

## Romans 5 :1-2 -The Blessings Of Believing -17 July 2011

As we have been doing for the past few months, let us open our Bibles to the book of Romans and we'll consider chapter 5 today. So turn your Bibles with me to the book of Romans and chapter 5. It's quite a remarkable book, a blessing just to be able to discover the blessings, the truths that God has for us. Romans chapter 5 and for the basis of our thinking this morning we will just be looking at verses one and two. Romans chapter 5:1,2. Allow me to read these two verses unto you.

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said,  
(Romans 5:1,2) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

So Paul here describes the tremendous blessings a Christian, a believer, does enjoy.

One of the happiest times of my life is when I was with my wife in Japan on holiday some years ago. We were in Tokyo and we decided to visit Disneyland. Not that kind of place that I felt adults should go, it's quite kiddish, quite childish, but that is the very first time we will be in Disneyland and so we decided to go. When we were at the ticketing booth I was sort of a shocked that it costs so much. I can't remember how much it was, maybe \$70 or so per person and I thought wah \$70 to go to a amusement park. That's very expensive! But nevertheless, we have made all the way, we have travelled all the way there, let's pay the 70 bucks and see what it has in store. So there goes \$140, there goes the two of us into Disneyland and I must say I got more than I bargained for. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Both of us we had a wonderful time in Disneyland and I thought it was well worth that money. We really enjoyed it.

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Very few things in life are like that, isn't it. You pay for something, you wish for something good but often times it fails to deliver. But not Disneyland Tokyo and certainly not about coming to Jesus Christ. Except that when you come to Jesus Christ it's far better than Disneyland because you don't even have to pay for it. It's given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore Paul says "Therefore being justified by faith..." We come to God. We are justified, we are declared righteous, innocent, guiltless, not because we worked for it but because Jesus paid it and we received by faith. Tremendous! Coming to Jesus Christ is the best thing that has happened in my

life. I certainly got more than I thought I would. I certainly got more than I originally bargained for. You see, when a man comes to Christ, sometimes he thinks it's just an escape from hell, a ticket to heaven. But I realised, in accordance to the Bible, there is so much more than just an escape from hell and more than just a ticket to heaven. You know the problem with mankind and human nature is this - we are often negligent or unappreciative of the blessings around us. We fail to appreciate the good things, the best things, and the blessings of life. We fail to appreciate our families; we fail to appreciate our homes, our wives, our spouses, our children. We tend to take things for granted. We are ignorant blessings.

My son loves trees. Shawn loves trees. You talk to him at this stage of his life, everything is about trees. You bring him out into the park later on; he'll tell you all about the trees. Why is this tree bumpy, why is it cut, why is it black, why is it white? He loves trees and so yesterday I brought him to see more trees. I brought him to Botanic Gardens and we were there in the morning hour. And when I was there I thought, alright Shawn you go and explore the park yourself, go and explore the trees yourself. And so I found this bench and I thought I would sit on the bench and say Shawn go and roam, go and explore. Shawn said no, bad people would catch me. I'm glad he learnt some basic protection principles of life. And says then Shawn whom should you follow? I thought he would say daddy or mummy, but Shawn says wherever you go follow Jesus. Wah, from a three year old boy, wherever you go follow Jesus. So I said Shawn where did you learn that from? He sees from the teachers in church. What a blessing, isn't it. Daddy never told him that, I thought it might be a bit too cheem (difficult to understand) but the teachers helped him remember this phrase, 'wherever you go follow Jesus.' And just reminded me to be appreciated of those who are serving our children in the children ministry. How many of you are in the children ministry? All right, and the rest of them will be in the ministry. Let us appreciate them. The tremendous impact that you can make in the lives of the next-generation.

