

OUR HEAVENLY BENEFITS PACKAGE

Series: Righteousness Revealed

Romans 5:1-11

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I grew up in Alliance, Nebraska. There's a lot of farming and ranching around Alliance but what Alliance is really known for is a railroad town. They have a large shop there for servicing locomotives and cars. Growing up in Alliance, I think there's a pressure on the young people to just hop on the railroad right out of high school. There's a lot of talk about how great the railroad is and how much they pay. They were the highest paying jobs in town for the average guy. They provided a benefits package—retirement, health care, dental and vision, etc. Growing up on farm and watching my parents gamble every year—because let's face it, farming is gambling; you can't really control anything and you plant the seed by faith—the railroad looked pretty good. All I wanted to do was farm but you know how hard it is to get into that, especially when your dad is talking up the railroad. But what attracts a lot of people to work for the railroad is that benefits package. Well, I'm not trying to be a salesman for heaven by any means, but there does exist a heavenly benefits package in Christ. Everyone who has believed in Christ and experienced justification is given many benefits that are way better than the railroad's or any other job for that matter, and we're going to look at 7 of them briefly this morning from Romans 5:1-11.

By way of context, I remind us that in Romans, Paul has explained man's need for righteousness in chapter 1-3. He has defended from Old Testament Scripture how we are justified/made righteous (declared righteous) by faith just as Abraham was. Now he begins to explain the benefits of righteousness. And he's going to start out in chapter 5 with the word "therefore" which tells us that he is resting what is said here on what was already spoken. Justification is by faith—therefore—"we have" (v. 1, 2) a certain number of spiritual blessings/benefits given to us. There are several indicative verbs in this section like "we have" (vv. 2, 11), "we stand" (v. 2), "we were reconciled" (v. 10). These are indicating what benefits we've been given in Christ. And these benefits that Paul is going to share are important for us each believer to embrace because every believer struggles with questions like, *When I sin, does God still love me? Do I need to get saved all over again if I sin? Is Christ really enough? How secure is this "faith" thing? I feel like I need to do more. Can I really rest my eternity on what He did for me or do I need to do more?* These are good questions. And this is one of the most treasured passages in all of Scripture.

5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

So Paul starts out with “*having been justified by faith.*” This is really a point on its own and the base-point. We have benefits based on this justification. The tense of the Greek here suggests that this is a one-time event in the past. Once you are justified, it cannot be repeated. You have been justified and it’s a once-for-all time deal. You have been legally declared “not guilty” once and for all. We don’t justify ourselves. He justifies us. Nothing can change that or remove that.

Heavenly Benefit #1 – We have peace with God. (v. 1)

In Romans 2, Paul talked about God’s wrath being poured out on sinners (1:18) and how with our sin, we are storing wrath for ourselves (2:5) before God in judgment. Everyone, whether they realize it or not, are at enmity with God. They are His enemies without Christ. However, those who have been justified through faith in Christ are considered His friends. We do not need to fear God’s wrath. We’re no longer at enmity with God. We have everlasting peace with God. It’s a permanent thing because of Jesus’s perfect sacrifice for us, taking the wrath we deserve so that we could be reconcile to God.

Reconciliation: to change from a state of war to peace; from enmity to friendship.

All of us at one time or another have been in conflict with someone else. You might think of a childhood friendship or a husband and wife. You got in an argument over something and said things you shouldn’t have, leaving the two of you in a state of conflict. However, in time you came together and said you know, I should have said that, you were right, and I forgive you. Or you were wrong, but I forgive you anyway. And you were friends again. Well, that’s a very small taste of the healing Christ brings to our relationship with God.

Heavenly Benefit #2 – We have obtained access to grace. (v. 2)

He says, “*We have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.*” This is another positional truth. All believers receive access to God’s grace and are standing in it. We can approach His throne of grace with boldness Hebrews says. This grace in Jesus that enables us to enjoy a continuous relationship with God. You cannot stand before God on the basis of your own righteousness, but we have a perfect standing/position before God based on Christ’s grace.

Heavenly Benefit #3 – We have certain hope of coming glory. (v. 2)

Because of our reconciliation with God, we exult/rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. In other words, we can be assured of future glorification. Sanctification has three tenses. We have been saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. Another way to say that is we have salvation, we are being sanctified, and we will be glorified. Right now, our redemption is not completed. We have been forgiven and born again and are making progress in our Christian walk, but one day we will be resurrected and given glorified bodies just like our Savior and we will be sinless (Rom. 8:30). Because we have this certain hope, it impacts our response to the difficulties we go through in this life. Hope can bring about joy in our tribulations.

Heavenly Benefit #4 – We have joy in tribulation. (v. 3-4)

we also exult [rejoice] in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope.

