

The Walk of Faith

Lesson 4: Enjoying peace with God in the conscience and love for God in the heart, Rom 5.1-5

- I. One main point of the Christian life is to know how to maintain peace with God in the *conscience*, because this is one of the most powerful motives of setting out in the Christian life and one of the most invigorating springs that keep it going, Acts 23.1; 24.16; Heb 9.14; 10.22
 - A. **Notice:** a purified conscience before God is preliminary to serving God in good works, Heb 9.14; and a clean conscience before God is necessary to drawing near to Him in faith, Heb 10.22.
 - B. As long as our conscience remains pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well, we don't falter, we press on and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
 - C. **But** when guilt enters, unbelief follows, and a new controversy starts up in the court of conscience, disturbing that peace: "Am I freely forgiven? Is God fully reconciled to me? Is He still my loving Father? I'm afraid not. I've done so and so. He's certainly displeased with me, so I can't approach Him as I used to with love and confidence."
 1. As long as these doubts and fears defile the conscience, instead of walking with God, we run away and try to hide ourselves from Him because we look upon Him as an avenger of our wrongs and a consuming fire whose burnings we cannot abide.
 2. And the more we run from God, the more a coldness and shyness arise in our heart as we shut out the comfortable sense of His love, making way for a fear of His wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence and an evil heart of unbelief tempts us to depart from the living God, our God, Heb 3.12-14
- II. But when the Holy Spirit brings the message of peace into the heart, and enables us to find peace with God through His forgiveness and our justifying faith in Christ, then we look upon God in another light.
 - A. We see Him as He proclaimed Himself to be, Ex 34.6-7
 - B. We see Him in the covenant of grace He's made with us in Christ, Heb 10.16-17
 - C. We see Him as our Father, the Father of mercies, freely loving, forgiving, and accepting us in the Beloved, Eph 1.3-8
 - D. We see Him as our loving Father, with the tender heart of an ever-loving parent, Isa 54.10
 - E. And as the Holy Spirit brings these truths home to our hearts, He sheds the Father's love into our hearts and draws out our love after Him. His love begets our love, 1Jn 4.19
 - F. So we need to look to this leading truth that has such a strong influence over our Christian walk: we need to strive, with Paul, to walk every day before God in all good conscience.
- III. And in order to do this, we need to understand how God has shown Himself to be reconciled to us in Christ Jesus, how God has established an everlasting peace with us by His grace. And for this, we turn to Rom 5.1-6. In this passage Paul gives us many powerful arguments to *establish* the peace of God in our conscience in order that the love of God may *rule* in our heart. He records for us the *gracious privileges* of a justified child of God. Each of these are meant to establish God's peace in our conscience and God's love in our heart, so that we can delight ourselves in God and in His ways.
 - A. The first is the gift of *faith*. The Holy Spirit enables us to believe in the finished work of Christ and to trust that because He has freed us from sin and guilt and entitled us to life and glory, we are therefore fully justified before God.
 - B. Second, He shows us that through Jesus Christ God is at *peace* with us and that this peace is everlasting because it was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb 13.20.

Believing this, our conscience is quieted and satisfied, because it's purged by the blood of Jesus (Heb 9.14) and justified by His righteousness (Acts 23.1) and we know ourselves to be admitted to the high honor of friendship with God.

- C. Third, He shows us that we now have *access* into the gracious relationship with God in which we now stand: access to a mercy seat, to which we're invited to come freely, as a beloved child to a loving parent. Boldness and confidence are both invited and commanded, Heb 4.14-16; 10.19-23. Moreover, He shows us that we *stand* in this grace, which means we're fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God, 1Pet 1.3-6 (in this you *rejoice!*)
- D. Fourth, He shows us that we can *rejoice* in the hope of the glory to be revealed. As faith relies on the truth of the promise, so hope waits for the enjoyment of it. And this hope of glory is full of rejoicing because the One who's promised is a covenant-keeping God who cannot fail to keep His Word. So it's impossible for us to be disappointed. Come what will in life, our hope remains steadfast because it rests on God.
- E. Fifth, He shows us we can even rejoice in our *tribulations* because rather than take away our joy they work to increase it because they bring forth our patient endurance, which grows us in Christlikeness, which in turn increases our hope, which does not disappoint because He pours the love of God into our hearts in the midst of our suffering.
 - 1. And it's the gracious persuasion of the Father's love for us that then begets our love for Him and disposes us to seek our supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with Him.
 - 2. How important it is, then, that we meditate on this passage! that we pray for a greater enjoyment of these privileges and walk God in the light of them! Because nothing can give us the enjoyment of the love of God (v.6) and what that means for our daily walk, but being sure of our peace with Him through Christ (v.1)—these two are inseparably connected.
- F. Let us learn to pray this prayer: "O eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father as that I may maintain peace with Him in my conscience, and a growing love to Him in my heart, until you bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love. Amen."