But often times as people we tend to take blessings for granted. We tend to forget the good things around us. And may I say, spiritually speaking, this is particularly true. As a people of God, we tend to not know, or be ignorant or forgetful, about the beautiful blessings of believing in Jesus Christ. See, Paul tells us in this passage about the blessings of believing. The blessings of believing. And this morning's is an encouraging passage. An encouraging theme and topic to dwell on because the book of Romans is getting better and better in a sense of its good news. It has to begin with bad news. But as we move on Paul is telling us justification by faith and together with

it, there's so much more than just a ticket to heaven. So this morning, let's consider with Paul in the book Romans the blessings of believing.

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There are few things in these two short verses that we need to understand and revel and rejoice in.

### 1. The peace with God

First of all, the Bible tells us when you come to Jesus Christ in genuine faith this is what God gives unto you – He gives you the peace with God. He gives you the peace with God. Peace, something very elusive you know. I was told in the Guinness book of world records that for the past 3500 years there had only been 250 years where there had been no war politically or physically. In other words, there have only been about 7% of the 3500 years that the world had some kind of peace from physical political war. Peace, it's very elusive. It's very hard to have it. In fact I read yesterday in the news about unrest and it's interesting the context when this occurs. Some of you might have seen this in your internet or in the newspapers – 'Liverpool fans shame a Devil.' What do you mean? The devil here refers to the Red Devils. Those who support Manchester United Red Devils. Okay, let's not get political here. All right, Liverpool fans shame a devil. What happened? Well, it is in KL Petaling Jaya and there's a training match by the Liverpool team and everyone that was there was of course a Liverpool fan. But there was a fan who turned up and he was dressed not in a Liverpool jersey but in a Manchester United jersey. And it must be number 10 Wayne Rooney jersey. And so when he got into the stadium everybody rose up, got to him and says, "Buka, buka." You know what is 'buka'? Open or take off your shirt. They chanted, buka, buka to this man but he refused and so forcefully they gathered around him and stripped off his shirt. And I watched a video it's a two-minute video. He was very upset, he set down on a seat, tried to watch the match for a while, his face was really, really black and the chants was still going on. He had no choice, he had no peace. He couldn't take it any more. He got up and left.

Hard to have peace you know. It's hard to have peace in this world. It's elusive. But the peace we're talking about today is not this peace. The peace we talk about today is far more important and far greater than the peace politically speaking or socially speaking. This is about peace with God. What is the meaning of 'peace'? Well the word 'peace' in the Greek is the word 'Eirene' from which we understand the root meaning to be joining together. Peace is about being one. Peace is about being joined together. And here Paul is saying we can have peace. We can be joined together with

God. We can have oneness with God. And that is the greatest need of life, isn't it. If your life seems to be a puzzle, look for the missing peace. Not P-I-E-C-E but P-E-A-C-E. Look for the missing peace and the peace is the peace with God. Because God created us for his glory. God created us for himself. We are meant, we are created to have a relationship with God. But when man is separated from him, there is a void; there is a vacuum in his life. But Paul is saying, when you come to Jesus by faith he gives you peace with God. He gives you that joining, that union, that oneness with him. Now what does this imply? It implies this. Before we come to Jesus, before we have a relationship with Christ, there is no peace with God. In fact the Bible tells us we are at war with God. Wow, serious, are you sure pastor?

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Well, let's look at how it happened. When God created man it was all very good. But God did give a warning. He said in Genesis 2:17 "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." God did not create man that he dies. But because he disobeyed God, he sinned, and then death comes into the world. So the moment Adam and Eve ate that fruit they began to die physically. And may I say they also died spiritually because the idea, the concept, of death is that of separation. They died spiritually because they are now separated from God. When they ate of that fruit guilt came into their lives, shame came into their lives and they began to hide from God. They wanted to hide because now there is a barrier, there is a gulf, there's a separation between God and man. They tried to hide; God found them and now God does something in Genesis 3:24. "So he drove out the man..." Separation because of sin. "and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." There is no clearer message of separation than this. God evicted Adam and Eve, placed cherubims and a flaming sword just in case they were to turn back. And says that's it that there's a separation now between God and man. So man is estranged. God has put the distance between himself and man and our relationship with God is changed. Do you know what God looks at sinful man today and calls us? What is our status before God today? Man is separated from him and now we are called... sinners is a correct word but there is another description...we are enemies! Aren't you a bit serious, aren't you a bit harsh to call man and God as enemies? How many of you agree with Richard – we are enemies? How many of you agree? Can I see by a show of hands? Wah a few of you so strong ah! Eh isn't your language too serious? They are not too serious, they are right. That's what the Bible says, it says, (Romans 5:10) "For if when we were enemies..." That is the way it is. Men was created to be with God but when sin came

