

THE BENEFITS OF BELIEVING
Romans 5:1-11

Good morning! We're on the 12th part of our series on the Book of Romans I'm calling "Power to Change". We're finished with the first four chapters. Just 12 chapters to go. I hope we'll finish by Christmas. That will be my gift to you. Just hang in there. Tell the person next to you, "Hang in there. Nice to see you, anyway, this morning."

Today, we're going to be a little more positive. The first four chapters are kind of gloomy because it talks about our sinful condition. It talks about how we cannot be saved by our own good works. But it also talks about hope because of our salvation in Jesus Christ. That our salvation is not earned but it is given to us as a free gift by God through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Now, Romans 5 is rich with life-changing truth. Paul is excited. This is an upbeat passage. Three times in the passage he uses a Greek word that could mean "glory", "rejoice" or "boast" or "be happy". Paul says there are some things we ought to be happy about. He has explained what it means to be a Christian, now he's going to talk about the results of being a Christian.

Our message this morning is entitled "The Benefits of Believing". Please get your Bibles and turn with me to chapter 5 of Romans. This time I'd like audience participation. Maybe I'll call someone to read it for us. Many of you are opening your phones. Now, I'll see whether you have the Bible or TikTok. It's a short passage, so anyone? Whatever version you have. As long as it is NIV.

So, Paul starts with "*Therefore* [now, anytime you see a "therefore" in the Bible you see what it is there for] *since we have been justified through faith...*" Paul is summarizing the previous four chapters of Romans.

In light of everything he's said about how man is sinful and he can't make it on his own, but God saves us, not because we deserve it, earn it, work hard for it, but simply because of our faith in Jesus -- therefore in light of the fact that God makes us Christians because of his grace, what He does, not because of what we do... this is the good news, the benefits of believing, the natural consequences of having faith, of being justified. We've talked about justification—being acquitted of guilt. But it's more than forgiveness. It means God makes you absolutely perfect in His eyes. Now we'll talk about the results of a relationship with God.

What Paul says in this passage applies to every believer. This applies as much to you and me as it does to the Romans he was writing to twenty-three centuries ago. So, **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BELIEVING?**

1. You are at peace with God. *"Therefore since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God."* The war is over. There's no more struggle. God is not mad at me anymore. I'm no longer mad at God. No more broken relationship. We're in harmony. It happened because God justified me when I put my faith in Jesus who is Prince of Peace. Jesus made possible the peace that's now between me and God.

2. You have a 24-hour access to God. *"Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace which we now stand."* This word "access" is an important word. It's composed of two Greek words. One means "to bring" and another "forward" -- to bring forward. Access means when one person brings another two people together. It was used when one person brought another person in the presence of a third party. It was a word used in history which referred to having an audience before a king. The Romans understood this word. You didn't walk into Caesar's palace and have an impromptu meeting with him. The typical

Roman would probably never have a meeting with Caesar. You didn't have access to him. Only a few close people around him could get to him.

The Jews understood this very well. In the Old Testament, the Jews did not have access to God. **There was the Temple and the wall around the Temple.** The wall around the Temple prevented all Gentiles from getting inside. If a Gentile went inside the Temple he would be killed immediately. Gentiles did not have access. Not only that but the Jews did not have access to God. **In the Temple there were three parts.** There was the Holy of Holies that no man could enter and there was a veil over the Holy of Holies. The veil separated God from man. The veil in the Temple represented that you are separated from God. And you did not have access to God. In the Old Testament they went through a priest to get access to God.

Luke 23:44-46 When Jesus Christ died He broke down the barriers. ***“It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last.”*** When Jesus died the curtain in the Temple was rent. It was torn from top to bottom. God tore the Temple curtain and the barrier was broken down. Since Jesus Christ came to earth we now have access to God. We don't go through a priest. You don't have to offer sacrifice. You can talk to God directly. You have 24-hour access to God. We can always talk to Him in prayer. He's always available.

I read a story once about during the Civil War a soldier was very discouraged trying to get in to see President Lincoln. He tried for two weeks at the capitol steps and nobody would let him in. He didn't have access. President Lincoln's

younger son Tad came out, "What's going on?" The soldier said, "I want to see your dad." Tad said, "I can get you in." The son got access for the soldier.

That's what Jesus Christ has done. He's gotten us access into God the Father. You can come to God at any point.

As Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us, *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

Because you are a believer you have access to God and you can come to God anytime, anywhere, any place with any request and not feel ashamed. That's what access is. The door is never closed.

