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01 Jul 07
The Story of Lot
Genesis 19:1-26
Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. In Genesis 19, we have a picture of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. We have a picture of a backslided Christian or a worldly, half-hearted Christian.
3. Don't forget that Lot happens to be a righteous man.

I. THE BACKGROUND OF LOT

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew.
 - a. He was the son of Haran (Gen 11:27).
 - b. Apparently, he went along the journey with Abraham.
2. The downfall of Lot.
 - a. The first step in his fall is found in Genesis 13:10.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah...." (Gen 13:10).

(1) *"Lot lifted up his eyes"* to look for the best region of the land.

(a) This was not a casual glance.

The word *"beheld"* means "to look with longing."

(b) He wanted the best for himself despite the fact that the right to choose first belongs to Abraham.

(2) Keep in mind that:

Abram had treated Lot like his own son when Lot's father died.

(3) Many people, including Christians are like Lot.

- b. Second, we are told that he *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (Gen 13:12b).
- c. Next, we see Lot living in Sodom (Gen 14:12).

This is his third downward step.

(1) It is interesting to note that although Lot lived in Sodom, the citizens in that town did not consider him as one of them.

(2) Genesis 19:9, *"they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn...."*

d. Finally, we find Lot attaining some kind of prominence in the city.

(1) Genesis 19:1 said that *"Lot sat in the gate of Sodom."*

(2) This implies that he was a member of the ruling council.

(a) We know that Abraham had saved Sodom from foreign conquest (cp. Gen 14:1-24).

(b) Perhaps, the King of Sodom had honoured Lot, making him a judge because of what his uncle, Abraham, had done for the country.

II. THE SINS OF SODOM

1. Sodom was a very wicked city.

a. Lot was sitting in the gate.

When he saw the two angels, he got up to meet them.

"And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night" (Gen 19:2).

b. Lot was a hospitable man.

When he saw these two strangers, he invited them to his house.

(1) At first, they were reluctant.

They said, *"Nay; but we will abide in the street all night"* (Gen 19:2b).

(2) Lot knew that it was too dangerous to stay out at night.

He insisted upon them and they came in (Gen 19:3).

c. The men of Sodom.

After they had eaten, but before they had gone to bed, the men of Sodom came.

(1) They surrounded the house and called out to Lot: "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them" (Gen 19:5).

(2) Lot went outside his door and said, *"I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly"* (Gen 19:7).

(3) Then he offered to give his two unmarried daughters to the men, if they would leave the visitors alone (Gen 19:6-8).

(4) But the men of Sodom rejected his offer.

(5) When the people wanted to break the door in order to get his guests out, the two guests struck them with temporary blindness so that they could not find the door.

2. The Bible condemns homosexual activity (Lev 18:22, 20:13; Rom 1:26, 27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:8-10).

a. The sin of Sodom was so great that God is going to judge it.

b. The angels said to Lot:

"Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place..." (Gen 19:12-13a).

Lot was unable to convince any of them.

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM

1. Dawn came.

a. The judgment is about to fall. Yet, Lot hesitated (Gen 19:16c).

b. The angels had to take his hand, his wife's hand and the two daughters' and pulled them out of the city to safety (Gen 19:17), saying *"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"* (Gen 19:17).

2. Lot's wife

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen 19:26).

I think there are two reasons for Mrs Lot to do so.

- a. She looked back because she did not want to leave Sodom.
- b. She looked back because she did not believe God.
3. Lot did not do well in moving down to the city of Sodom.
 - a. Lot's life is a picture of a backsliding Christian — one who loves God as well as the world. In the end, he lost everything.
 - b. It is a warning to all of us not to play a fool with sin.

08 Jul 07
An old sin repeated
Genesis 20:1-8
Rev James Chan

In today's lesson, we watch Abraham repeat a mistake he made long ago. His failures were tragic, but from them we can learn some valuable lessons to help us in our walk of faith.