in, sin separates us from God and now we are at war, we are enemies. Man is now an enemy. There is hostility and we sit under the wrath of God. In fact the Bible tells us in Colossians 1:21 "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." We are enemies by our wicked works, by our sins. That's the description of man. Have you ever tried to glue something to a surface that is dirty, full of dust, full of impurities? Have you tried to glue something to a surface that is dirty? Well, what you have to do is probably clean that surface and then it would adhere properly. And man cannot have oneness with God when there is sin that comes in between God and man. Who can cleanse us from our sin? The Bible tells us this is about Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:20) "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross..." Who cleanses us from our sins? It's Jesus and only Jesus can give us therefore that peace because he's the only one who can wash away our sins by the blood that was shed upon that cross. (Colossians 1:20 "...made peace through the blood of his cross")

There was a preacher who came to a young man and says, "Son, have you made peace with God?" Good question. Have you made peace with God? The same question I want to ask you today. Have you made peace with God? The young man says, "No, I haven't. The preacher went on to ask, "Why not? Don't you think this is important?" He says, "I can't." "What do you mean you can't? You must make peace with God." To which the young man now replies, "I can't because according to the Bible that peace is made by Jesus Christ through the blood on the cross. Jesus had already shed his blood and made peace for us. I can't make it. I simply need to receive it." (Romans 5:1 "...peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.") This is it for you friends. Peace with God is not what we do or what we produce or what we can work for. It's what Jesus had done, what Jesus will make, what Jesus has accomplished and we need to be justified by faith, receiving it by believing in Christ alone. So this is the thought, the first blessing we need to consider. That there is peace with God, there is oneness with God because of what Jesus Christ has done. Now not only is there a cessation of war or a stopping off that hostility, there is a beautiful transformation of our relationship from enemies to father and child. There is a beginning of a life of intimacy, and love and a beautiful relationship with God. Why? Because of what Jesus Christ had done there is peace with God.

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Now I want to ask you a question. Is there a difference between peace with God and the peace of God? I see that again. Is that the difference between the peace with God and the peace of God? Is there a difference? Yes! What is the difference? One is 'with'

and one is 'of' lah pastor. Yes I know. The peace with God and the peace of God. And when the Bible says you have peace with God – what does it really mean? Well the peace with God is described in Romans 5:1 "...we have peace with God..." There is this change in our relationship. But the peace of God you can find in Philippians 4:7. All right you can look at Philippians 4:7 and that describe the peace of God. What is the difference my friends? What is the difference? Do you need to be exact on this? I think so otherwise you don't know what the Bible is describing with regards to your blessing. When you come to Jesus by faith you already have this peace with God. So but what is the peace of God? Wah, it was equally difficult during the first service so... (Audience says it's the gift of the Spirit, through the spirit, circumstances... Okay, we can hold that thought, we can develop that in a while... it's the peace that God gives. Peace with God also what God gives me, peace of God also what God gives me. It's a witness to the people around you... Okay let's put it this way. You must have peace with God first before you can have the peace of God because the peace with God is about our relationship with God. Now only when you have a peace with God will then God give you the peace of God in your life. You see the peace of God is what you think and feel on the inside but the peace with God is our relationship with God on the outside. The peace with God is something that is permanent the moment you come to faith in Jesus Christ. Your relationship is for ever changed, it doesn't change anymore. But the peace of God is conditional. In Philippians 4:6 you must be praying, you must be entrusting, then the peace of God will come into your life. So one is an objective relationship – that's peace with God. The other one is a subjective conditional experience, an understanding and that is the peace of God. Are you all blur? Okay if you're blur that's good, it doesn't matter. Just remember Romans 5:1 this is what God gives, a peace with God that doesn't change. Your relationship with God is forever changed and it will not change any longer because you peace, you made up, you have union; you are joined together with God forevermore. That's what Scripture teaches when you come to faith in Jesus Christ.

