

July 25  
Lesson 8 (NIV)

## PEACE WITH GOD

DEVOTIONAL READING: [Isaiah 53:1–12](#)

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: [Romans 5:1–11](#)

### [Romans 5:1–11](#)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! <sup>11</sup> Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.



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## KEY VERSE

*Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. —Romans 5:1*

## CONFIDENT HOPE

### Unit 2: Faith and Salvation

## LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. State the result of being justified by faith.
2. Explain the meaning and significance of Paul’s “much more” argument.
3. Recruit an accountability partner to help make progress regarding the growth stages in

Romans 5:3–4.

## LESSON OUTLINE

### Introduction

A. Sacrifice for Peace

B. Lesson Context

I. Founded in Faith (Romans 5:1–5)

A. Peace Made with God (vv. 1–2)

B. Love Poured into Hearts (vv. 3–5)

*Embrace the Struggle*

II. Died for Ungodly (Romans 5:6–8)

A. The Right Time (vv. 6–7)

B. The Right Sacrifice (v. 8)

*A Risky Investment*

III. Reconciled in Joy (Romans 5:9–11)

A. Wrath Averted (v. 9)

B. Salvation Awaiting (v. 10)

C. Atonement Accepted (v. 11)

### Conclusion

A. Freedom from Fear

B. Prayer

C. Thought to Remember

## HOW TO SAY IT

Isaiah     Eye-*zay*-uh.

Moses     *Mo*-zes or *Mo*-zez.

# Introduction

## A. Sacrifice for Peace

In the 1964 Cold War epic movie *Fail Safe*, a series of mistakes sends a squadron of American planes with nuclear bombs to annihilate Moscow, Russia. Despite every conceivable effort by the American president, he was unable to stop the mission.

Realizing that the Soviet Union's capital city would be destroyed—and desiring to avoid worldwide thermonuclear devastation from retaliatory strikes—the president made a deal with the Soviet premier. They agreed that at the same time the bombs hit Moscow, an equal nuclear strike would lay waste to New York City. Thus an equivalent “eye for an eye” act would even the accounts. The president agreed to this realizing that his beloved wife was in New York City. He knowingly decided to sacrifice her for the sake of world peace.

The great paradox of this film is that the most horrific wartime tactic ever devised by human beings was to be used to forestall hostilities. The saving of hundreds of millions of lives was more important than any single life, even that of the first lady. Parallels between this fictional trade-off and today's lesson text are thought-provoking.

## B. Lesson Context

Romans is both the most challenging of Paul's letters to understand and the richest depository of what he calls “my gospel” ([Romans 2:16](#); [16:25](#)). The basis and reality of being justified by faith is the subject of [Romans 1–4](#) in general (see lessons [6](#) and [7](#)) and [3:24](#), [28](#) in particular.

Paul quoted [Habakkuk 2:4](#) in [Romans 1:17](#) to set the tone for the entire book: “the righteous will live by faith.” Included in the letter are the apostle's understanding of the Old Testament background for the Christian message, the nature of salvation as it is based on the atoning death of Christ, the centrality of faith as the only path for salvation, the changed relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the plan of God, and several other matters.

Only through faith in Christ may eternal life be found. Eternal life cannot be earned by works, although works are important. Eternal life is not inherited by ancestry, although such ancestry is not unimportant (see [Romans 3:1–2](#); [9:4–5](#)). Eternal life, the life of salvation, is found only in a faith that trusts God to save us.

Abraham, the great patriarch of the Jews, was justified by faith ([Romans 4:3](#), quoting [Genesis 15:6](#); see lesson [7](#)). Thus the idea of faith as the core element of one's life is not a Christian innovation. Faith is to be the foundation of our relationship with God. But this was nothing new: faith was to have been central in the pre-Israel period, in the nation of Israel itself, and in the church. Having established these facts in [Romans 1–4](#), Paul moved to implications, today's text.

# I. Founded in Faith

(ROMANS 5:1-5)

## A. Peace Made with God (vv. 1-2)

**1. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Having established that the life of Abraham is relevant to the Christian, Paul uses the connecting word *therefore* to signal two things. First, the phrase *been justified through faith* summarizes thoughts of [Romans 1-4](#).

