

**May 26, 2013
Trinity Sunday**

"Glorious Peace in Your Triune God"

ROMANS 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

The other day I was reading some accounts from WW2 veterans who had landed on the shores of Normandy Beach on D-Day. One man told how his commander said shortly before they hit the beach, "Boys its time to make your peace with God." Have you ever heard someone say, "I am sure glad he made his peace with God before he died?"

Laverne was 50 years old when she was led by to believe in Jesus Christ as her Savior. She was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prior to becoming a Christian her religious beliefs were centered in the occult, mysticism and philosophical religions. It was a joy to see her progress in her faith and to read the Bible for the first time. After a lesson on Jesus' resurrection from the dead, she claimed to have found a mistake in the Bible. One verse said Jesus raised himself from the dead. Another verse said the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. What a joy it was to show her several verses that said the Holy Spirit raised her from the dead.

Genesis one says God created the heavens and the earth. It also says the Spirit was hovering over the waters. John 1 says Jesus made all things. Who brought you to faith in Jesus for your salvation? Jesus says in John 6:44 that the Father draws us to him. But then in John 6:63 he says the Spirit gives life. And at the end of that long chapter in John 6:70 he says, "Have I not chosen you?" You have great honor and privilege and blessing of being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Before us this morning we have these comforting words of Scripture that speak to us about having peace with God. On this Trinity Sunday we want to focus on the amazing peace that comes to us by being declared righteous through Jesus, having access to God our Father, and the peace that comes because the Holy Spirit keeps reminding us of the hope of glory that is ours.

The peace of being declared righteous through Jesus

"Therefore, since we have been justified, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." To help us appreciate the meaning of being justified, I have brought with me this gavel. In a court of law a judge can pound the gavel on the table and announce the person guilty or not guilty based on the evidence that has been presented and the verdict given by the jury. The first three chapters in Romans present to us a world full of people who are

guilty before God because of sin. Here is the charge in Romans 3 that says, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law, rather through the law we become conscious of sin." God's holy and perfect law pronounces the whole world guilty of eternal death. God must by his very nature as God condemn to hell whatever does not measure up to his perfection and holiness.

Through Jesus we receive a verdict of not guilty. Under normal circumstances if a judge lets guilty people go free we would demand that he be removed from his position as judge. God is a holy and perfect judge. He would never let sinful people go free without violating his own system of justice and his own perfection. Notice it says you are justified or declared not guilty because of Christ. In the previous verse in Romans 4 it says of Jesus, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification." Jesus took the punishment for our sin upon himself so we can have peace with God. Isaiah 53 says "The punishment for our peace was upon him." We know the Father accepted the punishment Jesus endured for us because the Father raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus even kept the nail prints in his hands as visual, concrete, forensic evidence that the debt of sin was paid for and we are declared not guilty.

We were born into this world with the firmly implanted belief that we have the human potential to justify ourselves or make our selves acceptable to our God by what we tried to do to please God. Take the example of your family dog. He seems to know when he does something wrong. You reprimand him. He bows his head in shame, but then his tail starts to wag. He has this hope that he can make up for what was done wrong by pleasing you and being friendly. He cannot wait to lick your hand so you can say, "Everything is OK." I may be able to make it up to my wife for forgetting her birthday by buying her flowers, but I have nothing to offer a holy and perfect God that can cause him to declare me not guilty.

A man once came to Jesus and asked, "What must I do inherit eternal life?" Jesus asked him to summarize the Ten Commandments. The man correctly said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live." If he loved God and his neighbor perfectly then he could justify himself and live. But then the man asks Jesus "And who is my neighbor." He gave himself high marks for loving God but he wasn't quite sure how far he had to go in loving people. Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. A Samaritan stops to help a Jew who had been beaten by robbers. He even offered to pay for him to stay in an inn and recover from his wounds. Jesus told this story to show us that our love for our neighbors and friends and even family often falls short of the love our God expects of us.

How could you ever dare to think you can be declared righteous and have peace with God based on the kindness and love you show others? Oh, on some days, you do very well. You might even be way up there on this kindness meter I am holding before you. But then there are those other times when we are humbled to think we show more kindness to our cat and dog than people who rub us the wrong way and get under our skin. It is only through the perfect kindness of Jesus that moved him to go to the cross for us that we have the hope of being declared not guilty before God.

The peace of having access to our Father

Because of Jesus and the peace with our God through him, we have direct access to our heavenly Father. "Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." Because of Jesus, you now enjoy the blessing of direct access to your heavenly Father and his love for you. That means we can go boldly to our heavenly Father in prayer through Jesus. Ephesians 3:12 says, "We may approach God with freedom and confidence."

If you are traveling by airplane this summer, you will have to go through a security check. You simply cannot wait to the last minute to run down through the airport and jump on the plane. I am holding in my hand a special pass that I have to go through the doors of our new state of the art hospital in Santa Maria. Swiping the pass causes the swinging doors to open wide for my entry. You don't have to go through security to talk to your heavenly Father. You don't have to cut yourself with a knife and cause the blood to gush out as the prophets of Baal did when they tried to get the attention of their god Baal, or even worse they sacrificed their own children so their prayers for rain would be heard. We have direct access to our Father. Jesus made that so clear to us when he told us to ask anything from our heavenly Father in his name and he will hear us.

Because of Jesus you have direct access to your heavenly Father's grace and mercy. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through me." There are no other paths and no other religions that take you into God's amazing grace and mercy. Mention this in a college classroom or even high school class room, and you will be mocked and ridiculed for such exclusive and intolerant views. That will not go over well with those who believe "all roads lead to heaven."

You have constant access to God's unfailing love through Jesus. Picture yourself in a room, where you are surrounded by God's grace. The wall in front of you is God's grace. The wall in back of you is God's grace. The wall to the right is God's grace. The wall to the left is God's grace. The ceiling and floor is God's grace. Through Jesus the love that your Father has for you is very intense and personal.

Because of this access to God's grace through Jesus, you rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. You long to see God's glory in the place Jesus has prepared for you. You know that he loves you personally. Romans 8 says that nothing in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God that exists in Jesus Christ our Lord. The full face to face experience of that love is coming to us after we die. Amen.

So amazing is this grace in which we stand, we can make it through the hard times of life knowing that goodness and mercy will always be there for us. "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character hope." Off course this does not mean we rejoice when we get sick, or lose a loved one, or lose our job, or see some disaster hit our country. When ever troubles come, we can still say "I know that my God who gave his Son for me really and truly still loves me."

The Holy Spirit keeps our hope alive

The Holy Spirit is also there in your difficult days of life to fill you with the hope of glory that will someday be yours. "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us." If I take a water bottle like this I can pour out the all the water in a few seconds. Your heavenly Father is constantly pouring the Holy Spirit into your heart. It never stops. Jesus said the Holy Spirit is our Comforter. Romans 8 says we have "the first fruits of the Holy Spirit" that cause us to groan inwardly for our "adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Jesus will redeem our bodies from the grave on the last day when he raises us to live again. The Holy Spirit leads us to groan inwardly. There is in all of us this ache for the Eden, this intense longing for life as God intended it to be. Precious moments in this life are a taste of the greater glory to come. The Holy Spirit keeps this hope alive.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God. My limited human mind cannot comprehend how this can be. My mind is limited on the vastness of the universe, yet I appreciate the stars. I cannot fathom how my body has millions of miles of blood vessels that feed the small cells. I cannot comprehend how my brain is able to function, yet I appreciate what my mind is able to do. I cannot fathom how three person can be one God, yet this morning, I thank God for this amazing peace my Triune provides. Amen