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## 2. The Pathway to Grace

Let me give you a second thought here. The Bible promises not only the peace of God when you come to Christ but secondly, he promises you the pathway to grace. So firstly, there's a peace of God that is spoken, number two there is a pathway into grace. What you mean pastor? Let's look at the verse two, (Romans 5:2) "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..." I'm really excited about a word here. Which word is that? (Audience: Stand) stand is exciting (Audience: Access) access is exciting. Wah, access exciting. Yes, it is that word

'access'. But let me tell you, this is a monumental word, this is an astounding word, this is a revolutionary word. Why Pastor aren't you over-dramatising that word? It's just access. What is access? Well I want you to look at a few passages with me and through the Bible you are able to see the importance, the relevance of this word 'access'. Now the word 'access' is found three times in the New Testament. One in Romans 5:1, another two times in Ephesians. So turn with me to Ephesians 2:18. You have access; you have a pathway into grace. What does that mean? Ephesians 2:18. For those who have not the Bible I will just read to you, I hope it is clear for you. The Bible says, "For through him we both" that is both Jews and Gentiles, "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." This access is spoken of with regards to coming to a dignitary, coming to a royalty, coming to a king and in this case, this is an access unto the presence of God. How many of you have an access to the president? We're still wondering who the next one is but whoever it is, anyone has access to the president? Wow, you say who can? Who can go to the president - so many policemen, how to get there? But let me tell you. The Bible is saying there is an access not to Singapore's president but to the God who created the heavens and earth. It is a tremendous word that we would even think about having access to God. Ephesians 3:12 "In whom", that is Christ; "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." And again this is in the context of coming into the presence of God. So this is a big word because this is about coming into the presence of not just a president, of not just a CEO (chief executive officer), of not just a great man, but coming to the presence of God. Hold that thought for a while – it's about coming to God.

Now, for a Jew this is a shocking concept. Turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus. Exodus and chapter 19. And anyone cares to tell me where is this story taking place in? Exodus 19 is when Moses and Israel are now at the foot of Mount Sinai and this is where God is going to reveal and give to them his commandments. Now, I want you to note the scene, the atmosphere, the ambience at that time. I don't think this is a place that is easy to come to but if you're a film director and if you're going to film this scene, what would it be like? Think with me as you look at Exodus 19 and verse nine onwards. I'll just read and you grasp, and you try to grasp the feeling, the vibe on that day. Exodus 19 and maybe I will read verse 10.

(Exodus 19:10-25) "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze and many of them perish.

And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.

And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them.

So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them."