Knowing that we will be enjoy eternity with God brings perspective to our undesirable circumstances in life. Notice that Paul doesn't say we have to rejoice about our trials, but that we can rejoice in them—there's a big difference. This is coming from a man who endured more trials than anyone probably on the face of the earth today.

But why can rejoice in them? For one, we are reminded that these trials we go through are **temporary**. They are so brief in light of eternity—just a speck on long, endless line of eternity. This reality of future glory can really help us cut back on the grumbling or despair of our circumstances. Faith enables us to let our suffering produce endurance and hope rather than bitterness or despair. But second, we are reminded that through it all, **we are becoming more like our Savior**. That's the purpose of sanctification you know—to become Christlike. Sometimes we want to focus on the trials that we go through. We say, Oh no, not another trial. I'm so tired of trials. I can't believe this happened to my spouse. But trials come with benefits just as justification comes with benefits. The benefits of trials is that they develop us. They develop perseverance, character, and hope. (James 1:2-4).¹ I get to demonstrate Christlike service to my wife as Mr. Mom.

When we enter into a trial, we should recognize the grace that we have access to in that trial. God gives us the grace we need to go through a trial and that this trial will build our spiritual character.

Heavenly Benefit #5 – We have the indwelling Spirit. (v. 5)

and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

I think another way of saying this is that your hope won't be prove won't prove to be an illusion. It will be demonstrated as something real, something tangible, that affects your day to day life. The reason is because the love of God is poured out within our heart through the Spirit given to us. Even in our trials we can overflow in our love for God and it's evidence of God's Spirit in us. Paul will speak of the Spirit's ministry later in chapter 8. Groanings too deep for words.

In verses 6-8, He delves into God's love for us which is the basis for our security.

Heavenly Benefit #6 – We have evidence of God's love for us. (vv. 5-8)

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

This "helplessness" in verse 6 is a complete helplessness. We are, as ungodly sinners, helpless to save ourselves. One man called it a moral helplessness, and God meets us in our moral helplessness. We have no righteousness of our own that can make us right with God.

The word denotes an inability. Have you ever been in a situation you could not remedy on your own? Maybe you climbed on top of the house and the wind blew the ladder down, and you had to yell for help. Maybe you were caught in between something or underneath something heavy and immovable in your own strength. You got hurt and couldn't move on your own. You had to call for help. As sinners, we find ourselves helpless, caught underneath the weight of sin. We are in a position we cannot remedy on our own. No amount of good works or religious works could save us from the penalty of our sins. No promise of obedience can save us. But we can call out for help! We can call out to the Savior who died for us! And He lifts the burden and sets us free.

Paul demonstrates the extravagance of this love by noting that one might perhaps die for a good man, but to die for sinners? For those who deserve death? That's incredible. That's unfathomable love. To get the tiniest taste of what this is like we can think of a convicted serial killer standing guilty in a court room. He is worthy of the death penalty and indeed, sentenced to it. However, a good man who is loved by everyone and has never committed a crime, steps in and says, "I'll take his place." That kind of love is unheard of. Someone But that's the love of God for us even while we were yet sinners and there is no rival to it. The provision of His Son demonstrates the depth of His love (John 3:16).

Heavenly Benefit #7 – We have assurance of salvation. (vv. 9-11)

We see this in the way that Paul uses a rabbinical method of logic where one moves from the lesser to the greater and the easier to the harder, proving the easier by the harder. If God was willing to save us while we were still His enemies (which is the harder thing for Him to do logically), then He certainly won't forsake believers who have become His friends through faith. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, *much more*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. If God was willing to display His wrath toward His Son instead of toward us while we were His enemies, then He will certainly not expend His wrath on us when we have been justified by the blood of His Son and have become His friends. We are His friends and irrevocably so.²

This is one of the strongest passages on eternal security and I'd just like to share a couple of more just in case there's anybody out there wrestling with their salvation. I remember as a young believer sinning against the Lord in some way—intentionally or unintentionally—before I was grounded in the gospel. And I remember wondering if I was still saved or truly saved? Many of you know what it's like to be a kid and praying every night for God to save you. Or raising your hand every time there's an altar call at camp or an invitation to raise your hand in church. At some point you need to get grounded in the gospel and take God at His Word—that justification is a once-for-all transaction. If you believe in Him, you have eternal life. You can have assurance.

John 3:16 says, *“16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”* These aren't ambiguous statements. It doesn't say that they might have passed out of death into life or that they could be kind stuck halfway between death and life in some sort of purgatory.. It's a transaction. You passed out of death. You are now in life.

1 John 5:11-13 says, *“11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”* This is a clear, black and white statement. If you have the Son, you have the life. You have eternal life.

I want to finish this sermon with the benediction from **Jude 1:24** says, *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

¹ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans*, 2023 edition, 105.

² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Romans* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2022), 108-109.