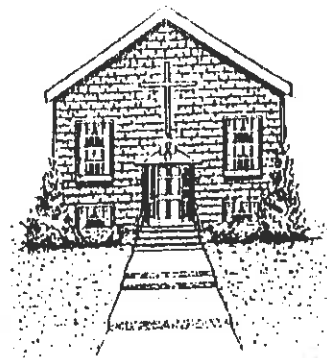


DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages

52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Series: Exposition of Romans 5
Scripture: Romans 5:1

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Lesson 1 Oct. 14, 1990

A SIMPLE EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 5:1

Introduction It is my theory that for many of us, our lives are slowly growing more and more complicated.

- In terms of TIME, we never seem to have enough; there are so many activities and obligations that make demands on our schedules.
- In terms of EQUIPMENT, we have all kinds of automobiles and boats and airplanes and computers and microwaves and radio-telephones and security systems and digital-audio-tape recorders
- In terms of MONEY, our financial portfolio's are getting more diverse (that's my high-finance talk for this year!). Your tax picture, your insurance coverage, if you have them, your investments, your debts and even your giving...these are all growing more complex, are they not?
- In terms of MINISTRY here at DBC, did you notice our new bulletin board out front? There are now no less than twelve divisions of ministry in which a person can plug into here at DBC.
- In terms of RELATIONSHIPS, you have your families--and that, for a number of you requires a computer to track! There's your work associates. There's your personal friends, your Christian brothers and sisters (some of whom may be friends, eh?), your neighbors, etc.

Our week-to-week lives are slowly complicating themselves into where the old *phrases* aren't even sufficient--now you hear people using words like "networking," and "portfolios"...

I think most of you have to look at your week-to-week lives and admit that, yes, it has grown more complicated than it used to be, or *might* have been if you lived 100 or even 50 years ago.

For this reason, dear ones, I think it becomes MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT that *each of us* have a simple and strong understanding of the Bible. I think that as the rest of your life grows more complex and hectic, your need for a CLEAR and SIMPLE grasp of Scripture also grows.

Its interesting that among the most influential and powerful people in the country--who are true Christians--they testify almost universally to a *profound* hunger for the Word alone, the pure Word of God.

Our church calls itself a BIBLE CHURCH. That ought to make it clear what we emphasize here: the Bible. And its why I'm real proud of the fact that we have an adult Sunday School class just working their way through the early chapters of Genesis; an AWANA ministry which is heavy on helping kids simply *memorize* and understand key verses in the Bible; several mid-week Bible studies; and it is why right now I am burdened to simply go through some key passages in the Scripture from this pulpit. I can do sermon series on topics--we did one on the Christian life recently. But you need to have a good grasp on the *central* truths of the Bible. That will help you in your own personal Christian walk. That will feed you as you try to understand your role in your family, and be a blessing to them. It will help you deal with evangelism. It will help you recover from longstanding inner hurts and injuries. The Word of GOD is the program you and I need, dear ones!

And this week as I was in Florida, and I drove by a lot of big churches. I haven't seen so many fancy and "artsy" church buildings since I left Dallas. (I love the church names I saw down there--at one street intersection there were two Baptist churches kitty-corner across from each other--*Mt. Zion Evangelical Baptist Church* and the *Moses Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church*. --I said, "Lord, take me home to Dartmouth where at least I can't spit, and hit another evangelical church!)

Well folks, as individuals' lives and church life grow more complex, you and I need to feast more hungrily just on the Word of God; and we need to clearly and simply understand it! I'm not saying we water it down--God forbid! But our *thinking* needs to be clear about what Scripture teaches--THAT is my burden right now, folks!

So, we have read in Romans chapter 3, today. And what I want us to do is to simply consider the first verse of Romans 5 together. Its a *marvelous* verse! Let's look first, then, at:

STARTING in the faith...

First of all, let's start a DIAGRAM of this verse...

Rom.1-4

^<< ...THEREFORE

This points us *first*, back at the first four chapters of what he wrote to the Roman Christians. Its *because* man is fundamentally ruined by sin, that his reconciliation with a holy God must be initiated and accomplished BY that God. In a nutshell, that is what the first four chs. are saying. So, when Paul says *therefore*, the next point he's going to make RESTS UPON the points he's already made. The picture is this: man is broken, and he keeps *refining* his brokenness. Therefore, the only way man could escape the wrath which he deserves, is to flee IN FAITH over to *God's provision*. That solution--that reconciliation--that escape from wrath--is to believe in the One who already suffered the wrath. Make sense? That's what the "therefore" is THERE FOR!

HAVING BEEN.....

