

*Romans 5:1-11*¹The Results of Faith ([5:1–21](#))*(1) Peace and Hope* ([5:1–8](#))

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

[5:1–5](#) The “therefore” with which chap. [5](#) begins connects it to what Paul had written in the previous verses. In fact, “since we have been justified through faith” (v. [1](#)) summarizes the entire argument of chaps. [1–4](#). Those who have placed their trust in Christ can rest assured that their faith has been credited to them as righteousness ([Rom 4:24](#)). Their confidence is based on the fact that Christ was put to death for their sins and raised again that they might be declared just ([Rom 4:25](#)).

At this point we encounter a textual problem. The **UBS** text chooses the indicative (“we have peace”) rather than the subjunctive (“let us have peace”). The **NIV** adopts the first option, which points to the objective state of peace with God that follows from having been granted a right standing with him. The second option understands peace as a subjective state of mind and encourages the readers to lay hold of the fact that they have been justified and to experience the peace that flows from that reality. **Moffatt**, for example, translates, “Let us enjoy the peace we have.” In much the same way, **Phillips** has, “Let us grasp the fact that we have peace.” Was Paul continuing to build a theological foundation, or was he moving on to the ethical implications that flow from that foundation? Perhaps the two options are sufficiently interwoven so that while we must choose between Greek variants, we do not need to limit the verse to a single emphasis.

The first consequence of justification is “peace with God.” Peace is a word rich with meaning. It speaks of the new relationship that exists between God and those who turn to him in faith (cf. [Eph 2:14–15](#); [Col 1:21–22](#)). As Paul used the term, it does not primarily depict a state of inner tranquility. It is external and objective. To have “peace with God” means to be in a relationship with God in which all the hostility caused by sin has been removed. It is to exist no longer under the wrath of God. It is not necessary, however, in the interests of literary precision to remove all psychological connotations from the term. Peace is also the joyful experience of those who live in harmony with God, other people, and themselves.

1. Robert H. Mounce, *New American Commentary – Volume 27: Romans*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 131-137.

This kind of peace is made possible through the redemptive activity of “our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul delighted to dwell on the full title of his Savior. Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah (“Christ”). He is God (“Lord”). And he is “our[s]!” Through him we have been ushered into the presence of God the Father. By faith we have gained access (a second consequence of justification) into this gracious relationship in which we now find ourselves (cf. [Eph 2:18](#)). It leads us to rejoice in our hope of sharing “the glory of God” (a third consequence).

Those who chose the subjunctive (“let us have peace”) in v. [1](#) should now translate “let us rejoice.” In this case it is not a question of variants but the fact that the indicative and subjunctive forms of the Greek verb are the same (*kauchōmetha*). The **TCNT** has the unusually felicitous translation, “Let us exult in our hope of attaining God’s glorious ideal.” All have fallen short of that ideal, “the glory of God” ([3:23](#)); but through the rich provisions offered by God, we can move toward the goal he had in mind in creation. The fall of humankind did not put an end to God’s plans once and for all but rather necessitated an eternally significant detour through the cross and the empty tomb. God’s plan that we should reflect his glory is now being realized in the lives of obedient believers.

Not only do we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but we also rejoice in our sufferings (cf. [Jas 1:2–4](#)). The believers’ joy is not simply something they hope to experience in the future but a present reality even in times of trials and distress. Their joy is not a stoic determination to make the best out of a bad situation. Christian suffering is a source of joy because its purpose is to build character in the believer.

Paul argued that suffering produces steadfastness, and steadfastness results in “strength of character” (**TCNT**). The Greek term in v. [4](#) for “character” denotes that which has been proven by trial. The **NEB** translates “endurance brings proof that we have stood the test.” Thus it is the experience of coming through a time of testing that produces hope. Our confidence in God’s ability and willingness to bring us through difficult times leads to an ever brighter hope for that which lies beyond. Hope is not superficial optimism but the confident assurance of that which will surely come to pass. It distinguishes those who have kept the faith in times of severe testing.

[5:5–8](#) Hope never disappoints (v. [5](#)). It does not let the believer down. The reason is simple. God floods our hearts with his love through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Hope is rewarded with a fresh awareness of the incomprehensible love of God. God’s Holy Spirit, who enters our life in response to faith, is at work helping us grasp the reality of what it means to be encircled by the love of God. In another place, after speaking of things that “no eye has seen” and “no ear has heard,” Paul pointed out that these very things have been revealed by the Spirit to those who love God and that we have received the Spirit so “that we may understand what God has freely given us” ([1 Cor 2:12](#)).

