

BIBLE & BAGEL

Romans – Our Common Faith

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“Every religion teaches people to be good”, how often have you heard that quote before? To a certain extent it is true, except of course if you consider Satan worship a religion. The difference between the Christian faith and other religions is that Yeshua did not teach us to be good so that we could get right with God, He made us right with God so that we could do the good works that God has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). We don't have to work our way to be accepted by God but He has accepted us on the basis of what Messiah Yeshua has done. The Apostle Paul having established that both Jew and Gentile are justified by faith now tells the synagogue in Rome what benefit we have received from His grace.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. NKJV

After establishing the fact that we are justified by faith Apostle Paul says that we have peace with God. By faith we also have access to His grace i.e. generosity and we can rejoice because we now have the hope of His glory, the hope that we will live in His presence not just after death but in this present life as well.

This hope we have received also enables us to boast even in tribulation, because we know that God is using the tribulations we encounter to build up our character, and this character is full of hope, a hope that is not vain or empty but sure because God has, through the Holy Spirit given us His love.

Two Greek words are translated as glory in this passage:

In verse 2 the word is ‘*doxa*’ which means dignity, praise, worship or in the case of God; His character¹.

The second in verse 3 is the word is ‘*kauchaoma*’ which means to boast.

By His death we could say that Yeshua established a peace treaty between God and us, before we put our faith in Him, it would not have been possible for us to get near God, to enter His presence, simply put, we were enemies of God and therefore not allowed into His presence. But now by faith, not in our goodness or righteousness but in Messiah (Christ) we can go near to God. This is something we often take for granted especially when we've been in the faith for some time. We need to reflect on who God is; the Everlasting God, Creator of everything and if we compare ourselves to Him, we would appear even smaller than an ant would appear to an elephant. Yet He would say to these ants “come near, I love you”.



The other thing that we see here is that with the knowledge of our relationship with God, we do not have to feel fearful or in despair when we face tribulation, in the first century church tribulation meant persecution; arrest, torture and death by the Romans. If the early church had hope in that situation how small are the tribulations we face today? Keeping close to God maintains a spirit of hopefulness.

Romans 5:6-11

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. NKJV

The Apostle explains here that at the time when mankind is helpless, unable to save ourselves, Messiah died for us. He describes our situation before Christ as “ungodly” meaning wicked or irreverent, having no heart for God. Then he asks the people to consider that no one would sacrifice themselves for a righteous man meaning an upstanding citizen, but maybe for a good man, one who does good for others someone might be willing to sacrifice themselves. Messiah though is very different; He died for evil people, people who did not care about God.

So we have this assurance that if while we were still enemies Messiah died for us, now that we have been justified by His sacrifice we shall surely be saved and so we can rejoice because we have been restored into right relationship with God.

Have you ever considered yourself a wicked person, an enemy of God? We might say that “well I was never against God why should he consider me an enemy?” The truth is that there are only two spiritual kingdoms; the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, the book of Colossians tells us this. Colossians tells us that when we put our faith in Christ we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s wonderful Son Yeshuaⁱⁱ. The book of Ephesians says that in our natural state were controlled by the “Prince of this world”ⁱⁱⁱ. Thus we were enemies with God but now because of Messiah’s sacrifice and by placing our faith in that we have been made right with God, no longer enemies but friends, servants and more than that His children. Hallelujah!

ⁱ Exodus 33:18 - 23

ⁱⁱ Colossians 1:13

ⁱⁱⁱ Ephesians 2:1-3

