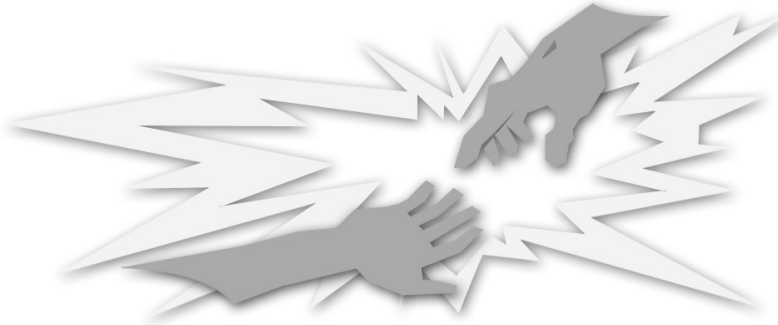


Explaining the Faith



SABBATH—JULY 31

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Romans 5.

MEMORY VERSE: “We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus we have received God’s grace.¹ In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God’s glory”² (Romans 5:1, 2, NIV).

PAUL HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT BEING MADE RIGHT WITH GOD comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. This is because Christ’s righteousness (holy life) alone is enough to give us the right standing with our Lord. Building on that great truth, Paul now preaches more on this theme (idea; topic). Paul shows us that we are saved by faith and not by our works. Not even someone as “righteous” as Abraham could be saved by his works alone. Now Paul steps back and asks the big question: What caused sin and suffering and death? He also shows us that this answer is found in Christ and what He has done for all people.

Through the fall of one man (Adam), all people faced judgment, separation from God, and death. Through the victory (win) of one man (Jesus), all people have received a new start with God. The record of their sins could be taken away by faith in Jesus. And the price for those sins now could be paid and forgiven.

Paul shows us the difference between Adam and Jesus. He also shows how Christ came to correct Adam’s mistakes. With His blood Jesus brought justification³ to all who would accept Him.

This is something we all need to study because it is the basis of all our hope.

1. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy (kindness that is not deserved) that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

2. glory—great beauty, power, and royal perfection.

3. justification—being forgiven and made clean from sin.

SUNDAY—AUGUST 1**THEREFORE, BEING JUSTIFIED⁴
(Romans 5:1–5)**

Write down Paul’s message in Romans 5:1–5. What can you learn from it for yourself?

“Being justified” really means “having been justified.” The Greek verb shows this as something that has already happened. We have been declared righteous (holy). It has been done not through any deeds (actions) of law but through our acceptance of Jesus Christ. The perfect life that Jesus lived on this earth and His perfect law-keeping have been credited (given) to us.

At the same time, all of our sins have been put on Jesus. God has “judged” that Jesus did those sins, not us. That way we can be saved from the punishment⁵ that we deserve. That punishment fell on Christ for us, for our sake, so that we never have to face it ourselves. What more joyful news could there be for the sinner?

The Greek word that means “glory” in verse 3 is the one that means “rejoice [be joyful]” in verse 2. If it is translated⁶ “rejoice” in verse 3 (like it is in some Bible versions), the connection between verses 2 and 3 can

be better understood. Justified (forgiven) people can rejoice when they go through troubles and hard times because they have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. They believe that God will work out all things for good. They will think it an honor to suffer for Christ’s sake. (Read 1 Peter 4:13.)

Notice, too, the steps in verses 3 through 5.

1. *Patience*. The Greek word *hupomone* means “to keep on going stubbornly.” This is the kind of patience that hard times develop in those who keep on having faith and do not forget the hope they have in Christ. The person does this even when he or she is going through the trials and suffering that can make life so difficult at times.

2. *Experience*. The Greek word *dokime* means “being accepted as qualified.” In other words, it means “character”⁷ or “approved [accepted] character.” The person who patiently goes through troubles can develop a character that God approves of.

3. *Hope*. Patience and approval easily lead to hope. It is the hope we find in Jesus and the promise of salvation⁸ in Him. As long as we hold on to Jesus in faith, repentance,⁹ and obedience, we have everything to hope for.

4. justified—forgiven; made holy; made righteous (holy and pure); cleansed from sin.

5. punishment—a penalty (price to be paid) for, or the result of, doing something wrong; when someone must suffer loss or pain for doing something bad, wrong, or against the law.

6. translated—when words have been changed from one language into another.

7. character—who someone is; all the things that a person does, feels, and thinks are what a person is made of; a person’s character is the sum of the choices he or she makes, such as a choice to be honest or to cheat.

8. salvation—God’s plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end) death; the gift of eternal life; being saved from sin or evil.

9. repentance—the act of feeling sorry for your sins and turning away from sinning with the help of the Holy Spirit.

What is the one thing in your life that you hope for more than anything else? How can that hope be fulfilled in Jesus? Or can it? If not, are you sure you want to be putting so much hope in it?



As long as we hold on to Jesus in faith, we have everything to hope for.