The connection between vv. [5–6](#) is not clear. The Greek manuscript Vaticanus suggests a transition such as “if indeed [as we believe].” The punctuation—a period at the end of v. [6](#) but none at v. [5](#)—ties v. [6](#) to what has gone before. This would have us understand the text to say that God has poured his love into our hearts if indeed, as we believe, Christ died for the ungodly. A personal experience of God’s love comes as a result of Christ’s death. Most translations, however, begin a new thought with v. [6](#). Christ died for the ungodly “at just the right time” (**Goodspeed** has “at the decisive moment”). Paul wrote to the Galatians that God sent his Son “when the time had fully come” ([Gal 4:4](#)). Not only was it the right time in terms of the sweep of history but it was the right time in the sense that we were powerless to break the chains of sin. We were unable to help ourselves. Bound by sin and destined for an eternity apart from God, no amount of struggle could free us from condemnation. It was for us “the right time” for Christ’s atoning death.

Now it is a most unusual thing for people to give up their lives even for an upright person (v. 7). Life is precious, and the yearning to live is strong. Nevertheless, once in a while a person has sufficient courage to die for a “a generous friend” (Williams). The remarkable thing about the death of Christ was that it took place “while we were still sinners” (1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 3:16). God did not wait until we had performed well enough to merit his love (which, of course, no one ever could) before he acted in love on our behalf. Christ died for us while we were still alienated from him and cared nothing for his attention or affection.

God is the Father who, having forgiven his prodigal son, watched daily for his return (Luke 15:20). Little wonder that the beloved disciple John exclaimed, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us!” (1 John 3:1). The proof of God's amazing love for us is the gift of his only Son (John 3:16). The cross defines what Scripture means by “love” (1 John 3:16). Love is the voluntary placing of the welfare of others ahead of one's own. It is action, not sentiment. Love is the mightiest force in the world. It is the ethical goal of human existence. God is love (1 John 4:16), and that determines the goal toward which all redemptive history moves.

(2) *Reconciliation* (5:9–11)

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

5:9–11 In this paragraph Paul twice argued from the greater to the lesser. The first premise is that we have now been declared righteous by virtue of the shedding of Christ's blood (the greater). Since that is true, it is far more certain that we will be saved from wrath by him (the lesser). If the premise (which is greater in import) is true, we can be sure that the logical corollary (of lesser import) is also true. That the verb is future in tense indicates that the wrath in question is eschatological.

The second argument is parallel. The “greater” statement is that while we were enemies of God, we were reconciled by the death of his Son. The transaction took place while we were in a state of hostility toward God (cf. Col 1:21). In 2 Corinthians Paul wrote that God reconciled the world to himself in Christ, yet every person must respond in faith in order for that forgiveness to become effective in his or her case (2 Cor 5:19–20). Reconciliation is a personal relationship; it cannot be a unilateral action on the part of God alone. He has provided forgiveness for all people through the once-for-all death of his Son. Only when that forgiveness is accepted by faith is the compact completed and reconciliation takes place. God's part is finished; our part is a matter of individual decision.

It is agreed that reconciliation came through the death of Christ. The line of reasoning continues. How much more shall we be “saved through his life” (the “lesser” statement). Some take this as a reference to the life of Christ in the believer (cf. Phil 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ”; Col 1:27, “Christ in you, the hope of glory”). It is better to understand it in connection with the intercessory ministry of the resurrected Christ. The author of Hebrews said that Christ “always lives to intercede for ... those who come to God through him” (Heb 7:25; cf. Rom 8:34). In the immediate context the promised deliverance is more than eschatological. It is a daily deliverance from the power and dominion of sin. God has made every provision for us to live out our lives in holiness. His abiding presence provides the power to break free from the control of sin (6:18).

Not only is the power for deliverance available through Christ but through him we “[continue to] rejoice.” He is the one who made our reconciliation with God possible. At the heart of God's redemptive plan stands one solitary figure—Jesus Christ, his Son, our Savior. Through his death he has made it possible for those who believe to receive forgiveness for their sins and enter into an eternal relationship of joy with God the Father.