**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series*

 *Peace with God and Neighbor*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

August 11th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

**Romans 5**

1 Therefore, having been **justified** [Abel – approved] by faith,

we have peace with God

**through** our Lord Jesus Christ,

 2 through whom also we have obtained

Our introduction by faith

into this grace in which we stand;

and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now **faith** is the assurance of *things* **hoped** for, the conviction of things not seen.

 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

**Eph. 1:9-14** 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ,

things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

 11 also we have obtained an inheritance,

having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed,

 **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,**

 14 who is given as a **pledge of our inheritance**,

with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession,

to the praise of His glory.

So, and therefore, leading from Romans 4, where Abraham is made righteous by “faith” to God, into Romans 5, we see the goal of humanity. . . “**Peace with God.”** If a person has peace with God then they would have peace with their neighbor. This obviously parallels the two greatest commandments of loving God and your neighbor. (Matthew 22:37-39)

**Mark 12:29-31** 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

**Leviticus 19:18** Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** 4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

What a message the whole world should want to receive; go after, pursue, be enveloped by, and immersed in being at peace with God.

The number one question to ask a person is do they have peace with God? The follow-up question can be how did they achieve peace with God?

I know the historical question many in the evangelical Church ask, “If you died right now and you were standing in front of God, what reasons would you give Him that would allow you into His heaven?” This is an adversarial question. Asking a person if they have peace with God and the follow-up question, “How did they get peace with God?” may be challenging but does not automatically pit one against another.

It is my opinion that this is too confrontational. Some people respond to this approach. But the presupposition to this question is does the person have peace with God? Every question has a presupposition. The biblical reality is that there are **no** questions asked at the Great White Throne judgment in Revelations 20:11. The books of Deeds and the book of Life are opened. Ever been to a meeting where the reviewers didn’t have any questions. They simply opened books to see where your name is recorded. At that point, all the decisions in life had been lived. The only event left is the eternal assignment.

**So, God’s Peace Plan. . .**

 What gets in the way? **The Adam-plan, the Adam-way, the Pride-plan gets in the way**. Some may ask – what’s that?

Who is Adam? However, we Believers know. We know that the **Adam-way** represents to all of us the choice we all have; that choice to choose our own pride and ambition over God’s plan and way for our lives.

 Even after God freely offers redemption through the most easily accessible path of faith, people and their organizations complicate the path by throwing one obstacle after another and then complete barriers. I fully believe that Satan, the author of death and destruction, historically and personally works through people, who have surrendered to evil, to destroy God’s peace plan. These efforts are seen in our time on a daily basis outside and inside the Church.

1. **There is no God**. This teaching is front and center everyday in all the naturalistic and materialistic explanations for human existence and events in the world.
2. **There are many gods**, which dilutes the reality that there is One God. The end result is there is no God to save humanity from itself.
3. **God is distant** and you will never be in His presence, as in Islam. People or objects are to be used, as in women being subjected to the pleasures of men even in the next life. People are not viewed as created in God’s image. This creates the opposite of peace with God or neighbor. In fact, where Islam is the majority, they are at war with their neighbors. This is why their leaders do not pursue peace but total temporal domination of their neighbor.
4. **Miracles cannot exist** because the materialistic world does not account for events where the explanation for miracles does not fit in a test tube.
5. **God’s Word is just another book** written by unknown authors and has been changed so many times there is no more representation of truth.

These are just a few of the messages people hear on a daily basis. Note that these messages primarily come from outside the Church, but, through the 19th and 20th centuries, many in the Church adopted the same teachings.

So, attacks against God from outside the Church is understandable. However, there are full-frontal confrontations to God’s peace plan within the Church. The biggest impediment to God’s plan is the **man-plan**. **Man’s plan** is to add every imaginable work or process to the Cross of Christ that a person has to perform to accomplish peace with God, to gain salvation and to keep salvation. How can a person achieve peace with God when they are constantly attempting to satisfy a religious agenda that demands compliance that is never-ending? It is the same as the priest daily sacrificing animals in the temple that can never take away sin.