3. v. 2. You have a dependable hope. *"... and we boast in the hope of the glory of God."*

In the New Testament hope does not mean wishful thinking. In the New Testament hope means confidence. You see, hope is essential to living. You can't live without hope. You've got to have it. Doctors will tell you that people in the hospital who don't have hope don't do well. People who have hope get well much quicker. Why are Christians so happy? They have hope. They have a future.

A third benefit of being a believer is we know that no matter what happens, no matter how many problems and trials we go through we know what the ultimate outcome is going to be. We know what the final score is going to be. We've already fast forwarded to the end of the game and we know we're going to win. Amen? So we have hope. Hope is confidence that you'll win out in the end

because of Jesus. The Bible says *"We are more than conquerors through him who loved us."* (Rom. 8:37)

Now, why do we rejoice in the hope of God's glory? You know, when Jesus Christ comes back to earth this is what's going to happen. *"When Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."* (Colossians 3:4) In the last days, when Christ comes back, we're going to appear with Him and we're going to share God's glory. We will appear in glory with Christ. Not because we deserve it. Again, it's grace. We rejoice in hope because we know, no matter what happens the end is going to be OK eventually. It means no situation is hopeless. It's easy to rejoice in hope. Whatever you're going through, it's nothing compared to the hope that's waiting for you. This life is temporary. Eternal life in heaven with Jesus is permanent.

V. 3, *"Not only so but we also glory in our sufferings."* Now, what does glory here mean? The original Greek means to boast, to take pride in, to exult, to rejoice, to be happy. And that's how different versions of the Bible put it. Paul is saying don't be let down by sufferings because there's benefit in suffering. You must be glad, you must look at what suffering can do to you as a person. Which brings us to the next benefit.

4. *There is a purpose in your problems.* This is an exciting principle that is a characteristic of a mark of maturity. You are mature when you understand the purpose of suffering and respond accordingly. The rest of v. 3 and v 4 says:

"...we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Our problems take on a new purpose. They are no longer meaningless or senseless.

The primary benefit is character development. Problems produce character in our lives. v. 3-4 say that the means to maturity is suffering. You are going to have

problems in life and you're going to benefit from them or not. Wouldn't you rather benefit from your problems?

You see, as a Christian, you still have the same problems as other people, they don't go away, but now the problems take on a new meaning. Your suffering produces perseverance which produces character which produces hope.

Now, it seems illogical to rejoice in suffering. Why should I be happy in suffering? You shouldn't until you understand the purpose. He's not being masochistic here – having a martyr complex. Paul was writing to the Roman Christians who were under intense persecution and he's telling them, "*we also glory in our sufferings.*" One of the biggest heresies in Christianity is the misunderstanding of the difference between "in" and "because". We rejoice in suffering, not because of suffering. The Bible says in everything give thanks, not because of everything give thanks. God doesn't say you should thank him because of evil in the world. Doesn't make sense. God says thank him in the midst of evil. So, God never tells you to thank him for suffering. Instead, you rejoice in suffering. We're rejoicing about the purpose behind it. We're rejoicing about the benefits that God can bring out of it. We're not rejoicing for the suffering but for the results it can produce if we respond correctly.

Romans 8:28 says, "*In all things God works for the good.*" It doesn't say all things are good, but in all things God can bring good out of them even the bad things in life.

If anybody knew the meaning of suffering like pressure and problems, Paul did. In 2 Cor 4:16-18 he says, "*Therefore we do not lose heart. [we don't get discouraged, give up, cop out] Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles [He was three times shipwrecked, five times beaten, twice left for dead,*

been without food, clothes, in distress, persecuted -- any one of us would have had a nervous breakdown under the kind of pressure Paul dealt with] *are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*" God has a purpose behind even

the little irritations and problems. I'm not saying that God is the author of those things, but God even takes those things, once you become a believer, and works them for good. Don't say that God is the author of your problems.

Don't blame God for a broken car, maybe you just didn't do good maintenance. But God can even use that for a purpose, for character building. *"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal."* We don't look at our problems because we know they aren't going to last. We look beyond the problem to the Lord. The Lord is going to last forever. The character He produces in our lives is going to last forever. Only a few things are going to last forever. All the TVs are going to burn up, the homes, the cars, the clothes, the phones, eventually all of this is going to be destroyed. There are only a few things that are going to last forever. Those that last are intangible things. Things that define you as a person and a child of God.

Ultimately, the primary benefit of character development that comes from problems is that you become like Jesus. You see, God's number one purpose in your life is to make you like Jesus Christ. He wants you to think the way Christ thinks, act the way Christ acts, love the way Christ loved, in short, to have the characteristics of Christ. What are those characteristics? The fruit of the Spirit: He has love, He has joy, He has peace, He has patience, He has kindness, He has goodness, He has faithfulness, He has gentleness, He has self-control.

