

ROMANS 4:22 - 5:1-2 "The Blessed Hope--The Glorious  
Appearing Of Our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"

What Paul has done in Romans 4 is to clearly show us that faith in God is the only way in which we can become justified or declared righteous in the eyes of God because of the righteousness of Christ put to our account by our faith in His atoning work.

But instead of speaking of faith in an abstract way he chooses an individual who actually placed his faith in God and then was reckoned righteous. Of course his name was Abraham.

Paul showed us that this faith in God was not some mystical, magical wonder which only manifests itself in super humans. He showed us that even Abraham, whose father and possibly Abraham himself worshipped false idols, were called upon by God to place their faith in the Creator.

And then Paul explains what this faith involved. It was a simple trust in God and a trust that God was not only willing to bring Abraham into a right relationship with Himself but also had the power to accomplish that which He promised.

But faith always involves some action which demonstrates that we trust God at His word. Therefore Abraham is recorded as leaving his home in Haran and following where God would lead.

It's recorded that Abraham trusted God at His word so much so that he was willing to let God take Isaac, knowing that God was true to His promise and would bring Isaac back from the dead, if necessary, in order to fulfill the promise made to Abraham, 'In your seed will I make you the father of many nations'.

And last week we saw that Abraham's trust in God and His word encouraged him not to waver in unbelief. In fact, instead of wavering we see in Rom.4:20 his faith grew strong and he gave glory to God.

In spite of all of his circumstances which screamed of the impossibility of Abraham becoming the father of many nations, he looked beyond the impossibility of his own abilities and he looked to and trusted in the truth that with God nothing is impossible.

That's the faith that Paul speaks of in regards to Abraham. He was willing to take God at His word and then to act on that faith by obeying the Lord knowing full well that God could be trusted in

every area of his life, even in bringing the Messiah through his seed.

This was the great promise which Abraham understood to be the ultimate fulfillment where God would give to all mankind what He gave to Abraham, and that is the Seed to come who would take away the sin of the world, so that all of God's people could be reconciled to God, and as Abraham, be called the friend of God through faith.

We know Abraham understood this by what we read in Gal 3:16 "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," [Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 24:7] meaning one person, who is Christ."

That faith of Abraham in God, as we've been saying over the last couple of Sundays, was reckoned to him as righteousness. But Paul didn't write all of this to simply memorialize Abraham so as to put him on some sort of pedestal.

No, he wrote this to encourage all of us in that what Abraham obtained through faith we too may have by faith in our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Rom 4:23-25 "The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."

Verses 23 through 25 speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it is this gospel from God in which Abraham believed. He believed that God was able to bring the promised Seed to life after it had been put to death.

And our redemption is found in Christ who was brought back from the dead. Jesus Christ is alive and well and is calling all men to repent of their sin and their feeble attempts where "self" thinks it can accomplish a righteousness which is pleasing to God.

Christ's righteousness is credited to our account as we, like Abraham, trust that God is faithful to His word and will give us His righteousness by faith which will declare us to be not guilty, and declares us to be a friend of God.

But without the resurrection of Christ we have not hope. Without the resurrection of Christ we have no righteousness. Without the resurrection of Christ we are still in our sins.

But praise God, Jesus accomplished what men could only consider impossible. When the apostle John was given the Revelation of Christ he recorded these words concerning our Lord.

Rev 1:17-18 "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!....."

What does the resurrection of Christ mean to you and me? I'll let Jesus Himself tell us. Speaking to Martha, the sister of Lazarus..... Joh 11:25-26 "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

He's asking Martha the same thing He asked Abraham. 'Do you believe Me? If you do then trust Me and the life that only I can give.'

As Christ was resurrected from the dead for our salvation, to deliver us from our transgressions, to give us our justification, He promises that we too will be resurrected at the very end to a life of eternal joy and happiness in His presence.

Paul says, that life of eternal hope begins today as we place our faith in Christ for our justification. Justification from God is a legal status we did not formerly possess.

Outside of Christ our legal status before God was "guilty as charged". To be justified in Christ, by faith, is to be given a new status by God and declared by Him, "Not guilty".

What does it mean to be not guilty? Paul tells us in Rom 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Now this is very important for the Christian, not only from a legal standpoint, but also from a personal standpoint. There isn't a criminal in this world who wouldn't want to be declared not guilty, even though they were.

