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## Romans 5:3-5

### The Detail of God's Good News, Part 8

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

The apostle Paul wants us to understand what happens when we are justified by faith. First of all, he says in verse one of chapter 5, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The word "peace" means two have come together to be one. It comes from a root word that means two things cohere with nothing in between to irritate. When Adam sinned, man and God were separated, and there was no way man could get to God. There was no way! He couldn't do it by works. He couldn't do it by human effort. But God came to man. Jesus came to this earth, born of a virgin and lived as the God-man, sinlessly. He went to the cross, qualified to be our substitute on the cross, took our sin upon Himself and became the bridge between man and God. So when a man puts his faith into Jesus Christ, that enmity that once was there is erased and man and God have become one together. That's a relationship that will never end.

The verb "we have" is in the present tense. That means I have it today; I'll have it tomorrow; I'll have it the next day, and nothing can take that away from me. If you believe you can lose your salvation, it might be good to cut that verse out of your Bible, because it tells me I have an eternal relationship with God the Father, and I am at peace with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We sing the song,

*"I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God. I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by the blood. Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod. I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God."*

We are born into His family. We're at peace with the Father and are made one with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Secondly, not only do we have eternal peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have an eternal standing in the divine favor of God. Verse 2 of Romans 5 says, "through whom [that is, Jesus] also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand." How in the world can I be a part of this grace? Well, it's by my faith in Jesus Christ. Once I've received it, I stand in it. That is in the perfect tense. Something happened back here which is determining the state that I'm in right now. I stand in the grace of God. I'm standing in the divine favor of God. He's always smiling at me, maybe not at what I do, but at me as an individual through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus took the wrath upon Himself. Therefore, we don't have to ever endure that wrath, and the face of the Father is eternally toward you and me. That grace is the divine favor of God that cannot be merited, but it is also the changing power of God—the transforming power of God. It gives me the ability to do what I could never have done before. It literally transforms me from within. That's the grace of God.

Thirdly, not only do I have peace with God and eternal standing in the grace of God, I have a glorious future to look forward to. The last part of verse 2 says, "and we exult in hope of the glory of God." That little word "exult" means to joyfully boast in the glory of God. I believe "the glory of God" there is the day that we'll see Him as He is. Won't that be a wonderful day? Not only will we see Him in all His glory, we will be changed to have a glorified body like His. Then we will enter into that glory and we will live in it with Him forever. That's the hope of every believer. We have a glorious future ahead of us.

Now somebody must be saying, "Now if we have all of that, then we ought to be able to deal with life down here." Someone said, "If you draw a line representing eternity and put a dot on that line, that's where we are—from the time we are born until the time that we die." He said, "If you live for that dot, you do not have the perspective of eternity." We must remember we are living right here, but oh, the best is yet to come! Why can't we handle the things that go on in this life? Probably because we are not looking at what God has given us in Jesus, and we don't realize the glorious hope of the future, seeing Him in all of His glory.

Well, the apostle Paul, I think, is anticipating somebody saying that, because he leads right into it in verses 3-5. If I have peace with God, eternal standing in His grace, and a hope of a glorious future, how do I live while I'm down here? There are three things all of these things enable me to do. First of all, it enables me to rejoice in my suffering. We can rejoice in our suffering. Look at verse 3: "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance." We've got something to boast about. We know that we can rejoice in our tribulation.

You say, "Now, what's the word 'tribulation'?" Well, it's a word that most of us don't really want to hear. It's the word that means crushing pressure, *thlipsis*. It is not to be confused with that 70th week of Daniel, the time of great tribulation that is going to come on this earth. We know from I Thessalonians 5:9 that we're not destined for the wrath of God. We're not to confuse it with that. But while we are here on this world, suffering is going to be a part of our vocabulary.

*Thlipsis* means to be burdened down. It means to be troubled. It means to be under severe stress. The apostle Paul is telling us that we have peace with God and all of these wonderful truths that we've looked at, but that does not eliminate suffering in our life. Suffering is a part of the believer's life. Now if you don't believe that, you don't believe the Word of God. It is a part of the believer's life. This should not come as a surprise to us. John 16:33 says, "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world." We live in a world filled with tribulation.

