

## Peace with God Through Faith

**Romans 5:1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

**5:2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**5:3** And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

**5:4** And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

**5:5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

**5:6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

### DISCUSSION

This is just one of the passages about suffering in the Bible. It has helped me a lot - even though in practising it I felt pain and still do as I learn to let go of my self-sufficiency and live in HIM and the GRACE-Sufficiency which His death and resurrection made possible.

The writer of the above passage, Paul, had an awesome skill in putting forward an irrefutable set of arguments, which go as follows:

PREMISE NO 1:

‘Therefore’ (vs 1) (This refers to the statements made in the end of Chapter 4?): *If* it is true that we are redeemed by the supernatural power released by what Jesus did (paying the penalty of death for us and then rising from the dead) *then* we can have *PEACE* with God through Jesus Christ. In summary: if the salvation message is true then we are entitled to peace.

PREMISE NO 2: In addition, we also have access to *GRACE*

PREMISE NO 3: The above status or ‘state of grace’ is PERMANENT and IRREVOCABLE.

- This ‘state of grace’ cannot be removed from us,
- We cannot be removed from this ‘state of grace’.

(The word 'STAND' - 'grace wherein we STAND' is translated from a Greek word which also means 'abide' and 'covenant'. In other words: God has promised it and so that is how it will be and NO ONE and NOTHING can take this access to grace away from us.)

PREMISE NO 4: We also find ourselves standing in 'the wide open spaces of God's glory, standing tall and shouting our praise' (Petersen – The Message)

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION – LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE**

We access the power of grace by:

1. PRACTISING how to *act* in **FAITH** (this is a different quality of faith from the 'free gift' kind of faith, we have to work at this one). The work involves exercising our faith 'muscles'. We practise this best when things are going wrong. Just like lifting weights in physical exercise, the heavier the weight the more exercise we get. (When things are going well we don't really need to do much work)

When things are not going well we might experience anxiety and fear about money and provision or status or health, or anger about threats or insults. The work of acting in Faith involves noticing the emotion and the thoughts that accompany them, and then remembering God's promises and our relationship with Him as Father/Shepherd. If we do this then it becomes possible to let go of finding our own solution and developing patience

- JEHOVAH-JIREH, our PROVIDER will be present and ready to act in accordance with His Name (Genesis 22.14) (*He will definitely provide for our needs and He may also provide for our wants but there is no guarantee that He will decide to do so and we cannot command Him to -so forget the prosperity teaching*).
- JEHOVAH-ROPHE the God who HEALS will be present and ready to act in accordance with His Name (Exodus 15:22-26) (*not that we can demand it but He **CAN** heal all levels of man's being, including the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, if He decides to do so – so forget the demands for healing*)
- JEHOVAH-NISSI, 'The Lord our Banner' the MIGHTY CONQUEROR will be present and ready to act in accordance with His Name (Exodus 17:15) The name is about God on the battlefield like a banner being flown over a mighty army. Eugene Petersen interprets this as 'God-of- Angel-

Armies' in 'The Message' bible. One angel can kill 185 000 humans in a night and can certainly deal with anyone attacking you (*not that we can demand it but God can stop the attack if He decides to do so*)

## 2. PRACTISING HUMILITY.

- Christ would trust his Dad all the way to the cross and death.
- The Holy Spirit wants to make us more like Christ which means dying to our own good ideas and demands
- That is why we cannot DEMAND that He acts according to any of His descriptions above.
- The decision about our fate is up to Him and Him alone and no programmes or methods or rituals or special ways of praying will FORCE God to let us be God. This sounds harsh but it is something we ALL try out when acting from the old man. It makes for very attractive teaching and can build large groups of followers
- Christ trusted His Dad all the way to the cross and death. That is why we cannot DEMAND that He acts according to any of His descriptions above. God will not allow us to be gods or turn to any other gods and then use His power on our behalf.

Our egos are our biggest downfall in this challenge as we want to do it ourselves, and fix it ourselves and decide what would be best. We want our desires to be met and we do not want our comfort zones challenged or taken away. If we act in our own interests and get our own way we sometimes become proud and even arrogant. These attitudes are poisonous to humility and that is why we are deeply, deeply encouraged to deny ourselves, seek what Christ would do and let Him guide our every step (Galatians 2:20)

*If* , at all times we practise faith and humility (thereby accessing grace) *then*, especially when we have problems we are promised in the passage at the top that we will:

- DEVELOP *patience* which will then
- TRAIN us to *experience*
- HOPE (the meaning of this word was translated from a Greek word meaning to anticipate usually with pleasure or to have an expectation or *confidence*) and
- CONFIDENCE that
- *As* the love of God is extravagantly poured to overflowing in our hearts (shed abroad) *then*, after being trained like this for a time, no matter

WHAT, no matter WHO, no matter WHICH memories haunt us or WHY the future scares us or WHEN the present shames us, NOTHING ever, EVER will make us ashamed again!

All of the above is not something we do or we accomplish. The Holy Spirit does it in us when we ask God for the wisdom to apply the above. HE is the only one Who knows what to do in every situation. It takes a gradual turning from 'whatever can I do next to fix this?' The very next step will come to me in my thoughts or some other way and that will be one step in God's direction. It may seem small and insignificant, and the patience Paul is talking about here is not resignation but a courageous acceptance of the problems with a willingness to take those small steps when God says 'move'. We don't always feel like moving but we put our feet on the floor and walk and make our hands do whatever needs to be done, however small.

We try to solve the whole problem. God knows the future and sometimes shines a light, which shows us years ahead, like telling Abraham he would have a son which only happened years later. Sometimes he shines the light only on our feet and illuminates the very next step, the very next second. That develops trust - just like the page in Good King Wenceslas looked down and just took one step at a time in perfect trust.

So that means that we can: (verse 3.1) 'rejoice' which includes boasting with my mouth and glory with my body (maybe lift hands to Him or even jump for joy even if I don't feel joyful) *whilst still IN the struggle*

We can rejoice and boast about the 'hope' we are promised thanking God *for the struggle*. This hope is a combination of feeling and thinking and is greatly enhanced by reading God's promises, and by reminding our minds of how things work in God's reality (Discernment - God's kingdom not the kingdom of this world).

In the struggle we have a conscious reminder of who God is, of His dignity and can 'glory' in this maybe listening to or singing praise and worship songs – in other words *thanking God in the struggle*

When trials and tribulation and trouble comes we are encouraged to do all that we have been doing above: rejoice and hope in the glory of God. This is counter-intuitive and goes against our instincts and common sense and yearnings. Even

though we may not feel like it we can move our hands and feet and mouths and do these things anyway.

So to summarise with a sort of an equation, with the understanding that knowledge is intellectual understanding and wisdom is knowing what is the right thing to do and doing it:

Knowledge:

Resurrection of Christ = justification/redemption = free pass to grace (the keys to this door are practicing faith and humility) = irrevocable access to Jehovah=Jireh+ Jehovah-Rophe+Jehovah Nissi = patience+experience+hope = no shame = overflowing love of God = no fear even to death

Wisdom: move hands + mouth + feet= praise God in mind and heart and body + endure the fear = patience + experience + hope = no shame