

The Christian Hope

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Date: 01 January 2000

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- [0 : 00] Now as we read together upon God for his guidance and his spirit, I would like to center our thoughts on a familiar passage in Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 5, at the beginning.
- Romans chapter 5, at the beginning. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope.
- Now in this passage, hope, you will see, is mentioned twice, but in an altogether different context.
- Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, by whom we have access by faith, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- [1 : 30] And then tribulations also, tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.
- The two passages would seem to describe not only two different situations, but experience us that are contradictory, mutually incompatible.
- Can it be, then, that we arrive at the Christian hope, by two altogether different roads? Then you will see that in each case, hope is mentioned here as a fruition of three very different processes.
- It is a goal you reach, on the one hand, by justification, peace, and access, and on the other, by tribulation, patience, and experience.
- Is it the same hope, the apostle speaks of? Is there any real contradiction? Or are there indeed two roads we can travel to a good hope by grace?
- [2 : 51] No, I think not. It is all the highway of salvation. The royal road, the king's highway. It is, I think, the transport that is different.
- We are familiar with varying modes of transport, giving us varying degrees of expedition and of comfort for our travels.
- Well, I think we have two differing modes of transport on the royal road to Christian hope. We have, in the first passage, the doctrinal road, the doctrinal approach which faith uses.
- And the second passage, we have the practical approach which experience has forced us to take. Now, I do think, and I submit to you, that not only do they lead to the same goal, but they have an intimate bearing on one another.
- This play, an interplay of faith upon life and of life upon faith, is a very real thing to our hearts today.
- [4 : 19] And I am going to try, with the help of God, to unravel these two modes of reaching, a well-grounded and a firmly established hope in Jesus Christ.
- And let us take, then, the first four steps given us here. Justification, peace, access by faith, and then rejoicing in hope.

Then we will take the other four steps given tribulation, patience, experience, hope.

These are virtually four milestones on the highway of salvation. The first four steps. First of all, there is out-position.

The starting place. Being justified by faith. Justification, as you know, is a matter of relationship.

[5 : 37] Sin has put us wrong with God, and justification puts us right with God. And until we are put right with God, life cannot begin on the Christian level.

Until we are put right with God, there can be no saving or gracious communications between God and our souls. So justification, a change of position and relationship, is the starting place of the Christian life.

But justification, you will notice, is not an unrelated act that stands alone and apart from other divine happenings.

It is presented here as the result of something that went before. Therefore, being justified.

And the therefore takes you back to what happened and is related in verses 24 and 25 of the preceding chapter.

[6 : 54] Jesus was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.

There you see, justification is related to our Lord Jesus Christ. And justification is utterly meaningless if you leave Christ out.

Nay, justification is impossible. It is immoral. It is un-justifiable if Christ is left out.

And so the apostle mentions two factors that underlie our justification. The one is that Christ was delivered for our offenses.

And the second, that he was raised again for our justification. There you see, first of all, the Lord Jesus Christ linking himself with us in our offensiveness.

[8 : 06] He identified himself with our criminality. And when he so identified himself, he came under law with us.

The law took its course with regard to him. And he was delivered for our offenses. Handed over so that the full penalty of our criminality might be experienced by him.

That is the first great act that led to our justification. The gracious identification of the Lord Jesus with us.

When he was willing to be numbered with the transgressors. When he willingly took our offensiveness upon himself. And bore our sins in his own consciousness on the tree.

And he was given to us. But then you will see another factor that he was raised again. The debt was liquidated.

[9 : 19] Full satisfaction was given. And God handed over to us, as it were, the receipt that the debt was paid. It was when he raised his son again from the dead.

That was the receipt bearing the sign manual, the signature of God. In the miracle of the resurrection.

God's declaration that the debt has been fully met, the criminality has been expunged, the sin has been put away, and now, by faith, we are linked to the one who died and rose. And as he shared our criminality and our offensiveness, we share his deliverance and his justification.

And so it is that Jesus Christ, in his death and resurrection, is the pivot on which our justification swings. It's a foundation on which we attain a new standing before our God.

Now, the second step in our journey towards a good hope is a possession. Second, first possession, then possession. For when your possession is put right, and not till then, you are in the line of receiving. God gives and you receive. And this is the great possession that comes to you. Through your standing being put right with God, we have peace with God, through Lord Jesus Christ. Peace with God. That is to say, it is a God made, peace with God made, and a God made, and a God made, and a God made, and a God made, and a God given, a peace. It is a peace of reconciliation. And reconciliation, need I tell you, has its home in heaven.