Now some of you are saying, "Well, when it mentions tribulation for the believer, it's talking about persecution." Now careful! That word tribulation does involve persecution, and we'll look at that, but it also involves suffering of all kinds. Everyone on this fallen earth is going to have to suffer. It comes from original sin, when Adam sinned. This world is a fallen world, and one day we'll have to be judged by fire and there'll be a new heaven and a new earth. While I'm here on this earth, I am going to suffer, not only because of original sin, but because of other peoples' sin.

Ask Habakkuk if you have to suffer because of other peoples' sin. He was the prophet doing it right. The

people were not, yet he had to bear up under the consequences of their sin. You ask, "How can a loving God allow that to go on in this world?" Now be careful? Be real careful! God preset the consequences of sin before sin ever came into existence. Once man sinned, the consequences were here, and we're still in them. We live in this world under the consequences of sin. It may be that something traumatic may have to happen in my life. I may have to die a horrible death. We can't choose the way we die. We can't choose what's going to happen to us in this life. In this world we will have tribulation!

In Acts 14:22, the apostle Paul, having been beaten, stoned and thrown out of Lystra, goes back! Now that is an incredible guy we're talking about. He went back to Lystra, Derbe and Iconium. It says he went "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God."

Of course, persecution is also involved, as we said earlier. You see, the believer not only has to live in a world that's under the consequence of original sin; he not only has to experience the consequences of other peoples' sin, many times in his own family; but the believer has to add to that persecution, something the unbeliever doesn't even have to deal with. We have been made light, and we live in a world of darkness. That's going to be a part of our walk. The apostle Paul, if anybody, knew something about persecution. As a matter of fact 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 says something about his life. He says, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. We are perplexed, but not despairing. We are persecuted, but not forsaken. We are struck down, but not destroyed."

Again in 2 Corinthians 6:4, listen to what Paul says about what he had to endure being a believer, having put his faith into Jesus Christ. He says, "But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger."

In 2 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul makes an amazing statement about all the affliction, all the tribulation he had to endure, particularly in the area of persecution. He says in verse 17, "For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison." Do you see what he's doing? He doesn't live in the little dot that I told you about. He's living on the line. He sees suffering in light of eternity. He has realized that what he goes through here is working a far greater work for all of eternity. So he calls it a momentary, light affliction. In fact, he actually took pleasure in it at one time in his life, not in a sadistic way, but he began to understand how suffering works for the believer. It does not work against the believer.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10 he said, "Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses." He didn't say, "I am well content with three cars in the garage, a swimming pool in the back yard, a nice home in a good subdivision." He didn't say that. He said, "I am content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, difficulties for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then, I am strong." He knows something, and we've got to look at this. He's telling us something about suffering that we all need to understand. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God, he penned the words of Philippians 1:29: "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." The word "granted" there means it is given to you as a spiritual gift.

Now everybody loves to talk about spiritual gifts. "Oh! Let's talk about tongues. Let's talk about miracles. Let's talk about healing." No! Let's talk about this one! It has been granted to you to suffer for Christ's sake. Now you ask how in the world can Paul feel this way about suffering? You don't like pain. Well, neither do I, and neither did Paul. Then what is behind all these statements that he makes concerning suffering?

Look back at Romans 5:3: "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing..." Look at that word, "knowing." There are two words for "knowing." One of the words means, "I've gone to school. I've applied myself. I've learned something." You study, put effort into it, and you learn something on the other end. That is *ginosko*. That's the word that means a learned knowledge.

But there is another word for knowledge: *eido*, which is intuitive knowledge. It's something built in. The apostle Paul says, "I've got some built-in understanding here. I've got a built-in knowledge." The world doesn't have it, but every believer has it. The same word is used in Romans 8:28, "For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to them that love Him and are called according to His purpose."

What is it that we know? Look at the verse again. "And not only this, but we exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance." Let's take that apart. We know what tribulation means. How about "brings about." That's the word *katergazomai*. It's the word that means to work something fully out. Let me put it in my words. When you put pressure on something and squeeze it, what's on the inside is going to come out.

When a believer goes through tribulation, suffering, of any kind in his life, he knows the thing tribulation will squeeze out of him is something that he desperately needs. It's already there, but the trial will bring it out.

