

# Peace with God

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[ 0 : 00 ] Find my text this morning in the epistle of Paul to the Romans chapter 5 and at the first verse. Romans chapter 5, verse 1.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The epistle to the Romans is probably the most profound theological treatise that the Apostle Paul ever penned.

In no other epistle of his does he with such thoroughness and in such detail explain the whole scheme of redemption.

In the first four chapters he is treating of justification. Now the term justification is one of the most important terms in Christian theology, in the Christian religion.

[ 1 : 11 ] There are some of the modern versions that do not use those precise theological, technical theological terms. And that is not at all to be commended.

Those terms are precise, exact terms. And in this matter, in matters such as these, precision and exactness are of the utmost importance.

The Bible is verbally inspired. And those precise terms were the terms used by the Holy Spirit, breathed out by the Holy Spirit, through those men whom the Spirit used, those human instruments whom the Spirit used, to write the books of Scripture.

Justification. Having dealt with justification in the first four chapters, Paul goes on now to tell the fruits of this justification.

The benefits that flow from justification. We'll talk about justification in a little while. But we notice that one of the fruits, the first of those fruits that flow from justification, which he mentions here, is peace with God.

[ 2 : 35 ] Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so first of all this morning, we consider this peace with God.

Paul says here, we have peace with God. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.

A justified person has peace with God. He possesses it. He has it, whether he is aware of having it or not. Whether or not he has entered into the conscious enjoyment of it, he possesses this peace. If you have been justified, then you have peace with God. You see, there are some Christians, and they lack assurance.

That is not at all an enviable position to be in. But if they have been truly justified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they possess peace with God.

[ 3 : 46 ] How is it that we can say that a person can have peace with God, and yet not be conscious of it? It is because the peace that the apostle is referring to here in this text is something that is objective.

He is not talking of something that is primarily inward. He is not speaking of an inward feeling of peace. He is talking of something that is outward, something that is objective.

He is not speaking of the peace of God. That is something very wonderful. That is something very glorious. An inward tranquility that the believer experiences as he commits all his concerns to the Lord.

This marvelous peace that pervades his whole being. The Bible says it is like a river. It is abundant and ever flowing. The peace of God.

But that is not what the apostle is speaking about here. Peace with God has to do rather with the individual relationship with God.

[ 5 : 03 ] It is a matter concerning his outward relationship with God himself. And our relationship with God, the relationship that man in his sin and unbelief has with God, the relationship of man in his natural condition with God, it is a relationship of enmity.

There is this hostility, there is this state of war, as it were, between man and his sin and the holy gods in heaven. It is not just that there is this enmity on man's part toward God.

That is certainly true. Man in his natural condition is opposed to God, the carnal-minded enmity against God.

But God's relationship with man in his sin is that of wrath. Now it's not popular maybe today to say that.

But that is the truth of God. That is the teaching of a Bible, the teaching of the word of God. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness in men.

[ 6 : 22 ] It could not be otherwise. God is holy. He is utterly holy. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. He is the God of burning holiness.

Our God is a consuming fire. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burning?

The, there is them, you see. And this is why we say that there is in man's relationship with God, the relationship between man and his sin and God and his holiness, there is this enmity, this alienation, this state of hostility.

but when a person when a sinner has been justified through faith in Christ when he has been justified his relationship with God is a relationship of peace he has peace with God God is at peace with him is what is signified in our text here this morning the relationship between the sinner and God once that sinner has been justified is no longer a relationship of alienation it is that of reconciliation that sinner is reconciled to God God is a reconciled God and his wrath has been turned away God in his goodness and in his love and in his kindness looks with favor upon that sinner his relationship with him is one of favor one of friendship one of blessing he blesses him with all spiritual blessings that sinner who has been justified knows God he has a personal knowledge of this God he enjoys communion with the great

God of heaven he has been brought into God's family he's a child in the family with all the privileges that that entails God causes everything to work together for his group God a supplies him with the strength needed and the grace needed for every demanding duty God God is at work within him bringing about a moral renovation sanctifying him making that person holy within God is preparing that one for glory that person is a special object of God's favor the object of God's special love of his covenant love of his loving kindness of that love that he bears toward his own people that sinner is at peace with God do you have peace with God or are you still in your sin if you are still in your sin then God's wrath rests upon you you are the object of his wrath that's upon you now he that believeth not the son shall not see life but the wrath of God abided on him we read at the end of John chapter 3 that means is already abiding on him and that wrath if you end your days here in this world and that condition will be upon you forever and forever and forever oh my friends seek this reconciliation with God seek peace with God

[ 10 : 17 ] God in his goodness and in his love has provided reconciliation with himself for sinful men and women and as Christ's ambassador here this morning in his death I beseech you be reconciled to God be concerned about this matter today tomorrow may be too late peace with God but secondly we notice here that we have this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ God God have reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 this peace with God is in

