

Romans 5:1-8(NIV) ¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[£] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through 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. ³Not only so, but we[£] also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. ⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

God reveals Himself, shows himself to us most clearly through Jesus Christ. Jesus is not the Father. Jesus does say, He who has seen me has seen the Father. Of course, the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus is so much like the Father that he is able to say, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." "I and the Father are one." The Holy Spirit is here to reveal Jesus to us. This is my point. Our God, and He is the only God, is by nature exceptionally relational. I look at the relationship that Peter, James, and John had with Jesus. Those three men were in Jesus' inner circle. They were exceptionally close and they each served the Lord Jesus until God took them home. God is the essence of relationship. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had no beginning and they have no end. They have been perfectly relating one to another from eternity past to eternity future meaning always. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. The Trinity has never had an argument. No one in the Trinity has given each other the silent treatment. No one in the Trinity has ever spoken a harsh word to each other and of course neither of them has ever lied to each other for God is incapable of lying. They have enjoyed each other's company always and have never tired of each other. Not one of them has said "I'm tired of you and I need a break." "I'm taking off for another galaxy."

God is the essence of relationship and never wants a break from you. Inside of you is your soul and your soul whether you feel it or not yearns for God. Your soul is hungry for God and for what only God can give to you. God gave you your soul when you were conceived and only God Himself can fill your soul, satisfy your soul, and give eternal life to your soul.

There is nothing in this life more important than your relationship with God. God has provided everything necessary for that relationship to be the most intimate part of your life, the most important part of your life, and the most significant part of your your life. The highest knowledge there is, is knowledge of God. The more we learn about God our lives take on new meaning. Jesus came so we can know the Father. Jesus came to reveal the Father. Like Father, like Son.

Today our nation is full of turbulence. I do not believe our answers to the turbulence will come from our government. Sinful human nature abounds all across this country. We do not need change from the outside in through laws. We need a change from the inside out, a change of heart, a change of behavior, a change of attitudes one toward another. Our nation needs heart surgery and only God Himself can change our hearts. I know there is power in the Gospel to fill our hearts with love toward one another. There is power in the Gospel for our entire nation to live at peace with each other.

Such a necessary change begins like this. “¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace with one another begins with peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ there is no real peace. Apart from Christ there is no lasting peace. The peace this nation is looking for is only found in Jesus Christ from being in a relationship with Jesus Christ. This world can only produce tribulation and strife since the fall. Only Jesus can produce the peace people are crying for, demonstrating for. People’s souls are crying out for a work of God in their lives and a work of God in our nation. Human effort will never achieve what only God’s inner working can

achieve. God is the best heart surgeon of all and only God can give a new heart. Jesus says this about our old hearts. **Mark 7:20-23(NLT)** ²⁰And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. ²¹For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²²adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you." How our nation needs heart surgery from the Master Physician.

True and lasting peace only comes from being right with God. Every human being is created in God's image. Every human being has an inner desire to be connected to the one who gave him or her the gift of life and that is God. Laws cannot change a person's heart. The Holy Spirit moving in and changing one's heart and mind is the only way for lasting change to take place. Thank God Jesus overcame the world which gives us assurance that we too can overcome, meaning those who are in relationship with Jesus. The Kingdom of God can work in and through us and all around us even in this world.

¹"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Before we know Jesus we are at war with God. Before we know Jesus our souls are absolutely dead, dark, empty, and crying out to the only One who can fill it. God sends His grace to you, pours it inside of you, creates faith in you as you hear the Gospel and makes your soul alive. You were born once when you came out of your mama and you were born again when God birthed faith inside of you and adopted you into His family. Forever and ever you belong to God. God claims you and God will never let go of you. Jesus took out of you all of your sin and replaced it with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You stand justified before God. You are standing in grace, God's grace, God's amazing grace.

We rejoice in the hope of God's glory. When you know deep within yourself, in your very soul that one day you are going to experience God's glory, it makes everything here we go through worth it. Not only that, when our knowledge of God grows now, we get to experience

greater depths of God than ever before and those depths of God we experience makes us never want to give up on God and forsake the faith. God has everything that we need.

I have seen children grow up in single families, meaning only one parent. Yes, the parent is a Christian of strong faith. My heart goes out to these young people for a lot of reasons. This is what I have seen. The single Mom or Dad raises the children bringing them to church and Sunday school, VBS, confirmation, and later to youth group. The love that they did not receive from the missing parent was made up for by the greatest parent of all, God the Father. The Lord Jesus revealed the Father to them by the power of the Holy Spirit. God's love is there to provide for the child what the child needs. The deeper we know God the more of the love of God we know and experience. God is the best Father ever. No question. When we stand in God's grace our lives are filled to overflowing. We have the peace of God running through our veins so to speak. The blood of Jesus has wiped away all of our sins and we stand justified forever before the Lord God Almighty.

Looking forward for the glory to come makes us willing to suffer in the present for Christ's sake, for doing the right thing. We have so much glory to come and that gives us hope now so we can rejoice in the Lord now even during times of difficulty, pain, anguish and more. We can rejoice in God our Savior regardless of our circumstances, especially as our knowledge of God grows inside of us. Paul writes "rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice."

We are living in a time of great tribulation. The change will not come from without, from new laws and stipulations. True change can only come from within when God changes our hearts, gives to us a new heart, receiving the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts with love one for another. What our nation is really crying out for is a work of God, a work that can only happen by God's power and strength. Our nation needs heart surgery where hate is removed and replaced by the love of God. Only then will there be peace in our land. Amen and Amen.