

Sermon Notes for May 26

“If...then” Romans 5:1-11

Paul has been talking about Abram, also called Abraham, in Romans 4. This scripture from Genesis is the foundation for the first part of Romans 5, verses 1 through 11:

Genesis 15:6 The Voice (VOICE)

6 Abram believed God *and trusted in His promises*, so God counted it to his favor as righteousness.

Abraham is “justified” by his *faith* in God and in God’s covenant promises. This is extended to all and for things beyond any covenant with Jesus:

“Since we have been *acquitted and* made right through faith, we are able to experience *true and lasting peace* with God through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, *the Liberating King.*”

(We made war and separated ourselves because we followed other “little g” gods or we tried to make ourselves god. What Jesus did allowed us to find our way back home like the Prodigal Son and reconcile with our “father” God - Who ran to welcome us!)

When we are right with God we experience the **peace** of God. But also, did you know that **peace** has a twin? FF Bruce explains, “Peace and joy are twin blessings of the gospel: as an old preacher put it, ‘peace is joy resting; joy is peace dancing.’”

IF WE HAVE FAITH - THEN WE HAVE PEACE. IF WE HAVE PEACE - THEN WE HAVE JOY.

We return to the scripture: “Jesus leads us into a place of *radical* grace where we are able to celebrate the hope of experiencing God’s glory. And that’s not all. We also celebrate in seasons of suffering because we know that when we suffer we develop endurance, which shapes our characters. When our characters are refined, we learn what it means to hope *and anticipate God’s goodness*. And hope will never fail to satisfy our deepest need because the Holy Spirit that was given to us has flooded our hearts with God’s love.”

IF WE HAVE FAITH - THEN WE HAVE HOPE. IF WE HAVE HOPE - THEN WE HAVE LOVE.

Again, we return to our text: “When the time was right, the Anointed One died for all of us who were far from God, powerless, and weak. Now it is rare to find someone willing to die for an upright person, although it’s possible that someone may give up his life for one who is truly good. But *think about this*: while we were wasting our lives in sin, God revealed His powerful love to us *in a tangible display*—the Anointed One died for us. As a result, the blood of Jesus has made us right

with God now, and certainly we will be rescued by Him from God's wrath *in the future*. If we were in the heat of combat with God when His Son reconciled us by laying down His life, then how much more will we be saved by Jesus' *resurrection* life? In fact, we stand now reconciled *and at peace* with God. That's why we celebrate in God through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed."

THIS IS THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD!

THANKS BE TO GOD! Amen!

God's grace, God's love, God's humility, God's sacrifice, have allowed for us to be drawn to the bosom of God's will. We were separated, but now we are together again, and we can celebrate the peace we have with each other and with God. We can celebrate the joy in our hearts and in our lives and we can share that joy. We can endure because we have hope in God's mighty goodness. We can love and love powerfully, because God loved us first.

I am not a world-class scholar, but I think folks either don't know about Jesus or have some "so-called" reason to be mad at God. Life isn't fair. Bad things do happen to good people. Having faith does not equal prosperity. We can't give \$1000 to the church and expect that we have "paid" for safety.

Brené Brown says, "There's an old saying: 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.'"

Thus, we have to share our stories. We have to let folks know how much Jesus loves us! We have to talk about what our faith means and how it works.

Here is an illustration:

When the Bishop's ship stopped at a remote island, he was determined to use the time profitably. He came across three fishermen mending their nets. In pidgin English they explained, "We are Christians!"

The bishop was impressed. Did they know the Lord's Prayer? They had never heard of it. The bishop was shocked. "What do you say, then, when you pray?"

"We lift eyes to heaven. We pray, 'We are three, you are three, have mercy on us.'"

The bishop was appalled at the primitive nature of their prayer. So he spent the whole day teaching them the Lord's Prayer. The fishermen were poor learners; but they gave it all they had.

Months later the bishop's ship happened to pass again and he recalled with pleasure the fishermen who were now able to pray, thanks to his patient efforts. While he was lost in thought he noticed a spot of light in the east. The light kept approaching the ship and, as the bishop gazed in wonder, he

saw three figures *walking on the water*. The captain stopped the boat and everyone leaned over the rails to see this sight.

When they were within speaking distance, the bishop recognized his three friends.

“Bishop!” they exclaimed. “We hear your boat go past island and come hurry hurry to meet you.”

“What is it you want?” asked the awe-stricken bishop.

“Bishop,” they said, “we so, so sorry. We forget lovely prayer. We say, ‘Our Father in heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come. . .’ then we forget. Please tell us prayer again.”

The bishop felt humbled. “Go back to your homes, my friends, and each time you pray, say, ‘We are three, you are three, have mercy on us!’”

Taken from Soul Food: Stories to Nourish the Spirit and the heart, by Jack Kornfield and Christian Feldman, Harper San Francisco.

Our faith, through God’s grace will grant us peace and joy and hope and love...

AND THAT’S THE MESSAGE!