MONDAY—AUGUST 2

GOD SEARCHING FOR US (Romans 5:6–8)

What do the verses in Romans 5:6–8 tell us about the character of God? Why do they hold so much hope for us?

Adam and Eve broke God's law and fell into sin. So, God took the first steps toward bringing them back to Him. Ever since that time, God has taken the first step with sinners. God has made a way of salvation possible and invited men and women to accept it. "But then the right time came. God sent his Son" (Galatians 4:4, NIV).

Romans 5:9 says that we can be saved from God's wrath (anger; punishment) through Jesus. How do we understand that?

When the people of Israel put blood on their doorposts the night before they left Egypt, it protected their first-born children from the killing that happened to the firstborn Egyptian children. In the same way the blood of Jesus Christ protects the person who has been justified. And those who hold on to Christ will be protected when God's wrath finally destroys sin at the end of the age.



Just as the blood on the doorposts protected the people of Israel, so the blood of Jesus protects the one who is justified.

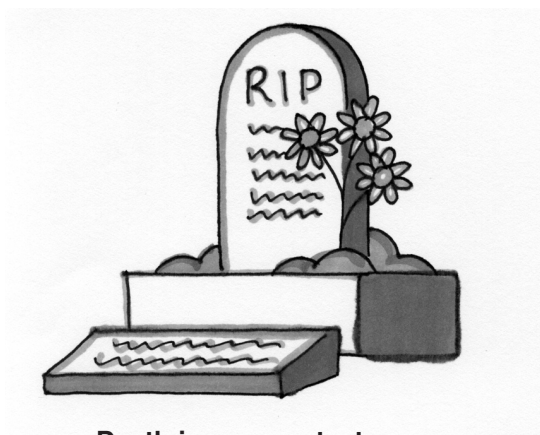
Some people have a hard time understanding that a loving God gets angry. God gets angry because of His love. How could God, who loves the world, not be angry about sin? If God did not care about us, He would not care about what happens here on earth. Think about what sin has done to His creation. How could God not be angry about the terrible things sin has done to the world?

What reasons does Romans 5:10, 11 give us to rejoice?

Some thinkers notice an example

of the life that Christ lived on this earth in verse 10. During His life, Jesus developed a perfect character that He now offers to credit (give) to us. But Paul is making the point that when Christ died, He rose again and is alive forevermore (read Hebrews 7:25). Because Jesus lives, we are saved. If He remained in the tomb, our hopes would have died with Him. Verse 11 continues with the reasons we have to rejoice in the Lord. That is because of what Jesus has done for us.

verse for purposes other than Paul planned.”—Adapted, volume 6, page 529.



Death is our greatest enemy.

TUESDAY—AUGUST 3

DEATH SWALLOWED UP (Romans 5:12)

Death is one of the greatest enemies we have. When God created people, He planned for them to live forever. People normally do not want to die. Only a few want to die, and those only after the greatest personal suffering. Death goes against our most basic nature. And that is because, from the beginning, God created us to live forever. Death was not supposed to be something we knew.

What is Paul describing in Romans 5:12? What does this verse explain?

Bible thinkers have argued more over this verse than over most others. *The SDA Bible Commentary* may give one reason for this. It says that these thinkers “tried to use the

One point they argue over is this: how was Adam’s sin passed on to his future children? Did Adam’s future children share the guilt of his sin? Or are they guilty before God because of their own sin? People have tried to get the answer to those questions from this verse. But that is not the issue Paul was dealing with. He had another meaning in mind. Paul is focusing on what he already said, “for all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). We need to know that all of us are sinners. That will help us understand our need for a Savior. Paul was trying to get people to understand just how bad sin is and what it brought into this world through Adam. Then Paul shows that the things God offers us in Jesus are the only answer to the sad problem caused by Adam’s sin.

But this verse tells only one half of the story. It only tells of our death as a result of Adam’s fall. It does not show the answer, life in Christ.

One of the most glorious parts of the gospel is that death has been swallowed up in life. Jesus passed through death and broke its chains. Jesus says, “I am the Living One. I was dead. But look! I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys to Death and Hell” (Revelation 1:18, NIV). Because Jesus has the keys, the enemy (death) can no longer hold those who are dead in the grave.

What is your experience of how sad death is? Why must we have hope in something greater than ourselves or greater than anything this world offers?

WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 4

LAW AWAKENS NEED (Romans 5:13, 14)

What is Paul talking about in Romans 5:13, 14? The wording “until the law” (KJV) goes with the wording “from Adam to Moses.” Paul is talking about the time in the world from creation to Sinai, before the rules and laws were given to Israel. These laws, of course, included the Ten Commandments.

“Until the law” means what God required in the different laws that He gave to Israel at Sinai. Sin was on the earth before Sinai. How could it not be? Were lying, killing, adultery,¹⁰ and idolatry¹¹ not sinful before that? Of course they were.

10. adultery—breaking the marriage vows by having sex with a person who is not one’s spouse (husband or wife); not being faithful.

