

Assurance

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, let's get our bowls back into Romans 5 territory. Let me pray before we start spending time as part of God's Word. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, as we come to your Word now, we pray that you would encourage us and spur us on in the great joy and hope of knowing your love for us in Christ.

Please make these words deep and plant these words deep in our hearts and minds and lives that we might live to your praise and glory in all confidence of your love for us in Christ.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. This morning I want you to go home knowing for certain that you are okay with God. That's my prayer for everyone of us here this morning.

That you go home this morning knowing that you're okay with God. That if you were to meet the Lord Jesus today, you'd be sure to meet Him as your friend and not your foe.

And I wonder what category you put yourself in this morning, if you're in this morning here. Would you put yourself in the category of being confident that He is your friend or your foe?

[1 : 1 6] If you're confident He is your friend, our hearts can sing. Alright? And it puts a spring in your step.

And it changes the colour of your day. It really does. But if you're not confident He is your friend, this may be one of the most liberating mornings that you've ever been at church.

For some today, we'll be a reminder of what we already know and we'll rejoice in that. And for some here today, this might be the first day of a new life of meaning, significance and hope.

So radical that it's described as being born again. So my prayer this morning is that everyone in this room will go home certain that they're okay with God.

Knowing for certain you're okay with God means that when you draw your last breath on this planet, the next thing you will know is that you're safely at home with the Lord.

[2 : 2 9] That you'll be with the Lord. We who love Jesus have nothing to fear when it comes to death.

The process is horrible but the outcome is good. The ultimate prognosis is not decay and worm food but it's eternal life in glory with a perfect body.

That is the prognosis. And today, I want to actually remind many and declare to everyone that we have every confidence of being right with God and of being with Him in glory and knowing the reason why.

It's this truth that moves me and motivates me to want to love Jesus and to love those who don't love Him yet.

Now we all need hope to get through life and everyone is hoping for something at the end of life. And one of the greatest and most comforting things about biblical Christianity is that we can be absolutely confident that when we die we'll be raised from the dead and be in glory with God in the new heaven and the new earth for all eternity.

[3 : 58] That's what we've been looking at and being reminded of again and again in the book of 1 Thessalonians. And so I wonder if you have that hope, that confidence. And it's this great truth which is foundational to our faith.

Now, some of you might be saying Roy, you're a bit arrogant aren't you? I mean, how can you say that you are confident you're okay with God? Do you mean to tell me that you're so good that God's going to let you into heaven?

Are you confident about that? And I'd reply to you, no, I'm not arrogant. I'm far from perfect. Just ask Karen, my wife, or anyone else who really knows me.

that my confidence is not in anything of my doing but in everything that God has done for me. So let me show you that from Romans chapter 5.

So my prayer today again is that everyone here today will be able to walk away confident of knowing they're standing with God and that their hope will be certain hope of being okay with God and know the freedom that is given to us from the fear of death now as we live in this world.

[5 : 13] So Romans 5 starts with therefore. So it's a good idea to work out what the therefore is therefore which means a quick trip through Romans chapter 1 to 4 beforehand.

So previously in Romans we've seen that people are without hope. There is no hope at all. In fact, everyone stands condemned before God rightly.

Paul makes that point in chapter 1 through to chapter 3 verse 21. Mankind stands universally condemned before God by ourselves on our own in our own strength we have no reason at all to have any hope beyond the grave.

There's no hint of a noble savage. There's no hint that things are going to get better all the time. There's no hope that we are capable of being okay with God. In fact, on our own our situation is quite the opposite.

I wish I could give a report card on my life which I did that I did perfectly and was a blessing to all those around me all the time but I can't. And if you were totally honest you'd say the same.

[6 : 22] And God tells us in no uncertain circumstances that that is the reality of mankind outside of Jesus. Have a look at chapter 1 verse 18.

Back to Romans chapter 1 verse 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and righteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. Right? God is clearly noble but mankind suppresses the truth and rejects God.

