

8,12,21 Rom. 5:1-11 Having the Peace of God in Adversity

Let's begin by reading through some passages that will help re-focus us on the reality of our time in history – then I'll make some applications and we'll move into Romans;

(Matt. 24:8-10) "All these are the beginning of birth pains . . . you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away."

(John 15:18-20) "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

(2 Tim. 3:12-13) "All who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and imposters go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

(Rom. 8:18-19) "I consider that our present sufferings are not comparable to the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the (mature) sons of God."

The world is engulfed in deception, and there will be an increasing antagonism against the followers of Christ which will bring about the final purification of the bride of Christ.

At the end, there will be a remnant who will have pioneered the way to the throne of God's Son.

So, before we go into Romans 5, let's bring those verses I just read up to date.

I want to show what the rest of 2021, and possibly into 2022, will look like if we're still here.

When I send the transcript out Friday, I'll include the links to the articles I'm reading from.

Let's start with the enemy's tested and proven strategy to get nations to move against God's people.

Nero burned Christians on crosses near his palace after blaming them for starting the fires that burned Rome.

In the 1930's Jews were classified as a health threat to the German people.

This is from an article entitled, "In the Name of Public Health — Nazi Racial Hygiene" by Dr. Susan Bachrach.

"In Nazi Germany, national or public health took complete precedence over individual health care. Physicians and medically trained academics, many of whom were proponents of "racial hygiene," or eugenics, legitimized and helped to implement Nazi policies aiming to "cleanse" German society of people viewed as biologic threats to the nation's health."

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/07192004-nazi-racial-hygiene-bachrach.pdf>

And from The Journal of Clinical Investigation,

"Jews were labeled disease carriers and a public health risk to justify the creation of ghettos (of isolation from others) . . . Containing . . . epidemics provided a rationale for quarantine (and) ghettoization."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1297275/>

As one survivor of Auschwitz said,

"Once Hitler instructed the (Public Health Department) to classify the Jews as a health threat to the German people, everything else was easy. . . ."

Soon after the Germans were convinced of the truth of this, the camps were built and the trains began to roll.

So, how did nearly an entire population of German citizens buy into this?

It was Hitler's propaganda machine.

The definition of propaganda, according to Webster, is;

"The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person."

Hitler described propaganda as "a truly terrible weapon in the hands of an expert."

George Orwell, who wrote *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, describes propaganda as ‘lies, even when one is telling the truth.’

Maybe the best definition of propaganda is by Richard Alan Nelson, who said;

‘Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages, which may or may not be factual, via mass and direct media channels.’”

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1138&context=history-in-the-making>

And now it’s unvaccinated ‘evangelicals’ who are being incrementally labeled among the greatest health threats to America.

Here’s an ironic quote from part of this NPR article,

“‘Love Your Neighbor’ And Get the Shot: White Evangelical Leaders Push COVID Vaccines. The Rev. Franklin Graham, president and CEO of Samaritan’s Purse, sits for a portrait at his group’s field hospital in New York’s Central Park in May. Graham has spoken out in support of COVID-19 vaccines.”

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/05/984322992/love-your-neighbor-and-get-the-shot-white-evangelical-leaders-push-covid-vaccine>

And from the Wall Street Journal,

“White Evangelicals Resist Covid-19 Vaccine.”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/white-evangelicals-resist-covid-19-vaccine-most-among-religious-groups-11627464601>

Biden and Fauci are ticked off about that – and apparently Franklin Graham agrees.

Since endangered health is one of the greatest fears to motivate the masses to action, Satan has initiated a global fear campaign and has now begun to finalize his agenda by ramping up the propaganda against Christians.

So, as with Hitler, it’s the same plan, just a new target.

Now, here's the 30,000-foot view.

The virus was created and released to pave the way for the vaccine. The vaccine was developed to eventually place the entire world in a tracking system – to implement a universal ID for everyone on the planet; which results in the global technological infrastructure needed for the mark of the Beast.

Sometime between now and then, the church will be raptured and the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit will be removed to allow the revelation of the Antichrist and the launch of his kingdom.

So, what are Christians supposed to do with the fear that's gripping the planet?

