

### Romans 5:1-2 ESV

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

There is a part of your journey with God that includes: Past, Present, and Future.

**Why is it so important that we see this for what it really is?** Justification – **we have been made right** in God's sight: You are not justified over and over again... it's a completed work. Some of you have been "saved" 50 times. That all works against peace.

**If you don't know God has changed you, you will never try and change the world. Others miss out!**

**If you think that God will take salvation from you because you sinned, then you forgot that the reason He gave it to you is because you sinned.**

**We have peace with God** – this speaks of the Father's outstretched arms toward you. He wants to redeem and restore every part of your life. The reality is there are many people who name the name of Christ, but they are not living the abundant, full life God has for them. Saved, yes... but it's like they entered the door of God's house (His family), and then just stayed by the front door. Come on, there are rooms to discover, relationship to be cultivated!

When we know what has been done in the past and where we stand in the present, we can look to the future boldly, we can dare to dream big dreams... **and we can face trouble and not crumble.**

Recently, my tire kept going flat. They discovered I cracked my wheel. How? They said I probably ran into a pothole. Life is full of potholes... those bumps you didn't see coming, the things that shake you a bit... whoa! Some of you have hit a pothole such as a diagnosis you didn't expect or something you thought would be a dream come true that has turned into a nightmare. There is hope!

### Romans 5:3-4 ESV

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

### Romans 5:3 NLT

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

### What if the trouble you face could develop you instead of destroy you?

Rejoice: This does not mean we rejoice (celebrate) when we run into problems, but because of them! The problems become the reason we rejoice. What? Paul is teaching the Roman Church that:

- Your trouble can be your transportation system to the next level God has for you!
- Trials and troubles don't automatically make you better, stronger. They can just as easily make you bitter and paralyze you.

**How can we get the most out of trouble?** In our text today, I will suggest a few ways:

**Look up.**

Look up and see your future, look up beyond the current muck you are wading through.

**Romans 5:1-2 NLT**

Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

The Christian faith is a "looking" faith! I'm looking beyond the moment. I'm looking for the Blessed Hope—the catching away of the saints—the physical return of King Jesus!

**Psalms 121:1-2**

I look up to the hills, does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth!

What is the trouble you face right now? Look up, my friend...

Jesus taught us to pray "looking" when He said in Matthew 6:10, "...as it is in heaven, let it be on earth!"

**Look at what we are heading towards:** No Republicans, Democrats, no racism, no us and them, no white church, Hispanic, Asian and black church... there is just US. No more betrayal, depression, divorce, sickness, pain, loss...

The only thing that is clear in your sight is what you focus on, everything else is a blur.

In 2 Kings 6, Elisha's servant woke up only to look out and discover that they were completely surrounded by an army. He ran into a problem, felt hopeless in the pit of his stomach, **he could see the danger but not the deliverance.** What he needed was Heaven's perspective on things. To him it looked like it was all over, but there was more going on than he thought.

**2 Kings 6:15 -17**

When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. **"Oh, sir, what will we do now?" the young man cried to Elisha.**

We've all been there? We see something with our eyes... and say, WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?

**v.16 "Don't be afraid!"** Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!"

**v.17** Then Elisha prayed, **"O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!"** **The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up,** he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

What a prayer! He didn't pray for the Lord to change the circumstances; rather, to open his eyes to see the rest of the story! **He went from only seeing the danger to now seeing the deliverance.**

When you look up, it will be a game changer. You will be taken from problems to prevailing!

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.

What does it look like to look up? Don't worry. Pray. Thank God.

### **Psalm 100:1-2 MSG**

On your feet now—applaud God! Sing yourselves into his presence.

That's where peace is, and sometimes you have to sing yourself there. Then you will experience peace and make decisions out of peace. Show me the person who kneels and I'll show you the person who shapes the future!

### **Link Up.**

### **Romans 5:3-4**

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

We/our: this journey is something we do TOGETHER! If you run into a problem, you don't need a program; you need a person!