Christ we have it in Christ and through Christ and there is no other way by which any sinner can be reconciled to God and know peace with God but in and through the Lord Jesus Christ apart from Christ there is no gospel it is Christ that we preach it is not a system of morality that we preach that was a great mistake made by those people in the Scottish church last century the moderates you remember that in the national church there were two parties of preachers there were the evangelicals and there were the moderates those moderates were people of noble ideals and their sermons were really a sermon in which they commended morality Christian morality to their congregations but that is not the gospel that is the great mistake of people like Thomas Arnold who was the founder of that famous school rugby school in England perhaps one of the most famous of all the public schools that there are he had this noble ideal that he would found this school and those boys there would be taught

Christian morality moral living based upon the teachings of Christianity but that is not the gospel we preach not the system of morality as such it flows from our teaching of course and we must be on

our guard that we do not so present the message of the scriptures as to give the impression that the Christian religion is simply a means whereby people can overcome the difficulties that they meet with in this life that's the way it is sometimes presented that's the teaching of a cult for example the Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults they see people with all those difficulties in life and they say here is the answer to your difficulties they present the truth in the way that a doctor might present a certain drug to help people overcome physical problems we thank God for those drugs that do help people with their physical problems but the truth of God the gospel is not something that is man centered at all the gospel is

God centered we preach Christ we glory in Christ himself Jesus Christ is the mediator the mediator between God and man man is alienated from God because of his sins he needs to be reconciled to God he needs a mediator and Jesus Christ the Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator he needs he is the one you're uniquely qualified to be the mediator between God and man for he is himself God very God of very God eternally God and he became incarnate he took to himself our nature he's man as well he is the God man the only mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus he is the Lord Jesus

Christ we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ he is Lord he is supreme over all he rules all he's our owner he's our maker he has made us without him was not anything made that was made he has an absolute right to our unquestioning a trust and obedience to our complete allegiance he's Lord he's Jehovah he's God and he's Jesus Jesus is his human name the same name as Joshua he is one with us in our humanity he is the elder brother of his people and the name Jesus signifies also that he's a saviour the word means saviour the angel said to David before Jesus was born thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins he's Christ the Lord

[ 15 : 49 ] Jesus Christ he's the Messiah he's God's anointed the one who's God's anointed to be our prophet our priest and our king he is the Lord Jesus Christ we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ but we must put our text in its context the very first word of the text sends us back to the preceding chapter the word therefore because of the teaching that is given this is true there is that marvelous teaching that is given in those preceding chapters what we have here in our text this morning follows on from the teaching given in the preceding section and the preceding chapters of this great epistle the word therefore is one of the most important words in the Christian religion in Christian theology therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our

Lord Jesus Christ and when we do put this in its context and we do look back to the preceding section we can come to no other conclusion than this that the people of God are justified and have peace with God on account of the work of Christ it is due to the work of Christ that those who are justified have peace with God Paul in those preceding chapters talks a very great deal about the work of Christ indeed he is constantly speaking about the work of Christ he is teaching there about Christ's death about his sacrifice about the atonement that he has made about his blood shedding and he is making it very clear that it is because of what Christ has done dying for sinners of the cross that those who are justified have peace with God always this is where Paul places the emphasis always this is where we must place the emphasis too upon the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified we preach Christ crucified probably nowhere it has Paul so succinctly and so precisely teach and explain the meaning of Christ's death probably nobody teaches more precisely than in chapter 3 verse 25 where he talks of Jesus Christ whom God does set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood or by his blood God does set him forth to be a propitiation and there you have it again you see another of those technical theological terms the term propitiation and so many want to do away with that term and explain this in other way but we must not do that we must hold on to this term propitiation for it's a term that is so precise so exact it explains so exactly just what it is that the apostle here is teaching it is the word that the

Holy Spirit is used that he has breathed out through the apostle here the word in the original is precisely rendered in our version here by the term propitiation there is this enmity between God in his holiness and man in his sin the wrath of God is upon man in his sin and unless and until that wrath has been tanned away from man he cannot know and have and possess peace with God propitiation is the turning away of that wrath it is the appealing of wrath it is the diverting of wrath Christ by his sacrifice has turned away the wrath of God from his people

Christ crucified is a propitiation a wrath removing sacrifice Christ Jesus came and he stood in the sinner's place he became the sinner substitute he took upon himself our sins he bore our sins in his own body on the tree and in bearing the sins of his people he bore the punishment of them he bore the wrath of God against them that is the explanation all his dreadful suffering none of us can know and comprehend the torment of soul that our blessed Lord endured there of the cross when he cried out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me but he endured such dreadful torment because he was bearing the wrath of God against the sins of his people he was suffering his people's hell there as he died upon that cross and so by his sacrifice he has propitiated

[ 22 : 05 ] God turned away God's wrath from his people and remember this always remember this it is God himself who sent his son to be that wrath removing sacrifice to be that propitiation it is not that the son the loving son has done something by his sacrifice that has persuaded God to love his people that is a terrible misrepresentation of the truth it is a dreadful error God in his love sent his son to be the wrath removing sacrifice the father and the son are at one in this in their love for sin and in their hatred of sin God set him forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood the apostle John tells us that he is a propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world and a little later in that same epistle he says here in his love not that we loved

