

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series two teachers will do Bible study from ROMANS 5:1-11.

Romans chapters 1:1 to 3:20 proved that both the Gentiles and the Jews need God's righteousness and concluded that no Gentile or Jew is righteous in God's eyes; that everyone stands condemned before God; and that keeping the law cannot attain righteousness. Romans chapter 3:21-4:25 revealed the way to God's righteousness: In Romans 3, the sacrificial death of Christ is the ground or bases of God's righteousness. And in Romans 4, the example of Abraham shows that faith is the means of receiving God's righteousness. Romans chapters 5 to 8 reveals the effectiveness and fruitfulness of God's righteousness: Romans 5:1-11 reveals that the blessings of God's righteousness are that Christians experience peace and grace that leads to a life of hope and love.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read Romans 5:1-11 together. When you are two or more people, take turns to read one verse each until you have completed the reading. Due to shortage of time, please read Romans 5:1-11 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in Romans 5:1-11. "Which truth in this passage is important for you?" or "Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?" Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is in Romans 5:1-2. Two consequences of justification by faith.

The first consequence of justification by faith is from verse 1-2. We have assurance of peace with God. According to verse 1, we have a new relationship or status with God, which is expressed as having "peace with God". *God made peace with us* by justifying us on the ground of the sacrificial death of Christ. And *we make peace with God* by receiving his gracious righteousness through the means of faith. Thus, the result of God's peace with us, is our peace with God! We experience the peace of God as a deep assurance of three things: Our *sins of the past* have been forgiven; Our *evils of the present* are being overruled for our good; And all our *future events* cannot bring about our separation from God's love!

According to verse 2, we stand immovably and forever in this relationship or status of gracious justification, only through Christ. But this state also implies the consequence that we have confident and continual access into God's presence.

The second consequence of justification by faith is from verse 2. We rejoice in the hope of God's glory. *Hope* is the certainty that future promised expectations will become present realities. The things we expect to become realities is summarised by God's *glory*. This glory includes at least three things: in the future we will receive resurrected bodies; we will be completely conformed to the glorious image of Christ and we will live in a gloriously redeemed universe. Because we have been justified by faith, we also have the assurance that we will share in God's future glory. Although in our actual daily lives we fall short of this ideal, this assurance is not presumption, but is our privilege. Therefore we may rejoice!

(T) An important truth for me is in Romans 5:3-11. Two more consequences of justification by faith.

The third consequence of justification by faith is from verse 3-5. We have assurance of being loved by God. Although we experience pressures, hardships and persecutions, these sufferings directly contribute to the forming of Christian character and the establishment of hope. According to James 2:2-4, Hebrews 12:5-11 and 1 Peter 4:12-16, our sufferings also produce Christian maturity, holiness, fruitfulness and the certainty that we are God's sons and that we will share in Christ's glory.

Although our responsibility is to persevere in difficult times because *we love God*, the fact that we can and will persevere is due to the fact that *God loves us!* Through his Holy Spirit, God abundantly and continually pours out his love for us in our hearts. He fills us with a consciousness of his presence and favour, and inwardly persuades us that we are the objects of his love. God's sovereign and gracious love for us gives us more and more hope that finally we will share in all God's glory. This causes our hope in God to become as irreversible as God's love for us!

The fourth consequence of justification by faith is from verse 6-11. We have assurance of our final and complete salvation. While people on earth might expect somebody *to die for righteous and good people* (7), Christ did what was totally unexpected: *he died for unrighteous and wicked people!* God's love constrained him to give Christ as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins (8). Only through the death of Christ, could God's mercy and love be reconciled with his righteousness and holiness! *If by Christ's death*, we have been justified and thus reconciled to God, then we will certainly *by Christ's resurrection* be saved from God's wrath in the Final Judgement (9-10). If God has given the lesser benefit, that is, our complete *justification and reconciliation*, then he will certainly not withhold the greater benefit, that is, our complete *sanctification and glorification!* That is why we rejoice in the salvation that has already begun on earth and will be completed in heaven (11)!

(S) STEP 3. QUESTION

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 5:1-11 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. (5:1-2). How do people get peace with God?

(T) A person, who relies on his own good works of keeping the law for his justification, can never have peace with God, or experience peace of mind. All his good works cannot remove God's wrath against his sins, nor quieten his apprehension of God's punishment. Peace with God can only be attained through God's justification by our faith, when that justification is founded on Christ's sacrifice of atonement. *It is not we who make peace with God by keeping the law, but God who makes peace with us by the atoning sacrifice of Christ!* Only after God has made peace with us, can we experience peace with God! Only after God has reconciled himself to us, can we reconcile ourselves to God! Only after God has changed his relationship to us, can we change our relationship to God! Our peace with God begins with God making peace with us.