But, to be pardoned of sin is only part of what all of us want. It's one thing to be left off the hook for criminal behavior but it's

entirely different to enter into a peaceful relationship with the one against whom you committed the crime.

And this is essentially the way in which we are allowed to enter into God's presence as He makes the way open. God comes to us and reconciles us to Himself. He not only takes away our guilt in Christ, He makes for a peaceful relationship whereby we can be His friend.

This is what Abraham was to God by faith.

Jam 2:23 "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend."

Imagine being in a relationship with God whereby He has forgiven our sin and then says, "you are My friend". A friend that sticks closer than a brother.

David tells us in Pro 17:17 "A friend loves at all times,."

You and I have friends that will let us down. Not God. He will never let us down. He is a friend who loves us no matter what.

This is what Jesus tells us in Joh 15:13-14 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command."

What does He command? 'Trust Me, love Me with all your heart, soul and mind.'

To be at peace with God is not some event which we just consider on our death beds. We've all heard the expression..... 'It's time for you to make peace with God.'

God's answer to that is, 'I've made real peace with you by taking your guilt out of the way so that we don't have to be estranged. Come to Me, you who are weary and I will give you rest and establish a peace which only I can give through the blood of My Son and His resurrection from the dead.'

When God declares us not guilty, and then enters into a relationship with us that is now based on peace, not enmity, we as believers don't have to be worrying, 'Is God angry with me? Is He ever going to cut off this relationship with me?'

If God is the One who establishes our relationship with Himself, and He says that nothing will ever sever that relationship, then we can live in that peaceful relationship not fearing an imaginary

sword which we sometimes place above our head, thinking that God will cut us to pieces.

There's a big difference between receiving discipline from a loving Father and being cut off from that loving Father which, in Christ, is impossible for those of us who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Paul says this peaceful relationship comes through the One who suffered the wrath of God on our behalf; who paid our penalty in full so that we may be declared not guilty.

Col 1:19-23 "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated [to estrange away] from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."

I like the way Charles Hodge puts it..... "We are no longer His enemies, in the objective sense of the term, but are the objects of His favor."

And Paul tells us that by faith in Christ we have entered into this peaceful relationship, but then adds to what end and for what purpose we can rejoice in this relationship.

Rom 5:2 "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.***"

Our access to God is all grace as found in Christ. But having access is only the beginning, if you will. Our access includes an amazing inheritance in Christ that Paul describes here as the hope of the glory of God. Well, what is that?

It should be the very thing that lights up our life to where we rejoice at all times in the access that we have in Christ that leads to eternal life, an eternal inheritance. Paul actually identifies the time frame in which this hope comes to fruition.

Paul tells the saints to <sup>13</sup> [look] for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, **(Titus 2:13)**.

And so the blessed hope, that for which we long to gain in Christ through faith in this age, will find its culmination at the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And when will this appearing happen? Well again, Paul puts this appearing or coming of Jesus Christ into context when writing to the Thessalonians about the coming of the apostasy.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3** Now we request you, brethren, *with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him*, <sup>2</sup> that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that *the day of the Lord has come*. <sup>3</sup> Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

And then he concludes by describing that the lawless one will finally be taken out of the way when Christ appears.

**2 Thessalonians 2:8** <sup>8</sup> Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

The appearance of Christ, or the day of the Lord, or day of God, is associated with a variety of things, but we know that all of these things happen on the last day; that day when we are raised from the dead to receive this inheritance and to serve and rule and reign with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is precisely what Paul was saying in 2Thessalonians 2:1 when he connected the coming of Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, which is a reference to the resurrection.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1** <sup>NAU</sup> Now we request you, brethren, with regard to *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him*,

And of course we know this to happen on the last day according to Jesus Himself.

**John 6:39-40** <sup>39</sup> "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but *raise it up on the last day*.

<sup>40</sup> "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the

Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and *I Myself will raise him up on the last day.*"

It is on this last day, also described as the day of the Lord, that we will be ushered into the new heavens and new earth.

**2 Peter 3:10-13** <sup>10</sup> But *the day of the Lord* will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God*, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! <sup>13</sup> *But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

This is the hope of glory that Paul speaks of in our text as that age to come in which we are delivered from death to life, where death is finally swallowed up in victory as he explains to the believers in Corinth as well.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-57** <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* <sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, *then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.* <sup>55</sup> *"O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"* <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; <sup>57</sup> but *thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And so, when we look at our text in the first couple of verses of Romans 5 we must understand that this is the context in which Paul can rejoice and that rejoicing is founded only upon having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Romans 5:1-2** <sup>NAU</sup> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> 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.