I want to share some thoughts from members of the Underground Church in China about this. They are commenting on Psalm 56:3-4 which says,

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I will praise His Word.
In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”

“You have probably heard many preachers warn against the dangers of fear. Of course, fear is toxic and can kill your faith. However, God doesn't expect His people to just dismiss fear as irrelevant. Jesus is always real, and He wants us to be real in sharing our feelings with Him.

The first step, when we face the kind of unstable situation millions of believers find themselves in today, is to be honest. If we are afraid, we should tell the Lord and ask for His help, power, and deliverance.

To pretend that fear doesn't exist is not helpful. King David knew a lot about fear. His life was in constant danger, but he prayed, “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.”

Nehemiah was a man who was greatly used by God, but when the Lord first put it in his heart to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and gates, Nehemiah said, “I was very much afraid” (Neh. 2:2). Despite being terrified, he conquered his fears and asked the king's permission to return to his homeland, where he gradually overcame the taunts of the enemy. One brick at a time, Nehemiah and his construction teams worked hard until they finally completed their great task.

Likewise, you may be feeling fearful about Covid, or about the general decay of the world and the increase of lawlessness, violence, and unprecedented governmental control. If so, we encourage you to do as David and Nehemiah did, and truthfully acknowledge your feelings to the Lord Jesus. He is wonderful, and has always been able to work with every type of personality among His followers.

For two millennium, Thomas has been somewhat looked down upon by many Christians. Even today, people who show any skepticism are labelled a 'Doubting Thomas'.

Whereas Thomas appears timid and cautious in the gospels, Peter was at the other end of the personality spectrum—he was never backward in coming forward, courageous, and outspoken. The Lord Jesus, however, loved both Thomas and Peter, and He used them greatly in the extension of His kingdom.

Although not much is mentioned of Thomas in Scripture, it is strongly believed that he became the first missionary to India. We have visited the tomb of Thomas in south India, where the apostle is said to have been murdered and buried in AD 72.

Some early Church historians (see Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vol. 1) record that very soon after the ascension of the Lord to heaven (and before Judas had been replaced as an apostle), the 11 disciples gathered in Jerusalem to strategize how to obey Jesus' command to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15).

Lots were cast, and India fell to Thomas, who strongly resisted the call, asking, "How can I, a Hebrew, go and preach the truth among the Indians?" That night, the Lord visited Thomas in a dream and assured him, "Fear not, Thomas. Go to India and preach my Word, and my grace will be with you."

Thomas still hesitated, as investing the rest of his life in India was clearly not the way this cautious man had envisaged things. After more prayer by the disciples, however, Thomas was made aware that an Indian king (who ruled the Indo-Parthian empire from AD 19-46) was visiting Jerusalem at the time,

and was looking for a carpenter to accompany him back to India to build a palace for him. Thomas was in this way enlisted to make the journey.

In India, the Holy Spirit empowered Thomas. He preached with great power, and many miracles were done by him in the Name of Jesus. Trouble arose when many Hindu priests were converted, among the thousands of Indians who surrendered their hearts to Christ. Fearing their customs and religion was under threat, priests killed the apostle with a sword, but the kingdom of God had been planted in India, and Thomas is revered by Indian Christians to the present day.

You may also be a cautious or even timid person by nature, but fear not! Your Heavenly Father knows and can move on your heart, giving you confidence and all the gifts needed to fulfill His purposes in and through you.

The key to overcoming in a volatile and decaying world is not to pretend that fear doesn't exist, but to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, who is marching ahead of His people and whose Word encourages us to be "confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

If anyone has a right to explain to those of us in the West how to deal with fear, it's Chinese believers.

We have to keep our eyes on things above, or this life and the pressure we feel, will drag us down to earth.

So, to help us do that – let's move into our study in Romans.

(Rom. 5:1-11) "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own

love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Before we break this down, I want to share something that I am becoming increasingly aware of.

The simplicity of the Gospel (which is what Romans is all about) is being subtly and dangerously compromised.

Here’s what I mean.

I doubt there’s anyone who hasn’t got John 3:16 memorized.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

There’s the gospel – in full.

God’s motivation was ‘love’ – to seek and save those who are lost. The purpose is to give us access to heaven and to keep us from hell. And the means God used to make this happen was the sacrifice of His Son.

Christ took the punishment we deserve, so we can receive the forgiveness we *don’t* deserve.

Our part is incredibly simple – whether we understand how all this works; whether God remains a huge mystery to us or not, we are told that if we simply put our trust in Him, He will take care of the rest.

