



ROM. 5-6 THE TWO STAGES OF SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION & SANCTIFICATION

Paul begins Romans 5 by explaining two of the three stages of salvation--justification and sanctification (the third is glorification). He says "Therefore being *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" (Rom. 5:1-2).

The term for *justification* in the Gk. is *dikaiois* and it was a legal term that a judge used to declare a person absolved of all guilt. This does not mean, in our case, that we are innocent, but that by Christ paying the penalty with His death, we are declared forgiven of all guilt. Hence, we are no longer "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) but now are "children of peace," being reconciled to Him.

God, as a righteous judge, can now forgive our sins through Christ's sacrifice. Thus, the penalty of the law is satisfied and the punishment is fulfilled. So, through justification, we become undeservedly free, pure and righteous, having *access* to Him. The term *access* in the Gk. is *prosagoge* and means, "'entrance to the king through the favor of another" (*Wiersbe's Commentary*).

Therefore, in spite of that universal condemnation and death sentence of mankind, there is very *good news* (or gospel)—that there is a way to be absolved from that condemnation of sin and not die forever. It is by God's Loving Plan of Salvation that God the Father and Jesus Christ have prepared out of Their immense love for us.

This justification is applied when *baptized* into the true faith. As Col. 2:11-13 says, "In Him you were also circumcised with the *circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism*, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, *being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*"

Next comes the second stage of salvation called *sanctification* (to be made a saint--a person with God's spirit), which occurs in the second part of the baptismal ceremony. It is named "the laying on

of hands," when the Holy Spirit is received (Acts 8:17). This stage of sanctification should last a lifetime, where we are overcoming and developing spiritual character by God working in us, as we yield to Him and obey His commandments so we don't become disqualified (I Cor. 9:26-27).

Fittingly, Paul goes on to explain the qualities of that spiritual character. He says, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop *endurance*. And endurance develops *strength of character*, and character strengthens our *confident hope of salvation*. And this *hope* will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love" (Rom. 5:3-5, NLT).

The term for "trials" (or tribulations) comes from a Latin word *tribulum*. "A *tribulum* was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the grain. The *tribulum* was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff. As we go through tribulations, and depend on God's grace, the trials only purify us and help to get rid of the chaff" (*Wiersbe's Commentary*).

The word *endurance* here is *hupomone* in the Greek. It means the ability to withstand hardship and persevere until achieving the proposed goal.

The Gk. word for *strength of character* is *dokime* and it means to subject a metal to fire to purify it of all the dross. It was also used to test and determine the purity of a coin.

That *strength of character*, Paul says, leads to "hope" (Rom. 5:4-5), from *elpis* in the Greek, which means to have a positive outlook on the future no matter what happens. This is because we know that in the end, all things will turn out for good, according to God's Loving Plan of Salvation. (This certainly does not mean all things that happen are good, only that in the end, God will make it all turn out for good.) Paul later explains this hope by saying, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to His plan" (Rom. 8:28, GW). This is God's universe, not ours, and it's a good thing, for we don't have His holiness nor infinite wisdom. As Paul says, "But, my friend, I ask, 'Who

do you think you are to question God? Does the clay have the right to ask the potter why he shaped it the way he did?" (Rom. 9:20, CEV)

So, God does not make excuses for how things are run in the universe and knows what is ultimately best for us. His great love has shown this. Paul writes, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when 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 that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:6-11).

It is clear that Jesus' *death* only "justifies" or reconciles us to God, but it is Christ's *life* that *will save us*. He is now our High Priest and Mediator in heaven and therefore, He will continue to act on our behalf. As Paul said: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has *begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 1:6). That is the great hope we have.

Next, Paul explains historically how mankind came to be under sin and the law's penalty. What's more, how this process of condemnation can be reversed. He mentions: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—For until the law [was given on Mt. Sinai] sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law [by not being conscious of its existence]" (Rom. 5:12).

