



Romans 5:1-11

Lent 3, March 8, 2026
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Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 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. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

One of the things you learn when you're growing up, or at least you're supposed to learn, is not to brag so much. We learn that it's better to be humble. Because experience teaches us that there's no such thing as a *sure* thing, and bragging can quickly get you into trouble. When I was younger, I felt this compulsive need to brag about my favorite sports teams. On Friday during school, I would brag to my Vikings-fan friends how the Packers were going to blow out the Vikings on Sunday, and then if we lost, I would feel so ashamed, I would be mortified to show my face in school again on Monday. It's experiences like that which teach us to be more general in our predictions: "I think we have a good chance to win. I *hope* we win, but we'll just have to wait and see." Yeah, growing up, you're constantly taught not to brag. And even if you're not taught that, you figure it out along the way.

But growing up and maturing in the faith is exactly the opposite. Consider our text. Paul is teaching us this morning to "boast." And that might sound strange to us, for one thing, because all of our other readings this morning were teaching us to be humble! For another thing, if you scan through the text, you don't actually see the word "boast" in there, but it *is* in there. In fact, any time you read the word "rejoice" in these verses—in verse 2 "***Rejoice in hope,***" or in verse 3, "***Rejoice in our sufferings***"—it's the same Greek word used in both instances, and the idea behind that word is to "boast."

The Apostle Paul uses this word a lot in all of his letters; he's basically the only New Testament writer that uses this word, and He uses it to promote this idea of "*boasting in Christ,*" especially with regard to what will happen to us on Judgment Day. Paul is speaking about that last day in our text as he presents the only two outcomes for every person in the world. The first outcome is found in verse 2: "***we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***" The second outcome is alluded to in verse 9: "***much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.***" As we await Christ's return, we know He will come in wrath and in glory—God's wrath poured out on His enemies and God's glory given to His people. And our sermon text this morning is teaching us that we can be 100% certain which of these two options is ours, "***That we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.***" And because of that certain hope, we can boast! We can speak openly that the glory of God is waiting us. Paul is telling us that we can make those bold claims, and we're *never going to be put to shame!* We're never going to find out it's not true and then feel foolish for believing it. No, we can and should boast, for two reasons.

We find those reasons expressed in our Sermon theme: **God Wants Us to Brag**

I. Because we have peace with God II. Because we have suffering

Now, of those two statements, the second one, “boasting because we have suffering,” is really the confusing concept. But we’re going to deal with the other one first, and that’s actually very strange as well! Of course, it’s not strange to boast when you’re at peace, in fact, that’s usually when you do it. When your team is doing well and constantly winning, when your country is thriving and at peace, when the economy is soaring—these are the times when you might want to boast. And that type of boasting can easily lead to arrogance.

This is likely what the people of France felt in the early 1900’s. They had what many experts believed to be the greatest land army in the world. On top of that, France was also considered the center of art and learning and culture, and it was likely thought, “We’re the greatest country in the world, no one would attack us.” And really, the rest of the world shared similar ideas. There was this prevailing idea in the early 20th century that mankind had reached such a height of philosophy and wisdom and knowledge that there was never going to be war again. That’s why WWI was known as the “war to end all wars.” And yet, the 20th century then became the bloodiest century in the history of the world.

As for France, they were shelled three times, Paris was held by the Germans for four years, the beautiful French landscape became the site of many battlegrounds, and over half a million French citizens were killed. And where was the boasting then? Would we feel like bragging if suddenly our military was destroyed, our planes grounded, our battleships sunk, and no one was there to stand in the way as our enemies began marching on us? Would we boast then? Would we brag about being the greatest country in the world? Of course not, that would only serve to put a target on our backs.

So, we recognize that it’s normal and natural to brag in peacetime, and so it’s not unusual that Paul is telling us to boast because we have peace with God. That makes sense. But there are two strange elements here: **1)** That we have peace with God at all, and **2)** that this peace will *not ever* end.

Paul writes in verse 10, “***While we were enemies, we were reconciled with God.***” And that’s the opposite of peace, the word for enemy literally means “hate.” He’s saying we hated God, we fought against God with everything inside of us. And that’s the natural state of mankind, isn’t it? Just look around us in America: hatred of God and rebellion against God’s will and against everything God says just plastered on the front page. And that’s not just true of unbelievers, it’s our own sinful nature within us that hates God as well.

Our sinful nature is so bad that it would never ever want peace with God. It would rather that we spend every day of our lives shaking our fist at God, trying to prove that we don’t need Him! Our sinful nature would have us boast in ourselves, in our own apparent goodness. We said earlier how there are only two outcomes for everyone, receiving God’s glory or receiving God’s wrath. And for so many whose sinful natures are so opposed to God, they would rather suffer His wrath, would rather burn in hell than have peace with God. And that’s how we *all* are by nature.

And so, seeing our natural condition, we recognize there is no possibility of finding peace with God on our end. And that’s what makes this whole thing very strange, *that we have peace with God*,

especially when you think about it from a normal human perspective. Think about France in the the first half of the 20th century. Army destroyed, the Nazis marching on France to take over the capital—are the Nazis going to show up and sue for peace? Are they going to walk into the capital and ask for a peace treaty? Not a chance! It's the weaker side that asks for peace. It's the side that loses, that has no other options available, they're the ones that beg for a treaty to be signed.