I don't think you need to be an expert in a Bible to realise this is a scene of great fear and awe. The message God is giving to Moses is very clear. Ask and tell and charge the people to keep their distance. You can't come near. I don't think Mount Sinai is a place where you have your candlelight dinner. It's just not the right place; it's just not the right ambience. It is a place of tremendous awe and God is saying there is no access for the common people unto me. Keep their distance. And even when God led Israel in the wilderness and into the Promised Land, he led them as he is, his presence is with them in the ark. There is to be a distance kept between the people of Israel and the ark of God. There is that message that is constant in the old Testament – keep your distance. When Herod built the temple God... (Slide: Picture of a temple) This is a picture of the temple; this is a representation, a kind of miniature model of what it might have looked like. Maybe for most of us we are not that great, we can't see what this is about, but let me give you a schematic diagram and you will realise it is a temple that is designed to have a consistent message – keep your distance. (Slide: Schematic diagram of Herod's Temple) You see, for the average people, if you are not a Jew today, in another words you are a Gentile, all you can come to is the Gentile's Court. That's all. You can't go further. The ultimate place to be in is the Most Holy Place which we call the Holy of Holies. But a Gentile could never dream of going to the most holy place because all he could come to is the Gentile's Court. Now if you are a Jew, you can go further. But if you are a Jewish lady, all you can go to is the Court of Women and not beyond. Again the message is – keep your distance. Now for a Jewish man, you can go a little bit more. You can go into the Court of Israel but that's it. An average commoner, an average Jew, cannot go beyond the Court of Israel and only the priests are allowed into the Court of Priests and into the Holy Place. They are the only ones who can operate and minister within. But then, in the Most Holy Place which we call the Holy of Holies, there is only to be one man who can enter it. In the entire world, on the entire face of the Earth, at any one point of time, there is only one man who can enter the Most Holy Place and he can enter in only once a year on the Day of Atonement and he can only enter in when he goes in with a blood sacrifice. The message is crystal clear – keep your distance. Those who tried to breach this suffered major consequences. Nadab and Abihu in the book of Leviticus and then you read of King Uzziah who thought he could do the work of priest, he was struck with leprosy. God is saying to the people don't approach me presumptuously. Keep your distance.

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In fact, it is very interesting if you look at the dress code of the high priests. This is what he might look like in his dress code during the days of his ministration. I have

preached on this before but there is only one aspect I want to highlight and that is here. At the bottom of his hem, of his robes, there's something which God prescribes and that is he must have golden bells here. Quite cool. Everywhere you walk people will know you are coming. Tink, tink, tink... And he has the bells there. You know why? Because he's the only man, once a year, who can enter the Most Holy Place. And as he enters and as he performs what God wants him to do, he moves around, you hear the bells. The priest outside you will be comforted he still alive. But the moment the bells ceased ringing for any protracted period of time, they would know he has transgressed against the Lord and Lord has struck him dead. His dress code is a reminder to the people – keep your distance. This is a holy, holy, holy God. In fact there is a legend, I think it's a legend because it cannot be verified with accurate sources. There's a legend that goes that a high priest has a rope tied to his ankle. Why? Anyone? Wah, you guys are very creative people. That's right, this action is right because they say if the priest dies inside nobody can go in and so they got to pull him out by the rope that is tied to his ankle. Now I think that's a legend because I cannot verify it anywhere. But the message is clear – for a Jew, you don't approach God presumptuously. In fact, there are barriers after barriers after barriers that would not allow you an access to God.

So when Paul writes in Romans chapter 5 that you have an access, it is a reminder of the great day when Jesus died on the cross. Do you know that some 2000 years ago this whole concept has been revolutionised. Why? Because when Jesus went to the cross and when he shouted it is finished and when he gave up his ghost and he died and returned to the Father, the Bible tells us, (Matthew 27:51) "And, behold" look, "the veil of the temple" that separates the Holy Place from the Holiest of Holies is now "rent" torn "from the top to the bottom." The significance of top to bottom is to symbolise that this is not done by the priest from the bottom up. It's done by God from the top down. By the way, the veil is no easy piece of material to tear. It is thick, it is heavy. And for it to be torn from the top to bottom it is an act of God. And so when Jesus died on the cross, God is saying the access, the way to God is now open. Ah, make sense now, Paul, when you say because of justification by faith we can (Romans 5:2) "have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Man can now come to God in the grace that Jesus merits for us. It's not because we are good, not because we are good enough. We are never good enough but Jesus gives us that grace. God gives us that grace and we can stand here. The word 'stand' is to be firmly fixed, to be secure, immovable. You don't lose salvation you don't lose your standing. It is permanent, it's not precarious, it's not temporal, and it's there. And you stand in that grace because God has given you an access. It means today you and I, my

brothers and sisters in Christ, you can draw near to God and not be fearful like the Jews were in the past. You have direct access.