What does it bring out? It is the word *hupomone*, "patience." Tribulation worketh patience. It works out something that is already within me. There is an ability that God puts within me that I never had before, and when you put pressure on me, it causes that ability to be worked out so that people can see it, so that I can see it. What is it? It is the ability to bear up under whatever comes my way, whether it be a death in the family, a traumatic experience at work, a division in the family, or whatever it is that I've got to face while I'm here. The Holy Spirit of God lives in me and produces the ability to cause me to be able to bear up under anything that comes my way.

Do you realize how necessary suffering is? Without suffering most of us would not have a clue what is on the inside of us. Why would He put the Holy Spirit within us and tell us that the fruit of the Spirit is love if He wasn't going to put some very unlovable people in our pathway? You see, it's only when you come across those people whom you can't love and run to God and say, "God, I can't!" when God says, "That's right. I never said you could, but I can, and I always said I would. Trust Me!" Then that love begins to flow out of you. This ability to bear up under comes out of you the same way.

Paul says in I Corinthians 10:13 that there is absolutely no temptation, no trial, that ever comes to us that He does not give us the ability—not to get away from it—but to bear up under it. Every believer has this. Every believer knows this.

You might be thinking, "I'm a believer, and I'm going through a problem, and I don't know it." I'll tell you why you don't know it. You've done the same thing it said back in chapter 1; you have suppressed the truth about God because you are not willing to bow and do what God's telling you to do. Just wait until we get to Romans 12! After Paul tells us these beautiful truths of salvation he says, "Now, therefore, I beseech you, brethren, present your bodies as a living sacrifice." There's an attitude here. You may not be walking in the realization of what you already have until you come to that place of faith. It says in Romans 1 that righteousness—that which God does, that which God requires, that which God approves—comes from faith to faith. Then Paul quotes Habakkuk, "The righteous man shall live by his faith."

If you are not walking by faith, you have these things but you haven't even realized it yet in your life. Not one thing can come your way that you cannot bear up under. God says this in His word.

Well, that just gets us started. Not only do we have the ability to bear up under, but with that ability, under difficult circumstances, it produces a proven character. Look at verse 4: "and perseverance, proven character." The verb is still implied: "bringeth out, worketh out" proven character. Suffering is a part of every believer's life, just like it's a part of anybody else in this world, except that we have persecution thrown in. The difference is we have the ability to endure. When we are able to bear up under in the power God gives us to bear up under, that proves something, not only to us but also to the world of what we really are. It proves the fact that we've been justified by our faith. I've always said, "Put a Christian under pressure, and you'll find out what they're made of." Pressure is God's classroom. The whole world suffers, but to us it becomes a classroom.

The term "proven character" is really the word *dokime*. It means to prove something, approve something. It's the word Paul used in Philippians 2:22 when Paul spoke about Timothy. He said, "But you know of his proven worth that he served me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father." He's been proven. It's the same word. It's also used in James 1:12 when James says, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the *Lord* has promised to those who love Him." It's a proving of something. When you depend upon the Lord you find something out about yourself, but you also find out something about Him that you could have known in no other way.

Peter says in 1Peter 1:6, "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the *proof* [same word] of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." We need to understand how important suffering is to us so we don't start shaking our fist in God's face the next time something difficult happens in our life. It's like a refiner's fire.

Do you know what a refiner's fire was? When a silversmith melted silver he would put it into a pot and heat that pot and heat that pot. It would get hotter and hotter and hotter, and finally the dross that's in that silver would come to the surface. He would take a ladle and throw it off. When the silversmith could look into the pot and see himself, then he would cool the fire. Somebody said, "Having gone through the fire, it has become silver." I

disagree. It was silver before it ever went in the fire, but it was the fire that burned off all the things that had been hiding what it really was.

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went through the fiery furnace in the book of Daniel, the only things that burned on them were the things that bound them. It didn't singe a hair on their heads. They didn't even have the smell of smoke on them.

When we go through these things it proves what we are. How many Christians are fighting against the very thing God is trying to use to prove Himself, who you are and what He has given you in the Holy Spirit of God? This is a tremendous truth of this brand new relationship that we have with God. It is no wonder James could say, "Count it all joy, brethren, when you encounter various trials." If you read that without knowing Romans, you would think he had lost his mind. Who wants to thank God for trials? This is why Paul said in 1Th 5:18 (see note), "in everything give thanks."

