



Text: Romans 5:1-11¹

Series: Right Living: God's Righteousness Transforming Our Lives

Title: Part 6: The Warm Side of Justified

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Place: First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

I want to talk with you this week about what I've called "the warm side of justified." The passage we just read is full of what might be called "warm" words. They're words that are full of emotion and feeling and sense. They are words we are meant to experience. Words like...

Peace...

Hope...

Joy...

Love...

But before we jump into what Paul has to say about our experience of these things, we need to make sure our foundation is secure. All of these things can be fleeting in our experience. There are days we don't feel peaceful or hopeful. There are times we aren't joyful. There are days we don't sense love. But Paul wants us to know that all these "warm" realities are ours to experience because of something that is not touched by the ups and downs of human experience. He begins his teaching with these words...

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith...." Romans 5:1

Our experience of peace, joy, hope and love are all grounded in the unchanging reality of justification by faith. Last week we looked at the foundation that has been laid for our relationship with God in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We looked at three key words that establish our confidence in our relationship with God.

First, we're told by Paul that ...

We are justified

God has declared us to be acquitted of all charges & right in His sight

Although we are guilty of sin, the verdict that God declares over us is "innocent of all charge"...

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**“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.”
Romans 3:23-25**

Second, we’re told by Paul that the reason we are declared innocent is that Jesus Christ has paid our penalty for us. We have been...

**We are redeemed
God has paid our penalty for us**

Jesus’ death on the cross is the payment of our penalty. Paul tells us that...

“the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

And **third**, Paul tells us that God’s case against us is closed. Because of Jesus’ death on our behalf...

**God is propitiated
God’s justice has been satisfied**

The word “propitiation” refers to **the offering of a sacrifice that satisfies God’s demands for justice and sets aside God’s wrath against sin.** God’s verdict that we are innocent will never be overturned on appeal – God is satisfied that justice has been served in the death of Jesus Christ.

The scene that Paul depicts in Romans 3 is set in a courtroom. The language he uses is the language of the legal profession: “justified,” (v.24) is a legal word. In a courtroom the proceedings are formal, the language is exact, the mood is somber – courtrooms are places where important, life-changing decisions are made. In the courtroom into which Paul brings us, God’s courtroom, our eternal destiny is being decided – that is somber, serious business! God wants us to know beyond a shadow of a doubt what His verdict is and why He gave it: *we have been declared innocent because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.* Our eternal destiny hangs on whether or not we accept by faith His offer of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ: those are the terms of God’s offer of pardon.

Has that foundation been laid in your life?

Some years ago, George Wilson was convicted of murder and condemned to die. Public sentiment was running against capital punishment at the time and some of his friends lobbied the president of the United States on his behalf to grant George Wilson a pardon. The president agreed and wrote out a pardon



declaration. But a strange thing happened: George Wilson refused to accept the pardon.

Could he be executed? The president had issued a pardon in his name! The case went to the United States Supreme Court. After deliberating over the matter, the chief justice issued this decision:

"A pardon is a parchment whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that which the receiver gives to it. George Wilson has refused to accept the pardon. We cannot conceive why he would do so, but he has. Therefore, George Wilson must die." George Wilson, as punishment for his crime, was hanged. Pardon, declared the Supreme Court, must not only be granted, it must be accepted. © 2008 PreachingToday.com
George Maronge, Jr., Birmingham, Alabama. Leadership, Vol. 12, no. 3

Have you accepted God's offer of pardon? Has the foundation of justification been laid in your life?

The courtroom isn't the only picture Paul uses to describe our relationship with God. God is our judge, and he's more. But as Paul moves to describe some aspects of that "more," he reminds us that unless we accept God's offer of pardon through faith in Jesus Christ, God will never be more to us than a Judge.

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1-2

Last week I challenged you with a question. I asked you: **On what basis does God declare us righteous: by faith or by perfect obedience?** As I said last week, most people quickly respond that we are declared righteous "by faith." I told you that that answer was wrong. Let me repeat that: that answer is wrong.

We are declared righteous in God's sight by perfect righteousness – the perfect righteousness of Jesus which we receive as a gift from God by faith in Jesus Christ. Our confidence isn't in our faith; our confidence is in Jesus' righteousness which we receive by faith. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul put it this way...

"For by grace you have been saved through faith." Ephesians 2:8

Faith is our empty hands reaching out to receive God's grace for us. *Hear me clearly:* our salvation, our confidence before God, our hope and security isn't found in our empty hands but in what God puts into those empty hands of faith: the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Paul tells us...