And then if you think that you're not like that if you're not unrighteous that the look at chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 Therefore you have no excuse O man every one of you who judges for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself because you the judge practice the very same things.

We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose O man you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourselves that you will escape the judgment of God?

[7 : 37] Or do you presume on the richness of his kindness and forbearance and patience not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance but because of your hard and impenitent heart you're storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Now there's a whole list of sins that go on beforehand between chapter 1 and beginning of chapter 2 you can read for yourself. He then goes on to show that the Jews can't boast about being okay with God simply because they are Jews because they have the law.

Romans chapter 3 verses 9 to 12 have a look at it with me then. What then are we Jews any better off? No not at all for we have already charged that all both Jews and Greeks is chapter 3 verse 9 that both Jews and Greeks are under sin as it is written none is righteous no not one no one understands no one seeks for God all have turned aside together they become worthless no one does good not even one their throat is an open grave they use their tongues to deceive the venom of asps is on their lips under their lips their mouth is full of curses and bitterness their feet are swift to shed innocent blood in their paths are ruin and misery and the way of peace they have not known there is no fear of God before their eyes he quotes Psalm 14 Psalm 53 there is no one righteous no not one no one is okay with God neither Jew nor Gentile verse 11 no not one not even one now that's a pretty pessimistic view of mankind but it's demonstrably true

I know a lady who became a Christian because she realised that what the Bible said was true about the world the world keeps saying that we're good but when she reads the Bible she goes actually the world says the word of God says that the world is not good and that's right and then we come to one of the best words in the Bible little word three letter word but B-U-T right easy to spell and a word that introduces something that changes our expectations but God right Romans chapter 3 verse 21 have a look with me but but everything goes beforehand can be different now but now the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from the law although the law and the prophets bear witness to it the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ

Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith God put forward his son as the atoning sacrifice as the burnt offering at one level on the cross for our sin Abraham Abraham brought Isaac Isaac was about to die but God provided a sacrifice in Romans we see that God has his own son but does not spare his own son but his own son is the sacrifice we are justified declared right with God by trusting in Jesus Christ we are credited with being okay with God by faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified and is now risen from the dead we understand what credited means you know what credited means the bank account's got nothing in it zero right then what happens somehow magically overnight money gets put in there and you've been credited with money and there's money in the bank that's what credited means

[12:10] God does this to make people credits people righteous with himself not because they've earned it or deserved it but by the precious blood of his son and he does it for both Jew and Gentile that is for Jew and everyone else in the world who's not a Jew by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which is what the rest of chapter 4 goes on to explain which then brings us to our chapter 5 therefore because of all that's gone before right chapter 5 verse 1 we have peace with God even though humanity stands condemned before God because we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God God has done something about that for us he has sent his son as a precious gift who dies in our place so that we will be made right with God not by our own effort but by trusting in what God has done for us his sin bearing sacrifice in our place and since this is the case verse 1 chapter 5 right since is the case that is we are no longer his enemies we have peace with

God you see it there therefore since we have been justified by faith we have been we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ now justified is an English word that has an explanation that is so child like ish that you'll never forget it once you've heard it okay it's a little bit corny but the explanation is good right being justified means that God treats us you ready for it or can you tell me just as if I had never sinned that's right okay well done and if that's the case I can have confidence can't I that when I meet God he won't punish me for my sin right

Jesus has taken that punishment for me and God has wiped out any record of sin that was held against me notice the tense of the phrase firstly it is something that has already happened do you see that by trusting in Jesus we have been justified secondly it's something that we didn't do ourselves by faith trust belief in Jesus Christ God justifies us declares us guilt free it's something he has done for us in us we don't we cannot do it ourselves which is good news really it is good news it isn't a matter of my ability my effort to be good enough for God before he does anything for me it's all been done by God for me and notice there's a new stance in verse 2 a new stance through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of