### **Acts 14:19-20**

They stoned Paul and dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead. But as the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town.

Where was God? Right there in the believers that surrounded him! You don't need someone who will just add to your misery. You need someone filled with faith that will say, "Okay... come one, let's go!" Meaningful relationships, such as can be found in Life Groups, are a catalyst for your spiritual growth.

You need to ask yourself today: Who am I around? Where are they taking me? What do they have me reading? What do they have me saying? What do they have me thinking? *What do they have me becoming?* Find somebody who has the capacity for where you are going, not where you came from!

Remember, nobody succeeds alone. Everyone needs a somebody. Elisha's servant needed Elijah; Paul needed Barabas; Timothy needed Paul. I (Pastor Kevin) needed Dave Williams.

SOMEBODY NEEDS YOU! And it would be selfish to refuse to be the help that somebody else needs. You are the Elisha and somebody needs you to help them look up! **You have something to offer that others need!**

### **1 Corinthians 12:26**

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one is honored, all rejoice together.

Look around this room... there is somebody here that needs you. There is somebody here that you need, somebody that will challenge you, believe in you! Outside the walls of this church, look around you... somebody needs you! Somebody is drowning and you are the life jacket they are longing for.

## Determine to Grow Up.

### **Romans 5:3-4**

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

**Sufferings:** Greek: problems, tribulation, pressing together, pressure, distress

### **James 1:2-4**

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

You can't grow up without growing pains. You can't have a diamond without discomfort. A diamond is just a piece of coal that handled stress exceptionally well. Diamonds are made 100 miles under the surface of the earth, 2000 degrees, then they come to the top of the earth in volcanoes. That is some pressure!

**Suffering/Trials/Problems will produce something.** It's what you do with problems that determines what they produce. Our problem is we try and avoid every bit of discomfort.

**Endurance is translated patience, but it means to stay under; it's having staying power.** I'm going to remain under what feels uncomfortable. It's not passively being patient like sitting in a waiting room at a doctor's office; it's your staying power through trouble today that develops you for the trouble tomorrow.

**Character. Endurance produces character** - The character tests always come as a pop quiz.

Psalm 105:19 tells us that during all the pain, Joseph's character was being tested until the time came for the fulfillment of his dream.

You need to say, "I'm not just going to go through this... I'm going to grow through this."

If your pain capacity is being increased; If, like Joseph, you are facing injustice, being lied about, being rejected by your family, it's your invitation to grow.

A life that has been made right with God and has peace with God is also a life with problems. In Christ, you are destined to prevail!

### **Genesis 32:28**

"No longer will your name be Jacob," the man told him, "but Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have prevailed."

**Prevail:** To be stronger, to prove more powerful than opposing forces

You can't prevail unless you have some opposition. You have to face the fight before you can come out the winner. You can't be an overcomer unless you overcome something. Every obstacle you face is actually an opportunity in disguise... an opportunity to help you grow!

What's currently rubbing you the wrong way? It might be the very thing God will use to shape you! David could have never been known as the giant killer if he wasn't willing to stand up to a giant and fight when no one else would. There is some more victory for you on the other side of a fight!

→ *Mount Hope Leadership School is coming this fall!*

It is our desire and commitment to see you grow; to equip you for the work of the ministry. I want to plant 100 churches, send 100 missionaries – you might be one of the church planters... one of those missionaries! See [mhls.me](http://mhls.me) for more about how you can get connected!

### **Get Your Hopes Up!**

#### **Romans 5:5 ESV**

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

#### **Romans 5:5 TPT**

And this hope is not a disappointing fantasy, because we can now experience the endless love of God cascading into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who lives in us!

#### **Isaiah 43:2-5 MSG**

When you are in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end – Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel your Savior. I paid a huge price for you... That's how much I love you! (You are precious to me.) So don't be afraid: I'm with you.

You're not alone, this isn't happening because God is mad at you. The Lord says you are precious to Him.

Don't think you are not blessed when you have pain...

The pain that the enemy meant to take you down with can be the pain God uses to take you over with!