[11 : 44] It is divinely wrought. It is a reconciliation of which God himself is the author and the finisher.

And here it is called peace. Elsewhere it is called the peace of God. And we are told that we have it.

The revised version, by using a slightly different rendering, translated, let us have. No, that is not good enough. The Lord Jesus Christ has given us a heritage of reconciliation and peace, and we have it. And he is now ministering to us this peace that he wrought for us. It is mediated to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. And through him, you and I are put into personal possession of the peace of God.

By him, you are lifted into its calm, and into its power, and into its radiance. It is not our peace. It is not based on our circumstances, on our moods, or on our fortunes.

If so, it would be a varying and a fluctuating peace indeed. It is the peace of God, and it passeth all our understanding. It transcends all our intelligence, and all our calculations, and all our surmises, and all our fortunes.

[13 : 33] It is God's own transcendent peace. And we are asked to enter it through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have this as our eternal and changing possession.

And the third thing we have on the way to good hope is privilege. Our privilege. I am sorry for the alliteration. It really was not intended.

It just fell out like that. Privilege. Now, as a believer, put right with God, you have as your eternal heritage, the reconciliation, and the peace of God.

You cannot be alienated from it. But then, you have privileges that you are invited to enjoy.

And of all the great and glorious privileges that have come to you, because of your new relationship to God in Christ, there is one great one, the outstanding one perhaps mentioned here.

[14 : 50] It is your new standing in grace. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.

Oh, what a wonderful privilege it is to be standing now in grace. How blessedly different it is. Remember when you were standing on merit, on good conduct, on personal endeavor, on obedience to the law in your own strength.

What a precarious footfall you had. What a difficult standing. But how changed. You are now standing in grace.

It is not do, now it is done. It is not a try, it is trust. It is not give, it is take.

Everything has been revished and transformed. And all your relationships to God are now conditioned and suffused by his grace.

[16 : 08] And you have access to that standing always through Jesus Christ. Through him you can claim access. On his righteousness you stand.

And so in all your dealings with God, you take up your standing on grace. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you have not claimed that privilege, you are indeed a half-hearted, dispirited, undelivered soul.

What a deliverance it is now when we have stood so long on our own merit to find the eternal rock of Jesus' righteousness beneath us.

An outstanding holy in grace. That's our privilege. And the last step in this journey is prospect.

you see, grace gives you an outlook. And here it is. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[17 : 33] What a wonderful outlook you have as you take your standing in grace. grace. You see, many things and understand many things that you never saw or understood before for grace is a wonderful interpreter.

But, best of all, you get a vision of the glory of God. Grace is a wonderful introduction to glory.

one of the old Scottish Covenanters used to put it that grace is young glory. Grace is glory in its infancy.

Grace is the break of a glorious day. A day that shall shine to its noonday splendor.

And so you realize that grace has called you into eternal glory. But, you hope in that glory with a hope that is really a full taste of the glory that is to be because I read here that you rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[19 : 02] It's the hope of glory that brings the full taste of glory down and the song of glory awakens in your heart.

The music of glory stirs within your souls. You have not only a full gleam of the glory but a full taste of its blessedness.

Christ in you is an experience of glory that makes the hope a full taste of heaven began.

So you see that is the royal road. The road let us say of faith. The road of believing. The road outlined to us in the written word.

The road by which faith possesses its possessions in Christ. From our position we go into possession.

[20 : 03] From our possessions we enter into our privileges. And as we enjoy our privileges we realize that the best is yet to be.

We have prospects of a brighter and a more glorious inheritance to come. But how does the other road square with this?

For we must admit that Paul immediately pulls us as if it were down to a dusty and a rough and a hard way.

For he goes on to say we glory in tribulations also knowing an experience of ours knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience experience and experience hope.

Now let us look at these milestones on what seems to be a different a lower and a more toilsome road.

[21 : 15] it begins with tribulation. Now the word tribulation here really means testing testing testing by trial.

is there anybody here who can say that his Christian life began in a terrible storm of testing?

Immediately you made choice of the Lord Jesus Christ storm the clouds gathered the storm broke and your tempest tossed for days and weeks in your home in your office in all your relationships the strain was put on you at once and your health storm stayed.

that is not at all unique. You remember when Abraham long ago became God's pilgrim and traveled to a land of promise?

Through an toilsome road he reached Canaan at last. True he had delayed obedience on the way but into Canaan he came and the record that greets us is strange in the extreme and there was a famine then in the land.

[22 : 50] What a famine in the land of Canaan? Abraham met with no famines in Arab the Chaldees there was plenty and luxury to spare.