God our standing with God exists now as one of grace it's a new stance our old stance is one of being at odds with God right our new stance is one of being at peace with God God is no longer angry with me our position is being at peace with God it's a gracious entitlement from God himself we don't deserve it God has put me put those who trust in Christ put us in a privileged relationship with God himself we don't stand the relationship based on rights by rights we should have been condemned right we don't stand in relationship with God based on works our works could not did not never worked off our sin and we don't stand in relationship based on nationality by birth we are born outside the family of

God and born sinners we don't stand in relationship based on any criteria race colour intelligence performance we stand in a relationship purely of grace by the graciousness of God we are at peace with him now that's got to be good news and when you get that when you stand confident with God that is something to sing about as we've been doing this morning we have every reason to rejoice in a certain hope of being in glory with God for all eternity God is for us he's with us he's for us and so we have a new joy you see there in verses three and four not only that but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and the list goes on endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame and this is something we need to pay attention to suffering is now dignified not as a way of salvation not as self flagellation but as a way of

[18 : 51] God developing character in us do you want to see someone who is a mature Christian yeah you want to see a mature Christian well this is the way it came about refining through suffering and look at what God's good plan for suffering is when suffering comes get this our attitude should be thanks to God do you see that when suffering comes our attitude should be thanks to God now that's very strange as I've heard Paul Tripp say God will take us places we wouldn't go on our own to doing us things we couldn't do on our own suffering produces character and hope as well thanking

God is naturally the furthest thing in my mind to do when suffering comes this hope this hope will let you down this hope will not disappoint there is no regret in this hope it's not a wishful thinking hope it's a solid and sure hope we hope we hope to have super annuation when we die but lots of people have had big hopes that were dashed when their life savings were lost in various ways that is tragic and all too common people have hopes dashed all the time hopes for the job hopes for the holiday hopes for the family hopes for the spouse hopes for the children but we just don't know what tomorrow brings none of us had the week this week we had planned on having and you know what you probably won't next week either but there will be no disappointment with this hope of glory because believers have been sealed with the

Holy Spirit God has given us His Holy Spirit He's poured out His love into our hearts changed our hearts written His word on our hearts softened our hearts towards Him by His Holy Spirit and so do you have the hope of being welcomed into glory on that last day when we stand before God if we're trusting in Jesus Christ we'll be okay that's guaranteed that's a certainty not by our own effort but by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ but let's delve even deeper into the reason for this certain hope see verse six and this is the paradigm that I want you to take home today the paradigm is coming up here now for this gives us a reason for this certain hope what comes next gives us the basis for our certain hope and the bottom line is this if you can remember nothing from today's talk

I want you to remember this we have been justified we certainly shall be saved right I'll say it again this is the bottom line this is the guts of what you want to get a hold of you written nothing else from this morning this is what you we certainly shall be saved can you tell that the person next to you right okay hope you remember it that's good let me show you from the passage right let me show you from the passage at just the right time all right notice verse six at just the right time Jesus died for us yes he did die 2000 years ago in fulfillment of all the expectations that were made about him the big picture of Abraham and Isaac showed us it he didn't die for us while we had made ourselves good enough for him he didn't die for us while we were nice innocent cute little babies he didn't die for us he died for us while we were the rebellious teenager sinners while there was not even a chance of deserving his death while we're out and out rebels against him while we're living lives ignoring him rejecting him going our own way that's when he died for us that's amazing while we're his enemies and as we read in verse 7 you might consider dying for someone who is good you might die for someone you really think is good but it would never cross your mind would it it would never cross my mind to die for someone who hated me it would never cross my mind to die for someone who was my enemy but that's when he died he died for the ungodly scarcely will for one will scarcely die verse 7 for a righteous person perhaps for a good person one would dare to die but