Second, the phrase *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* introduces a theme that undergoes much expansion and explanation in the verses and chapters that follow. After having sketched the dire condition of humanity in [Romans 3:23](#) (“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”), the sun breaks through (or perhaps we should say, “Son”). *Jesus* “was delivered over to death for our sins” and “was raised to life for our justification” ([Romans 4:25](#)). We are justified by God’s actions, not ours. Our sins invite God’s wrath; our justification from him by faith results in peace (compare [Luke 2:14](#)).

Perhaps you have heard various definitions of the word *justification*. One such is an appropriate play on the word: being justified means being treated “just as if I’d” never sinned. God himself has provided the means for bridging the rift between him and humanity, for making peace by satisfying the punishment for sin. That means of peace is Jesus. As Paul has explained and will explain again, since God has forgiven our sins by means of a substitutionary atonement (the death of Jesus), no basis remains for God to impose punishment on those who accept his terms. Christians need not fear future judgment from God.

**2a. through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.**

The central point is reinforced by use of the word *grace*. There are no “works” that gain our justification. Salvation has been provided by God. It is a gift that we must receive. *Faith* in Jesus gives us *access* to grace. A good way to remember the significance of the word *grace* is to use its five letters to create this phrase:

God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense

### *What Do You Think?*

Would you use the letters of the word *grace* to explain that concept to an unbeliever as God’s riches at Christ’s expense? Why, or why not?

### *Digging Deeper*

Would you explain to an unbeliever that the word justified means “just-as-if-I’d never sinned”?

**2b. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.**

The word *hope* as frequently used today is often at odds with how the Bible writers use the same word. Often people today use the word *hope* to express a desire that they know has very little chance of becoming reality. They talk about something they would love to have or see happen, but they don't know if it will ever happen. We hear the expression "One can only hope" in contexts of passive resignation where one feels carried along by a series of events that indicate an outcome almost certain to be undesirable. This kind of hope is a forlorn hope; it is not the kind the Bible talks about.

The New Testament uses the word *hope* in the sense of "confident expectation of something good"; the word is never used in a sense of "fearful anticipation." Rather, in Christ we *boast in ... hope*. What he has promised, he will do.

For the one in Christ, there is no doubt. The quality of hope hinges on the character of the one in whom hope is placed. What more needs to be said? We acquire true hope when we abandon the futile practice of trusting in ourselves to shape the future and put our future in the hands of *God*. When we are in Christ we have peace, grace, and hope. And there is more! The concept of hope is so important to Paul that he uses the noun and verb forms of the word *hope* a total of 17 times in Romans alone!

**B. Love Poured into Hearts (vv. 3–5)****3. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;**

Here begins a teaching chain of character-building virtues that form the core of the Christian life. We will have *sufferings* ([John 16:33](#)), hardship that could drive away all hope. But these troubles build our capacity for patient *perseverance*, a virtue close to the heart of our long-suffering Lord (see [Romans 9:22](#); [2 Peter 3:15](#)). This is not a passive resignation, but rather an active continuance (compare [Romans 2:7](#)). Difficulties teach us the value of waiting on the Lord ([Psalm 37:7](#)).

When faith is our guiding principle, what appears to be a very bad situation can yield good results. (Read Paul's later affirmation in [Romans 8:28](#).) Such results are not always immediately seen (see [Genesis 45:4–8](#)).

**4a. perseverance, character;**

The word translated *character* is an interesting one, used seven times in the New Testament, and only by Paul. In addition to the two translations "character" in our text, it is also translated "test" ([2 Corinthians 2:9](#)); "proof/proved" ([2 Corinthians 9:13](#); [13:3](#); [Philippians](#)

2:22), and “trial” (2 Corinthians 8:2). The overall idea is that of being tested to determine (or improve) one’s mettle.

Testing in this regard comes from many directions and at various stages of life. Yet through the patient handling of circumstances, prayerful discovery of solutions, and the discipline of waiting on the Lord, our character is improved.

#### **4b. and character, hope.**

That *character* can provide *hope* not only to the one undergoing tribulations, but also to the one who needs a mentor in that regard, someone who’s “been there” (see 2 Corinthians 1:3–4). We live through hardship sustained by the hope that the Lord has the future in his hands. Our confidence in the future can be based only on God’s faithfulness in the past.

At this point, Paul may appear to be going in circles. But let us not think of this as a circle but as an advancing spiral. With each round of faith-guided living—which blends trouble and joy and lessons learned—we gain strength.