So, why, are there books and tracts and articles listing “3 steps to salvation?” or “7 steps to salvation”? I even saw one that had “10 steps to salvation”

There’s *one* step! – trusting God to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves, because “salvation is of the Lord.”

That’s it.

Jesus' explanation of the Gospel in John 3:16 is fully complete.

So, if someone asks you how to be saved, don't give them a list of things to do filled with Christianeez they probably won't understand anyway. Give them John 3:16.

Or do what Paul did in Acts 16:31 when the jailer asked him how to be saved and Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

No list, no steps; just trust in the Lord and He will save you.

Ok, end of soapbox.

As we're working through our passage in Romans, I have to preface this by making sure we remember that even though parts of the Bible seem to have no immediate, practical application, *every* word of the Bible has immediate, practical application.

It just takes a little more effort to see the connection between the doctrinal and the experiential in some places than in others.

So, what I'm hoping to do with the first part of Romans 5, is help us make that transition.

Just as with John 3:16, I'm sure all of us are familiar with the parable in Matt. 7 of the two houses – one built on a rock and one built on sand.

If we are going to build on the rock, there is a definite process that has to be used.

To help illustrate this, I'm going to spend some time comparing what the author to Hebrews calls "the rest" to what Paul develops for us in Romans 5.

In (Matt. 11:28-29) Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

(Heb. 4:10) "For he who has entered (God's) rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."

This rest that's offered to us has three components; foundational, structural, and experiential. All are tied together and each leads to the other.

The foundation is the finished work of Christ. The Hebrews Christians, under pressure from Rome, were returning to a 'safe' religion – Judaism, which was legal in Rome (Christianity wasn't).

So, they went back to offering animal sacrifices which was the same as trampling the blood of Christ under their feet through compromise and unbelief (Heb. 10:1-18, 28-31). They moved from a grace position of God's acceptance through faith back into an attempt to gain that acceptance through works.

The structure is the promise of Canaan. The Jews who died in the wilderness didn't die because they denied the efficacy of the blood on the doorposts in Egypt; they died because they refused to go into Canaan, their promised inheritance.

For us, this would be the failure to press beyond infancy and move toward spiritual maturity, which is taught in Heb. 5 & 6.

The experiential is what we saw in Jesus' offer in Matt. 11:28-29 and in Heb. 4:10; "Come to Me and I will give you rest. . . He that has entered into God's rest as ceased from his (own) works."

If we are solid on our foundation of the total acceptance and forgiveness we have in Christ, and if we continue to move forward in our spiritual growth, then when the storms beat on our house, we aren't shaken by them.

In our passage in Romans 5, Paul presents the same tri-component explanation of "the rest".

The foundational – 5:1, through faith, we have "peace with God". The enmity between us and the Lord is removed forever by the Cross.

The structural – 5:3-4, this is where Paul shows the process of spiritual advance being established through suffering. It's through trials that the doctrines and principles we continue to study move us past the intellectual to the formation of the moral and spiritual character of our Lord in us.

We gain, over time, a personal history with God. There's no short cut to this. It takes time to learn Christ.

And finally, the experiential – 5:9-10, where Paul makes the connection to the experience of what Ian Thomas calls “The Saving Life of Christ”.

The life of the indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit raises us progressively above the world, the flesh and the devil.

We can never know the “*peace of God*” until we are well established on the foundation of knowing we have “*peace with God.*” Otherwise, we’re building our house on the sand of religion instead of on the rock of relationship.

Alexander R. Hay wrote that “faith must be based on certainty, on facts. There must be definite knowledge of God’s purpose and will. Faith is not a force that we exercise or a striving to believe that something shall happen. That may be positive thinking, but it is not Biblical faith.”

Evan Hopkins adds this, “Faith needs facts to rest upon. God in His Word reveals to us the facts with which faith has to deal. There can be no steadfastness apart from immovable facts. This is the test which faith must face. When we study the Word of God, we see the facts; do we believe them?”

And from Miles Stanford, “We cannot trust anyone further than we know Him. So, we must not only learn the facts involved, but ever more intimately, we must come to know the One Who presents and upholds them.”