The hope of the glory of God is essential in our walk with Christ in this present world because without a proper understanding of this hope it is easy to become weary in doing good.

Why? Because this present world wants to sap us of all strength. This life can be hard for all men including believers. Without the hope that this world is not all that there is and that there is a city with foundations whose architect and builder is God,

then running the race becomes futile because our eyes are not on the prize, they're on the path we're running.

Paul knew that there was a prize that was found in both a person and a place that this person created for His people. In fact, the apostle John puts both the place and the person into the same prize or inheritance that is promised to us.

**Revelation 21:1-4** <sup>NAU</sup> Then *I saw a new heaven and a new earth*; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "***Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,*** <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Notice that the person we long for is Emmanuel, God with us, in verse 3 of this text in Revelation. But the back drop is the new heavens and new earth that replaces the old earth and heavens as they are burned up according to Peter on the last day.

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Our hope is to be with Christ, but it is to be with Christ on the new earth that He has fashioned from the old that now becomes part of our eternal inheritance, thus fulfilling the original mandate for Adam and Eve in the Garden to rule over the earth and take dominion of it.

We have such an amazing life to look forward to in Christ and the hope of glory is intrinsically tied to the idea that this life is very

real since we will be physically resurrected to rule and reign with Christ on the physical planet we were made for by God Himself, which will be transformed into the new earth. But until it is actually upon us, as Christ comes back to raise us up with Him, it is only a hope, though certainly a glorious one; the hope of glory that Paul speaks of in our text.

What will this new earth look like? I mean, do we have any idea as to what this place will look like that God will prepare for His resurrected people?

The answer is a resounding yes! Just as we have the template for what our resurrected bodies will look like as we look to the resurrected body of Jesus Christ, that which is physical and entirely human, we also have the template for what the new earth will look like as we are standing on it right now.

Yes, our resurrected bodies will be glorious as our Lord's body has been raised to glory. But even in the present heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, He is as much physical now as He was when He ministered to people on this present earth.

He is and always will be, since His incarnation, fully man as well as fully God. But the point is that the same body that went into the grave is the same body that rose from the dead three days after He was crucified.

And it will be the same for us who are in Christ.

**1 Corinthians 15:41-42** <sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*;

Paul's point is that the same body that was laid in the tomb, or sown, is the same body that is raised imperishable.

Therefore, when we talk about the old creation, and by implication the entire universe, being destroyed by fire and made into a new earth and heavens, we are not talking about an entirely new creation as if the old earth had been annihilated out of existence only to be replaced with an entirely new earth.

Paul makes it clear that this present creation, (and here again this is a reference to the entire creation of God), is awaiting for something

to happen to it to where it will join with the resurrection of God's people to enjoy a new glory that God will bestow on it.

**Romans 8:19** <sup>19</sup> For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

The revealing of the sons of God is what John refers to as being made like the Son when He appears for us on the last day.

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

And so, just as the old creation is subject to the curse, it metaphorically, is also awaiting to being released from the curse at the same time that the sons of God are resurrected.

**Romans 8:20-23** <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

And so, if you want to know what the new restored earth will look like just imagine all of the beauty of this present world, with its majestic mountains, its vast forests, its amazing marvels like the aurora borealis in the northern hemisphere and any other scene you've captured on film that makes you stand in awe of your Creator, then you have only scratched the surface of what the new earth will look like.

As resurrected human beings we will enjoy the fellowship of other believers as we gather around tables for feasting and fun and utter joy as we all marvel at the grace that Christ has extended to us as we tell of His mercy that brought us from darkness to light to enjoy Him forever as we rule and reign with Him on this new earth.

The air will be sweeter, the seasons will be delightful as we enjoy every aspect of this earth we were made for from winter to summer and everything in between. And the most amazing thing about the

entire new creation is that it will never be tainted by the curse or the sin that brought about the curse in the first place.

But more than that we get to share it with our Lord who will dwell among us on this new earth forever, thus literally making it heaven on earth. And the apostle John makes this clear.

**Revelation 21:1-5** <sup>NAU</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

This is the blessed hope and it should fill our hearts with joy and anticipation as we look forward to our reward with Christ. But in the meantime it should prompt us to put this present world into perspective and glory in what is to be revealed when we meet our Lord and Savior in our resurrected bodies on that last day.

**Philippians 3:8-11** <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; <sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.