

Studies in Romans

The Foundation of our Hope (5:9-11)

Context

- **1:1-17 Introduction**
- **1:18-4:25 The problem and God's solution**
 - 1:18-3:20 The problem: God's wrath at our unrighteousness
 - 3:21-4:25 God's solution: justification by faith
- **5:1-8:39 What it means to be justified by faith**
 - 5:1-11 If we are justified, we will be saved from God's wrath
 - 5:12-21 Through His death, Christ has established a realm of righteousness, which will supersede the realm of sin and death (established by Adam) in which all mankind naturally lives.

Review:

In **Romans 5:1** Paul begins to list some of the wonderful benefits of being justified by faith:

1. Peace with God
2. An introduction into "this grace in which we stand"
3. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God
4. We can rejoice in our sufferings

So we asked the question – **how is it that we can we rejoice in our sufferings?** See **v. 3**. *What is it that we know that helps us rejoice in trouble rather than grumble and complain or even accuse God?*

- We know that tribulation brings about perseverance (**v. 3b**)
- We know that perseverance brings about proven character (**v. 4b**)
- We know that proven character brings about hope (**v. 4b**)

But then we asked, **doesn't suffering do the opposite? Doesn't suffering make you doubt God's love?**

What is the ultimate foundation on which our Christian hope rests—our hope of glory? It firmly rests on the steadfast love of God. And **how can we know God loves us?** How can we be sure of God's love (and therefore know that our hope will not be disappointed)? We can be sure of God's love, Paul says, "because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (**v. 5**), and then he goes on to describe that love. See **Rom. 5:6-8**.

Verse 5 is the pivot upon which this whole passage turns. Paul has told us that we can rejoice in the future and the way can even rejoice in the sufferings of the present, because they lead to an increase in our confidence about what God will do. They increase our hope.

And how do we know that this confidence—this hope is well-founded?

The first reason: our confidence—our hope is well-founded because it is based on God's love (see **vv. 6-8**).

The proof of God's love is seen when we look back to what God did for us in Christ's death on the cross. Paul makes his point by focussing on what we were like when God put forward Jesus as a sacrifice. Christ died for us while we were still wilful rebels in His world. That's the first reason for our confident hope. Our hope is founded on God's wonderful, gracious love for us.

Second reason:

We have confidence—**our hope is well-founded because it is based on the fact that we have been justified and reconciled. See vv. 9-10.**

Do you see the argument there? What God has done for us in the past *proves* that He will not neglect us in the future. Take note of the wonderful, encouraging logic we see here from Paul.

First Paul looks back to our justification:

Verse 9: *“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”*

See also **1 Thess. 1:10 and 5:9.**

“Justified”?

We shall be “saved.” *Why would Paul speak about rescue in future tense?*

Verse 10 – Paul restates the case. *“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”*

Again, take note of the beautiful, encouraging logic.

“Reconciled”?

But Paul’s not done. One step higher! **Verse 11:** *“More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*

“We also rejoice in God!” Paul says. **See Psalm 34:2-3; Hab. 3:18 and Psalm 43:4).**

Note **v. 11** again: it is all through *Jesus*. Jesus has brought us to God and now God is our Friend. So we rejoice in God Himself. As John Piper says, “God is the gospel!”

At this point in Romans, we have got a number of “unanswered questions”:

- If Jesus’ death sufficient for all of humanity?
- If I know I’ll be saved in the future, can I just keep on sinning now?
- Does the fact that I still sin now mean I may not be saved in the end?

For further discussion

(Perhaps choose one or more to think about further or to discuss in a group)

- *How does our knowledge about what God has done in the past give us confidence in the future?*
- *How can Christians be sure that they will be saved on Judgement Day? Are you sure you will be saved from God’s anger? What is necessary for you to be sure? How can we help one another to be certain of our salvation? Why is it important that Christians should be sure they are going to heaven?*
- *How might tonight’s passage (**Romans 5**) change the way you pray this week?*
- *A Christian friend comes to you anxious that they are not right with God, despite having believed in Jesus’ death for their sins. They are not aware of any specific serious wrongdoing in their lives. What could you say from **Romans 5** to encourage them?*
- *What difference does Paul’s use of the word “we” have on our understanding of this passage? In other words, how does a shared rejoicing in God affect a church? How will a shared rejoicing in God show itself in the life of a church, in our conversations and in our sharing of the good news?*