00:37:07

(Hebrews 10:19-22)

What does the writer of Hebrews say to all this? By the way this is not my imagination. My imagination is worth nothing. But the Scriptural teaching is encouraging. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Having therefore, brethren" what now, "boldness", the Jews were filled with fear and awe and trembling but because of Christ we can now have boldness "to enter" where? into the Most Holy Place because Jesus has opened up the way. "By the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil," that is now torn, "that is to say, his flesh". An encouragement to you and I, "Let us draw near". You know what God wants? He's enabling us, he's giving us the tremendous privilege of access. For all the years President Nathan has been a president he has never given me access. I have driven by Istana (the official residence and office of the President of Singapore) many times but he has never invited me in. In fact when I drive by, I look at the guard, his message is - keep your distance. It applies to any president. But our God is saying come near to me. Yes, I am a majestic God, holy God and sinful man by himself could never stand but I'm giving you the grace, the environment of grace, I'm giving you Christ that you may stand in his grace. I'm giving you an access to me. Draw near.

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Let me give you another botanic's illustration. This is Shawn, yesterday, when we went to botanic's. This is near the botany centre. Botanic Gardens is huge and I am discovering new things in this garden because of my son. So we went to botany centre. When went there we could see a giant tree. Doesn't look very giant ah. But let me show you the next slide. This is the giant tree and this is my son, puny little boy standing by a majestic tree. It's a huge gorgeous tree. He loved the tree. But if you look carefully, he's not able to go near the tree because there are barricades, there are barriers, there are fences and not only that there are also some spindly things that are there. It's not natural, it's artwork. So I read on the plaque what this really means and this is what the plaque says. It's a 'Far Away Tree'. It wants to tell you the tree is majestic and far away. And so to emphasise that it says, "This land art design is inspired by the beauty of the root of the tree. By extending the root using smilax (which is the vine), this structure creates an impression that the tree is far away." It wants you to think that the tree is majestic and far away. I thought about. It is exactly the opposite of what God to be. He wants to have us in proximity with him. He wants

us to draw near to him. And that is what the writer of Hebrews says "Let us draw near." And that is what he says again in Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let us come boldly at any time. You don't have to come to church to ask your pastor to allow you access to God. You have an access today if you justified by faith in Jesus Christ. You don't have to go to a booth. You don't have to go to some intermediaries. You have direct access with God any time in your life today. A privilege the world who does not know God won't have. Just two nights ago I was really tired, both Winnie and myself we were knocked out, we were sleeping and I think it was somewhere at 4, 5am that some strange thing happened. We felt something crawl up our bed. We felt someone kicking us, dragging us. And then this thing came between Winnie and myself and it started to kick us and push so that he would have more space. Who do you think this thing is? Of course it's my son Shawn. Now, he has direct access to us. He was in his room and he was feeling too cold so he voluntarily came down his bed, came to our room, climbed up our bed, kicked us all around and slept comfortably right in between us. Now none of you should do that in my home. You have no such access to our home. You can come to our home. We welcome you but not coming up in the middle of the night and sleeping in between my wife and myself. That privilege, that access, is given only to Mr. Shawn Lim. My friends, we have direct access to God. It's amazing! Can you imagine what this implies? In your time of need you need not fear. You can come boldly to the throne of grace. Why? Because through Jesus the pathway to grace is already open. There's is an access open for us. So it's a tremendous thought. Let it sit and soak in your life. Let this flood your thoughts. Let your mind be filled with the wonder and amazement that I now have peace with God and I now have a pathway to grace.