The next thing is to see that what Paul was laying out in chs. 1-4, was the *means* by which God transforms people from being enemies of the State--HIS State of holiness, that is, was to pay for their sins, conditioned upon their personal reliance ON His plan, and then based upon JESUS' substitution, to sovereignly DECLARE all those people *positionally righteous*. Now, I know that's a lot of theology to digest, but that is a summary of the whole of Romans 1-4!

The process of justification for a Christian, is in the past! Paul says, "Hey, you Roman Christians--you've BEEN justified by God Himself. Its already happened for you if you're a Christian. That's HOW a person starts out in the faith. You don't START ACTING LIKE a Christian, and then you become one! Walking into the Vasco da Gama Club doesn't make me Portuguese. Walking into a garage doesn't make me a car. The thing that MAKES a person a Christian, is to *personally sign up for justification*. EVERY person on the planet is eligible to trust God individually to make him or her perfectly righteous. Its a POSITIONAL kind of righteousness that I'm talking about--it has nothing to do with performance, any more than your CITIZENSHIP in this country has anything to do with your performance. That's what a Christian is: a person who has already been declared BY GOD to be positionally perfect.

JUSTIFIED

Dikaiothentes - to declare righteous

BY FAITH..... (that is, by means of...)

Rom.8:30-33; I Cor.6:11; Gal.2:16,17

The way that happens, is when an individual--of any conscious age, color, station, nationality, etc.--places their fate in God's hands. They are justified by God the moment that faith OCCURS in their heart, mind and will--and therefore, we call it *saving* faith.

Questions, so far?

Let's look, then, at the rest of the verse. Paul now moves on to the main part of this verse. It has to do with...

ENJOYING the faith...

LET US HAVE PEACE...

eirenen - the removal of God's wrath

Rom.14:17; 2 Cor.13:11; Eph.2:14,17;
Phil.4:7,9

The Christian life is meant to be enjoyed. It's not meant to be a gruelling hardship, grinding it out miserably from one horrible day to the next. The STATE of being at peace permanently with God is meant to be one of JOY. In the Greek, the verse should read (as some of your Bible's will note in the margin),

"...let us keep on having peace with God..." in the sense that a believer is responsible

for having peace in the sense of MAKING it, but in the sense of ENJOYING what we already have. You and I are not aware very often of just *how much* at peace with God we really are (assuming you're a Christian). We need to enjoy our justified position.

Yes, we still sin, but that's OK. You repent of it, ask the Lord for forgiveness, pick yourself up and move on, if you're justified. You've had bad times and maybe real big disappointments over the years, but that's OK. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, if you're justified. You get sick, your car fritzes out, You have to wait till next year to buy that new "whatever", but that's OK. You can wait on Him in full confidence that you will be happy, if you're justified.

You see, dear ones, there's great cause for open season on joy--at least according to Romans 5:1. If you've been justified, practice the state of peace. Cease striving with Him, or cringing *from His presence*. Cease from acting like the pagans who have real good reason to fear Him.

**WITH GOD...
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...**

Christ Himself, is the central HERO of the faith. Yes, we've got a lot of talk about Jesus in this Bible Church. He's the One through whom we have our justification. He's the one who brings me into a permanent state of peace with God. There is no other. Mary baker Eddy can't do it. Buddha can't do it. Mohammed can't do it. Only Jesus, the true Promised One of Israel can do it. Zeus, Jupiter, Athena, Plato, Aristotle, Socorates, Caesar all are useless and hopeless. There is only ONE WAY to peace with the Living God.

Dear ones, do you see the simple truth of this verse? Feast on it this week. In the midst of hectic schedules, and complicated emotional situations you're maybe facing--feast on Romans 5:1. BE AT PEACE with yourself, with your parents, with your spouses and with your kids --because you're at peace with God.

Practical Applications

1. You don't have to worry about your past failures, rebellion, or sin, if you've been justified.
2. You don't have to win arguments--ultimately your significance and importance on the planet are *not* on the line.
3. You can cut loose any longstanding anger--because the real peace we have between ourselves and God is the very antidote to ALL anger.
4. You can be proud of your identity as a Christian--as was Paul in Romans 1:16.

Series: Exposition of Romans 5
Scripture: Romans 5:2-11

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Lesson 2 Oct. 21, 1990

WHAT GOOD IS JUSTIFICATION?

Introduction Today we're asking the question, "What good is this 'justification' stuff?" And to start with, think about that phrase from the Apostle James that is often quoted by believers, but has sometimes been sort of *mocked* by some Christians, because it seems so hard to do--almost impossible, seemingly. That is where James wrote (1:2,3), "*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.*"

Now how are we supposed to consider something *joyful*, if its a trial? Are we supposed to blind ourselves to the facts? Are we supposed to *pretend* that we're happy (at least when we're around other Christians), even though inside we're really hurting? What is it that James is telling us we're supposed to feel, when we're going through a trial?

