



## Romans 5:1-2

### “Standing in grace”

How hungry are you this morning to:

- Experience God’s love, His grace and truth?
- Live the abundant life the word of God promises?
- Overcome the strongholds that keep you from His intimacy?

I’m trusting you are all hungry for God’s word this morning and that you thirst for righteousness. That your desire is to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - **2 Peter 3:18**; that you may have life, and have it to the full - **John 10:10** and that you who believe are more than a conqueror through him who loved us – **Romans 8:37**

We have just spent several weeks (20 hrs in total) going through the Grace Course and I pray that in the 40 days following the course we will see the breakthrough to freedom in Christ and experience the grace of God for those who attended it.

I’m sure we remember most of what the course taught us about God’s love, His grace and truth but do you truly believe what He says about **you**, especially when failure or falling short of God’s glory is inevitable? The truth is that grace empowers the believer to be set free from the past and therefore, we can be confident of His love for us, whatever happens – that’s Good News, that’s the Gospel truth!

**John Piper** - “Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is **power**, not just **pardon**.”

This morning I would like to reaffirm what we already know and understand about grace and by studying **Romans 5:1-2** together, we can be encouraged to stand in the grace that justified us before God and brought peace into our hearts. Grace continues to empower us, as we have already gained access to stand in the grace that saved us and that same grace will sanctify and will finally glorify us.

During the course we learned of the need to persevere for 40 days (6 weeks) in order to break old habits and form new ones.

If you truly desire to experience God’s grace in your life and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to overcome Satan, sin and death, then I want to encourage you to persevere until you achieve the breakthrough God promises and until the wall comes down and the lies that have deceived you are replaced with the truth of God’s word!

**Romans 5:1-2** *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand...*

These two verses in context, speak of justification, which simply means a right standing in the sight of God.

This morning I would like to highlight 3 points.

Therefore, since...

1. We have been justified through faith
2. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
3. We have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand

## 1. We have been justified by faith

The Apostle Paul writing to the church in Rome explains that we are justified before God by faith in Jesus dying on the cross for our sin, not by works we have done to earn God's favour. In the previous chapter Paul gives the example of father Abraham being made righteous by faith.

### Romans 4

<sup>3</sup>*What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."...*

<sup>13</sup>*It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith...*

<sup>16</sup>*Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*

**Galatians 3:17-18:** *The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*

We understand from scripture that God's promise to Abraham and to all who believe, is to justify (make righteous) by faith, not by anything we do or by meeting a certain standard (the law), otherwise the cross of Calvary would be emptied of its power and Christ died in vain!

Scripture goes on to explain that the law is good and helped keep the nation of Israel safe by revealing right from wrong. However, the holiness of God means we must be perfect to come into His presence. We are incapable of meeting that requirement in our own strength, so the purpose of the law is to drive us into the merciful arms of a loving Saviour!

Praise the Lord that by faith in His Son we now stand righteous before the God of grace, through the blood of the lamb; saved, sanctified and secure.

## 2. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

**Colossians 1:20** *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

The result of a right standing before God means there is now peace between born again believers and the Father in heaven. The war is over – there is no more rebellion – no more resisting His good, pleasing and perfect will, no more trying to earn His love but *freely we have received, freely we will give* **Matt 10:8**

In place of selfishness there is now selflessness and the new heart has a desire to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'* **Luke 10:27**

Those who remain in the vine will bear fruit for His glory, fruit that will last and will grow in grace through a loving, lasting, life giving relationship with the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus.

God's peace is something the world does not know or understand and Jesus said: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* **John 14:27**

When we look around the world, we see there is little peace amongst men and it comforts our heart to know that the God of grace has promised His transcendent peace to us when we present our requests and petitions to Him with thanksgiving.

### 3. We have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand

We have already gained access by faith into grace but are encouraged to take a stand. The Greek word for stand (*histēmi* – to make firm, fix, establish) is the same word used in Ephesians 6, where we are counselled to take a stand against the enemy's schemes and put on the full armour of God. The devil is the father of lies and will want to deceive you into believing you can win the spiritual battle on your own if you try harder; the truth is the battle is already won through faith in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, we are to stand in grace and be aware of the enemy's schemes to take us back under a yoke of slavery, making us try harder to please God and trying to earn His love, when we already have it.

**Ephesians 4:14-15** *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

So the truth of God's word sets us free to experience the power of grace and as we continue to grow in grace we find intimacy with our Father and bear *the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

There is a word of caution about grace: it was not cheap, it cost God His only son, it is not a license to carry on living the way we did before salvation. The darkness of every human heart and the knowledge of the cost to God opens our eyes to the truth of His love. The right response to a redeemed life is one of gratefulness, worship and obedience to His commands – not because we have to but because we want to!

The Apostle Paul says it this way: Romans 6:1-3 *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?"*

#### Challenge for the church this week:

One of my favourite verses is **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.*

However, we if we continue on in **verse 10** *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. We are not saved by our works but saved for them!*

God's whole purpose of leaving us here on earth is to further His Kingdom **Matthew 28:19-20**. The most excellent way to experience His love, to live in abundance and be set free from the past and self, is to know the works He has prepared for us in advance and to keep in step with the Holy Spirit and do them!

Have you asked the Lord which part of His body He is gifting you to build up in love and do you desire to partner with Him to spread the Gospel message in a world that is desperate for love, joy and peace?

Please join with us in prayer this week to ask, seek and knock...

AMEN