

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

CHAPTER 5

The Story so far

Chapter 1: Let's meet up, and encourage each other. Jesus is Good News, because he is the power of God for everyone: Jews first, then everyone else. Not sure? Well, look around you: there is something wrong with people. Unnatural and selfish behaviour leads to a warped mind, but God allows people to choose their own hell.

Chapter 2: But when you condemn others, you are condemning yourself: God gives you time to sort yourself out, but one day it will be too late. God wants people to be Jews in spirit.

Chapter 3: What the Jews have are the laws of God, but this only tells you what God dislikes. Nobody has ever perfectly obeyed God's laws, so God gives Jesus to us to be the place where we can find mercy. Faith in Jesus affirms God's laws, it does not replace them.

Chapter 4: Abraham had faith, and he is the ancestor of all who have faith. You can only be OK with God by faith.

**Therefore ... since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand**

Executive Summary of Chapter 5:

We have been declared 'in the right' on the basis of faith. This brings peace with God through Jesus the Messiah, an experience of his unconditional love, and a reason to celebrate the hope this brings. It enables us to find something positive in our sufferings: we find that suffering produces patience in us, and patience produces a well-formed character, and a character like that produces a hope that does not make us ashamed. This hope, through the Holy Spirit, is poured into us by God who loves us to be like this. This is all based on what the Messiah did: in our time of weakness, he died on behalf of all those who have no time for God. But this is how God demonstrates his own love for us: the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners. So if the death of Jesus reconciles us to God, how much more will his life benefit us! We can shout about it: Jesus has reconciled us with God!

So just as sin came into the world through one human being, and death through sin, spreading to everyone, so grace comes into the world through the one man Jesus: just as death reigned after Adam, so those who receive the free gift of God's grace reign in life through the man Jesus the Messiah. Remember: (1) sin was already here, even though there was no law to measure it against. Death was still a fact of life from Adam to Moses, even for people who did not break a command like Adam did; (2) it is wrong to think '*as the trespass, so also the gift*' as there is no comparison; and (3) neither is it '*as through the sin of the one, so also the gift*' because the positives in Jesus far outweigh the negative in Adam.

So then the disobedient act of one person meant punishment for everyone, and the upright act of another person means justification and life for everyone. 'Sinners' become 'saints', people in the right, through the obedience of Jesus. The law came in so that disobedience could be recognised, but where disobedience increased, grace super-increased. Just as sin ruled ultimately through death, so through God's faithful covenant justice, **grace reigns** through Jesus the Messiah our Lord, to the life of the age to come.