

PEACE AT LAST!

5:1-11

It's dark night in Jerusalem. Streets of the city are empty.

The disciples are meeting with our Lord for the last time.

They're anything but peaceful.

Hearts filled with fear. *What'll happen to them tomorrow?*

Religious leaders are out to get them.

The Lord does nothing to quiet their fear.

He confirms their fears, assuring them: *time has come!*

They only understand that the One they've committed their lives to is going to be betrayed, taken away & killed

What will happen to them?

Jesus speaks: ***"Peace*** *I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*

How about us? Have you ever felt that way?

We turn to God; He seems strangely silent.

We don't feel peace!

Why is peace so elusive?

We struggle with guilt, adversity & affliction.

How do we find peace—in midst of the struggle?

Jesus' death brings peace on earth now!

Benefits of salvation aren't *just* "Pie in the sky by & by."

We enjoy benefits now—here on earth!

What do we receive when we trust Christ?

1-11 introduces 2 benefits of salvation by faith.

1st: **We have peace with God** **1-2a** "Since we've been justified **through faith**, we have **peace** with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ, ²through whom we've gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."

We've been declared righteous . . .

Because we trust Christ

Not because of our effort

Therefore, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.

Salvation by works NEVER produces peace

We're never sure we've done enough!

Guilt robs our peace. We're haunted by fear of death.

**But *certainty of salvation, based on trusting Christ,*
*produces peace with God***

But it produces more than that: 5:2b-11 "we rejoice"

2nd benefit when saved *by faith*: **we have joy**

Because of what Christ did for us, we can celebrate!

3 REASONS TO CELEBRATE! (Causes for joy)

Introduced by: "*We rejoice in...*" Lit., "we boast about..."

NOT because of what we've done.

We celebrate what God has done for us.

WE REJOICE IN OUR HOPE 5:2b

"We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

We celebrate hope of participating in God's glory

In Christ, we're promised what we could never attain:

we're co-participants in God's glory!

2nd cause to celebrate—We rejoice in suffering 3-10

**Ability to rejoice, not just when things go well, but
*also in midst of troubles.***

3-5 *"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; & character, hope. ⁵& hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."*

Different perspective: **God uses suffering to perfect us;**

=> we can be content in hard times.

Steps to contentment and satisfaction:

Do we want contentment?

Follow staircase: (*When **troubles** come our way =>*)

***=> Tribulation (suffering/affliction) $\wedge$**

Affliction produces perseverance (patience)

Young Christian went to godly old saint: "Will you pray I may be more patient?" Old man began: "Lord, send this young man tribulation in the a.m. Send him tribulation in the afternoon. Send him..." Young man blurts out: "No! Don't pray for tribulation. Pray for patience" Wise man responded: **"through tribulation we learn patience."**

Affliction produces ability to bear weight of burden."

=> Perseverance (Endurance/patience)

=> Proven Character (tested, approved by God)

=> Confidence (Hope—never disappoints)

=> Satisfaction (Contentment)

How could **Job** endure barrage of afflictions?

Suffers loss of 10 children, economic ruin, physical pain

God works to perfect Job's character & glorify Himself.

Job doesn't understand what God's doing; he trusts

His hope isn't disappointed!

Such hope ends in contentment; doesn't rely on empty things that produce frustration when they don't produce what we're seeking!

If this process works **Why are we averse to tribulation?**

["Don't ask God for patience!"]

Why are we undone when affliction comes our way?

[Explains relationship between God's love & suffering]

GOD'S LOVE FLOODS OUR HEARTS!

We're overwhelmed by the thought that God loves us.

That permeates *everything!* **GOD LOVES ME!**

Paul compares God's love with human love.

6-8 *"At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

People sometimes die for a righteous person 7

People sometimes die for a good person 7

We might be willing to die for worthy cause

But God's love is different.

Christ died for helpless, sinful people 6-8

God's love: Jesus dies for people who don't deserve it!

While we were **sinners**, Christ died for us.

He won't turn His back on us now 9-10 *"Since*

we've now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be

saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God's enemies, we were re-conciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

If Christ's **death** accomplished so much, how much more will His **life**, as He intercedes in heaven?

If He justified & reconciled us, shouldn't we assume **God will finish what He started?!!**

He paid too much while we were in sin to let go now!

Due to God's love for us, we can be sure hope rests on unshakeable foundation

We won't be disappointed because God keeps promises.

We can rejoice, even in hard times.

Have you endured, trusting God in hard circumstances?

Did your faith pay off? Why are we slow to learn?

Why don't we trust Him with today's troubles?

[3rd cause to celebrate:] **We rejoice in God 11** *"We also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we've now received reconciliation"*

Before, He was our Judge; we thought of Him with fear,

but now **in Christ, we're friends with God!**

Like human parents, God isn't impressed when we're *only* grateful for—"presents" He gives us.

We should get excited about *GOD* once in a while.

We get excited about everything else—futbol?

God doesn't see us as we are; He sees us *IN CHRIST*:

Therefore, **We have peace! We have joy!**

Struggle's over! We have cause to celebrate!

Sum of benefits of gospel is captured in hymn by **Horatio Spafford**. Suffered death of son. Followed by financial loss in Great Chicago Fire. Wife's health became bad. He wanted to take part in crusade in Britain with D.L. Moody. Business emergency caused him to send family ahead. Ship struck by another & sank. Wife survived: all 4 daughters died. Sailing to join wife, he wrote hymn:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll--
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, It is well with my soul.

That's peace!

We know peace—with ourselves & with God
Because He lives, we can face tomorrow, without fear
Do you know what it's like to enjoy peace with God?
If so, praise Him for His gift! Tell others about it!
If you're not enjoying peace with God, why not?
Are you still saying "I'd rather do it myself?" **Trust Him!**