Why did he say that? I'm convinced it simply has to be the language of conversational accommodation.

God didn't put Abraham to that test because God was walking around heaven saying, I wonder how Abraham would fare. Well, I guess I won't know unless I put him to the test.

So I'll put him to the test and see if the old boy flunks or passes. Of course not. It cannot be the case. Not with an omniscient God who knows everything and calls those things that are not as though they are.

What? The idea, I think, is that Abraham didn't know. And Isaac didn't know. But when they passed the test, they knew. Abraham knew something about his proven character.

[37 : 02] Let me tell you, that's a tribulation. And Isaac knew. And it was important that these patriarchs of the faith would be able to establish their obedience before God in this time of crisis.

Very important. God didn't do it in order that he might find out which way Abraham would go. He had to know. But Abraham didn't know. And Isaac didn't know. And as a result, Abraham proved his character.

And what does that do? But it produces hope. Proven character produces hope. And this hope is synonymous with the word confidence. And what that means is you end up right back at the beginning where you started in verse 2 in hope of the glory of God.

And that cycle brings you right back to the concept of renewed confidence. Out of the end result of tribulation comes a renewed confidence in the person and in the product.

And we looked at that briefly on the overhead. And I would like to direct your attention to it again, if we may. We have pictured life and the tribulation cycle as being just that.

[38 : 09] It is a cycle. In the foundation here, in the center of the believer's life, and we'll let the circle represent the believer, justification by faith.

We have peace with God. We have a standing in grace. These things provide us with the platform. And once we have this established, as all believers do, who are justified by faith, then God begins bringing things into our life to mold us and fashion us and conform us to the image of Christ.

How is he going to do that? How is he going to do that? Some people say, well, the best way God can do that is just making sure that now you are a Christian, everything is just wonderful.

Life is just a big bowl of cherries. No pits. Everything goes the way you want it to go. You become a member of the body of Christ and brother from here on out.

It's just smooth sailing. Everything is hunky-dory. No problems. No trials. No tribulations. No money trials.

[39 : 20] No marital trials. No parental trials. No government trials. No nothing. You just place your faith in Christ and that's the end of all your problems.

Boy, that's a bunch of baloney, isn't it? You know, there are some people who think that. God doesn't do it that way. When you become a believer in Jesus Christ, you are, as it were, a gem in the rough.

And you know what happens to gems in the rough. The rough has got to go that you may be a polished, finished product.

So what's God going to do? He's going to start chipping away at the rough. Knocking off the rough edges. How is he going to do that? By giving you everything you want.

No. He's going to do it through a cycle called tribulation. Tribulation. Now we can define the word tribulation as being problems, trials, difficulties, heartaches, disappointments, financial reversals, everything going wrong.

[40 : 41] These are tribulations. Tribulations. A Christian is not exempt from these. Now none of us are going to go volunteering for them. None of us put in our order for tribulations. But they come.

And God doesn't shelter us from tribulation. But God has promised to do something even more wonderful than sheltering us from the tribulation. He said, I'm going to take that tribulation and I'm going to use it to mold you and make you and fashion you into what I want you to be.

For all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose. So it isn't long in the Christian life what we encounter this thing called tribulations.

And if we respond to tribulations in the right way. Now you've got to do this because if you don't, then the purpose of the cycle is frustrated and God has to just leave you there.

Spinning your wheels until you're able to respond in the right way. Tribulation works patience or endurance if you respond to the tribulation in the right way.

[42 : 02] If you lay down and play dead, it won't work. If you moan and groan and bawl and fuss and cuss and say, why me? How could God allow this to happen to me?

Doesn't he know I'm on his side? After all I've served him. After all I've done for him. After all the money I've given to that church. And then look what happens. Is this the way God repays me? Here I gave an extra \$20 to the missionaries last week and this week my motor clunked out on the refrigerator. It's going to cost \$80 to get it fixed. Is that how God chooses things? Here I give my money to the missionaries.

Look what happens to my refrigerator. Can't you take better care of your people than that? And on and on. You know what happens then? This whole thing is frustrated and God just leaves us here with that tribulation.

But when we respond to the tribulation in the right way, then endurance is the result. And this endurance leads to character.

[42 : 58] See here's the cycle. Just keeps on going. Leads to character. And the character brings us right back to the hope of glory. And the hope of glory is the absolute confidence. And what this means is when you respond in a positive way and go through the cycle that God has intended, it brings you back to more confidence of God's glory and your sharing in it and that stabilizes and strengthens your soul and gives you more trust and more confidence in God's ability to bring to pass what he's promised concerning you and you are strengthened.

This is how you mature. This is spiritual growth. This is growing in grace. You grow through tribulation. Saints grow best in adversity.

We don't grow on fluff and puff. We grow on the hard stuff. We grow out of difficulty. That's the way we grow.

Now some people don't want to grow that way. If you don't want to grow that way, then you don't grow. You just don't grow. You just stay a spiritual baby. And there are lots of people who do that. They're contented with their diapers and their bottles and all the rest of it. And that's where they stay. And it's too bad. It's so very sad because they only have one life to live for Christ.

