

SALVATION AND LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Sermon for the 3rd Sunday in Lent, 2026

Romans 5:1-8

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is taken from Romans 5:1-8, our Second Reading read before:
Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

In the 4th chapter of Romans, Paul described and illustrated the faith and righteousness of God. Now, in chapter 5, he describes the life that *results from faith in Christ*.

Paul takes up the thread of his discussion by naming some of the blessed results that follow from being justified. He does this by picturing the work of God on our behalf, by showing the relationship of believers to God that arises from the atonement of sin and the consequent justification. **“We have been justified by faith,”** Paul writes.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, in Article 4, speaking about justification, says how it *“is the chief topic of Christian doctrine - an article which is of special service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ and alone opens the door to the entire Bible.”*

The state of being justified has become ours; we have entered it through our faith in Christ. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ. As a result of His death and vicarious work, the enmity that existed between the Father and us *has been taken away*. Peace with God the Father has been acquired and is now the property of men through justification.

This peace which we have with God the Father is based solely upon the reconciliation founded in the atonement of Christ. Through the mediation of Christ, this wonderful peace has been brought about through Him, by which we have **“access by faith into this grace in which we stand.”**

The way to salvation now lies open. Christ Himself has opened this door, which leads directly to grace. Through Him, we now have a standing as Christians. We are justified from sin, *all* our sins are forgiven, and there is no obstruction, nothing standing between God and us. Because of this, we boast on the basis of **“the hope of the glory of God.”** We can therefore see how this hope is indeed *a very precious possession* which leads to a tranquil peace in our lives, which is what we need when we see the world around us! But our lives here are not forever; we have an unspeakably greater joy in sharing in the glories of heaven and of God Himself *in the life to come*.

The glorious prospect of life eternal makes bearable the inevitable crosses and difficulties that come into our lives. These crosses, however, not only become bearable, but in the midst of them, we can still rejoice. We can do so because we know that under the loving care of a good and gracious God, even suffering leads to blessings and positive results in the Christian life. Hence Paul can make the bold claim that we rejoice not only in the hope of future glory **“but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ 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.”**

The afflictions which we may suffer in our present life, all finally result in our benefit, for in these trials *our faith is exercised and approved*. The more severe our trials here on this earth, the more need there is of patient endurance of suffering, of faithfulness to truth and duty.

This endurance produces approval, the state of the mind which has endured the test, as we read from James chapter 1, “*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him*” (v. 12).

During afflictions upon this earth, faith is on trial, being tested. If our faith is of the right kind, we shall emerge purified and strengthened in the hope of the glory of God, and it is a hope that will not make us ashamed. Because its fulfilment is absolutely certain it must bring salvation. David writes in Psalm 22, “*To You they cried and were rescued; in You they trusted and were not put to shame*” (v. 5). God’s Word and all the promises it contains have not failed and never will. The promise of blessing which comes upon the believer on the account of his justification, makes his whole life happy, as he waits for the glory which will be revealed on the great day.

But what is the *basis* of this hope that Christians have?

Paul writes, “**God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** ⁶ **For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.** ⁷ **For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—** ⁸ **but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”

Paul here explains the reason why our hope will not be put to shame. “**God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**”

The love of God, of which He proved to us by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, has been, and continues to be, shed abroad in our hearts, to be communicated to us abundantly, which spreads itself abroad through the whole soul, filling us with consciousness and the extreme happiness of His presence and favour.

This has been done “**through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**” Paul writes to Titus telling him, “(God) *saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,* ⁶ *whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*” (3:5-6). God’s love and the grace He extends to us are in keeping with His merciful nature. Baptism brings new life and spiritual cleansing. God provides this baptism as a means for us to receive His grace through the Holy Spirit, whose testimony we know: **God does indeed love us**. God’s love is our full property in Christ, our Saviour. Because of this, we are absolutely sure and certain of our blessedness. The love of God, resting upon Christ’s vicarious death, is the sufficient and certain foundation of the hope of our future salvation.

Dear friends, Paul explains to us in what respect the love of God is the surety of the Christian’s hope, because “**at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**” While we were still weak, in a condition of inability to do anything good, Christ at the appointed time died for the ungodly people of this earth. On our part, there was nothing. There was not a single thing that we could call favourable in the eyes of God. We were completely worthless in God’s eyes. But then God sent His Son to save us. His death on the cross was our Substitute. He died in our stead. John once wrote, “*In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). We are saved not by our love for God but by the love of God for us in sending Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, because of the death and glorious resurrection of Christ, we have the assurance of the continuing love of God. This is the singular, incomparable love of God which exceeds all that we can conceive.

Because of the fact of God’s love for us, worthless sinners, how much more certainly shall we now, being justified by the blood of Christ, be spared from the wrath of God through Him. **Our justification is the guarantee of our deliverance from the wrath to come**. We were godless, but we have now become righteous and just. We are exactly as God wants us to be because of His wonderful act of pronouncing us just. We are safe against His condemnation.

The hope of eternal salvation, which is the result of our justification, is a certain and definite hope, and one that we should cling to. A hope that fills our hearts, as believers, with a quiet joy that causes us to be confident in our minds that we are indeed justified through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.