You know, part of the problem of going through a trial, is that while you're in it, you're unsure of how its going to turn out, and so FEAR kicks in, doesn't it? If we knew in advance what the outcome of the trial was going to be--even if it wasn't happy--don't you think it would be easier to face? At least you would know where you stand... But we're not gifted with insight into the future, and so a trial brews up all kinds of fear. How are we supposed to experience JOY, when we're fighting fear?

Well, for a Christian, one of the big things the Lord Jesus is working through His Spirit to produce in your life, is JOY. And the kind of Spirit-induced joy that He is cultivating, is not circumstance-dependent. C.S. Lewis wrote--"The ultimate purpose of God in *all* His work, is to increase joy." I like that. For you, when you're in times of prosperity, or when you're going through trouble, God's PLAN for you; His PROGRAM for you, is to tie you more and more into HIS joy. I like something John MacArthur said:

"If you've got a problem with *joy*, then your problem isn't your circumstances, it's the problem of *glorifying God*. Because if you glorify Him, He gives joy. You say, 'Oh, I've got a tough life-- I just don't have any joy.'

Let me tell you how to get joy. Real easy. Just start glorifying God--just like Habakkuk did: '*Yes, I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hind's feet, and makes me walk on my*

high places.' Habakkuk started glorifying God AND BY THE TIME HE GOT DONE his circumstances hadn't changed one bit. They never changed--same lousy, rotten, stinking mess that he was in when he started. Yet he says, 'I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.' You say, what are you rejoicing about? You're in the same mess you've always been in. OH, BUT WHAT A GOD I HAVE!!! It took Habakkuk a whole chapter to work through everything He knew about God, and only then does he come to that rejoicing. He GLORIFIED God for a chapter, and the result was JOY IN HIS HEART! That's the pattern. If you've got no joy, then you need to glorify God...the Lord wants to give you joy.

Well, folks, this is "all by way of introduction" (as preachers like to say!) It brings us to Romans 5 again, where I want to spend a few minutes with you again today.

Rom.5:1 (review)

Last week, we looked at Paul's appeal that we should ENJOY THE STATE of peace that God has declared! Men declare war, but when men and women and children trust Christ, God declares peace! And Paul says, "Hey, brethren, let's enjoy that peace we have with God!"

Rom.5:2 Another way to put it, as Paul does in vs. 2, is to recognize that through Christ we have entered through a door into a state of GRACE. That's the *first thing* "justification" gets you. It makes you eligible for God's unmerited favor. No man can get into that state of God's favor and undeserved kindness except through the one door that He has made--through a personal and saving relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. J.I. Packer put it this way:

"Justification is the truly dramatic transition from the status of a condemned criminal awaiting a terrible sentence, to that of an heir, awaiting a fabulous inheritance!" Knowing God, p.121

Jesus is the Grace-Teacher! We say that when a person is growing in the Christian faith, they are "growing in grace." If you're a believer, then you LIVE in a state of uninterrupted, incorruptible FAVOR from God. Jesus is the reason for this, He is the SOURCE of it, and once you come to know Christ, living within His lovingkindness is the basis of all real joy in this world! When I became a Christian at 19 years old, I experienced real joy for the first time. It wasn't that I all of a sudden became this problem-free happy kind of guy. It was that I HAD HOPE for the first time in my life! Like MacArthur said,

"Yes, I'm still stuck in these circumstances...BUT WHAT A GOD I HAVE!"

Rom.5:3-5 Now in these verses, Paul gives us the *process* by which we can experience the joy of the Lord, even when going through some tough trials. It has FOUR STAGES:

TRIBULATION, which brings about
 |
 |___> PERSEVERANCE, which brings about
 |

|___> PROVEN CHARACTER, which brings about

|___> HOPE, a kind of which does not
disappoint

The TRIBULATIONS or, *sufferings*, that Paul had in mind were probably of a severe nature...but it is a general term, and we can attach a lot of things to it. Let's say, for instance, that you're having a real hard problem at work. Your Christian faith is either under attack, or you're being tempted to compromise it in some way. That is a "tribulation." It's a trial, and chances are you feel afflicted and under stress because of it. But as you work through the particular trial, over time--

--and keep that in mind: you have to give your faith TIME to work out a problem--

and as you're faithful to the Lord *through* the problem, you start to develop PERSEVERANCE.