Notice first that sin is a personal and not a collective responsibility. There is no such biblical belief as "original sin," which, according to Catholicism, one is born already guilty of Adam's sin. Thus, they scare parents by telling them that the only way to erase that original sin is to baptize the infant. It is an unbiblical teaching and a gross lie. If it were so, Jesus and the apostles would have taught the members to baptize their children, but they never did. Notice that you need to be a certain age to repent of your sins, as Peter said:

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Only the baptism of an adult person is valid if he has repented of sins and freely and consciously accepts Christ's sacrifice.

Paul explains that one is born without sin, but sooner or later, he will come to sin, just as Adam did, and then falls under the same penalty of the law, which is physical death.

Although the law was not formally given until Mount Sinai, everyone had previously broken God's spiritual laws in place since Adam and Eve. They did so by disobeying God's law and eating from the forbidden tree. Then, all the rest of mankind followed suit. There was even a universal Flood because of the *sinfulness* of mankind.

Paul adds, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:13-14).

He explains that all have sinned and died, but there will be a future opportunity for them to be saved, so they will not have to die a second time. Adam was the prototype of mankind, and showed the prevailing trend that would exist. It is like a model airplane tested in a wind tunnel. Depending on the behavior (called *attitude*) of the model, so it will happen to all similarly designed things. But, although this prototype of mankind showed serious tendencies toward sin, what Jesus did supersedes the damage done--if one repents.

We know man's true destiny is not to be flesh and blood forever, but to become a perfect spirit being, similar to Christ (1 Jn. 3:1-2). Adam's sin

initiated the process of the first death, but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ set in motion the process for eternal life. So God's Loving Plan of Salvation was not frustrated by Adam's or mankind's sins, but instead offered the solution to it--if accepted. Remember, God had foreseen all ahead of time as 1 Peter 1:20 explains, "He (Christ) indeed was *foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was manifest in these last times for you."

So now Paul explains how this works, saying: "Therefore, as through one man's offense [Adam's] judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act [Christ] the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:18-21).

What Christ has done can nullify all the damage done by the sins from Adam's day until now. But does this mean that Christ will now do everything for us? Next, Paul refutes this completely and says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin [i.e., can we continue to break God's law] that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Rom. 6:1-2)

He clarifies that grace can never be used as license to continue sinning or breaking of God's laws. It is as if one receives undeserved forgiveness from the judge and then goes out, ignores the law, and commits more crimes, expecting be forgiven and get away with it! 2 Peter 2:19-22 says it's like a dog going back to its vomit.

So, Paul reminds us once baptized, we begin a new way of obedience and can never return to the old ways of sin and the false values of the world.

He explains, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). Notice, true baptism

represents being "buried" in a kind of "watery grave" where all sins are covered up. So baptism by "sprinkling" is not valid or biblical--another heresy accepted by many professing Christians.

William Barclay readily admits what the true baptism was like in the New Testament. He says, "Now, when we try to understand what Paul goes on to say, we must remember that baptism in his time was different from what it commonly is today. It was adult baptism. A man came to Christ as an individual in the early Church, often leaving his family behind...Commonly, baptism was by total immersion and that practice lent itself to a symbolism to which sprinkling does not so readily lend itself. When a man descended into the water and the water closed over his head, it was like being buried. When he emerged from the water, it was like rising from the grave. Baptism was symbolically like dying and rising again. The man died to one kind of life and rose to another; *he died to the old life of sin and rose to the new life of grace*" (*Daily Study Bible*, note on Rom. 6:2).

Paul adds, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*, knowing this, that our old man [old way of being] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that *we should no longer be slaves of sin*. For he who has died [in that watery grave] has been freed [or forgiven] from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, *He lives to God*. Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:5-11).

Paul summarizes the same concept in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

This means not going back to the old life or trampling on God's law. On the contrary, the law of God should now be more respected and kept than ever before.