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### 3. The Prospect of Glory

But that's not all. There are great blessings and the third blessing spoken of in Romans five is that there is the prospect of glory. There is a glorious hope. There is a prospect of glory. All of us live in a sense because of hope. Isn't it so? We live on because of hope. We hope for better things. We hope for better life, a better job, a better family, a better health. We all aim for hope. But let me tell you, there's a great hope today found in the Scripture for you and I. Your future is glorious. Can I say that about you? I can if you have trusted in Christ. Your future is glorious. Guaranteed. The Bible tells me that I have a glorious future. What do you mean by a glorious future, pastor? Well there's a Sunday school teacher who asked the class about things in heaven and she asked this question. Who do you think will have the

biggest crown in heaven? Which one, what Christians, what child of God will have the biggest crown in heaven? And one Sunday school kid raised his hand and says, "The one with the biggest head." That's a very good answer I thought. Now we all know that when we go to heaven God will bless us, those who are faithful and who have honoured him. We will receive crowns. But I think the glory that we have is not only with what we wear in the crown. There's something more to that, isn't it? The Bible tells me in Romans 5:2 we can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

What do you mean by the glory of God? What do you mean? Let me tell you this is your future. You've got to know what it means. You have a hope of the glory of God. Let's look at some scriptural verses to understand what it means. It says in Romans 8:17 which we will come to, I'm not sure how long, we are at Romans 5. Romans 8 may be another year. I'm not sure but Romans 8 it says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Those who belong to Jesus Christ are heirs with Christ. Some of us hope that we are Bill Gates' children. Wah, have all his inheritance. Let me tell you, you don't have to be envious of Bill Gates kids. Not at all when we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ. Again, this thought boggles my mind. I'm an heir of Christ or with Christ. I'm a joint heir with him and I will be glorified together with Christ. Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate..." To be what? "To be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Looking on in verse 30. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." I want you to link the fact that our glorification is very much linked to be conformed to the image of his son. By the way, this verse tells us no one is lost when God chooses to save us. It's as good as done – predestinated, called, justified, glorified. None lost. It is attrition proven. No one would be lost if God is the one who saves us. But his plan for you when he saves you, or even before he saves you, is that you will be glorified and you will be conformed to the image of his son. My friends, that's the glory. You look and you can anticipate a day when you will be exactly like his son. Great thought – a man full of flaws, pimple here, balding there, lots of flaws, lots of flaws not only on the outside but on the inside. And we will be all glorified together with Christ. Hope of glory. "And that he might make known..." (Romans 9:23) "...the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy..." We are pure vessels and they are vessels mercy because apart from mercy of God there's no way we can come into his presence. But we are the vessels of mercy, the riches of his glory will be in us "which he had afore prepared

unto glory". He has destined you for glory. Again, Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." You know, that is a description of you. You will be in glory. Hebrews 2:10, "...in bringing many sons unto glory..." Wow, it is not a verse here and there only. It's throughout the Bible. That God's intention, that's God's plan for your life that you will be brought into glory. John said this when he saw or when he describes Jesus Christ. He says, (John 1:14) "...we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". He probably was referring to the day when Peter and himself were in the Mount where Jesus was transfigured in front of them. God's humanity in a sense was peeled back in the person of Christ and the full glory of Christ shown through and John said he saw his glory. He was glorious. That's Christ. And you will be glorious because that God's plan for you. A glorious, glorious man or woman before God.

00:49:45

My friends, that is the prospect you have. You can rejoice in the hope of glory. The word 'hope' here is not wishful thinking. It's not I hope this will happen, I hope that will happen. The word hope here is a confident expectation, a settled conviction, a happy certainty that this will happen because God said so. That's what a hope in the Bible means. It's a confident expectation. You buy durian today they tell you 'bao chiak' (in Hokkien simply means assured or guaranteed). You may not think it's 'bao chiak' because you may not trust in the word of that durian seller. But I'm saying to you it is 'bao chiak'. I'm telling you because it's not I'm telling you. It's because God is telling you it's 'bao chiak' when it comes to your glorification if you have genuine faith in Jesus Christ like that Abraham's. If you have that, if you are justified by faith, 'bao chiak' you will be glorified. Does not yet appear that case right now but it shall be when we see him face to face.

