

Conversations on
Romans 5:1–5

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Go to “Instructions for a Bad Day by Shane Koyczan” on Youtube (bit.ly/SKBadDay). How do you think Paul would answer Shane?

WHAT is important to know?

Through Jesus Christ, the Roman church has peace with God and access into the grace of God. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, it also has had the love of God poured into the hearts of its members. All of this underscores that the affliction or oppression of the Roman church is not the result of divine displeasure and should not, therefore, cause the Roman church shame. Rather, all evidence to the contrary, the church is awash in the gifts of God and, despite its affliction or oppression, is filled with divine favor and love. (*Margaret P. Aymer*)

- ✪ In what ways are Paul’s comments a reassuring word to the Roman church?
- ✪ What word of hope do Paul’s words offer when the church and Christians face suffering?
- ✪ According to this passage, what are the benefits of justification by faith?

WHERE is God in these words?

Paul tells the believers in Rome that because they believe that Jesus is the Son of God, God brings them to a place of highest privilege and they stand there presently. So whatever their place or station in life, in whatever circumstance they find themselves, they can rest assured that God gives them special honor and freedom now. Because of this, they can boldly and merrily anticipate developing into the complete person God always intends for them and for us to be. Following Paul’s message to the Romans means that becoming all God intends for us to be begins *now*. This too is part of the real peace we have with God. (*Linda E. Thomas*)

- ✪ Why is it important that peace with God comes through God’s grace instead of our own efforts?
- ✪ In what ways do Paul’s words give the Roman Christian hope for the future?
- ✪ Why is it significant to recognize that grace, faith, and hope are realities for believers now?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

Paul does not say that whenever the world breaks us, we will inevitably heal back stronger. It is simply not true. Some who suffer are broken for good, and they do not get well again. Paul is no magician, nor does he advocate a simpleminded optimism. What Paul does promise is that our suffering need never be wasted. Because we belong to God in Christ, because God has poured his love into our hearts, that which we suffer can produce patient endurance. This endurance can form the character of the God who gives God’s self away for us all, and this character produces hope, hope that will never disappoint because God is more faithful than we can ever imagine. (*Michael Jenkins*)

- ✪ Why is being grounded in God’s grace more important for you than a philosophy of “optimism”?
- ✪ How can you be more aware of God’s love being poured into your heart by the Holy Spirit?
- ✪ Where in your life do you see your character being formed by the hope God is giving you?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

Hope is not just the result of “being hopeful,” or “wishful thinking,” or how much we hurt. Hope happens because—as Paul wrote, again about suffering—“we know that all things work together for good for those who love God” (Rom. 8:28), even bad things like suffering and pain. Hope is not something we “work out” but something we take in. “And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (5:5). Our faith (endurance and character) and God’s love, freely given, are the substance of hope. (*Richard L. Sheffield*)

- ✪ How might your church more fully present Christian hope for the future to those outside the church?
- ✪ What ministries of hope and help can the church give to those who are facing suffering without hope?

God of hope, open our eyes to see you at work in our world. Amen.