

LEADER NOTES – Romans 4:16-5:11 – 3/11/07

16 – 17 – Paul summarizes his earlier points and ties together grace and faith in a way that continues to be inseparable (see 3:23-34).- Law doesn't save us and works can't save us – this must be clear by now. God's grace and His faithfulness are the only guarantee. Abraham is the "father of us all" in the sense that those who were under the Mosaic law are not excluded from the Abrahamic covenant of faith, nor are those who never had the law (Gen. 17:5) and were intended as recipients of God's blessing (Gen. 12:3). Bringing "life from the dead" and calling "things that are not as though they were" probably refers to the ability of Abraham and Sarah to give birth to the son of promise – Isaac.

18 – 22 – Faith knows that God is never late! God had pledged an heir and Abraham believed. However, so much time passed that the human circumstances rendered this promise impossible without supernatural intervention, yet Abraham and Sarah still believed! He was even willing to be circumcised before Isaac was conceived. If Isaac had not been born Abraham would have been an object of ridicule – yet he was "fully persuaded" that God would fulfill His promise.

23 - 25 – Paul ties the truth, as it applied to Abraham, to the position of his readers. The same God who "brought life" to the "dead" body of Abraham (and Sarah so they could give birth), is the God who brought to life the crucified body of Jesus, making OUR justification possible. See that Jesus death is tied to our sins and his resurrection is tied to our justification paralleling Isaiah 53: 10-12. Justification is a forensic (legal) transaction, but it also involves a living relationship with God through the resurrected Christ.

5:1 – 2 – "Therefore" (remember to ask what's the therefore there for?) What Paul is about to address is all based on the background that began with 3:21. Peace (relational harmony not a subjective feeling) with God is a product of justification, which relates to the past, present and future. This is in contrast to the wrath that was ours before justification brought the remedy through forgiveness (past). Since justification is only a result of grace and faith, it is clear that we cannot manufacture peace or secure it for ourselves. It, too, is the gift of God. It is far more than the absence of conflict. In fact you can have peace in the middle of a war, because true biblical peace is what God creates in you when you allow Him to put everything in your life in proper order.

Because of this peace we are also granted access. The sense here is a personal introduction that Jesus offers us to The Father in all His glory and the hope (remember, confidence!) of heaven (future). All of this is ours only because we stand in God's grace that is ours by faith (present).

3 – 5 – We rejoice in the hope of heaven, but also in the face of sufferings – external pressures, tribulation or persecution that affects the human spirit. This is not a full treatment of sufferings, but an expression of how they are used to bring blessing to our lives. Perseverance expresses the notion of resistance, which is in contrast to eastern religions which teach passivity and submission. Accepting the reality of suffering and the potential blessing of sufferings does not eliminate the quest for victory over suffering.

The victory is character (Job 23:10; I Peter 1:6) which indicates a "tested value." Paul attaches hope to character, just as he did to the glory of heaven.

This is fitting because, unlike material possessions character accompanies into the eternal presence of God in heaven. This hope does not disappoint – it is a sure confidence – as sure as the love God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

6-8 - While we were incapable of working out any righteousness of our own, Christ died for the ungodly – that’s us! God’s loving empathy expresses itself in that Christ demonstrated his own love, not for a supposedly righteous man or a good man, but for people who were sinners, by dying on the cross on our behalf.

9-11 - God will not only justify us but preserve us in His salvation, by His life in us. If He saved us when we were enemies, how much more will He save us (daily and forever) now that we are His reconciled friends. This is a cause for rejoicing – that we have received God’s reconciliation!

Leaders Notes:

Everett F. Harrison, The Expositor’s Bible commentary, Zondervan Publishing

John Stott, Encountering the Gospel’s Power, Intervarsity Press

Devotional/Group Questions:

Who We Really Are, Romans 1-7, Serendipity House

Romans, Life Change Series, NavPress

Find Freedom, Romans, Bill Hybels, Willow Creek Resources

John Stott, encountering the Gospel’s Power, Intervarsity Press

Romans 4:16-25
Weekend Message: *Hi Def PEACE*

Group Leader Guide

Important preliminary details:

- Update your **roster** and return a copy to Kirsten@cvcwired.com. – make sure everybody in the group has a way to contact you and vice versa, so that you can share leadership and know who is coming or who needs help/prayer.
- Pray for and encourage your group to grow spiritually and numerically (you may have to become two groups – so begin to develop an apprentice leader).
 - KNOW - help people know each other better and more personally, but don't rush this.
 - CHALLENGE - give people permission to raise the bar of commitment for each other, without judgment.
 - ENCOURAGE - Help each other adopt spiritual habits that will strengthen your faith. Be creative, encourage manageable next steps and consistency, not perfectionism.
- **Don't** feel you need to discuss every question for the week in your Life Team gathering. Cover the ones you consider most important, including some of the application questions. Allow questions and be willing to research the questions you can't answer.
- **Pray** – as a group with simplicity, honesty and no pressure to perform.
- Have fun – laugh and be relaxed as well as disciplined. Plan something social as the group needs it.

Pray each day, before you **Dive In** to God's word, that God the Holy Spirit, will be the teacher of your mind and heart. Pray for the **friends** in your Life Team to be faithful to study and receive God's truth for themselves today.

ICEBREAKERS – Don't feel you have to use them all. Using at least one helps people get comfortable with each other and opens them up to sharing.

A. What has been the happiest day in your life to date? Describe your feelings at that moment?

- ___ My wedding day ___ The birth of a child ___ A great achievement
- ___ The day I became a follower of Christ ___ The moment I realized what my purpose is in life.
- ___ Other _____

B. When you have a low point or a stressful time in your life, what do you do to find peace, release stress, or get centered?

DAY ONE

Peace is hard to come by in our fast-paced world. We try to grab a little here and there between obligations, deadlines and noise. In contrast to the guilt and brokenness that results from the sin we saw pictured in the first 3 chapters of Romans, it's pretty amazing to now hear his promise of peace. Peace is far more than the absence of conflict or stress. In fact you can have peace in the middle of a war, because true, biblical peace is what God creates in you when you allow Him to put everything in your life in proper order.

1. Read Romans 4:16 – 5:11. After reading and studying Romans 4, summarize your understanding righteousness by grace through faith.
2. Vs. 17 What is it that is NOT in your life right now that you want God to “as though it is?” ...anything that is dead that you wish He would make ALIVE? For ideas check out I Cor. 1:18-31; II Cor. 4:11-12; II Cor. 5:1, 6-10; Hebrews 10:35-11:2; Eph. 2:4-5.
3. When have you had to “hope against hope?” What fears and doubts did you struggle with?
4. Why is it hard to trust God at the level Abraham did? Where do you need to exercise more faith in your life right now?

DAY TWO

5. How were you formerly God’s enemy?
6. What’s your general attitude toward suffering? Why is it that we can rejoice in suffering? Vs. 2
7. Vs. 3-5 describes a sequence that moves from suffering to hope. When have you ever seen that in yourself or in someone else?
8. Vs. 2 tells us we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Get quiet with God – don’t even pray – simply spend some time drinking in the peace that is yours because of Christ. Then pray to God with your response to that gift. In your group time, be prepared to discuss how that felt?

DAY THREE

9. In vs. 2 & 5, how is this hope different than the “wishful hope” we sometimes use in daily conversation?

10. Describe the work of Christ as you see it in vs. 6-11.

11. What do you think Paul means by the word “reconciliation” in this passage?

DAY FOUR

12. What grounds do you find in vs. 6-11 that gives you confidence about what God can do in you through suffering? Vs 3-5

13. How does faith enable a Christian to let his suffering produce hope, rather than bitterness or despair?

What should you do the next time you’re tempted to grumble or despair?

14. What kinds of things tend to stop you from experiencing the hope of glory with joy and exultation?

DAY FIVE

15. What can you do this week to stay focused on your reasons for joy?

16. What is the simplicity of the gospel (good news) message in vs. 8-10? When did you first experience this?

What role will your Life Team play in Third Saturday, this week form 8:30 AM – 12:30?

- Giving blood?
- Learning about being a mentor?
- Painting curbs at Douglas High?
- Working outdoors or cleaning out the (cold) barn at the City of Refuge?
- Learning about after school Good News Clubs at local public elementary schools?