God chases love for us while we're still sinners Christ died for us that's when he died for us the ungodly who are his enemies which means we have even more reason to be sure of our standing with God he died for us while we're his enemies and verse 9 by his blood since therefore we have now here we go here's the logic since we have now been justified right by his blood that is his sacrificial death not by drinking communion wine that never becomes the blood of Jesus we are justified made right with God through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus God's one and only long awaited precious son God does indeed provide the sacrifice not a lamb not a ram not a bull not a goat but a son and so we shall be saved notice we were justified by his death we're reconciled to God by trusting in the death of his son verse nine we're put in a position of peace with God by the death of his son so we shall be saved right look at it there with me since therefore we have now been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God for if while we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of his son much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life we have been saved from the wrath of

[27 : 38] God which is what is coming upon the world upon all those who stand in opposition to God upon all those who would try and live life without God who would try and suppress God and drive God away upon all those who deny his rule deny his son deny his word we might not like the idea but must bring about just justice and judgment on the unforgiven sinner but look at verse 10 since we have already been reconciled to God we have even more hope that we are right with God by his life it's an a the I don't know how to say the word properly a for Tory argument since one thing is certain right we have been justified by his death how much more certain is it that will be saved from

God's wrath by his life it's even above and beyond what you could possibly want to even have try and base your confidence in if Jesus has been raised from the dead who is alive who is the one who will save us from God's wrath to come intercedes for us we have every reason to be confident before God because he has borne God's wrath for us and so brothers and sisters we are trusting the death of Jesus we certainly shall be saved from the wrath of God we have been justified we shall be saved why because we've already been justified already been declared okay with God by faith in the death of Jesus so let me say it Jesus certainly shall be saved from the wrath of God why because we've already been justified by the faith in the death of Jesus and that's the rock solid foundation of true biblical

Christianity and that's great news for those who believe it if you're not sure you're okay with God then today is the day to do something about it I can't think of anything more important to sort out and to sort out urgently so please be in touch if you want to sort this out with me or Josh or somebody else you know that can help you as well find out the things of Christ and if you're doubting right you're standing with the Lord Jesus Christ come back to Romans 5 and read it again and understand God's word and promise to you it's our only hope now all too often we get this wrong though and this is how we get it wrong when I sin and want to get right with

God what's my first inclination if it's to try and right it by doing something for God I'm heading in the wrong direction right my only hope is reliance on the death of Jesus so I'll give you a practical tip when you or when I write a eulogy for my Christian friend what will I say okay will I tell people how good they are make them out to be so good that they're such a saintly person that they're unrecognisable to anyone who knew them and in so doing so deny the gospel of Jesus or will I speak about how good Jesus has been to them and that their only hope was that they were a forgiven sinner justified by the precious blood of

Jesus and so certain that they'll be saved from the wrath of God to come I don't know who's going to write a eulogy for my funeral but hopefully you'll be on notice to get it right Roy was a forgiven sinner yeah he was a fantastic fellow as well but he was a forgiven sinner sinned more than he wanted to more than he should have so what is it that motivates my love and service of others well it's because I'm hoping that it'll make me right with God or is it because I know that I'm already right with God and so I want to do all I can to help others know that truth as well when I'm thinking of my standing with God as a believer I have every reason to be rejoicing in the confidence of being at peace with God every reason to be free from the fear of facing death from fearing the wrath of God

[32 : 57] I have every reason to be certain in the hope of being with him in glory for all eternity with everyone else who has bent the knee to Jesus that's fantastic foundational liberation for us now if that's you you have every reason to be confident you've been justified you've been forgiven you've been made free you've been freed from the power and the penalty of sin by Jesus death and so you certainly shall be saved from the wrath of God that is such good news that is such a comfort and that is something to sing about which we will let's pray our father in heaven we thank you for your wonderful word we thank you for your wonderful love we thank you for Jesus and your great love for us and we pray that knowing these truths that will be driven deep into our hearts and that we will sing for joy and gladness in the midst of good things but also in tough things and we might live in heartfelt service of you for all your goodness to us in Christ for we pray it in Jesus name Amen