

Believers In Jesus –
YOU ARE SO BLESSED!

Current Unbelievers –
YOU ARE BEING INVITED!

Saturday, 3/14 at 4:00 ✦ Sunday, 3/15 at 9:00

Third Sunday in Lent – 2020

Lenten Wednesdays: Services at 11 & 7; Free Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Do you ever stop and smell the roses? In other words, do you ever pause, realize how blessed you are, and give thanks to God? Doing so will turn us **from the negatives of life to the positives of life!**

We all have the basics of life – food, clothes, and shelter; we also have people who know us and care about us; we even have God the Father, His Word, His Son, the Holy Spirit, and the gift of eternal life! Wow, **WE ARE SO BLESSED!**

Today, *based on the first part of [Romans chapter 5](#)*, we focus on some of our ETERNAL BLESSINGS.

- Being At Peace With God:** ¹ **Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** // Two huge eternal blessings:

- a. Justified by faith: Last week I said that us being justified is **0% our work** and **100% God's work!** Why? **God** **showed** us our helplessness, **gave** us faith to trust in Jesus for eternal life, and **keeps** working through Word and Sacrament to keep us in Jesus!
 - b. At peace with God: When God created, the people were at peace with God, *in a state of reconciliation*, but sin destroyed that peace. Yet now, *through Jesus*, we are at peace with God!
2. **Rejoicing In Hope**: ² **Through [Jesus] we have also obtained access by faith into this grace** [*the amazing love of God*] **in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope** [*in the expectation*] **of the glory of God.** // What does that mean?
- a. Grace / Love: *Through Jesus* we have access to God's *everlasting* love. Therefore, we know God **loves** us now, **loves** us unconditionally, and **will** continue to love us forevermore! **WE ARE SO BLESSED!**
 - b. Hope: Hope, *in this context*, is our confidence in the glory of God. In other words, *when Jesus returns*, (1) we will receive a glorified body like Jesus and (2) we will one-day be with God in all His glory! Even though life can be hard now, *let us keep rejoicing in the amazing blessings yet to come to us through Jesus!*
3. **Having Endurance, Character, and Hope**: This section talks about sufferings – which are unpleasant, *yet those who believe in Jesus can be encouraged by sufferings*. Why? Because they lead us into the blessings of **endurance**, **character**, and **hope**! Let's consider the meaning of each of those key words:

- a. Endurance: ³ **[And] not only that, but [also] we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,**
- i. Sufferings (afflictions, oppression, troubles): The Bible is referring to **“suffering brought on by outward circumstances”** (Friberg). In other words, *not self-inflicted suffering*. Such things by themselves are not pleasant, *yet God can use sufferings to bless us!*
- ii. Endurance (perseverance, fortitude): The Bible is referring to **“steadfast adherence to a course of action in spite of difficulties and testings”** (Friberg). In other words, think of a runner in a race that sustains an injury; even though he is suffering, *he keeps moving forward toward the finish line!*
- b. Character (mature, approved): ⁴ **and endurance produces character,** // The Bible is referring to someone **“having the quality of having stood the test”** (Friberg). Going back to the runner, he **✦dug deep and ✦completed the race, so he passed the test!**
- c. Hope: **and character produces hope,** // The Bible is referring to **“Christian hope”** (Gingrich). In other words, **✦trusting in God, ✦waiting on God, and ✦knowing that He is causing all things to work together for good to those who love Him (Rom. 8:28).**

Then Paul explained: ⁵ **and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** // If we were certain of something that did NOT end up happening, *we would be put to shame*; however, God's Word cannot fail, *so we who believe in Jesus will not be put to shame!*

4. **Understanding God's Amazing Love:** ⁶ **For while we were still weak [helpless – regarding our ability to justify ourselves], at the right time Christ died for the ungodly [irreverent, godless]. // Since Jesus died for sinners, let us know we are sinners; then, let us know JESUS DIED FOR US!**
- a. **Some may do this:** ⁷ **For one will scarcely die for a righteous person [for someone who does what is right]-- though perhaps for a good person [one who does good for others] one would dare even to die— // Sometimes, in an extreme situation, a person will give his life so that another person can live!**
- b. **God did this:** ⁸ **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners [that is, not yet repentant], Christ died for us. // In other words, God gave us His Son BECAUSE of God's love for us, NOT because of some good quality in us.**

Conclusion: As believers in Jesus, we are right in God's sight, are at peace with God, should rejoice in our sufferings, and know that God loves us unconditionally! So let us be thankful and excited; let us also invite others to join us by identifying a few potential members, praying for them to be receptive, asking God to show us the best way to reach out to them, asking God for courage to reach out, and following through by giving them a Visitor Packet.

This Week's Challenge: In Christ we are so blessed! Identify someone who does not yet trust in Jesus for heaven; then pray and invite!

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, cause us to rejoice in Christ and invite others to benefit from Him too!