

## **Romans 5v1-2**

### Introduction

These verses contain the foundation truth of the Gospel, the touchstone for deciding if a church is founded on the truth. J.H.Jowett: “Plan to keep the trivial and sensational out of the pulpit. Concentrate on vital and central themes. You cannot drop big themes and create great saints”

This has always been a crucial subject. It dominates much of New Testament writing. Our forefathers constantly preached on it, and made it prominent in the Confession they drew up. They defended it constantly with their lives. It was a key issue at the time of Protestant Reformation. Luther’s search for God and attempt to try and save his soul – thought the answer would be found in the monastery. In his search he discovered this glorious truth of the Gospel, which for so long had been forgotten. He set Europe ablaze with preaching this truth.

In all the confusion and ignorance of today – not least in the professing church – this issue is still of crucial importance. It is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls (Martin Luther called it the article of a standing or falling church.) Nobody has understood Christianity who has not understood this great truth. This is what the Gospel and being a Christian is all about.

### The Doctrine of Justification by Faith

This doctrine deals with first and last question of man – How do I stand with God? Am I right with God? How does God view me? These questions take us to the lawcourt. Prisoner in dock, on trial for his life. God’s standards, the Ten Commandments, are the yardstick to examine all his actions, words and thoughts from the day of his birth. God has required absolute perfection. How does he plead – guilty or not guilty? What can an honest man plead but guilty? Judge passing sentence – **the wages of sin is death** (Romans 6:23) – eternal dimension.

How can I get right with God? 2 answers to this question have always been given:

- (a) Up to me. God works on a balance sheet, up to me to be black and not red. Religions, rituals, morality, self-discipline. Up to me to do my best and if I have luck or with God’s help, I can make it. Or:
- (b) Up to God’s grace. Not what I do, but what God has done in Christ. He has handled sin. Not my reaching up to God, but reaching down to save me in Christ.

God gave his Son to be sin-bearer, **the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all** (Isaiah 53:6). Took penalty of death in our place. Paid debts. Died in our place. Met every farthing of debt. Justice has been done. Sin is punished. All cost has been borne by God in the person of his Son.

But there is more. As my sin was transferred to Christ, so his perfect righteousness was transferred to me. Put to our account. Perfect transfer. On this basis, God justifies me. Sees me in Christ. Declared, pronounced me to be righteous. Not inward state of lives – become holy after. But standing – position before God.

*“My hope is built on nothing less,  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness”.*

How does this become ours? Realization that situation was hopeless, cannot do a thing for myself. Absolutely depend on the mercy of another. Hurts pride and self esteem to say so, but this is where I am. And by his help forsake sin and cast self on his mercy. Trust him as personal Saviour. Come just as I am, not attempt to improve self first, bring nothing, lean wholly on Christ to save me. No confidence in self, Look to Christ alone. Not by great effort on my part, but by humbly receiving gift, because utterly helpless to save self. Rest on Christ alone. Away from self and look to him.

This great doctrine sums up the Gospel. Offensive to man’s pride, especially if cultivated, educated and moral. Yet only one way. God’s grace alone and received by faith alone.

This doctrine distinguishes true Bible Christianity from all other religions (They are all essentially religions of merit). This is the very hinge and pillar of the Gospel. It is totally different from much that passes as Christianity today. It is opposed to formal religion, religion of forms and ceremonies, and ritual, salvation by sacraments.

To grasp this doctrine is to find the key to crucial matter of being right with God. It answers to problems of assurance. It taps into the root of spiritual life, and is the only effective motive and power for living in obedience to the Lord. Get hold of this doctrine and in dark days we find it holding us.

Only mark of true and living church. Wherever God revives and reawakens Church – this truth always came to the fore.

It demands our own response? Are we right with God?

### Three Great Blessings which follow

These effect past, present and future:

#### Past sins are forgiven – we have Peace with God

As far as our relationship with God is concerned, we have peace. In the clear. No condemnation. It was not always so. By nature we were in rebellion, up in arms, going own way. We had no peace while sin was unforgiven. Barrier. Antagonism. Under condemnation. Neither is there peace for those trying to earn salvation. Never sure done enough – church attendance, good deeds, turned over enough new leaves.

But true peace is found when there is submission to Christ. Embraced his salvation. Know sins have been borne by another. Righteousness put to our account. God sees us in him. Accepted for his sake.

*“My saviour’s obedience and blood  
Hides all my transgressions from view”.*

Atonement has covered all our sins. Nothing can be raked up against us. All put to his charge. No more demands on us. No unpaid debts. Nothing against us. Granted forgiveness and acceptance from the highest authority.

**Who shall bring anything against God’s elect? It is God who justifies us. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us** (Romans 8:33-34).