2nd Question. (5:3-5). Why can Christians rejoice in their sufferings?

(S) Romans 5:3 says, "We also rejoice in our sufferings." Our sufferings consist of *the ordinary sufferings* of people in a fallen and broken world. Christians also share in these ordinary sufferings, like sickness, weakness, disability, troubles, setbacks, disappointments, and disasters like epidemics, earthquakes, floods, droughts and famines. Christians also suffer *the special sufferings* caused by their persecutors in the world. But don't all these sufferings cause Christians to be sad? How can Paul say that Christians rejoice in sufferings? The answer is as follows: All things happening on earth serve God's purpose! Even human suffering serves God's purpose. Before we became Christians, we regarded sufferings only as expressions of God's displeasure with us. However, *when our relationship to God is changed, then the relationship of all people, things and events to us is also changed!*

After we become Christians, we begin to realise that sufferings are also manifestations of God's love for us! Christians consider it an honour to suffer for Christ, because according to Matthew 5:4-12, Christ considers the sufferings of Christians as sufferings inflicted on himself! Therefore, Christians can rejoice *on account of* their sufferings.

Christians also rejoice *amidst* their sufferings. Their sufferings become occasions for God to manifest his power in their support and deliverance. Their problems become God's possibilities! According to 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Christian's own weakness serves to magnify God's power! Precisely when suffering Christians recognise that they are weak but God is strong and ready to help, then they will seek help from above. Because God's help is sufficient, the faith of Christians is strengthened. As a consequence, Christians want to persevere and they can and will persevere. Christians know that sufferings are God's means to build character, make them useful in this world and prepare them for the new world to come. "Suffering" should therefore never surprise or baffle Christians, because to suffer is completely consistent with being a child of God. To be sad amidst suffering is not inconsistent with being a Christian. But Christians may and can rejoice in their sufferings.

3rd Question. (5:6-8). How does God demonstrate his love for us?

(T) Romans 5:6-10 says that God demonstrates his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

First. God's nature is love and he does not have to prove his love by some act. It is not true that the God who revealed himself during the Old Testament period was a God of war and vengeance, while the God who revealed himself during the New Testament period is a God of love. Both the Old and New Testaments clearly teach that God is both a holy God, who hates sin, and a loving God, who seeks to save sinners. For example, Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I loved you with an everlasting love and I have drawn you with loving kindness."

Second. God demonstrates his love for us through Christ's death on the cross. It is not Christ's death that proves God's love, but rather God's eternal love that constrained God to give Christ to die for us. The death of Jesus Christ was the only adequate way in which God could demonstrate his love. Some people think that God is only a God of love when he simply forgives the sins of people. But a loving God, who does not punish sin and wickedness, would at the same time be an unrighteous and unholy God! The God of the Bible is not only a merciful and loving God, but also a righteous and holy God. Therefore, *in order to reconcile his righteousness and holiness with his mercy and love, he punished our sins by putting our sins on Christ onto the cross!* Christ did not die for us as an example, nor as a martyr, but as a substitute! *Christ died in our place!* By dying, he made atonement for our sins. *Atonement* means, that he satisfied God's righteous and holy anger against our sins.

Third. God demonstrates his love for us by continually applying Christ's work to the lives of unworthy people. Paul says that in the Bible, the death of Jesus Christ is the highest possible or highest conceivable evidence of God's love *for unworthy people*. Verse 6 says, while we were still powerless (weak), Christ died for the ungodly. Our weakness is a lack of strength to do what is spiritually and morally good. By nature, we cannot keep God's law, we cannot do God's will and we cannot do what is good works in God's eyes. Our weakness is caused by our sin and it consists of our hopeless and total inability to rescue ourselves from the effects of the fall of mankind into sin. Our weakness is that we cannot save ourselves from God's condemnation, from our spiritual and moral depravity, and from our suffering and death. We can understand that God should love good, righteous, pure and godly people. But that the holy God should love unholy and ungodly people and give his Son, Jesus Christ, for their redemption, is the greatest wonder!