“now the righteousness of God has been manifested ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” Romans 3:21-22

From the moment I put my faith in Jesus Christ and forever, whenever God looks at me, he no longer sees my sin and guilt; he sees the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He has declared me justified; he has redeemed me from my imprisonment to sin and his justice has been satisfied; there will be no overturning of his verdict and no appeals.

Your faith and mine is an up and down thing; one day we are full of faith, the next we're struggling to believe. We need a much more solid ground for our confidence than our expression of faith; we need to establish our confidence on the unchanging ground of what Jesus has done for us.

Let me ask you another question: **On what do you stand in your relationship with God? On the ground of your faith in God; or on the ground of God's grace for you?**

Let me repeat: faith is merely our empty hands reaching out to receive what God wants to freely give us in Jesus Christ. Our confidence must never be in our empty hands but in what God has promised to put into those empty hands. And what He's promised to give us, Paul tells us, is...

“this grace in which we stand” Romans 5:2

The first of the “warm” words I want us to think about is the word “peace.” I want us to think together for a few minutes about...

Grace that establishes peace with God

“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1

When we think of the word “peace” we often think of it in terms of the absence of conflict. Now it's true that we were once enemies of God because of our sin and now, through Jesus' death, we've been reconciled to God. (Col 1:21-22) We are no longer God's enemies. But what Paul has in mind is a much richer experience of peace than just the end of hostilities.

When Paul used the word “peace” he was writing in the Greek language but he was thinking in the Hebrew language of his Jewish roots. The word “peace” in Hebrew is shalom. Shalom means ‘completeness’, ‘soundness’ or ‘well-being’. When we have peace with God, God is on our side, he's in our corner. When we have peace with God, God is our Friend. (John 15:13-14) When we have “peace with God” we have a relationship in which God pours his grace into our lives and make our lives whole and complete.



In the Old Testament there are beautiful pictures of shalom but I love the one painted by the prophet Isaiah...

“the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” Isaiah 32:17-18

Peace with God is a sense of “aahh...life is good, all is well.” Peace with God is security in our relationship with Him, it is quietness and rest in God’s provision for us, and it is trust that God has our good in mind because He’s our Friend. God’s grace in which we now stand is the source of our peace.

We can go through life knowing that God’s grace goes with us every moment of the day; that God’s grace precedes us into every situation; that it follows us, and fills us and holds us forever. God’s peace is there for us to experience because it is ours in Jesus Christ: “we have peace with God.”

And the experience of it is there just for the asking. Paul gives us guidance on what to do when we aren’t experiencing shalom. He tells us...

“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Because we have “peace with God” we can experience “the peace of God.” It’s peace that comes to us because of our relationship with God, not because of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. God’s peace invades our hearts and minds even when the things that caused us to be anxious and worried still surround us.

There once was a king who announced a painting contest. He was building a new palace, and he wanted the main entrance hall to be decorated with a large work of art. The king envisioned his kingdom as a peaceful land, so whoever’s painting best symbolized peace would win a large cash prize.

Over the next few months, hundreds of paintings arrived at the palace. The king decided on the top two. Before announcing a winner, he hung both paintings in the palace for public viewing.

The first painting was of a majestic lake, so tranquil and still that the lush hills behind it were perfectly mirrored in its reflection. The sky was a brilliant blue with soft, puffy clouds floating above. Wildflowers bursting with color outlined the lake, and a family of deer calmly grazed in a far meadow. All who saw it felt peace and happiness.



The second painting portrayed a tall mountain cliff, rugged and strong. A few small trees grew out of the cracks of the face of the cliff, with gnarled roots clinging for life. A foamy waterfall angrily crashed down the cliff and into the rocky land below. Above, dark ominous clouds loomed, and in the distance lightning flashed. Halfway up the cliff grew a small bush. In its branches, a bird sat in a nest apparently warming her eggs.

After several weeks, the king declared the second painting the winner. Confused and upset, the people asked the king to explain his decision. He said, "Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is a state of mind. Those who experience peace have love in their hearts even when turmoil surrounds them." © 2008 PreachingToday.com Michael Webb, "The Peace Prize," TheRomantic.com newsletter; submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec

The second and third "warm" words I want us to think about are "hope" and "joy"...