#### *What Do You Think?*

If you’re stuck at a particular stage in the sequence Paul mentions, what are some things you can do to get unstuck?

#### *Digging Deeper*

What texts in addition to 1 Thessalonians 4:13 help you see the biblical distinction between “hope” and “no hope”?

### ***EMBRACE THE STRUGGLE***

Twenty years ago, a neighborhood in my city was overrun with drugs, crime, and poverty. City officials sought out a person who had helped turn things around in a similar neighborhood by means of career-development training. Gail agreed to take on the challenge. Her first step was to buy an old liquor store as her headquarters in the heart of the community.

Gail faced obstacles at first: little interest in training programs, break-ins, and drug paraphernalia left at the front door. Nevertheless, she persisted. As she did, she saw success. People began completing her trainings successfully. The neighborhood began to change as people received better opportunities. The property value of that building soared.

Gail had stepped out with a biblical hope, and she watched God do the impossible. When we adopt a spirit of faithful hope in God in the midst of adversity, he will develop our Christian character through the process. How can you better yield to God in this regard?

—L. H.-P.

#### *What Do You Think?*

When considering [Romans 5:3](#) alongside [James 1:2–4](#) and [1 Peter 1:5–7](#), what changes do you need to make in reacting to situations that challenge your faith?

*Digging Deeper*

What other passages do you find most informative and convicting in this regard?

**5. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

Paul’s clarion call in the book of Romans is “I am not ashamed of the gospel” ([Romans 1:16](#)). The life of faith exudes confidence and trust. A nuance of the idea of *not ashamed* is to not be dishonored, which is how the same word is translated twice in [1 Corinthians 11:4–5](#). False fronts and false hopes lead to both. But authentic *hope* in the Lord and his faithfulness is neither. We are not fools to hope in *God’s love*.

This hopeful, faithful approach to life is not self-generated. God changes and empowers us by pouring out his *love ... into our hearts*. He even provides the means for maintaining what he has given, namely, *the Holy Spirit*. It is he who gives us love and helps us grow in love. When love is clearly visible in the church, it is a sure sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence. Elsewhere, the giving of the Holy Spirit is pictured as being poured on people (see [Isaiah 44:3](#); [Ezekiel 39:29](#); [Joel 2:29](#); [Acts 10:45](#)). The Holy Spirit is not a reward, but a gift bestowed to empower us to act in love when and where that is not the normal human reaction.

## II. Died for Ungodly

([ROMANS 5:6–8](#))

### A. The Right Time (vv. 6–7)

**6. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.**

The fact that *Christ died for the ungodly* is at the center of the Christian faith. That was a monstrous crime, the murder of the innocent Son of God. Paul’s insight, though, is that while the enemies of Jesus had nothing but malice in their hearts, God had planned all along for his Son’s death to be the means of salvation for humanity.

The high priest spoke better than he knew when he declared that it was better for one man to die than to have an entire nation perish ([John 11:49–53](#)). And so it happened *at just the right time*—God’s time! Just as the timing of Jesus’ birth was no random chance ([Galatians 4:4](#)), neither was his death.

*What Do You Think?*



What is the single, most important lifestyle or prayer-habit change you need to make to live out your conviction that God's timing is always perfect?

*Digging Deeper*

How does your response to the question associated with [Romans 1:13](#) in lesson 6

The first three chapters of Romans deal with the fact that all sinned and are therefore unrighteous, unjustified, and unholy. Paul was not speaking of careless morality or occasional mistakes. The ungodly turn their backs on God and his expectations knowingly, willingly, and decisively in their preference for sin and its temporary pleasures (compare [Titus 3:3](#)). But as Paul says in the beginning of the letter, the ungodly are without excuse for their sins ([Romans 1:20](#)). That includes all of us.

**7. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.**

What is the difference between *a righteous person* and *a good person*? Some would say that the righteous person describes an especially pious individual who possesses a “holier-than-thou” attitude. He or she may be highly respected but is not the kind of person for whom someone else would be willing *to die*. The good person would be someone whose good deeds make him or her a much more likable individual, and thus someone for whom others would be more apt to die.

# Through faith in God, we have peace.



Visual for Lesson 8. Point to this visual as you ask learners how this picture does or does not illustrate the kind of peace mentioned in *Romans 5:1*.