PERSEVERANCE is "the ability to remain under difficulties without giving in." On the job, it may be not giving into the cynical views your co-workers share. It may be not bowing to the pressure to work more or when you should not. As you trust the Lord *through* the trial, you develop steadfastness for what is right--Paul calls it "perseverance."

As you grow into more of a *persevering* Christian, that, in turn, deepens your CHARACTER, as a Christian. It's like when you blow up a balloon, and then look at it under the light--The pressure of the air reveals both the strong and the weak points in the balloon by light and dark patches.

Going through a trial (say, at work) , and developing a stick-to-it-iveness for the Lord, will make you a better employee. You will become more dependable or reliable, say. You may not stay at that JOB, because I don't think the Lord guarantees that He will always make out circumstances exactly what we want, necessarily. But you will develop CHARACTER. On the job, it may be more HONESTY, or better WORK HABITS, or more HUMILITY or INTEGRITY. But the Lord Jesus will use the trials you're facing to make you a **TOUGHER** Christian, frankly. Someone said,

You can judge a person's character pretty well, by whether he asks for a light burden, or a strong back.

You maybe can't see the difference from one week to the next, but over time, you will see *yourself* growing in grace. Justification works like that. You see *some* immediate changes in your life, but the real tough issues take time. Its more than just natural maturity. Its a *toughness* that gradually builds HOPE in your life, and that is the last STAGE in the process.

HOPE is that quality we enjoy as Christians, which keeps us going. It is not an automatic thing--it comes through persevering under trial, and through developing deep character. Some Christians, though saved, go through most of their Christian lives with little sense of HOPE. They are

continually concentrating on the DISAPPOINTMENTS they've experienced. Their hope is weak, because their character is shallow. Their character is shallow because they have caved in under trial more often than not.

But the justified person who concentrates on glorifying God during trials eventually develops a keen sense of hope, and no one or nothing can take it away from that person. Its been bought over time, by relying on Christ, time after time, in trial after trial.

Romans 5:5,6 Christian hope doesn't disappoint, Paul says, because it is grounded in a very important theological fact. The Christian has personally, and profoundly experienced God's love for him or her.

God's Spirit drenches me with the conviction, and the assurance that my life is controlled by a loving God, even if I enter tribulation. No matter what *circumstances* I face, I know my SINS are forgiven. No matter how sick I may get, or how few people meet up to my expectations, or how far I do or don't go professionally, my SINS are forgiven.

The Lord's Table reminds me of that, often. And my NEED for God to love me and forgive me is something that I never outgrow. I can always remember back to when I was an enemy of God, helpless and hopeless. But THEN God loved me, and in the eternal mind of God He marked me out as a recipient of His saving love.

When you're going through some trial, dear ones, glorify God in it. Use the trial as an opportunity to reacquaint yourself with your original "introduction" into the Christian faith. Think back to when you really sensed your need of the Savior, to when you asked Him into your life and heart--and GROUND YOUR hope in what you have seen of God's love. It will see you through whatever trial comes your way...

God never guarantees that He will keep you OUT of trial. But He promises to go through the trial with you. He promises to keep on loving you, to USE that trial-----even though you may not be able to foresee the outcome-----to build character and hope in you.

James says to "consider it joy...knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." Paul says that because of the confidence we have in God's loving *superintendence* of our lives, we can "exult in our tribulations."

Series: Exposition of Romans 5
Scripture: Romans 5:6-12

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Lesson 3 Nov. 11, 1990

WHY PEOPLE NEED THE GRACE OF GOD

Introduction Churches are preaching a lot of different messages today. Across the whole American church scene, most of those messages have to do with *ethical* issues. There's a lot of concern for the matter of **JUSTICE**, and that, of course, is something the Bible says a lot about, since the GOD of the Bible is a *just* God. There is much talk in churches about **EQUALITY** between people of different makeups, and from a Christian angle we acknowledge the Apostle Paul's words to the Galatian churches concerning a believer's spiritual status,

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal.3:28) So, in a spiritual sense, the Bible addresses the question of equality too.

Another thing that gets mentioned a lot in church ministries around the land is the practice of a difficult virtue: **ACCEPTANCE**. Church people are being told that they need to *accept* people of different races, ethnic backgrounds, health level and even sexual orientation. Acceptance is the big thing among Unitarian people, and they say that they even accept any CREED. The Bible is not silent on acceptance either though. Believers are admonished to accept one another, and to engage the discipline of a godly love for one another, which entails acceptance... The little N.T. book of Philemon is about this very thing, for there we read Paul admonishing his friend Philemon (vs.17b) concerning a run-away slave, Onesimus, that he (Philemon) "*accept him as you would me.*"

But dear ones, there is a big, big theme in the Bible which is not preached much any more--at least nationwide--or, at least, it is not preached nearly *enough!* It is the matter of **DIVINE GRACE**, and that is what I want you to del with this morning as we look at a few more verses in Romans 5...

