

A Verse to Live by

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:1 (ESV)

May Prayer Focus

This month I don't want to forget mom! Let's lift up a special prayer for mothers and grandmothers. Where would we be without the love and guidance mothers give us? If there is anyone that second guesses themselves, it is mothers. We worry if we are failing our kids, our husbands, our Lord. We need your prayers and His grace! Also, pray that God's grace and peace be multiplied in your heart and that blessed assurance fills your life with joy!

Life Application Challenge

Sometimes our doubts about being saved are fueled by unresolved issues. If there is a relationship that needs reconciliation, you owe someone an apology, or a hidden sin you have not confessed, take care of that. The sooner you do, the better you will feel and live. Living with shame, guilt or bitterness will leave you constantly agitated and unpeaceful. You got saved to be released from that - don't drag it around with you!

Recommended Scripture Reading

Ephesians 2 - A great chapter to remind us we are made alive in Christ.
Hebrews 12 - An encouraging chapter to remind us even when we mess up God still loves us.

Church On Fire!

Eleventh Street Church of God | May 2021 Prayer Newsletter

Believer, Stop Condemning Yourself!

Another Easter holiday has come and gone. We celebrated and honored Christ together and what a blessing that was! Easter baskets are put away for next year, most of the candy (or all) is eaten, and our focus has shifted to other tasks. And that is fine; that's life. But let's not ever lose focus of what Jesus did for us, which leads me to my next topic..."Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," (Ro. 8:1)

This is for the believers that worry they may not be really saved. That blessed assurance we sing about; you don't feel it. If you don't live with assurance, if uncertainty is what fills your forgiven heart, I am writing this with you in mind. Do you live in fear that you aren't good enough, don't do enough, aren't righteous enough, don't believe enough, don't pray enough, don't love God enough, doubt too much....etc? Well, guess what? You're right. You, me and every other believer is not enough and will never be able to do enough to deserve God's grace. Praise God our salvation isn't based on our merits! "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph. 2:8-9) That is the thing about us humans. We really really really have a hard time accepting salvation is a gift. On our good days we feel safe: we're reading the Bible everyday, praying regularly, we are on top of it and thus feel assured about our salvation. But on our bad days, we question if He really is there or if we are going to make it to Heaven. If on our bad days we feel we don't deserve His forgiveness, does that mean on our good days we feel we deserve it? This will result in a cycle between insecurity and pride. That is a works based faith and that **is not** what Jesus' sacrifice was about, "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Ro. 3:23-24) The God that loves you on your good days still loves you on your bad ones. Let me give you something to think about; God still loves you when you're sinning. He is displeased with you but He still loves you. He may discipline you, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." (Heb. 12:5-6) That is what a loving father does for his children, and that is exactly what your Heavenly Father does for you.

Do you wonder if you'll be accepted into Heaven? Have you allowed satan to steal the joy of your salvation because you

messed up? If you have asked for forgiveness and repented, my friend move on with your life freely. Let me ask, will anyone die perfect and sinless? Paul assures us nothing nor no one can take salvation from us, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ro. 8:38-39) Just as Paul is convinced of this; my hope is after reading this, you too will be convinced that your mistakes, shortcomings, and doubts will not separate you from God's love. Trust me, better yet trust the Apostle Paul, God will not abandon you because you fall short. Perfection will be in Heaven, for now accept the assurance that His grace was given freely to you "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (Jn. 3:16) And here is the really good, actually really great, news: His grace is sufficient to save you! Jesus didn't say "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish if they never mess up;" No that is not at all what he said. What Jesus did say, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." (Jn. 10:28) I am not saying we can indulge unrepentant sin or once saved, always saved. Jesus died to save us from sin not so we can sin freely.

Why do we Christians struggle so much with these doubts? Two reasons: satan and our sin. Satan loves putting destructive thoughts in our minds to convince us God couldn't or wouldn't love someone like us. Nothing crushes the spirit more than believing we are unforgivable and even God can't help us. Those are lies of the evil one, "When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (Jn. 8:44) I have heard it said and it's a pretty accurate description, "the best definition of Christianity is falling down and getting up, falling down and getting up, falling down and getting up, all the way to Heaven." That sums up our Christian walk doesn't it?

Thank God that " ... it is by grace you have been saved, through faith." (Eph. 2:8) If it weren't for grace we'd all be in hot water or... fire.

Watching God Work,

Carolyn Abel