Others believe that there is basically no difference between the righteous person and the good person and that Paul is making the same claim in two ways. Under this proposal, the first part of the verse states Paul's claim in a negative way; the second then restates it, but in a more positive manner. The paradox of Christ's dying for the ungodly contradicts reason as based on human experience. What sort of person would you be willing to die for? Paul knew there were possible examples: a parent dying for a child, a soldier dying for a comrade, etc. Still, the gist of Paul's thought is this: people are not likely to give their lives on behalf of even the best of human beings.

## B. The Right Sacrifice (v. 8)

**8. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

In spite of our rebellion and ungodliness, God continues to love us. This has nothing to do with our merit and everything to do with God's character ([John 3:16–18](#); [1 John 4:16](#)). God continues to love all sinners and desire their restoration to relationship with him ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). The willing and intentional sacrifice of God's beloved Son is the supreme way that God *demonstrates his own love for us*. The death of *Christ* was the final and ultimate sacrifice for sins (see [Hebrews 7:27](#)).

Christ did not wait until we were righteous ourselves to die *for us*. When *we were still sinners*, we could only wait for the harsh justice of God's judgment. But Jesus Christ died for our sins according to God's plan as revealed in Scriptures ([1 Corinthians 15:3](#)).

Jesus' sacrifice emphatically illustrates one of his most radical teachings: that his followers should love their enemies (see [Luke 6:27, 35](#); contrast [Matthew 5:43](#)). In the context of Jesus' day, this included loving the despised Roman overlords who occupied the land. Love was to be extended also to fellow Jews who collaborated with the Roman occupiers. The good news is that *all* our enemies can become one with us in Christ, part of the family of God.

### *A RISKY INVESTMENT*

One of my wife's grandmothers immigrated to America from Jamaica. Once she arrived, she worked hard and pursued her education, all the while raising three sons by herself. She invested wisely in buying a home, put money away for retirement, and had multiple streams of income. She did all this to build wealth for her family for generations to come. At her death, she left a sizable fortune that was inherited by her only surviving son and her grandchildren. But she could not know whether they would appreciate it or squander what she had worked so hard for.

Christ's work on the cross was intended to benefit the entire world for generations to come. He knew that some would accept his sacrifice and that others would spurn it. Yet he made the sacrifice anyway.

In what ways do you still do a disservice to Christ's offer by living contrary to his will?

—L. H.-P.

## **III. Reconciled in Joy**

**(ROMANS 5:9–11)**

### **A. Wrath Averted (v. 9)**

**9. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!**

The substitutionary death of Jesus paid the price for our sins, a price we could never pay

on our own. We are now counted as righteous because we are *justified by his blood*. We can be at peace with God. The work of Christ has been done. We are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), we wear a new name, and we have a new destiny. Even so, that destiny will not be realized fully until our time in our present world is finished and our time in Heaven has begun.

Because of Jesus' work, our faith, and God's grace, we no longer need fear the future. We respect the mighty *wrath* of God, but we do not fear it because we have forgiveness *through* faith in Jesus. Thus our past, present, and future are all in God's hands.

## B. Salvation Awaiting (v. 10)

**10a. For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,**

The ungodly, the unrepentant sinners, are still *God's enemies*. Sin severed the relationship between sinner and Creator. But God has provided the way by which those who are separated from him can come back. The new relationship is one of being *reconciled*. Salvation involves being returned to an ongoing relationship with God. Reconciliation comes only and always by *the death of his Son*.

**10b. how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!**

Now that Jesus is alive and reigning as Lord, *how much more* will he help those who have accepted his gift of salvation! We can have no doubt that Jesus will return and complete God's plan of redemption. Jesus' resurrected life and reign is the firm basis for the assured hope of our own resurrection. If our hope in Christ goes only as far as this life, then we are to be pitied for having believed a lie (1 Corinthians 15:17–18).

## C. Atonement Accepted (v. 11)

**11. Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Paul's phrase *not only ... but we also* is an expression meaning "there is more." We have been reconciled (reunited) with *God*. We have been saved from sin and death by means of his grace. As a result, we can *boast*.

This joyous reaction comes when we focus on God's great gift to us. *We have now received reconciliation* that results in being restored children of God. The hostilities have ceased. We are no longer enemies of God or slaves to the fear of death. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, our hope is secure, and our joy is complete. All of what Paul described comes *through our Lord Jesus Christ*.

