

## Readings

John [16:12-15](#)

Romans 5:1-5 (Peace and Joy, Hope and Love)

We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory. **3** And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. **4** The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. **5** And hope will never bring us shame. That's because God's love has been poured into our hearts. This happened through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

## Sermon

In the space of five verses, our reading from Romans mentions God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and is no doubt why it appears in the Lectionary for Trinity Sunday. However my sermon is not about the Holy Trinity - I think that as a beginner to sermon writing it is a good idea to steer well clear of that particular topic.

Actually when I read this passage in preparation it struck me that it contains valuable teaching for beginners, lessons really about life as a Christian and the benefits of being a Christian. If you were trying to explain to someone what it means to be a Christian and you only had a single Bible passage this could very easily fit the bill.

In this short passage Paul manages to fit in righteousness, faith, peace, joy, hope, love and God's amazing grace. I am going to read the passage again to give you a chance to really listen.

*"We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory. **3** And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. **4** The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. **5** And hope will never bring us shame. That's because God's love has been poured into our hearts. This happened through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*

There are real stepping stones to faith here. I suggested they may be useful for beginners but I could also see me using them as a way of relighting or strengthening my faith.

First Paul tell us that we have been made right with God and that we can be at peace with God, all because Jesus died for us. We could not achieve this on our own, there is nothing that we can do or strive to do that will give us the same rights. It's impossible. Instead it's about what Jesus has already done for us. We don't have to do anything but respond to what Jesus has already done for us - he gave his life to take away the punishment for our sin and to give us eternal life. Our response is to accept this gift, and to follow him for the rest of our life. Think about this and make it personal, you might want to close your eyes and ponder on these words, "Jesus died on the cross for me".

<pause>

This is where our faith begins and because of that act we have been made right with God. Let us make this our cornerstone. Everything else is built upon it.

We can now be at peace with God. Peace with God isn't a feeling. It's a fact. It's a status that we have with God because of what Jesus did for us. That's what you enjoy with God, no matter how

you feel or what you've done. "We have peace with God because of what Jesus has done for us." But it doesn't stop there. We've also been granted ACCESS TO GOD'S GRACE. We stand in a position of grace. It's like we live in a constant state of God's favour being poured out upon us. Grace has given us a foothold in the door that God will one day swing wide open to us. That's why God's grace is so amazing. God's grace isn't just a one-time thing. If you've become a Christian, you live in God's grace. You live in a constant state of grace.

So we have been made right with God and are granted peace and grace. Paul goes on to say that we are filled with joy because we expect to share in God's glory. An old preacher said that "peace is joy resting - Joy is peace dancing".

In verse 2 Paul suggests that "we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory." He's speaking of the PROMISE OF GOD'S GLORY. You and I don't know how long we have to live. We don't know the troubles that lie between us and death. We don't know the mistakes that we will make. But Paul tells us that our position is secure. We don't have to worry about it. We can confidently look forward to heaven. It's a done deal. We can look forward to it, because nothing can take it away. In fact, Paul even mentions in verses 3 and 4 that not even suffering or other problems can take our hope away. Hope is what keeps us going when we're ready to give up on ourselves. Our new status gives us hope that we will one day receive what God has promised us.

In some versions of the Bible verse 5 is translated as, "Hope will not disappoint us". God will keep his promises to us. How do we know that?

Because God loves us. Verse 5 says that God's love has been poured into our hearts. He hasn't given us little drops of his love. He's drenched us with his love. God has even given us his Holy Spirit to communicate that love.

And so everything comes back to love. God loves us so much that he didn't wait for us to love him before he made the ultimate sacrifice for us. Jesus didn't die for righteous people. Jesus died for those of us who have messed up our lives. Before you and I had even thought of God, God had thought of us – and he decided to give up his Son for us.

You never have to worry about earning God's love. When you were at your worst, God loved you with his best. God's drenched you with his love. He's given you the ultimate proof of his love. He's given you his only Son. He's never going to give up on you. You share in his Amazing Grace.

**Amen**