[44 : 27] And by the time many of them wake up and find out what's going on, they've moved on down the chronological ladder and they're ready to check out. And that's very sad. Very sad. Young people have a special opportunity to relate to this and get in tune with it.

Now, Paul says this brings us right back to hope and this hope does not disappoint. This hope will never let us down. And we are in verse 5.

And the reason that we know that is because the love of God has been proved or demonstrated and poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

So, we have a hope that does not disappoint. We possess the love of God lavishly poured out. It is an unselfish agape love. And by the way, all of these things are still flowing out of that spiritual cornucopia we were talking about.

And, eighthly, we possess the Holy Spirit. Paul said in Romans 8, 9 that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And nine, we possess the proof or the demonstration of God's love in that while we were helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, Christ died for us.

[45 : 44] Paul says, For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

But God went much, much further than that. Jesus Christ did not die for righteous men and he did not die for good men. God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Then the great argument of A fortiori comes in. Much more. If the former is true, how much more must the latter be true? If God has done the greater, will he not also do the lesser?

And what is the greater thing he has done? He has justified us by faith through the shed blood of Christ. That's the ultimate. That's the big one. If God has done that, if he has gone to those extremes in providing Christ to die for us, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Much more. Having done that, much more, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. And there is the through him again in reference to Christ.

[46 : 59] For, here is another, if while we were enemies, and we really, really were, that's the meaning of the Greek, we were reconciled, brought into the good graces of God through the death of his son, much more.

Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And we concluded that is the resurrection life of Christ that is mentioned in verse 24 of the preceding chapter.

And not only this, but what does all of these glorious things lead us to do? Where do all of these things bring us? Starting way back with justification by faith, going up through God's delightful dozen, I call them, of the spiritual cornucopia, what does all this lead us to do?

Well, it leads us to exalt, or rejoice, or boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

That should be the end product of all of this study. Having been captivated by these 11 verses, and having captivated these 11 verses, they should elicit just one response in our heart.

[48 : 13] And that is to exalt in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, realizing that he is the sum total of the whole package that it has all become a reality through him, and all of our love and adoration and worship is directed to him.

For worthy is the Lamb, worthy to be praised and to receive honor and power and glory and dominion and majesty and might and so on.

For he has redeemed us. What a glorious concept. And Paul has laid it all out here in such a vivid, vivid fashion for us. Of course, the great issue which each of us must decide for himself is whether or not we have been justified by faith.

Because that's the triggering device. That's the thing that determines whether all of these others are realities. For if we have been justified by faith, we have everything that is attendant to it.

But there is no such thing as a believer, one who has been justified by faith, who can look down through this list and say, well, I don't have this and I don't have that and I don't have this and I'm working on this.

[49 : 30] This isn't a reality in my life. There isn't any way that you can pick and choose from the list. They are all part and parcel. They go with the territory of being justified by faith. So the real question you have to ask is, have I experienced that?

Have I been justified by faith? To some of you, it might not really make any difference at all right now. You may not even be all that interested or that concerned, but I can promise you one thing. Five million years from now, you will be. One way or another, one place or another. If you aren't interested now, you will be then. For if you leave this earth not being justified by faith, you'll be interested.

If you leave this earth being justified by faith, you'll be with Jesus Christ and you'll be even more interested. The great issue needs to be settled in the here and now.

That admittedly is a very rapid overview and I don't look forward to these review sessions. This is not my cup of tea trying to teach that much content in such a short time.

[50 : 36] So of necessity, it has been very superficial, but if anybody would like a more in-depth exposition of these verses, there are 10 or 12 hours devoted to it on tape and you are more than welcome to it.

Questions or comments now that you may have? Yes, Becky? I was listening to John MacArthur and he said that we can oversell grace that a lot of people are self-deceived into thinking that they're saved when they're not because they're not living the life.

We can oversell grace and lead people to thinking that they are saved when they are not because they are not living the life. Well, I do not know exactly what terminology she mentioned that John MacArthur had made that statement.

I do not know exactly what terminology he used. I am of the opinion there is no such thing as overselling grace. There is no way that you can oversell grace.

I do think it is possible it is possible for people to be lulled into a false sense of security into thinking that they are believers in Christ when they are not.

[51 : 44] And certainly nobody wants to be guilty of that. But my position is that the grace of God properly taught this of course is assuming that it is properly taught and properly understood is the greatest single impetus there can ever be for the living of the Christian life.

There is such a thing as a cheap grace. It is a grace that is misunderstood. A true appreciation and apprehension of the grace of God motivates and inspires.

It does not stifle. I have actually heard some preachers say and I think this is deplorable. I think this is deplorable. I have heard preachers say well it is okay to preach grace but you have got to throw in a little bit of law or you can't keep the people in line.

I find that abhorrent. I find that unscriptural. people in the Bible because when you commingle law and grace you are doing a vast disservice to the body of Christ.

In fact that smacks to me of another gospel that Paul mentions in Galatians chapter 1. You dare not mingle anything with the pure grace of God. And I'm sure Becky that there will be people who will take advantage of grace teaching and who will interpret it to be a kind of license or libertarianism that if you preach that dangerous grace you are giving the people of God a blank check.