### *What Do You Think?*

How would you explain to an unbeliever that having peace with God comes only through Christ?

### *Digging Deeper*

How will you prepare for a “Surely a loving God would not ...” kind of reaction?

## **Conclusion**

### **A. Freedom from Fear**

On a grand scale, we understand the truth of Jesus’ teaching: the God of all creation chooses to love and save his enemies rather than hate and destroy them ([John 3:16–17](#))—at least for now ([Romans 2:5–9](#)). But we must take that grand scale down to the level of the individual person, beginning with ourselves.

Although we live in fearful times, we are not to fear the future. Though people around us fear many things—being laid off, losing loved ones, catastrophic weather, etc.—we are not to let fear of such things control us. The key always is to focus on the future Christ has prepared for us ([John 14:2](#)), made possible by the price for peace that Jesus paid on the cross.

### **B. Prayer**

Father, we stand amazed at your love for us, and we praise you for it. Our hope is in you for having redeemed our past, giving meaning to our present, and delivering us into our future. In Jesus’ name we rejoice and pray. Amen.

### **C. Thought to Remember**

Christ’s death has brought about our peace with God.

## **INVOLVEMENT LEARNING**

*Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible Student](#) (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the [NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition](#)).*

### **Into the Lesson**

Invite learners in groups of two or three to choose some newspapers and magazines from

a stack you bring to class. Request that they search for stories and pictures of situations where peace is desperately needed. State that these can be international conflicts, disagreements between individuals, or private psychological problems. After several minutes, invite each group to describe or show one or two examples to the class as a whole. (*Option.* Include smart-phone searches.)

*Alternative.* Initiate the “**conversation circles**” technique on page 232 of the **spring 2021** quarter (or another technique of your choosing). As you do, distribute on handouts (you prepare) featuring the following two questions for discussion within groups: *In what ways is the world more at peace today than it was when you were a child? In what ways is it less?*

After each member in each group has been allowed one minute to respond to the question, reconvene for whole-class summaries. Lead into Bible study by saying, “The discussions so far have focused on peace between humans. As important as that topic is, there’s a peace more vital still.”

## Into the Word

Write the following thought starter on the board as part one of a multistage study:

*I have confidence in my salvation because ...*

Have learners work within their groups to discover the single reason for their salvation. Expect groups to identify the answer in **Romans 5:8**: “Christ died for us.” Those who are more biblically knowledgeable may also mention **5:9**, “justified by his blood.” Expect that response to this question, which you write on the board as a follow-on:

*Why was Christ’s death necessary for our salvation?*

Use this question as a springboard for groups’ diving deeper into what the words *justify*, *justified*, *justifier*, and *justification* mean. References to include on handouts (you prepare in the form of a notetaker) are **Romans 3:28**; **4:2, 5, 25**; **5:1, 9, 16, 18**; **8:30, 33**; **10:10**; **1 Corinthians 6:11**; **Galatians 2:16–17**; **3:11, 24**; **5:4**. (Verses in **bold** are part of this week’s lesson, verses underlined are part of last week’s, and the verse *italicized* is part of next week’s.)

For the third and final stage of the study, distribute handouts (you prepare) that feature this listing:

- Verses **1–2**: faith, peace, grace, hope
- Verses **3–8**: perseverance, character, hope, love
- Verses **9–10**: blood, reconciled, wrath
- Verse **11**: boast (**NIV 2011**), reconciliation

Include printed instructions to determine how each word relates to the word group *justify*, *justified*, *justifier*, and *justification*, just studied. (Since this can be quite time-consuming, consider giving each of four groups just one segment of the listing.) If learners struggle getting started, give a hint by suggesting they pay close attention to the prepositions *by*, *in*, *from*, *through*, *with*, etc.

## Into Life

Challenge learners to identify someone who could help them move along the maturity path of [Romans 5:3–5](#). Ask, in whole-class discussion, how such a mentor is like and unlike an athletic coach. (*Option*: Precede this challenge by distributing copies of the “From Alphabetical to ...” exercise from the activity page, which you can download; allow one minute for learners to complete it individually, Bibles closed, before whole-class discussion.)

*Option*. Distribute copies of the “How Do We Know?” exercise on the activity page as a take-home exercise. Encourage its completion by promising to discuss class members’ conclusions as class begins next week.