He also wrote in Ephesians 5:20, "always giving thanks for all things." It's not only **IN** it but **FOR** it, because he knows something. Whatever goes on in your life or in my life, God is using it as a refiner's fire to prove what we are, to prove to us who He is, and to show us how much He desperately loves us.

Suffering is the classroom the believer goes through. Everyone in the world suffers, but Romans 8:17 says we suffer with Christ. That's the difference. We are not suffering alone. I've been justified by faith; therefore, He lives in me. He goes through it with me. That's the difference between a person in the world and a person who knows Jesus Christ.

If we could see suffering from God's point of view, we would stand up and rejoice in our suffering. We would begin to understand that we talk about things we have, but we don't have a clue what that means in our life. Why? Because we fight Him through the valleys. We say, "God, why did You do this?" God's looking back at you and saying, "Wait a minute. Don't you eternally stand in My favor? It is for your good that I am doing this. I'm using it to shape you into the image of My Son, Jesus Christ. That's the most incredible message in Romans 5 for the believer that you can find.

The world would stand up and defy everything I am saying. "Ah! God must be a cruel god to make us live like we live." God is the greatest god you can ever be around. The problem is they are looking at it from their perspective, not from His. So, it proves us; it proves Him to us, us to ourselves and gives us a witness to people who are all around us. Suffering, persecution, you name it. All of that has to do with God's loving us in this life. If you didn't go through it, you would have nothing to say on the other end of it.

Ro 5:5-11 is one of the greatest statements of God's love found in the whole New Testament other than John 3:16. I want to show you enough of it so you will get the point, then we're going to bail out of it real quickly. Once proven character emerges, how do you know what a person is? Put him under pressure and watch him. Then you'll find out what he is. As he turns to God, God will prove him and He will prove Himself to him, and He will give him a witness to others. But when that proven character emerges, in verses 4b and 5, with it is a hope that will not disappoint.

Look at verse 4: "and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, [brings about] hope; 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." The word "hope," *elpis*, is never uncertain to the believer. It is always an expectancy that he anticipates based on what God has said. Our ultimate hope is the glory of God one day, the fact that we're going to see Him one day.

What I believe he's saying is I get saved right here. I'm justified by faith, by putting my faith into Jesus Christ. It's Jesus who justifies me, not my faith. But right here it starts. Down here I'm either going to die and see Him face to face or He's going to come and take me out of here, one or the other. Between there and here, this is my ultimate hope. In the midst of that time, I've got valley after valley after valley after valley to walk through. I'll have times of suffering that include persecution, and every time I go through one God gives me the ability to bear up under it. That fuels the hope that I can go through the next one and the next one. There's something built into the believer that he just knows that God's in control and that God, somehow, will make it work for his good.

What if you find out you owe \$5,000 this year on your income taxes? What would be the first thing you would do? Well, if you're walking by faith you'd go before God and say, "God, I don't know how You're going to do it. I'll cooperate with You in any way I can. If I need to confess something and make it right, I will, but God thank You that You love me. You're my Father, and somehow, You will cause me to be able to bear up under it,

whatever it is that I've got to go through."

As you go out through valley after valley after valley, your hope starts turning to that one day when you will see Him face to face. Ask somebody after they have gone through what they have gone through if they think Jesus is really coming for His people. That hope does not disappoint. The word "disappoint" is better translated "humiliate," *kataischuno*. *Aischunomai* means to be humiliated, and *kata* means down. It doesn't shove us down and humiliate us and embarrass us in this life. It will not disappoint. Why? Paul goes on to tell you in verse 5 why it will not disappoint: "because the love of God has been poured within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given unto us." He's going to say in the next couple of verses, "He loved you when you were not a sinner. What makes you think He doesn't love you right now? He shows His love to you by putting His Holy Spirit in your life."

In John 14 Jesus said, "I'll not leave you as orphans." Isn't that precious? Jesus said, "I'll send My Spirit to live in you, My Spirit, one of the same kind. I'll send Him to live in you." The Holy Spirit in me produces an ability I never had before to bear up under. The fact that the Holy Spirit lives in me is another way of God saying, "I love you, I love you, I love you. I know the world you're living in. I won't leave you as orphans, because I love my family, and I'll give you the Holy Spirit of God." If you'll walk in submission to the Holy Spirit of God, He will enable you to be able to persevere under whatever trial comes your way. He loved me when I was ungodly. He certainly loves me now. I put my faith in Jesus Christ.