God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our things we have the people of God those who are justified have peace with God they have it through the Lord Jesus Christ and because of on account of his work his atoning sacrifice as a propitiation for sin and thirdly we notice that those who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ are those who are justified by faith therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ it is the past tense that is used here having been justified by faith is what the apostle is really saying having been justified by faith we have peace with God this peace with God it is the accompaniment it is the consequence it is the result it is the fruit of justification of being justified

Paul uses the term justification and the term justified a very great deal he uses a very great deal in this epistle and indeed in all his writings what does it mean what is justification what does it mean to be justified it does not mean to be made righteous to be made righteous within to be made virtuous it is not something that is inward it is not something that is dealing with the inward condition of a heart it is not that at all justification is outward it has to do with our outward status our outward standing our relationship with God although sanctification being made holy in character being made holy within always follows on from justification it is distinct from it justification has to do with our outward standing if then it is not being made holy within what really is it justification is declaring the sinner righteous it is you see our declaratory action it has to do with outward status with outward standing it is God declaring a sinner to be righteous declaring him to be innocent declaring him to be guiltless to be righteous to be acquitted it is a granting to him giving to him the verdict of acquittal words which we have in Deuteronomy chapter 25 the first verse there will perhaps help us to understand this there we read that there's part of them of saying law that if men had a dispute and they brought it to the law court them the judges were to declare a verdict and they were the chapter 25 of

Deuteronomy says they were to justify the righteous and condemn and condemn the wicked there you see justification and condemnation are set in antithesis the one to the other to condemn the guilty to condemn the wicked is not to make that person guilty it is simply to declare him guilty and similarly to justify the righteous is not to make that person righteous it is to declare him righteous it is to acquit him you see it is a legal term it is a forensic term it comes from the law court it is God declaring the sinner righteous in his standing before him and how does this come about how can it be that a sinner guilty in his sin can be declared righteous is that not in itself an unrighteous act declaring him righteous is it that he earns this justification by turning over a new leaf by reforming himself and beginning to do good work no it is not not at all by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight all our righteousnesses are a filthy wrack you will never never never justify yourself before God by any efforts of your own justification is of grace it is all of grace being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ

Jesus says chapter 3 and verse 24 God in his goodness in his good will in his love in his undeserved favor justify declared righteous those whom he justified in unearned mercy in sheer grace sheer goodness he declares them to be righteous in his sight a sinner is justified by grace justification is an act of God the judge declaring him to be righteous in his standing before God righteous but is it just is it righteous that a guilty sinner should be declared to be righteous is that

just all that God does is just and this is a just act on his part for what

[ 30 : 15 ] God does is he constitutes that sinner whom he justified he constitutes that sinner righteous by imputing righteousness to him the imputation of righteousness he imputes to him the perfect righteousness of Christ Christ came into this world and on behalf of those people he lived for 33 years here in this world a life of total obedience to God's law a life of perfect righteousness and God takes that righteousness and he imputes it to the sinner whom he justifies he gives it to him gives it as a gift he reckons it to be his he imputes Christ's righteousness to him and so declares into these what he is in his standing before him therefore a righteous person righteous with the righteousness of Christ if you're a Christian here this morning a Christian in a true sense of that term then in your standing in your state of people of

God you are perfectly righteous you are clothed with the flawless righteousness of Christ himself he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him and so you see the justified person can never perish he possesses he possesses that righteousness which God requires and can never be condemned there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus do you have this righteousness my friends if you do not have it then you are under condemnation God's wrath is still upon you you do not have peace with God and without this condemnation you shall perish eternity at the judgment you will be condemned condemned to an everlasting hell oh my friends seek seek the imputed righteousness of Christ and how is this righteousness it is well we are told here being justified by faith faith is the instrument by which the sinner receives this righteousness the righteousness of Christ that is a gift of

God in chapter one we are told that therein that is in the gospel therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is with him the just shall live by faith it's from faith to faith it's all of faith from beginning to end of faith no man ever work harder to obtain righteousness than did the German monk Martin Luther and it was all to no avail he could find no peace with God that way it was that God blessed to his soul eventually that text I quoted to you a moment ago Romans 1 17 therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith for it is written the just shall live by faith he realized that he could obtain this righteousness not by any efforts of his own but through faith alone and it is no exaggeration to say that that discovery by Martin

Luther changed the course of European history justification through faith alone Christ is the object of our faith it is in Christ this salvation is faith is trusting in him it is looking entirely and only to him it is resting upon him alone for salvation it is relying upon him it is abandoning sin and unbelief it is the abandoning of every other ground of confidence and relying only and utterly leaning entirely upon Jesus Christ justified through faith alone and I'm here this morning my friend to tell you that God calls you to Christ to faith in his son come to him come to him in simple childlike trust and you will be justified you will possess peace with

God God's wrath will be will have been turned away from you and you will possess peace with God God will declare you righteous in your standing in your standing in your status before him you will have peace with God you will be an heir of heaven oh what is it what is it that holds you back the way of salvation is before you walk in it and from you