

Romans – Crown Jewel of Salvation

12 - Faith in Christ Changes Your Suffering

Romans 5:3-5

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney

6 Radical Changes the Gospel Makes

From last week...

- I. You'll Have Peace with God ~ because before you were at war!
- II. You'll Have Direct Access to God ~ whereas before you were shut out!
- III. You'll Have Hope ~ whereas before you were hopeless!

- IV. As a Christian Now Your Suffering and Trials Take on a Whole New Purpose v. 3

Yes, suffering, for the person who's been justified by Christ, takes on a whole new purpose, but it's not automatic! You have to know what to think, and where to turn, and what to do.

A. What Should You Do When You're Feeling Hemmed in by Troubles?

v. 3 "... but we **also** glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope..."

Paul tells you exactly what you should do when you feel like the walls are closing in around you – Rejoice, boast, or give glory.

In these verses, Paul's not speaking as a SPECTATOR but as a fellow-sufferer.

2 Corinthians 12:9 "And He (Christ) said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather **boast** in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me."

B. Where Do You Get the Power to Rejoice in the Face of Suffering?

You get it at the same place you were justified and made right with the God of the universe – by grace! The grace that saves you is the same grace that empowers you to live radically different.

Romans 5:2 "Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand."

We don't have the secret to living this supernatural way of life that is supposed to mark us and set us apart from the world – God does! Just like you don't have what you need to be saved... you don't have what you need to rejoice in the face of suffering – but God does. It's His grace.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.”

Paul is talking about the way the Macedonian Christians rejoiced in their afflictions even in great poverty. "The grace of God" was given to them and produced supernatural joy in the face of great financial affliction. But that grace produced a joy that overflowed in their sacrificial giving.

God's grace doesn't work like magic. It's doesn't just show up in a vacuum. There's a source for this grace: God's Word and God's people.

1 Peter 4:9-10 “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

As messy and as sinful and broken as people are – they are STILL a major channel or source of God's grace.

Acts 20:32 “And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

God's Word – the Bible – is a word of grace. It's not just some dusty history book! It's a channel of grace. And you can ignore it and neglect it... but you do so to your own peril.

When you put yourself in the place of grace – being in God's Word and drawing near to God's people at close range - you'll find the grace you need to rejoice in the face of tribulation.

C. What Happens When You Choose to Rejoice?

Romans 5:3-5

1. Your suffering brings about perseverance

The opposite of perseverance is panic! You can either panic or persevere when you face tribulation and suffering. The choice is yours. But God tells us the Christian will be given the grace to persevere.

2. Your perseverance brings about proven character

The word 'proven' has the idea of putting metal through fiery testing and when it comes out the other side you call that metal 'proven' or 'authentic.'

3. Your proven character brings about hope

Trials - rather than destroying our hope - are meant to increase our hope!

4. You *will* have problems

Christians will have some of the VERY SAME problems as other people. We're not exempt. God doesn't shield us... He doesn't insulate us from problems.

John 14:33 “... In the world you *will* have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Acts 14:22 “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”