But that's not how it works between us and God. Paul says in verse 6 that we were weak, basically, we were helpless. In this war between sinful mankind and God, we have the one side coming with absolute power and authority, the other side weak and helpless. The weak side is always going to lose against God and yet, at the same time, not at all willing to ask for peace. There we are, still shaking our fist at God.

So, God did something to stop the war. He dropped the bomb. And when God dropped the bomb, He did so on His *own* beloved Son. He flattened Him, He crushed Him, and He ensured that Jesus was the *only* casualty. And the result? *Peace*, through God's own sacrifice. God came from a position of strength and yet gave it all up for us. Verse 9 says, "***We have now been justified by His blood.***" Verse 10: "***We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.***" To be reconciled means that peace has replaced hostility, taking two sides at odds and bringing peace between them. God made peace between Himself and us through Jesus' death, so that now, as verse 2 says, "***We have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.***" We can approach the Father, knowing that He looks at us with love, and so we stand in this perpetual state of having our sins forgiven.

So, we can boast! We can brag! In fact, **God wants us to brag because we have peace with God**, and we had *nothing* to do with it. God established this peace, simply because *He* wanted to have peace.

Now, it's one thing to brag about peace. That's easy, and that makes perfect sense. But Paul tells us also in verse 3 to "***rejoice in our sufferings,***" or really, to "*boast about our sufferings.*" And the world would say that's nonsense, because you can't have peace and suffering at the same time. If something's wrong in your life, then you're not at peace. And when we're suffering, facing some tribulation in our lives, Satan is trying to convince us that it's because we are *not* at peace with God.

These tests, these sufferings come up every single day. The fact that we have a sinful nature that rebels constantly against God—that is a struggle for us; that is a suffering. The fact that we live in a sin-sick world—that's a suffering. Death of loved ones, illness, pain—these are sufferings. And we are confronted with these things every day. And when these sufferings come up, the devil is trying to convince you that it's because you *do not* have peace with God. That you are the one person whom Christ does not love, that your sin has created a pit so deep that the *love* of God does not shine on you. And even if every single other person has found peace with God, you don't have it, and you *won't* have it. That's what the devil wants to convince you of every single day.

But in each of these situations, in every test and suffering, God is showing you that the opposite is true. God uses these very same tests to show us that there is no pit deep enough that God's love won't find us there. That's what's being spoken of in verses 3-5: "***Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame.***"

Let's examine those ideas a little more closely. First, Paul writes that **"suffering produces endurance."** The writer James uses the same word for endurance in chapter 5 of his letter to describe farmers. He says the farmer plants his crops and then he waits. If after a week he doesn't see anything happening, he doesn't tear up the field and say, "It's not working!" No, he waits. If it doesn't rain for a while and there's a chance that everything's died, he still doesn't tear up the field in anger. Rather, he waits, because he knows that the rain will come and that the crop will grow. He has "endurance," meaning, he doesn't give up. And through his experience, he grows in his endurance, not giving up.

And that's what God is trying to do here. He gives endurance by calling us to keep going on in suffering, to grab ahold of that promise that "we have peace with God." God uses this suffering to produce spiritual endurance in us, and then Paul goes on to say that this **"endurance produces character."** The Greek word used for "character" there is a bit abstract, but basically it means, it's been tried-and-true. It's been proven, it passes the test again and again and again. Think of your favorite pillow. If you have a favorite pillow that you like to sleep on, you don't go looking for a new pillow. You've got the one you like. And when you sleep without it, say you're at a hotel, you just keep thinking about your own pillow, because it's tried-and-true.

And what Paul's saying here is not that *we* are tried-and-true, this isn't some character within us that He's speaking of, but rather, he's pointing to God's promise. *It* is tried-and-true. God's promises are tried-and-true, so that when we go through sufferings, we find again and again and again that we have peace with God. So that as Satan points to our suffering as the proof that God doesn't love us, we might say, "My sins are still forgiven, I still have peace with God, and, Satan, you have nothing on me." No matter what pit we find ourselves in, no matter what suffering comes our way, we still have forgiveness in Jesus Christ our Savior; and this then is the hope that we find at the end of verse 4.

Now, notice how Paul describes us throughout this text: in verse 6, he says we are **"weak"**; later in that verse, he calls us **"ungodly"**; in verse 8, we're described as **"sinners"**; and if that wasn't enough, in verse 10, we're called **"God's enemies."** He is describing the *deepest darkest pit* that you can be in, the strongest stance against God that we can take. And yet, it was while we were in that very condition that Christ died for us! As Paul writes in verse 8: **"But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** We could never put ourselves into a worse position than we've already been in. We could never possibly make ourselves more unforgiveable, more irredeemable, more unlovable than how Paul describes us in these verse. And yet, in that very state, we were forgiven, we were redeemed, and we were loved—showing us that *nothing* can separate us from the love of God, and the peace that God struck with you through His Son *will* remain.

And so, there's nothing left to do but boast! And brag! Not in ourselves, of course, but in a God who created peace with us, in a God who sends suffering our way to give us strength. And with this boasting, we do not need to have any concern that we might turn out wrong and embarrassed, for God *wants* us to boast in this way. For your salvation in Christ is *His guarantee* to you. So go on boasting then, in Jesus' saving name. Amen.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amen.