Wesley Chapel in Bristol. Stories of people’s conversions. Not “saved”, or “became Christians”, but “found grace”. Christ and his atonement are a solid rock to build on. Solid hope here. Assurance of Salvation. Look out on life with calm composure. Security. Even when he goes through valley of shadow death – he fears no evil. Mind at rest regarding relationship with God. Die and face God without fear. Rutherford on his death bed “Oh that my brethren did know what a master I have served and what peace I have this day”.

In that peace – man cannot live as he likes. Sense of wonder at God’s gracious dealings with him. Owes all to Christ, so careful not to displease him. Not glib or light-hearted. Spurgeon, talking to woman belonging to strange cult. They exchanged their beliefs. Spurgeon declared he was “saved eternally”. She replied “If I believed that, I would give up all my beliefs for that. If you believe that to be true, you ought to be the happiest man in the world”. The reply came “I ought to be and, what’s more, I am”

Peace with God means being reconciled, right with him. This is the first need of men. Should be in forefront of message. It is common nowadays to hear “Come to Jesus for this & that... friendship, comfort, joy, peace of mind, problems sorted out” This is not the Gospel message. Man’s first need is to come to Christ for forgiveness, reconciliation and peace with God. Then other blessings will follow.

Present privilege - Access by Faith into this Grace in which we stand

Access into God’s presence through Christ on basis of his atoning work. One who died for us – mediator and High Priest, takes us by the hand and introduces us to the king. Approach him. Enter throne room and graciously receives us. We have no right to stand in his presence, no reason at all why he should receive us – but he does so for Jesus Christ.

Hence we offer prayers in Jesus’ name. He presents us at court. We dare not go as we are. God welcomes us, and looks with favour. No frown on his face. Delights to receive and bless us. Not beggars on street, but members of royal family. In the palace, seated at the king’s banqueting table. The whole relationship is changed because of Christ’s death, and we are justified by faith.

This full acceptance into his presence should make all the difference to our prayer life. Not shuffle anxiously into God’s presence. Come with confidence and boldness at any time. Have assurance, received by God, great and precious promises to claim.

Answers to prayers in his will are promised. **Supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). Be anxious about nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6).** When we pray, do so boldly. We are accepted. God is listening.

*“Thou art coming to a king,  
Large petitions with thee bring  
For his grace and power are such  
None can ever ask too much”*

Feel uncertain, lonely, fearful, at prayer? Access into throne room – you are heard. Not live like paupers. All at great and unspeakable cost to himself. Few men are better qualified to speak about prayer than Luther. Knowing he was justified by faith, he prayed continuously and incessantly. Knew God would hear his every thought and prayer. He prattled to God all day long, like a child on a walk with its parents. Prayed with certainty and confidence that God would hear and help.

#### Future prospects - Rejoice in hope of the Glory of God

One day – justified man to see God himself and all his glory. Also see glory of Christ, which he had with God before the foundation of the world. Glory was seen partly when he was on earth eg. transfiguration, Stephen. When justified, God begins to work in our life. Changed from glory into glory now. Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. One day we will realize to the full all that that means.

One day that process will be complete. Ultimate end of our salvation. Final goal. See full glory of God. This hope is a certainty. We will see him as he is. **See through glass darkly now, but then face to face (1 Cor. 13:12).** Our new resurrection bodies will be radiant with his glory. Like his glorious body. Wesley hymn:

*“Changed from glory into glory  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise”*

We need not live as those who are downtrodden and beaten, with heads hung down, stumbling about with fear and uncertainty. We were predestined to glory.

*“Come we that love the Lord,  
And let our joys be known,  
Join in our song with sweet accord  
And thus surround the throne”.*

Brethren – the best is yet to be.

#### Conclusion

- (a) Basic Christian truth. The doctrine by which Church stands or falls. Not a Christian if not know this.

- (b) How sinners, lost and condemned, helpless to save ourselves, raised up by God. He sent his Son to bear our sins and give us his righteousness. We can have forgiveness, reconciliation, and enter into his family.
- (c) Peace with God. In the clear. Accepted. Face life and death without fear. In full confidence. Foundation blessing.
- (d) In present life, we can constantly enter the presence of God, and boldly bring our petitions and needs, He delights to bless and hear from us.
- (e) Our future is glorious. We will see him as he is. See the Glory of God and Christ, and be like him
- (f) Speaking of certainties – once justified, we are his forever. Once for all. Can never be reversed. No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.
- (g) How grateful are we for what Christ has done for us in Christ? Once lost, condemned, helpless – now justified, accepted, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. All of grace. Ours by faith alone.
- (h) Look at things that are eternal. Not spend too much time concentrating all attention on world, showiness, TV and newspapers. Lets set our affections on things that are above, not on things on earth. Things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Concerned not at things that are seen and passing, but on things which are eternal and will never pass away.