11. idolatry—idol worship (bowing down to, or serving, false gods or statues); loving something more than we love God.

What are some verses that show sin was real before Sinai?

It is true that before Sinai people only had a limited knowledge of God. But they clearly knew enough to be held responsible. God is just and is not going to punish anyone unfairly. People before the time of Sinai died, as Paul tells us. Death passed upon all people. They had not sinned against a written law. But they had sinned anyway. They had the examples of God in nature. But they had not followed those examples, so they were held guilty. “Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God that are not seen. . . . So people have no excuse for what they do” (Romans 1:20, NIV).

In Romans 5:20, 21, why does God show Himself more fully in the “law”?

The teaching and laws given at Sinai included God’s law. It had been around before the time of Sinai. But this was the first time that the law was written down and told to the people.

When the Israelites started comparing themselves with God’s requirements, they discovered that they fell far short. In other words, there was plenty of sin. They suddenly understood that their sins were terrible. The purpose of God’s law was to help people understand that they needed a Savior and to help them accept God’s grace. As we have seen before, the true purpose of the

Old Testament faith was not legalistic.¹²

THURSDAY—AUGUST 5

THE SECOND ADAM (Romans 5:18, 19)

What difference between Adam and Jesus is shown to us in Romans 5:18, 19? What hope is offered to us in Christ?

As humans, we received nothing from Adam but the sentence of death. But Christ stepped in and passed over the ground where Adam fell. Jesus went through every test for our sake. He bought back Adam's failure and fall. As our Substitute,¹³ Jesus lifted us to a higher level with God. So, Jesus is the "Second Adam."

"The second Adam [Jesus] was free to choose. He also was held responsible for his actions. Surrounded by bad influences,¹⁴ Jesus lived in a more hostile world than the first Adam did. So, it was even harder for Him. But in the midst of sinners, Jesus refused every temptation¹⁵ to sin, and remained innocent until the very last. He was always sinless."—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 1074.

How are Christ's acts different from Adam's in Romans 5:15–19?

12. legalistic—believing that obeying the law will save you.

13. substitute—someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing. Jesus is our Substitute because He died for our sins.

14. influences—people or things that have the power to change or affect others.

15. temptation—things that can turn us away from God and that try to get us to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

16. compare—to show how two or more things are the same or different.

Think about the different ideas here: death and life. Disobedience and obedience. Being judged guilty and being saved. Sin and righteousness (holy living). Jesus came and undid all that Adam had done!

It also is interesting that the word *gift* shows up five times in verses 15 through 17. Five times! The point is simple: Paul is focusing on the fact that justification is not something we earn. It comes as a gift. It is something that we do not deserve. Like all gifts, we have to reach out and accept it. And in this case, with this gift, we claim it by faith.

What was the best gift you ever were given? What made it so special? How did the fact that it was a gift, and not something you earned, make you more thankful for it? And how could that gift ever compare¹⁶ with what we have in Jesus?



Death is our greatest enemy.

FRIDAY—AUGUST 6

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Help in Daily Living,” pages 470–472, in *The Ministry [Work Done for God] of Healing*; “Christ the Center of the Message,” pages 383, 384, in *Selected Messages*, book 1; “The Temptation and Fall,” pages 60–62, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*;¹⁷ “Justification,” pages 712–714, in *The SDA Encyclopedia*.¹⁸

“There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine [belief] of making the heart clean by faith was given . . . , it came to many people as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The holy life of Christ is given to us, not because we deserve it. Instead it is a free gift from God. This is a very important thought.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 360.

“Trial [suffering] is part of the education given in the school of Christ. It purifies [makes clean] God’s children from the dross [dirt] of sin. God is leading His children through these troublesome experiences. Trials and problems are His chosen methods [plans; ways] of teaching. They are His chosen conditions of success. God who reads the hearts of men knows their weaknesses better than they themselves can know them.

God knows that some have the right character and ability to push this work forward.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 524.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How has your faith supported you through some terrible trials (troubles)? What things did you learn from these trials about yourself and about God? What have you learned that might help other people who are going through some hard times?
- ② Think about how real death is. What does it do to life and to the meaning of life? Many writers and thinkers have complained that life is meaningless because it ends in eternal (forever; without end) death. How do we as Christians answer them? Why is the hope we have in Jesus the only answer to that problem?
- ③ Adam’s fall (sin) gave a fallen nature to all of us. In the same way, Jesus’s victory (winning) offers the promise of eternal life to all of us who accept it by faith. With such a wonderful gift right there for us, what holds people back from reaching out and eagerly accepting it? How can each of us help those who want to better understand what Christ offers and what He has done for them?

17. patriarchs and prophets—patriarchs were leaders of God’s people in early Bible times, men such as Abraham and Isaac, or other leaders of Israel, such as Moses; prophets are men or women who are spokespersons for God.

18. encyclopedia—a work (such as a book, series of books, Web site, or CD-ROM) that has information about many different subjects or a lot of information about one subject.