

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

In addition to the peace we have with God, which we covered in Romans 5:1, there are two more consequences of having been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. They are access to His grace, and hope of His glory. That sinners have been ushered into the very presence of the living God and have cause to hope in His glory rather than we terrified of it, is evidence of this amazing grace of which we sing!

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever received an invitation to join a very important person for special access? No, I don't mean your spouse or your child or your nana! I mean like a real VIP? Like a President of the United States? A General Officer? A nationally known celebrity or athlete? The President of a prestigious university? I had the blessed privilege of being the aide-de-camp to the Commanding General of Multi-National Brigade-East while I was deployed to Kosovo.

He was a Brigadier General (one-star) and I was his personal assistant as a first lieutenant. I went with him everywhere he went, carrying a backpack full of his coins that he gave to soldiers when he visited them. I rode in his armored suburban, flew in his Blackhawk helicopter. I ran his calendar and ensured he had all the requisite data before a meeting. I sat just outside his office. We drank from the same coffee pot and I was in most of his meetings.

Senior leaders came to me to check his mood before going into a meeting with him. That was funny; here I am as a first lieutenant and these senior leaders would come to me asking, "How's the old man feeling today?" I had an access that even they didn't have. It was a real honor.

I particularly enjoyed flying to international posts – Russians, Bulgarians – and gaining access with him to their commanders and command centers. It took awhile to get over the awe of having that kind of access as a first lieutenant.

This morning we're going to see the two additional consequences to our having been justified by faith. Last week we saw the first one in verse 1, which is that we have peace with God. No more enmity with God. No more condemnation. Now in verse 2 we'll see the other two consequences, including special access to THE VIP!

ROMANS 5:2

Verse 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.

Our faith not only gets counted to us as righteousness, but it comes with **access into this grace**. We get to enter, or **stand in**, God's grace. We dwell in it. Since we have peace with God through Christ, **through Him** we also have **access to God**.

This access is not just any kind of access. The word used here denotes the kind of access a person might be given to enter into the presence of royalty. Sometimes I think we lose sight of what we really have been given here.

I was star struck and little mesmerized by access to a mere man like that general, who was a great man and leader. But we have been granted access to El Shaddai, God Almighty! The alpha and omega, beginning and end! El Elyon, God most high! Elohim, Creator God. Jehovah Sabbaoth, the Lord of Hosts!

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Let's go back to the beginning of time when Adam and Eve walked in the Garden of Eden in the presence of God. They had unhindered access to Him. They had peace with God. Genesis 3:8 records that in the cool of the day, God walked in the Garden.

When God came into the garden He asked, "Adam where are you?" Of course, God knew where Adam was. But in asking that, now Adam knew there was a break in the relationship. There was division. There was separation.

We know that something substantial has changed because it says that Adam and Eve hid from God having eaten the forbidden fruit, rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him. So, the fall reveals it wasn't always this way. Nor was it supposed to be this way.

To prevent man from living forever cut off from Him, He removed them from the garden with its tree of life. Banished to the wilderness alone. An angel with a flaming sword guarded the opening of the garden. No access.

RESTRICTED ACCESS

All throughout the Old Testament we see the theme of restricted access to God. Only Moses could meet with God in the wilderness. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies in the Temple where God caused His spirit to dwell. And he could enter only once a year after making sacrifices for his own sin. No access.

For 4000 years man was prevented from drawing near to God. But on calvary as the Son of God hung upon the cross, something remarkable happened. An earthquake shook the ground. The Temple veil, which separated man from the presence of God in the Holy of holies, woven and potentially four inches thick, was ripped in two from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51)

Within the holy of holies was the Ark of the Covenant where God caused His presence to dwell. It radiated with His glory. Like the flaming sword at the Garden of Eden, the temple veil kept men from gaining access to God. But in the death of Christ access was restored by God Himself.

This is perhaps the most vivid evidence of God's grace – that sinners like you and me are ushered into His presence; that we have been given access to Him. *"...we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him."* Ephesians 3:12

ACCESS WITHOUT LIMITS

As aide-de-camp I had special access to the General, but I didn't get to just waltz into his quarters. There were limits. My kids, though, they have access to me that is without limits. They can walk into my room or my office if the door is open. They can knock if the door is closed. And unless I'm unable to respond, they can enter with confidence, knowing that they are my beloved children!

It happens a little less often, but when I first moved here my kids were 9, 7, 5, & 3. I remember on Tuesday mornings Kellye would bring them all to the church and I'd hear the pitter-patter of feet as they ran full-speed down the hallway to my office.

They didn't have to wonder whether dad was going to be delighted to welcome them into his presence. And I never failed to delight in them. How much more does our heavenly Father love His children and welcome us into His presence?! *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Hebrews 4:16

We can enter God's presence just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden! Can you even comprehend the glory of this?! That in fact God has caused His Spirit not to dwell in a building, but in a body?! *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you..."* 1 Corinthians 6:19 Lord, help us understand what we have!