**Hebrews 10:1-4** 1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

 3 But in those *sacrifices,* there is a reminder of sins year by year.

 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

 As noted last Sunday, these never-ending “satisfactions” generally include the work of water-baptism as a mandatory act of salvation, compliance of prayers being recited in specific manners and words, and the use of the Lord’s Supper as a means of meritoriously removing sin, all through the orchestration of a priestly group.

Romans 5 continued. . .

 Ever wonder from where the idea of bad times builds character came? Its Biblical. Paul, of all people, beaten and left for dead many times became more determined. In this fallen world, God intends for us to develop thick skins. To be a Christian is challenging in a fallen world, but then again, the alternative is living a life outside of God’s plan for life. Living life as God has planned (Ephesians 2:10) for us is the most successful life we can live.

3 And not only this,

but we also exult in our tribulations,

knowing that tribulation brings

about perseverance;

4 and perseverance, proven character;

and proven character, hope;

5 and hope does not disappoint,

because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the **Holy Spirit** who was given to us.

 In Romans 5, Paul started with justification by faith that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This leads to standing in God’s grace as we live in hope of the glory of God. And, in verse 5, hope does not disappoint. Why? Because the LOVE OF GOD had been POURED OUT within our hearts. But wait, poured out how? Through the Holy Spirit. How did we obtain the Holy Spirit? He was given to us. 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 20:22 NAU)

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into this grace in which we stand;

and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God.

 6 For while we were still helpless,

at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly**.

 This is a main distinction and difference from what islam teaches about allah. Allah did not come to be one of us and live our lives to absorb to price of our sin on the Cross. Allah waits to judge people according to his arbitrary will. There are no guarantees with allah, like we read in Ephesians 1 about our lives being sealed and promised for heaven, except if you give your life in a suicide bombing then you are promised a place in allah’s heaven. Allah did not come to be one of us to die for any person. We know all too well that allah demands for people to murder others in order to secure their place in allah’s heaven.

 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man;

though perhaps for the good man

someone would dare even to die.

 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us,

in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.**

 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the **wrath *of God***through Him.

 In islam, allah demands that we justify ourselves by the murdered blood of another person, not his blood.

**Romans 2:4-6**

4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

Proverbs 24:12 If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He not consider *it* who weighs the hearts? And does He not know *it* who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?

Matthew 25:44-46 44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

 45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

 So, peace with God is our goal. We describe peace with God as being saved. Many in today’s world do not know what “being saved” means. Being saved from what? This starts a lengthy discussion. We know that the ideal witnessing situation is one where there is a relationship that the other person knows you care about them.

 Questions or discussion points to engage others in concerning peace with God:

1. Where are we going from this life?

Are there determinates now in this life that direct our eternal lives?

1. Does peace with God start with us or God?

Obviously, God loved us first (1 John 4:19), so God has already started the process for us to have peace with Him. This is good news. The first step has already been taken by God. God waits for our response to His Holy Spirit.

1. How does a person obtain peace with God?

This is the big question that all Believers are responsible to respond. The answer is always right in front of us. The answer is already built inside of us. God created us in His image for the purpose to contain His Spirit. We only have the compacity, the life-long opportunity to surrender to God’s Holy Spirit conviction.

The Hebrews in Acts 2 came to the point under the Holy Spirit preaching of Peter that they knew they did not have peace with God. They wanted peace with God and called out to Peter from cut heart “What must we do” Their cut hearts revealed their surrender. The response Peter gave is the same call Adam was given except for one difference. Adam was called to stay in the Lord, but the Hebrews in Acts were called to return to the Lord. But both were called to have peace with God by surrendering to His will in their lives. This is accomplished by a turning to God (repent). Then life’s works such a water-baptism follow. Once those in Acts 2 surrendered, then God’s Holy Spirit could operate in them.