Hope that produces joy

"and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:2

As believers in Jesus Christ we have **a forward looking hope that anticipates a glorious future.**

One day we will experience something for which we were created: the glory of God.

When God created us he made us to share a portion of himself. King David wrote in one of his most beautiful psalms about the glory we were made to experience...

"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." Psalm 8:3-5

Our human problem is that we haven't lived up to the standard of God's glory that we were designed to express. Our essential problem, as Paul tells us, is that...

"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23

Because of our sin, our lives are marked by "un-glory." Birth defects, sickness, declining abilities and death, these are all symptoms of "un-glory." Because of sin, every one of us will experience "un-glory" at some point in our lives. But the reason that God has reached into our lives and justified us is so that some day



he might return us to the glory for which we were created. Later in Romans, Paul wrote that...

“those whom [God] justified he also glorified.” Romans 8:30

And it was in this hope, this hope of glory, that we were saved. (Romans 8:24) In his letter to the Philippians, Paul spells out our hope for glory...

**“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”
Philippians 3:20-21**

While we experience this life of “un-glory” Paul challenges us to live with a confident hope in the day of our transformation when everything will be made new. It’s this forward-looking, confident hope in the glory that awaits us that enables us to live through the “un-glory” we experience in this life. That’s the essence of Paul’s challenge...

“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” Romans 5:3-4

Please notice that Paul does not call us to rejoice *because* of our sufferings. There isn’t anything joyful about cancer or financial failure or rejection by those we love. He challenges us to rejoice *in* our sufferings. The only way this makes sense is if we take the long view of suffering. This life is not the end of the story. There is a day when all the things we experience will be refined and resolved into God’s perfect plan for our lives. Even the “un-glory” will be glorified!

How does hope sustains us and enable us to endure suffering? Does God bring anything good out of the hardships of our lives?

Let me tell you the story of Nancy & David Guthrie. Forgive me, it’s a long story, but it was a deep hardship and through it God revealed a profound lesson.

Nancy and David’s first baby was a girl they named Hope. Very soon after her birth they knew something was wrong. Hope had clubfeet, was extremely lethargic and was unable to suck to feed herself. She was diagnosed with Zeilweger Syndrome, a disorder that stops her body from riding itself of toxic substances. Most babies with the disease live less than six months.

“At first, I thought it was my fault,” says Nancy “that I didn’t pray enough for a healthy baby and was now paying for it.” Nancy was familiar with prayer. She grew up going to church, attended a Christian college, and had a great job in Christian publishing. Her life was filled with the pursuit of Christian things but as



she later realized, not necessarily with the pursuit of Christ. "There was a sense of hypocrisy, you know? I was so busy for God and interested in theological things, working with Christian authors and books, and working hard at my church, but I wasn't talking to him or listening to him by reading his word ...

"I think for those of us who have grown up in the church, it takes a miracle rescue touch from God to break out of going through the motions. It takes great humility to say 'What I've been doing hasn't been working, and it hasn't been real.'" Nancy began by telling God, "It's been so long since we've talked, and I don't even know how to do this or why you'd want to talk to me, but can we start talking?"

For Nancy, talking meant committing to regular Bible study. Slowly, she felt the hypocrisy being replaced by a hunger to know God more ...

She considered a recent Bible study she had done on the Book of Job. At the time, she wondered if she could do what Job did. She recalled the passage where God said, "My servant Job will be faithful to me no matter what."

"I remember being so challenged by that," she says. "I couldn't imagine God ever having that confidence in me." As Nancy looked at Hope, she thought, 'Here's my chance to respond to the worst thing I can imagine in a way that is pleasing to God.'

It wasn't easy. Nancy had to make that decision over and over again during the next few months. Her grieving didn't get easier. Hope wasn't healed. The pain didn't lessen. But each day, Nancy tried to respond faithfully despite her loneliness and grief. When people offered to drop off meals, she and David invited them to stay. When people expressed pity at their circumstances, she asked them to celebrate their daughter's life. "Whereas before we talked to our neighbors about our lawns, we never had meaningless conversations anymore. We were talking about life and death and Jesus in a way we never had before." In preparing for her own loss, Nancy began to help others.

On her 199th day of life, Hope took her last breath.

Both parents must be carriers of the recessive gene for Zeilweger Syndrome to occur. The Guthries decided David would have a vasectomy to prevent another pregnancy. Only one in 2,000 vasectomies fail, so the couple felt secure. But one year after Hope died, Nancy was pregnant again. Prenatal testing revealed their third child would also have Zeilweger Syndrome.