How does God produce those characteristics in your life? For example, how does God produce patience in your life? By putting you in situations where you're tempted to be impatient. It's easy to be patient when everything is going your way.

If not? God teaches you patience by putting you in traffic jams. Or allowing you to wait in a grocery line. God produces patience in your life through trials and crises.

The fifth benefit is this.

5. The Holy Spirit fills you with His love. v.5 *"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*

A lot of people put their hope in something or someone that later is a source of embarrassment.

Like when people invest in something and the guy who talked them into it is a swindler or a crook. Years ago, many people put their hope in Allen Stanford, who was nicknamed "Sir Allen" because of his philanthropic ways. However, he was found guilty of running a massive Ponzi scheme that bilked some 30,000 investors out of more than \$7 billion. The Texas mogul became one of the nation's richest men through his self-made financial firm based in both Houston and Antigua. But in February 2009, Stanford's lavish lifestyle came crashing down when the Securities and Exchange Commission accused him of defrauding his investors. He was sent to prison.

You can put your hope in the wrong thing. But when you put your hope in God you will never be embarrassed. You can count on it. Why? *"...because God's love has been poured out into our hearts."* The motive that God does everything He does for you is love. How do we know that love? Through the Holy Spirit. He gives us His Holy spirit to show us His love. What is the proof of God's love? v. 6-8 *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* If you want to see if God loves you, look at the cross. The cross proves

that God loves you. Most people won't even die for their best friend. Maybe you would die for somebody really close to you. But do you know anyone who would die for their enemy?

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He loves us and the proof of His love is that He loved us even before we were believers. Christ did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

6. **You have eternal security.** Once you're saved you are always saved. Once you become a believer you cannot become an unbeliever.

There are some people who don't believe that but the Bible teaches that very clearly. v. 9 *"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"* "shall we be saved", is that present, past or future tense? Shall is in the future. He's talking about the judgment day when God's wrath will be poured out upon unbelievers. If we've been justified right now by his blood, you don't worry about being punished for your sins. God's no longer angry with you. Verse 1 says you already have peace with God.

v. 10, *"For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"* Here he just repeats the thought or the truth that once saved you're always saved. You have eternal security. Jude 1:24 says, *"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to bring you faultless and joyful before his glorious presence— to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from all ages past, and now, and forever and ever! (And all God's people said) Amen."* Who does the keeping? God. Not me. I don't keep myself saved. God does the keeping.

When does eternal life begin? It doesn't begin the moment you die. Eternal life begins the moment you're saved. I'm living eternal life right now and it's going to go on forever. How long is eternal? For as long as I keep working for my salvation? It's forever. Jesus says, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."* (John 10:28-29) Both the hands of Jesus and his Father are holding you so tight. No one can take you out of their hands. That's double security. You yourself can't jump out of their hands.

But what happens when a Christian sins? You must understand the difference between fellowship and relationship. A fellowship is the joy you share. A relationship is the standing. My children may grow up and reject the Lord and if they became totally opposite of what I believe the fellowship would be broken with my children and it would hurt me and I would grieve. God grieves over believers who live in sin. But nothing my children could ever do could make them not my children. No matter what they do once they are my child, I cannot disown them. I can say "I'm displeased with what you've done" but they will always be my child because of that."

In light of all of this, how do we respond? Romans 5:11 *"Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."* There's that word again "boast" which is "glory" in verse 3. Paul actually used the same Greek word. He is saying, you must glory or boast in the fact that you are a child of God. You are no longer under condemnation. God's no longer angry with you. You are reconciled to him through Jesus. You are saved. No one can touch you. The devil cannot touch you.

Sometimes, when times get hard, we feel defeated, we feel like the devil has won. You may even hear him say, “You are despicable. You blew it again! You are a no-good Christian. Are you really saved? How come you fall again and again?”

My friend, don't believe those lies from the devil. You are special in the eyes of God because you are his child. He will never condemn you. He understands that you will fall and stumble every now and then but he will pick you up. Phil. 1:6 says, “...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” What God started in your life when he changed you since believing in Jesus, he will see to it that he will finish the work. You are a work in progress on earth. When you get to heaven, God will say, “Mission Accomplished!”

My friend, these are the benefits of believing:

1. You are at peace with God.
2. You have a 24-hour access to God.
3. You have a dependable hope that won't let you down.
4. There is a purpose in your problems.
5. The Holy Spirit fills you with His love.
6. You are eternally secure.

Those are the benefits when you believe in Jesus. If you're not a believer yet, would you like to receive Jesus in your heart as your personal Lord and Savior?