In these verses we especially are confronted with Paul's reasoning that man **NEEDS** God to extend grace. Man *desparately* needs God to deal with him in **GRACE**. Let's begin to look at verses 6-12 together.

Verses 6-8 In this section, Paul says a couple of things which point to man's need for grace. In verse 6, he states that men are **HELPLESS**. Specifically, he says that **WE**--that is, he and the Jews of the O.T. dispen-

sation--but he is writing the Roman church and his assessment is universal. "Helplessness" is a good word to describe man's lost state, apart from Christ. Man is *not able* to make himself right with God.

I have been aware lately of several older men, whom I know, who are not Christians. And their *lostness* has only become more advanced and evident as they enter old age. That doesn't mean they are unsavable--just that the state of being *spiritually helpless* intensifies with age.

Secondly, in verse 8, Paul describes himself and his countrymen as YET SINNERS. That, in itself, is remarkable, for a Pharisee (which Paul formerly was) rarely, if ever, described himself as a "sinner." Being a "sinner" is something *all people* are before they are saved. And, in a sense, a Christian is STILL a sinner, in that he knows he can still sin. But now his LIFE is not in bondage to sin, and his life is not ruled by the practice of sin. One of the most important verses in the Bible was penned by Paul in verse 12.

The Roman Catholic Church did not invent the doctrine of "original sin." It is a "cardinal truth" and an inescapable fact within the human race. It was invented, not by the church, nor even by Paul. It was invented by Adam and Eve, who, in their distrust of God, and desire for more than what God had given them, they *CHOSE* to rebel. In so doing, they doomed their entire race, as yet not even begun. Now I do not claim to understand the bio-genetics of sin, and how a moral-state can be induced into genetics and obstetrics, but I am persuaded that it *is so*; and that it is inescapable. Before men need to talk about civil justice, and social equality, and emotional acceptance, there is a more fundamental problem that needs a solution! It is man's helpless state before his Creator!

So, if man is in a state of HELPLESSNESS, and can only be called, flatly, a SINNER, how then can a holy God, and a God of pure light relate to such a creature? It is only if that God extends GRACE to that sinner!

Verses 9-11 Man is given another descriptive term by Paul in vs. 10. There, he is called an ENEMY of God. That is how severe the sin problem is, dear ones. But here's the good stuff--

Paul only uses these characterizations of people: "helpless", "sinners", and "enemies" to demonstrate man's profound NEED of grace from God. In each of verses 6, 8 and 10, there is more--did you catch it?

Vs. 6 - AT THE RIGHT TIME, CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.

Vs. 8 - GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARDS US IN THAT...
CHRIST DIED FOR US.

Vs. 10 - WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON...

In vs. 11 Paul says that JOY comes from *having been reconciled to God through Christ*. Only a true Christian can know high-joy, because only a true Christian has been brought from a state-of-war with God, into a state of peace.

When I go to the prison, or to the nursing-home, or to the hospital NEVER do I go and not feel a keen sense of "My, how these people need to hear that God is gracious." But often when I visit a Christian in one of those places, the testimony is on their lips, that, "Yes, I'm hurting. But God has been kind to me..."

In these verses, Paul is saying--Folks, sin is universal. If you're a descendent of Adam, then you've got a congenital problem! But if people-- anyone at all--will SEE their incredible need of being saved--if they will believe the Biblical assessment of their state--

And here is the problem, isn't it? Folks just don't want to believe that they're all THAT bad...

--if they will take an honest look at their own wretched *attempts* to make themselves right with God, then they become *eligible* for a gracious God to love them. Indeed, they become eligible for the greatest deal of all time, which Paul calls in verse 15 a "free gift."

Folks, it isn't our task to convince men of sin. We don't do that very effectively anyway. But it IS OUR TASK to confront people with the claim of Scripture that they are "helpless," "sinners," "enemies of God," and "ungodly." Let the chips fall as they may, but people need to HEAR about their NEED of grace, before they can TRUST in the message of grace!

God will show you how to get that PART of the message to people. I believe He will bring you across the path of folks who have been prepared by the Holy Spirit to hear what Scripture proclaims. I see that all the time. We need to be there to encourage them and show them HOW to move from A to B! They need to not get bogged down with a belief in sinfulness. They need to "turn their eyes upon Jesus--to look full into His wonderful face..." And to see that He is full of grace for those who will come to Him on HIS terms...