Time magazine interviewed Nancy and David for an article in which the writer compared their plight to that of Job's in the Old Testament. The article quotes an entry from Nancy's journal: "[Like Job], we often cannot see the hidden purposes of God," she wrote. "But we can determine to be faithful and keep walking toward Him in the darkness."



Named after the angel, Gabriel was born on July 16, 2001, the same day the Guthries' story appeared in Time. They knew what to expect. Their son's first day would be his best.

Gabriel died 183 days later.

Nancy says that answering how or why begins with another question: what? What do we believe about God? "Do I trust the character of God enough to believe he's in control and whatever he allows in my life will be for my ultimate good—not [that] whatever he allows in my life is good?" says Nancy.

Did you catch what Nancy said? She said that "whatever he allows in my life will be for my ultimate good—not [that] whatever he allows in my life is good." She wasn't rejoicing because of her suffering but in her suffering.

She went on: "Can I trust knowing him will be good enough to make whatever it cost me to know him worth it? A lot of people say, 'Oh, I could never do that.' And David and I say, 'You couldn't. But if God allows this in your life, he will also give to you the grace you need to respond to it faithfully.'"

"I've experienced one of the worst things that can happen," says Nancy, "and I haven't found I'm strong and I can handle it. But I have found out God's promise is true, his grace is sufficient. Now when I read 'My grace is sufficient' (2 Corinthians 12:9), I believe it not only because Jesus said it in the Bible—I believe it because I've experienced it."

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Endurance, character, hope – I wish we didn't need hardship to produce these qualities in our lives but it seems as if there isn't any other way. But God will redeem all the "un-glory" we endure one day. Trust him. Anticipate the glory and rejoice in it.

Finally, the last "warm" word I want us to reflect on is the word "love" and it's connected to the word "hope." I want us to think about...

Love that sustains hope

Paul wrote...

"and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Romans

5:5



It's a long way from today to the day of glory. The path winds its way through long days and months and years that stretch away into the distance. But God hasn't left us to walk the path alone. He's "poured" his love into our hearts by His Spirit. The word translated as "poured" is more literally, "flooded."

But there are days when that flood seems a trickle, aren't there? But those sensations aren't the reality. There are days when we may doubt his love for us, but on those days he invites us to look at a picture of His love. Carrying pictures of our loved ones with us is one of the ways we keep the feeling of warmth alive even when we're separated by miles. On those days when you don't sense the flood of God's love for you, look at this picture...

"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

Look to the cross.

Look to Jesus.

Look to love.

In his book Hidden in Plain Sight: The Secret of More, author and pastor Mark Buchanan tells the story of a woman who had a personal picture of God's love painted for her. Buchanan writes...

Tracy is one of the worship leaders at our church. One Sunday, as she sat at the piano, she talked about the difficult week she'd just been through. It was chaotic, she said—a mess of petty crises on top of a rash of minor accidents, all mixed up in a soup can of crazy busyness. It had left her weary and cranky. She got up that Sunday to lead worship and felt spent, with nothing more to give.

However, Tracy's 8-year-old daughter, Brenna, helped her gain new perspective earlier that morning. When Tracy had walked into the living room, the window was covered with scrawl. Using a crayon, Brenna had scribbled something across the picture window, top to bottom and side to side.

*At first, it seemed like one more mess for Tracy to clean up. Then she saw what Brenna had written: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindnece, goodnece, faithfulnece, gentlnece and selfcantrol** (in Brenna's delightful spelling).*

Mark writes: "Tracy stopped, drank it in. Her heart flooded with light. It was exactly what she needed to be reminded about: the gift of the fruit of the Spirit that arises, not by our circumstances, but by Christ within us.

And then Tracy noticed one more thing Brenna had written at the edge of the window: Love one another. Only Brenna, in her creative spelling, had written:

Love won another." © 2008 PreachingToday.com Mark Buchanan, *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Secret of More* (Thomas Nelson, 2007); submitted by Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky



Warm words from God to you and me:

Peace...
Joy...
Hope...
Love...

Are they yours? If you “have been justified by faith” in “our Lord Jesus Christ” they are! Do you want to experience them? Then just reach out your empty hands of faith and allow God to give them to you.

Let’s pray.

- The Lord’s Table
- Songs of Communion:
 - Arise, My Soul, Arise
 - To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul
- Benediction