

Fullness of Time: Peace with God

06.20.2021

We are in week 3 on our series

So if you want to grab a Bible – turn to Romans 5

I'm skipping a lot

You should read the letter to the Roman church on your own

Outside of Sunday mornings

I want you to focus on the first word in Romans 5

“Therefore”

Do you see it?

He's building a case from the previous chapters

And he concludes that case

And starts where he's going next in chapter 5

With “therefore”

Promise Keeper's story

Paul does the same thing

He's building a case

Layer by layer

Throughout this letter to the Roman church

This letter to us

Because we've been setting up the overall setting in week 1

And then burrowing into a specific cultural discussion last week

We've not really taken time to lay out the case that he's making in detail

So let me do that now

You can follow along in your bible

And I'll also put them on the screen:

Romans 1:16a - For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes

Remember the setting

The Jewish Christians had been kicked out of Rome 5 years before Paul wrote this letter

They were just now able to return because of Claudius' death

So he's calling on them

To live their life with boldness

Don't just slink back into town and blend in

Refuse to be ashamed of the Gospel

For it is the true power in this world

Claudius is not the true power

Nero is not the true power

The power of God – displayed in the Gospel – is the true power

So don't be ashamed

He said it "brings salvation to everyone who believes"

That's key - belief in the Gospel

Romans 2:4b - God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance

He's compelling the Roman church

In the face of a secular, hostile, immoral culture

To lead with kindness

Because God leads with kindness

One of the many things that didn't make it into last week's sermon

How many people

Living in an LGBT lifestyle

Would characterize the church

First word off the top of their head

As kind

Look at these statistics from Preston Sprinkle

Before I show you those

Let me tell you about a new thing we're doing

You may have noticed – over by the coffee – an empty bookshelf in the corner

Over the coming weeks, we're going to be filling that up with a few copies of several books

You go to Amazon and you'll find hundreds of books on every topic

So we want to make that simpler for you

We're going to keep a few copies of lots of books we recommend and trust

So – in response to last week – and a fairly large response & feedback from people

We're going to dedicate one shelf to a few books on sexuality

One of them is called – People to be loved by Preston Sprinkle

We're selling them at cost

Or you can go on Amazon and get them – same price

We're not trying to make money

We're just helping

OK – here's the statistics:

83% of LGBT people were raised in the church

51% left the church when they turned 18

Only 3% left because of the church's teaching on sexuality

Meaning 97% of LGBT people who left the church

Millions of people

97% left for relational reasons

They were mistreated

They weren't listened to

They judged or mocked or made fun of

They were isolated & alone

97%

“God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance”

May we become the kindest church possible

For everyone

Teach the truth

Stand on the authority of Scripture

But lovingly show kindness to everyone... always

This verse also shows us that God wants us

To come to repentance

#3:

Romans 3:21-22a - But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Our righteousness comes by faith

Not by works

Not by performance

Not by merit

Our righteousness comes by faith

Faith in Jesus to all who believe

A 4th point he hits

In chapter 4 ironically enough

Is about the faith of Abraham:

Romans 4:21b-22 – (Abraham was) fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Abraham had righteousness credited to him

Because he was fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He promised

Abraham had righteousness credited to him

Because he believed the word of God

And this is not just for Abraham

Romans 4:23-24 - The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

We are part of that promise

When we believe that God can do what God says

When we believe that God is right in all He decrees

Because of that faith

Paul says righteousness is credited to our account as well

In fact, let me just put those up there so that we can keep an eye on them:

Belief in the Gospel
Repentance
Faith
Credited righteousness

Belief in the Gospel

Repentance

Faith

Credited righteousness

Therefore...

Read Romans 5:1

Because of what Jesus has done

We can have peace with God

That is the good news

The good news is not morality

Although that's important

And the best, healthiest way to live

But the good news is not morality

The good news is not politics

Or amassing political power

The good news is not that all your problems go away

Health and wealth and always getting the upfront parking space

The good news is that because of God's great love for humanity

He sent Jesus Christ

His one & only Son

So that whoever believes in Him would not perish

But have peace with God

Eternally

Peace with God one day in Heaven

But also peace with God even now in this broken world

Paul gets specific in these verses

He tells us we can have peace with God

And like a good salesman

He tells us what that means for us

Read Romans 5:1-2

Our rejoicing

I wish more people understood this

Our rejoicing doesn't come because earth is like Heaven

Paul was beheaded for his faith a few years after he wrote this

Our rejoicing doesn't come because earth is like Heaven

Our rejoicing comes because Heaven awaits us

“Some glad morning when this life is over, I’m going to fly away”

“To depart from the body is to be present with the Lord”

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

What is seen is temporary...

But what is unseen is eternal

Read Romans 5:2b

That’s good news

But there’s more

Read Romans 5:3a

Wait a minute

Our rejoicing is not just about one-day, some-day

God has designed us so that we can rejoice now

That word “rejoice”

It’s in verse 2 & 3

We *rejoice* in the hope of the glory of God

And we also *rejoice* in our sufferings

That word rejoice

Doesn’t mean have a party

Or be fake

“Doctor says I’ve got cancer... yeah”

“My boss fired me... whoopee”

That’s not what it’s talking about at all

The word *kauchaomai* (καυχάομαι) {Cow-how-my}

Means “to boast”

Literally – “Head held high”

That’s a game-changer

So doc says I got cancer

But I’ve got my head held high

Because I have peace with Almighty God in this life

And I’ve got the hope of Heaven to come

You lose your job

Or get dumped

Or betrayed or besmirched

It’s gonna be OK

Keep your head held high

Head held high makes sense

But “boast” seemed a little off

And then it hit me

I’m an Indianapolis Colts fan

And the last couple years have been tough

But used to

When we had Andrew Luck or Peyton Manning at quarterback

And we’d be down in the 4th quarter

I’m still talking smack

Because I believed that those boys were gonna pull it out

There’s been a time or two over the years, where I record the game...

“I don’t know how this is going to end, but I know my team wins”

Read Romans 5:2b-3a

Why?

Read Romans 5:3-5

You may say

“That takes a lot of faith!”

It takes a lot of faith to keep my head held high when I face cancer or unemployment or divorce court or betrayal

“That takes a lot of faith!”

What gives you that kind of hope?!?

I’m glad you asked:

Read Romans 5:6-8

I see it like this:

We live in a broken world
But if we have peace with God
We can rejoice

Keep our head held high

We have the hope of Heaven

And we know that God is bringing purpose to our pain

So if this is true

And I believe this is true

If this is true

What does it mean if you can’t rejoice?

If you’re in a tight spot

And you can’t keep your head held high?

I think we all have our moments

So there will certainly be times where faith is difficult

But if you often struggle to rejoice

If life's pain consistently throws you for a loop

I think you need to take a good long look in the mirror

No judgement here

But take a good long look in the mirror

And ask yourself if you have peace with God

And if not

Go back and look at Paul's larger thesis:

Belief in the Gospel

Repentance

Faith

Credited righteousness