If God loved us because we loved him, then he would love us only as long as we love him and on that condition! Then our salvation would depend on the constancy of our treacherous hearts. However, because God loved us first and loved us as ungodly people, as sinners and as his enemies, and because Christ died for us as ungodly people, as sinners and as his enemies, therefore our salvation does not depend on our loveliness, but only on the constancy of God's love for us (cf. 1 Jn 4:10)! Verse 7 says, that among men, it was never heard of that someone died for a man who was simply *righteous*, that is, who always kept the law. The most human nature could be expected to accomplish was that a person should die for a *good* person, that is, for someone who had showed his love and kindness to him. On earth among people, somebody would scarcely die for a righteous and good man. But Christ did the completely unexpected - he died for *unrighteous and wicked* people! The death of Christ was a manifestation of God's love without any human example in history! In Romans 5:6-8, Paul exalts the greatness of God's love.

4th Question. (5:9-11). What is the difference between justification, reconciliation and salvation?

(S) Justification expresses a change of status. Justification means that with regard to God's law, God has *declared* a sinner completely righteous in his eyes. As a consequence, he *regards and treats* him as completely righteous now and in the Final Judgement. Justification includes the forgiveness of sin, the reconciliation with God, the restoration to the favour of God and complete acceptance by God. Justification guarantees that blessings, like sanctification and glorification will certainly follow. Romans 5:9 teaches that our justification is effected *by the blood of Christ*. In the Bible this expression always means *by his death*. The Bible clearly teaches that *the ground, reason or basis of our justification is not our work, not our faith, not our obedience, not even the work of Christ in us, but the work of Christ for us* (Rom 3:25).

(T) Reconciliation expresses a change of relationship. Reconciliation means that two parties, who were enemies, have made peace with one another. The Bible speaks of three kinds of reconciliation:

One. Romans 5:9-11 speaks of *the reconciliation of God to sinners*. Due to our sins, the holy God is separated from us. He is like an enemy to us, who must and will punish our sins. But due to Christ's sacrifice of atonement, the holy God's anger has been propitiated and his enmity against us has been removed. Therefore, we are no longer separated from God!

Two. Romans 5:1 speaks of *the reconciliation of sinners to God*, that is, they experience peace with God. Due to the fact that they believe in Christ's sacrifice of atonement, God justified them and they experience peace with God.

Three. Matthew 5:23-24 speaks of *the reconciliation of two brothers in a church with one another*. And Ephesians 2:16 speaks of *reconciliation of people belonging to various nationalities with one another*. Because God has changed his relationship to us, we can and should change our relationship to God, to brothers and to people of other nationalities.

(S) Salvation expresses an ongoing process of change. Salvation begins with justification, which is the *deliverance from the guilt* of sin. Salvation continues throughout life in an ongoing process of sanctification, which is the *deliverance from the power and pollution* of sin. And salvation is perfected in glorification, which is the *deliverance from the presence* of sin and all its consequences, like the death of our physical bodies, the physical disasters on earth, the corruption of this present world and the oppression by evil spirits.

When salvation is distinguished from justification as here in Romans 5:9-10, then salvation indicates the completion of that work of which justification is the beginning. It includes deliverance from the evil world and from the evil influence of Satan and his demons; the deliverance from all kinds of suffering and death; the preservation from all causes of destruction, and the inheritance of eternal life in heaven and on the new earth! Salvation here is deliverance from God's wrath, which he will execute on the Judgement Day. Because justification is complete and irrevocable, there is no condemnation reserved for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1) and their future complete salvation is absolutely certain! God will not leave his work unfinished! Romans 8:29-30 teaches that the people whom he calls, he justifies, and the people whom he justifies, he also glorifies! And Philippians 1:6 teaches that God will carry the good work, which he began in us, to completion! That is why Romans 5:10 says, "If while we were enemies, Christ's death restored us to God's favour, then the fact that Christ lives, will secure our final complete salvation"!

There is an indissoluble connection between Christ's death and Christ's resurrection (Romans 4:25). Those who are the beneficiaries of his death must also be the beneficiaries of all that is entailed in his resurrection life. The fact that Christ was resurrected and lives as the exalted Saviour, High Priest, Prophet and King, is a secure guarantee that all believers in Christ will be resurrected and live forever (Rom 8:11; Jh 14:19). The fact that believers in Christ have been justified and reconciled and will be completely saved in the future, makes them joyful. We rejoice in salvation, which is begun on earth and will be completed in heaven!

(T) STEP 4 and 5. APPLY and PRAY

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application God wants you to turn into a *personal application*. Then take turns to pray about one truth that God has taught you in Romans 1:1-17.

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. Use "the five steps" Bible study method to prepare Romans 5:12-21.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's Kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".