If the phrase **we have been justified** (Romans 5:1) reveals to us that something happened once in the past and has continual effect, what does **we have access** reveal? It reveals a present status we enjoy now as we continually **stand in God's grace**.

THE SAVING AND SUSTAINING GRACE OF GOD

Grace is the unmerited favor of God. The goodness of God. The unhindered, uninhibited, undefeatable, irresistible grace of God. It is God's determination to give you what you could never earn from Him as His free gift. Grace is God's disposition of kindness that causes Him to give to sinners what we do not deserve, *"by grace you have been saved," Ephesians 2:8*

But we are not only saved by grace in one moment, we are also sustained by grace continually.

When Paul was dealing with what he called the "thorn in his flesh," he asked the Lord to take it away three times. The thorn was given to Paul to keep him from becoming conceited, after being caught up to Heaven. So, rather than taking it away, the Lord promised him, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* 2 Corinthians 12:9

Jesus is like, "Nah, I'm not going to take this painful thing out of your life because it is serving a purpose. If I did it might actually ruin you. Instead, I'll sustain you through the pain with my grace. I will strengthen you, uplift you, support you, & encourage you."

And the amazing thing about Jesus' sustaining, sufficient grace is that it's not just for first century apostles. Just a few chapters earlier in 2 Corinthians Paul said, *"God is able to make all grace abound to you"* To who? To you! *"so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."* 2 Corinthians 9:8

Paul knew that Jesus works through us in our weaknesses because ultimately, He is all about the glory going to the Father. So, He uses the weak to shame the strong and the foolish to shame the wise. He gives grace to sustain us so that despite our weaknesses we may abound to every good work!

STAND

Paul says we **stand in His grace**. To **stand** is to remain. It is to dwell. It is ongoing and continual. We don't walk through it and let it sprinkle us. We stand in it and let it soak us. We remain. Do you remain in God's grace? If you have been saved by grace, His sustaining grace is available to you anytime night or day. Draw near to the throne of grace.

How do we stand in the grace of God? We choose not to lean on our own understanding, work in our own power, hope in our own righteousness, boast in our own virtue. We choose instead to trust in the Lord with all our heart, rely upon Christ who strengthens us, hope in Him, and boast in our weaknesses.

AN ALL CONSUMING FIRE

There is another truth to unpack here. Because we **stand in this grace** now we know we will also stand in this grace on the day of judgment. It is only because of this assurance that Paul can say what comes next. **Verse 2** continues, **and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God**. If we did not stand in God's grace today, there is no way we'd say we hope in the glory of God.

The glory of God is a consuming fire! When Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the ten commandments from God in Exodus 33 he asked the Lord, *"Please show me your glory."* Exodus 33:18

The Lord responded that He would cover Moses in the cleft of the rock until He passed by and would allow Moses to see the back side of Him, saying, *"you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."* Exodus 33:20

When Moses came down from the mountain the people were afraid to even approach him because his face radiated from the glory of God. They ended up putting a veil over his face because of it!

Now think about this, the moon radiates the light of the Sun. The moon has no light, no glory in of itself. It simply reflects the light from the sun.

If Moses reflected the glory of God similar to the moon that radiates the light of the Sun and if people were afraid to approach Moses, what do you think it will be like when you behold the glory of God whose glory Moses was simply reflecting?

For those who stand in His grace, it's going to be too wonderful for words. And for those who do not, it will be too awful.

We stand in His grace by faith in His Son. Those who have been justified by faith have good reason to **hope in the glory of God!**

OUR HOPE IS THE GLORY OF GOD

Our hope is that one day we will dwell in the glory of God forever just as we were originally created to do. Collin Kruse says this glory of God is “the restoration of the glory lost at the fall.”

We will behold His glory and because we have seen Jesus, we know that we have nothing to fear! His glory is full of grace and truth. *“...we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14*

Full of grace, full of truth – no condemnation, no deception. Only the assurance of the things hoped for by faith. Life & peace, forever.

This hope of the glory of God is letting biblical promises about the life to come gird up our souls and strengthen them to endure the sufferings we face in life today.

Paul said the glory awaiting us is far greater than any sufferings, *“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...” 2 Corinthians 4:17*

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18

Promises like these from Jesus, *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4*

“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.” Matthew 19:29

“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” Matthew 25:21

Let’s join Peter in praising our Father in Heaven, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” 1 Peter 1:3-4*

The promises of what awaits those who stand in the grace of God are meant to strengthen our weak knees and feeble hearts to stand in the face of adversity and trial and temptation; indeed, to cause us to rejoice in our sufferings! But that’s for next week.

The only way we can rejoice in our sufferings is if we’re standing in His grace, hoping in His glory. All this through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

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