

LESSON: GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

INTRO: We wish to look at a chapter so special, that it goes to the very heart of our salvation. Although the chapter is Romans 4, we will begin with Romans 5. This is because the chapter begins on a "Therefore" which tells us to look backward.

"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God...."-Rom. 5:1

I) JUSTIFIED IS ***"JUST-AS-IF-I"*** HAD NEVER SINNED.

A) ***We Know That*** every person has sinned and cannot possibly pay the price for his or her own sins and that no good work can erase the sin that caused God grief.

B) ***We Find That*** God the judge looks at us as guilty and then casts His eye on Jesus His Son, and then says to the sinner, *"I declare you justified because of His sacrifice."*

C) ***We See That*** a nearly unbelievable thing then happens. We can read it in these words: *"...Him who justifies the ungodly"-Rom. 4:5; "Christ died for the ungodly."- Rom.5:6*

D) ***We Come Face To Face With*** the God who justifies the wicked! In Romans 4:5 we read a very remarkable, even startling statement, which is that God justifies the wicked. In 1 Kings eight when Solomon was dedicating the temple, Solomon asked God to justify the innocent and condemn the wicked (1 Kings 8:32), but instead God justifies the wicked because there are no innocents to justify. The innocent does not need justification. His innocence alone justifies him. That is why Jesus did not need justifying. He was innocent. For this reason, God put our sins on His account, so that He might put Christ's righteousness on our account. Jesus is the only one that has ever been innocent!

E) ***We Can State*** that you are either able to be justified or have already been justified. We will now explain how this takes place.

II) AT THIS POINT IN TIME GOD HAS ADDED HIS ***SON'S CREDITS*** TO OUR LEDGER.

A) ***Eleven Times*** we find a special word used in this chapter. It is a bookkeeping term and may be translated in your Bible as *"reckon,"* or *"account,"* or *"count"* or *"impute,"* and it may use several English words interchangeably in the chapter under consideration.

B) ***Every English Word*** used carries with it the sense of *"considering the thing, the act or even the person and then acting accordingly."* This is a very important particle of information.

C) ***Each Time*** the word means *"added to the ledger,"* and may be used literally or of one considering the situation and *"enters it into the ledger of his mind"* and responds accordingly. The shocking news is this: God added the merits of Jesus' sacrifice to the credit side of our ledger, making our spiritual bookkeeping look good. This is because the same word is used of Jesus when it says *"...he was numbered with the transgressors"-Isa. 53:12,* quoted by Jesus in Luke 22:37

D) ***Error Prevails*** when we refuse to believe this truth. We are not used to hearing and believing things that have facts and faith only mentioned. It is difficult for us to believe this the whole truth. Where is Paul Harvey's *"the rest of the story?"*

E) ***Experiencing "Peace with God" and a "Stand in Grace."-5:2*** are just two of the end results of the cross of Jesus and our faith response. It works like this: we learn and understand the essence of John 1:17 which says, *"the law came by Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* An obvious attempt to make this sound like an improvement is noted here. When we read further in John's Gospel we stumble upon 8:32- *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free,"* and in v. 36, *"if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed"* (or really free!)

Struggling to illustrate this picture one contemporary Christian wrote, But when *"grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ,"* a long-awaited revolution of the heart began to set religious captives free. Fearful bondage motivated by guilt was replaced with a fresh motivation

to follow Him in truth simply out of deep devotion and delight. Rather than focusing on the accomplishments of the flesh, He spoke of the heart. Instead of demanding that the sinner fulfill a long list of requirements, he emphasized faith, if only the size of a mustard seed. The change spelled freedom, as the Lord himself taught, "...you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Rigid, barren religion was, at last, replaced by a grace-orientated, relationship-liberating grace. His followers loved it. His enemies hated it... and Him. Without a doubt, the earliest grace killers were the Pharisees (Max Lucado

III) BUT THE MOST AMAZING THING IS THIS: IT HAS **ALWAYS** BEEN THAT WAY!

A) **Bible Time Is Commonly Divided Into Three Sections. They are:**

- 1) **The Period of the Patriarchs.** This goes from Creation to Moses. Patriarch is another word for "Father." God dealt with people by speaking to the "fathers" of the families.
- 2) **The Period of the Law.** This takes us from Moses to Jesus. This is a time that God ruled the people by written law, the centre of which was the Ten Commandments.
- 3) **The Period of Grace.** Jesus to the end of time. Now we have the Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and freedom from a legal code called "law."

B) **But See The Clear Language In Romans Chapter Four**

- 1) **Abraham** lived in the first period!
- 2) **David** lived in the second(law) period!
- 3) **We** and the Christians in Rome lived in the third period!

C) **Best If We Read The Bible Carefully At This Point**

- 1) **"Abraham** believed God and **IT**(his faith) was credited to him as righteousness" v.3
- 2) **"David...speaks of the blessings on the man to whom God credits righteousness **APART FROM WORKS**"-vs 6-8**
- 3) **Us.** "Not for sake only was it written that it was credited to him but for **OUR** sake also, to whom it will be credited."-vs 23-25

IV) Application For Us All

- 1) Since you have been saved by grace through, live like it
- 2) If Jesus died to set you free, plan to spend eternity with Him
- 3) If you have sinned, he himself is still your Saviour.
- 4) Don't let pride, humility or prejudice give you the right to argue with God
- 5) Have faith AND confidence in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross
- 6) You did NOT make the grade up too Justified, God gave it to you for Christ's sake.

THE SHOVEL In Ernest Gordon's Miracle on the River Kwai. The Scottish soldiers, forced by their Japanese captors to labor on a jungle railroad, had degenerated to barbarous behavior, but one afternoon something happened. A shovel was missing. The officer in charge became enraged. He demanded that the missing shovel be produced, or else. When nobody in the squadron budged, the officer got his gun and threatened to kill them all on the spot . . . It was obvious the officer meant what he had said. Then, finally, one man stepped forward. The officer put away his gun, picked up a shovel, and beat the man to death. When it was over, the survivors picked up the bloody corpse and carried it with them to the second tool check. This time, no shovel was missing. Indeed, there had been a miscount at the first check point. The word spread like wildfire through the whole camp. An innocent man had been willing to die to save the others! . . . The incident had a profound effect. . . The men began to treat each other like brothers. When the victorious Allies swept in, the survivors, human skeletons, lined up in front of their captors (and instead of attacking their captors) insisted: "No more hatred. No more killing. Now what we need is forgiveness." Sacrificial love has transforming power.