So my friends, this is the summary of it all. (Romans 5:1,2) "Therefore, being justified by faith." This is the key, isn't it? Why did we labour so long? Why did Paul labour so long in the first five chapters of Romans? Because the book of Romans is a book of 'therefores'. It is said that the whole secret of Christian living is understood if you understand the word 'therefore'. What is it 'therefore'? It's logical and you got to be justified by faith, by genuine faith like that of Abraham's. And if you are so, if you believe in Christ with authentic faith then these are your blessings.

00:51:38

Can I recap for you...

1. You have peace with God. You are no more enemies. Your relationship with him is now dramatically changed, permanently changed. And there is that beginning of the life of intimacy with God. The peace with God.

2. You have a pathway into this grace. You have access. You're no more far away. You need not fear. You can have boldness to approach the throne of grace in times of need. Unlimited pass to God.

3. My friends, not only do you have your issues settled in the past, not only do you have access today but you have a glorious hope for the future in that you can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. You can exalt, you can boast, you can rejoice in the confident expectation I will share in the glory of God, I'll be like his son.

Those are the beautiful blessings of believing in Jesus Christ.

Let's bow for a word of prayer...

My friends, this is the teaching of God, the promise of God, with regards to our faith in Christ. I want to this morning just encourage all my brothers and sisters in Christ. Why do you worship? Why do you praise? Ah, my friends, as we consider these words, shouldn't we be appreciative, shouldn't we be thankful, shouldn't we be exalting, rejoicing, celebrating who God is and the tremendous blessings he has poured into our lives? Are you today downcast? Are you today stricken by the trials and afflictions of life? My friends, take time for a look at the Saviour, at Jesus the Son of God who gave you peace with God, who gave you a pathway into that grace and who gives you a glorious prospect of hope. But my heart yearns also for those who have not known Jesus. You are separated from God. In God's eyes you are an enemy. You have no help in this life. You can't come to him in prayer. You face a prospect of horror and torment and not one of glory and joy. And my friends, there is no Plan B for you. This is the only way because Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father except by me." Would you today asked God for mercy upon your life, that you may trust in Jesus and that you may be saved? Would you like what the Bible describes, be like that sinner who smote his chest and simply cried out 'God be merciful to me a sinner'. And Jesus said this man went away justified because he humbled himself and trusted in the mercy of God. My friends, the door to salvation, the way to eternal life, is through Jesus Christ alone. Would you believe in him?

Father, we thank you this morning. We praise you for who you are – perfect, flawless, glorious and majestic. And in your infinite wisdom you designed salvation's plan.

Inherent in this plan is the riches of blessings – peace with yourself, pathway to grace and the prospect of glory. Lord, may your children today revel and rejoice in it. That we may all say, 'oh it is wonderful to be a Christian. It is wonderful to be God's child. Wonderful to have my sins forgiven. Wonderful to be reconciled.' Would you lift up our eyes away from the muck and mire of life and rejoice in you. And Father, it is our prayer collectively as a body today for those who are seated right here but may not know Christ as yet. Would you have mercy also upon their hearts and give them the understanding that is needed. Blessed them with the ability to make that choice to believe in Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Lord, you must do it because except a man be born again he cannot see nor enter the kingdom of God and he must be born from above. And God, when you do that miracle of a new birth we will be careful to give you back the praise and the glory that you do deserve. So Lord, work mightily even in this simple hour because we trust that your spirit can take your living word and bless it to the hearts of your people. We thank you. We pray all this now humbly in Jesus name. Amen. God bless.