[53 : 28] They can do whatever they want to do. Well I'll tell you something. The people of God do have a blank check. That's what grace is. Now I'm sure there are some who are not up to handling that and there are some who abuse the grace of God.

But God forbid that we should ever temper pure grace with legalism in order to tone it down so as to keep some people from running to extremes or loose ends with grace.

We cannot do that. We cannot do that. Paul? The fact that individuals are abusing the grace of God doesn't change the character. Amen. Amen.

The fact that some individuals abuse the grace of God does not change the character of God. We have taken the position just let me give you an example here.

We have taken the position here that finances giving is conducted on a grace basis and we absolutely we absolutely refuse to put people under a legalistic burden to give or to give a certain amount of money.

[54 : 34] And one of the results that you're going to have from that kind of teaching is that there are going to be people who won't give. There are going to be people who say well brother if that's what you believe there at that church and you're not going to dog me for money and I'm not going to give I'm going to take you up on it.

All I can say is that's their prerogative. I don't want to encourage people not to give but brother I'm not going to come down and say if you love Jesus you bring your 10% in here and those who bring 20% love him twice as much.

All that garbage. If you're going to give people the grace teaching then you have to give them the liberty to live under it and when we tell people if we approach you to teach a Sunday school class and you don't want to do it we operate under grace.

We're not going to recruit people. If you don't want to teach then just say I don't want to teach and I'm not going to say oh God has given you the talent. He's given you the gift to teach.

Why aren't you using it for him? You should be ashamed. God has told me you're supposed to be teaching this class. On and on and on and on. All that garbage. I've been through all that stuff. Hey I've lived there.

[55 : 43] I know what all that's about. I don't want anything to do with it. But when you're going to give people those kind of liberties and you ask somebody are you going to teach a class and they say no then you can't say oh good grief.

I give them grace but I don't expect them to use it. What are you doing there? Then you're defeating your purpose. You're right back under the thing again. And I will tell you the most logical the most easy the most insidious the most natural thing to happen to this congregation is for giving enough time to go by is for this congregation and this pastor to slide right back under the same old garbage. All the potential is there. There is something within our old Adamic heart that craves legalism that likes it. That wants restrictions.

That wants impositions. It's not God's way but it's the way of the flesh. And there's just not going to be any of it here as long as we can identify it and root it out.

But it's always trying to creep in. It's always trying to creep in because legalism feeds on itself. Legalism feeds the flesh and it feeds the ego. And I like that.

[56 : 58] I like a well fed ego. Who likes a starved ego? Well you feed the ego you starve the spirit. Feed the spirit and starve the ego.

Take a choice. Hazel? I heard someone say the other day that a little faith will take your soul to heaven. But a growing faith will bring heaven to your soul.

That's good. I like that. I like that. That's a good grace saying. A little faith will take your soul to heaven. But a growing faith will bring heaven to your soul.

That's good. That's good. Luis? I think that the quote that was made originally, I don't think it really went so much into legalism as from what I gather.

we tend to preach grace and not balance it out with love of Christ. And when you have a congregation who is Adamic in nature, as all are, you're bound to sin with the idea in mind that I have the license.

[58 : 19] It's natural in us because we're sinful creatures. But if one preaches grace with something should result from it, which is love and therefore works, I think that's what the whole thing is trying to say.

Well, my contention is that the proper preaching of grace and the proper appropriation of grace will result in the fruit of the spirit being produced in the individual, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness.

You do not produce those things by beating on people and by embarrassing them or shaming them. Now, you don't have enough love for each other. You've got to do this. You've got to do that. I want you to all stand and face each other and tell each other that you love each other and give each other a hug and all this stuff.

You can legislate a certain amount of things like that, but to me, that's not the grace way. I am of the opinion that when the word of God is taught as it was intended, it will, not it should, it will produce a dynamic effect in the lives of the people who subscribe to it.

It will do that. And I don't know whether you've seen it or not, but I sure have. In so many ways, I couldn't recount them to you in many areas and many times that you don't know anything about, but it's there.

[59 : 50] And I've seen it registered over and over and over again. Nothing, nothing works like the word works. Nothing. Yeah. You can't go through the Bible without going into the book of James.

And I guess it was placed there for a reason. It's kind of to let us know that words have its place.

Sure. Works do have their place because according to Titus, we are saved unto good works.

We are to be zealous of good works. James says what good is a man's faith if he says he has faith and doesn't have any works? Can that faith save him? And someone has said we are not saved by faith and works.

We are saved by faith that works. And if the faith we profess to have doesn't work, then it is a defective faith. It is faith that is reposed in someone other than Jesus Christ.

This is our last question we'll have to dismiss. Brenda? You're sort of talking about two things.

You're talking about your salvation, justified by faith, and then you're talking about your walk through Christ and what your responsibilities should be.

[61 : 05] exactly. There are two different concepts. And the whole of the sixth chapter and most of the seventh chapter of Romans deals with this very thing that Paul is talking about.

time runs together last long