Since we are dealing with Paul’s “facts” in chapter 5, I want to also read some comments on this section of Romans;

This is Stanford again, “There are two questions that every believer must settle as soon as possible. The one is, ‘Does God fully accept me? And, if so, upon what basis does He do so?’ This is crucial. What devastation often permeates the life of one, young or old, rich or poor, saved or unsaved, who is not sure of being accepted, even on a human level.”

J.B. Stoney wrote, “God never alters nor diverges from the acceptance in which He has received us because of the death and resurrection of Christ. We diverge in our thinking from (the reality of) Romans 5:1-11. Many suppose that because they are conscious of sins, that they must renew their

acceptance with God. The truth is, the facts are, that God has not altered. He has not changed, we have.”

In Rom. 5:1 Paul says we have “peace with God.” That peace is not based on what kind of people we are, or aren’t; it’s based on what Christ did to bring us that acceptance.

William Newell has one of the best commentaries on Romans, and his input on this chapter is extremely valuable.

“We are not on probation. As to our past life, it does not exist before God; our old man died at the Cross and Christ is now our life. Grace, once bestowed, is never withdrawn; for God knew all our faults and failings beforehand; His actions were independent of them, not dependent *upon* them. To believe, and consent to be loved while unworthy, is the great secret. To be disappointed with yourself is to have believed in yourself. To be proud is to be blind, for we have no standing before God in ourselves, our only acceptance and standing is in Christ. “

Many of us learned of our absolute security in Christ when we are young Christians. But a large number of believers still struggle with this because they’ve never received the kind of teaching that will lay this foundation for them.

Considering where we are in history and how intense things are going to become, we need now, more than ever, to know our security in Christ.

We know that Heb. 13:5 tells us that the Lord will never leave or forsake us.

So, when the enemy tries to convince us that He *will* forsake us, the only thing that can sustain us will be what we know, and believe, based on God’s Word.

To close, I’ll read one final commentary on this issue of being sustained under adversity;

“The Lord is glorified in a people whose heart is set at any cost upon the goal which is God Himself. Here is a very difficult road; a road beset by enemies, but the passionate desire for the goal will hold him steadfast. It is the man who lacks the yearning to know Him that will easily be turned aside. Along that road the Man Christ Jesus has already gone before, and at every point he overcame for us. We do not have to climb up; we are to be brought

through in the train of His triumph. Every enemy has been met; every foe has been overcome; there remains nothing that has not been put potentially beneath His feet, and there remains nothing in this universe that is able to overcome the least child of God who has taken the hand of the Lord and said, 'Bring me to the place where Thou art, in virtue of the sacrifice which you have made and the place of victory which you have attained.' There is great glory to the Lord in a quiet, confident walk in a day of adversity, when things around us are shaking and trembling."

(Gen. 2:21-22) tells us that when Adam was in a deep sleep, God opened his side and out of that wound, the Lord formed Eve.

Adam recognized Eve to be a living part of himself;

(Gen. 2:23), ""This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

In (Eph. 5:30-32) Paul writes this; "We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones . . . This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The Church is formed from the wounded side of Christ Who, in 1 Cor. 15, is called the Last Adam and the Second Man. He is the Head of the new creation humanity, just as Adam was the head of the old humanity.

Adam's bride was created from his own body, and was perfectly formed in the image of God.

(Gen. 1:26-27), "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'; so, God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created he them."

God's purpose for the Church is shown in Rom. 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Just as Adam and Eve stood before God, Who said He was "well pleased", the Son of Man, in His glorified humanity, and the Church, will stand before the Father as one corporate humanity, Christ as Head and the Church as His spiritual body.

In the old creation, Eve was created instantly from the side of Adam.

In the new creation, the bride is formed over 2000 years of the patient labor of love and faithfulness of the Holy Spirit preparing the bride to meet her Bridegroom at the rapture.

Following the Bema seat of Christ where the final preparation is made by removing anything from the Church that represents the works of the flesh, she will be presented to the Lamb without spot or wrinkle.

Those works she has done in her life on earth, that had their source in the Spirit, will become the wedding garments she wears at the marriage of the Lamb.

In Rev. 19:7-8 we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

We are now at the end of the 2000-year formation of the Body of Christ. The next events on the prophetic timeline for the Church Age are the judgment of Laodicea and the final purification and removal of the remnant by the rapture.

There has been no other time in history when the servants of God could know with absolutely certainty that it's time to ". . . Lift your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luke 21:28)