But when he entered into God's land he was thrust into the heart of a famine. God has strange ways of testing.

What does it mean? It means this that he has to prove to you that the justification that brought you into a new relationship to himself will stand every test that the lifeline established between you and your God will take every strain.

He is proving to your complete confirmation and satisfaction that no trial on earth will ever sever you from his grace or will ever change the blessed relationship between you and him.

You remember that is virtually what our Lord said to Simon. Simon, he said Satan has decided to have you that he may sift you as wheat.

[24 : 10] Now Satan's sifting is a terrific thing because when Satan sifts it is to take away the living grain and to leave only the shell the shell the mere husk behind and Simon was to be sifted in this malicious way and our Lord give him a promise I have prayed for thee not that thou would escape the sifting not even that thou should not fall but that I fail not that the lifeline between me and you would not be severed that when you shall fall and my new Lord didn't tell him there and then he was to fall but he did tell him that when he was at on his back at the feet of the devil there would still be a link between him and his

Lord that the devil could not sever his faith in Jesus would not fail him and so God puts the new life often often under a very severe test to prove to ourselves that the lifeline between us and him will take every strain and will outlast every tribulation testing but you will see that the next milestone on this somber road is patience it should be really perseverance the grace of carrying on now you will see that that follows from the testing God has taught you to carry on and persevere in his strength it is a marvelous attainment of the grace of

God that a sorely tried believer should be able at job of old to sit amidst the wreckage of what he held dear and say though he slay me yet will I trust him that's the grace of carrying on and how does that grace of carrying on how does that patience grip a Christian heart it's because he has peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and that peace is being ministered to him in the hour of his most desperate need and the peace of God takes possession and as we heard here already garrison takes control armed control armed control of heart and mind and that gives them a patience that will defy the storms of circumstances or the tribulations of the world the flesh and the devil we don't always remember that when

H.G. Spafford wrote that touching hymn we have just sung it was during a time of poignant bereavement and terrible tragedy he was a man of considerable financial interest in New York and on this occasion his wife and only daughter had gone on a voyage to Europe and he had to stay in New York to attend to his business interest one morning a message came through to him from New York that the bottom had gone out of the business market and the particular line in which his interest lay had completely collapsed and there he found himself practically penniless shorn of all that he had in the world but worse was to follow a cable arrived that the ship on which his wife and daughter had sailed to Europe had been wrecked his wife had been drowned at sea lost at sea and his daughter was landed in Europe bereft of everything and she sent a cable to her father asking what she should do and there that man of God with a wreckage of all he held dear wrote about and sat down and wrote when peace like a river attendeth my way when sorrow like sea billows roll whate'er my lot there was taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul friend what supernatural power could enable a man in such circumstances to say that

I'll tell you the peace of God which passeth all understanding patience persevering and the third is experience now experience is subjective experience here that is experience that comes from personal knowledge what we might call experimental knowledge of the facts and circumstances now it says that after the grace of perseverance we enter into a definite assured state of mind and heart based on personal knowledge of the all sufficiency of the grace of God that experience it is a certainty based on our own personal experience that the grace of

[31 : 00] God is sufficient to bear us up and to carry us through but how did that experience become out don't you remember that we have access through the Lord Jesus Christ into this grace wherein we stand and the Lord Jesus Christ is giving us access at that hour of need and ministering his grace to us to sustain us and to assure us and to give us a deep and shaken confidence that the grace of God will bear us up and will carry us through he has made it real to us in our experience in that hour and last there is hope ah then we realize that the grace of God links us to the God of grace and that the promises of grace cover the road to journey's end and as far as eye can see and heart can feel there is the promise of

God lo I am with you all the way we believe in the sufficiency of grace to our journey's end and so we have an established hope that the grace of God will abound towards us until we reach on and see him face to face and thank him for the love that sought for the blood that bolt and for the grace that sustained us all the way what does it mean it just means this that what you learned through faith by the teaching of the Holy Spirit has become real in your daily and only experience you are tested by the hardest test of the test of real sore difficult living and now you came to the conclusion that it works it works what faith has revealed to your heart experience has worked into your soul and all you can say now is

I thank God he revealed to me by spirit the way I trod it and it worked it worked he has made good to me all that faith ever claimed in the name and by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ it is mine it is mine as my personal possession and experience forever and ever and so the Christian whichever way he trains has a good hope through grace which shall not be put to shame for the love of God is being shed abroad in his heart through the Holy God given to him and everyone who makes contact with a Christian must surely make contact with the love of God shed abroad in his name