I. BELIEVERS DO SIN

1. The Bible tells us the truth about all people, and that includes God's people.
 - a. It does not hide the fact that **Noah** got drunk and exposed himself (Gen 9:20-23).
 - b. It does not hide the fact that **Moses** lost his temper (Num 20:1-13).
 - c. It does not hide the fact that **David**, the King of Israel, committed adultery and plotted the death of Uriah, his faithful soldier (2 Sam 11).
 - d. **Peter** denied the Lord three times (Matt 26:69-75).
2. These things were recorded, not to encourage us to sin, but to warn us to beware of sin.
 - a. If these great men of God disobeyed the Lord, then we who are "ordinary saints" have to be careful.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*
3. Why did Abraham sin?
 - a. Abraham had a sinful nature though he had been justified (Gen 15:6).
 - b. What is a sinful nature?
 - (1) Everyone is born with a sinful nature.
 - (2) When we believe in Jesus, we are born again, and we receive a new nature.
 - (3) So, every believer in Christ has two natures.
 - (a) These two natures are fighting against each other.
 - (b) The old nature wants us to sin and to disobey God.

- (c) The new nature wants us to glorify God and to obey Him.
- (d) Believers can have victory over the old nature.

II. ABRAHAM — BACKSLIDING

Our story resumes with Abraham on the road again. He was setting out to make a home in another land.

Genesis 20:1

“And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.”

1. Abraham forsook the Promised Land.
2. Abraham deceived and lied to others.

III. THE GRACE OF GOD

1. Abimelech learned the truth about Sarah from God Himself.
2. What was God to do?
3. God appeared to Abimelech in a dream one night (v.3).
 - a. He said to him: *“Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife”* (v.3b).
 - b. Abimelech appealed to the Lord.
 - c. Then God revealed to Abimelech and spoke to him.
 - d. The point is this: God cared for Abraham and Sarah.

God has the power to save and to keep the believer.

He can do whatever is necessary to keep the believer, even intervene miraculously.

Genesis 28:15

“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

Jude 24

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

IV. THE CHASTISEMENT

1. The shame
2. The rebuke (v.9, 10).

V. THE CONFESSION

1. Abraham did not know that God had appeared to Abimelech in a dream.

In his mind, he had only one hope, one chance to save himself.

That is to tell the truth.

2. Sinning believers can be forgiven and restored.

a. *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chron 7:14).

b. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 Jn 1:9).

- c. Did God forgive Abraham?

Yes!

- d. Conclusion

(1) God will do whatever is necessary to save and help His people from afflictions, trials, temptations, and sins of this earth.

(2) *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"* (1 saiah 43:2).

- (3) God will lead us through trials and difficulties of life.

15 Jul 07

The greatest test of all

Genesis 22

Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa

Man was created in God's image — we have souls and wills, unlike animals. But what are we going to do with our wills? When we are tested, will we submit to God's will?

In today's sermon we examine how Abraham was tested by God not once, not twice, but four times. Each time Abraham, by submitting to God's will, passed the test.

Test #1: God told Abraham to leave his country (*Genesis 12:1-4*)

Abraham was seventy-five when God told him to go. That's equivalent to thirty-five or forty years old in today's context. He must have been quite settled by then, used to his daily routines and the safety and comfort of his home. Imagine being asked to uproot yourself and leave your home just when you've settled in!

Abraham didn't have pictures of his future home to entice him or even a map to guide him; all he had was God's word. But God's word was enough for Abraham. He departed — without questions, without knowing where he was going, just trusting God to lead him. His obedience proved that he believed what God told him, and that made him righteous in God's eyes (*Romans 4:3*). Righteousness comes only from obedience to God.

Test #2: God told Abraham that he would give him an heir of his own flesh (*Genesis 15:1-6*).

Abraham was already an old man and his wife Sarah an old woman. After years and years of marriage she had borne him no children. Abraham could have well said that an heir of his own flesh was an impossible dream. But God told him that he would have an heir, one born of him, and Abraham believed. Once again his belief was counted to him for righteousness.

Test #3: God told Abraham to listen to Sarah when she told him to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (*Genesis 21:1-14*)

Abraham loved both his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was his firstborn while Isaac was the son of promise. It must have grieved him that one son would mock the other, and it grieved him much more to hear Sarah tell him to cast out Ishmael, the son who had by this time already resided in his house for about thirteen years, the son who he had watched grow up. He was a father, being asked to give up his son. How sorrowful he must have felt!

Here, his will may have struggled with God's when God told him to listen to Sarah, but once again he believed and obeyed. He trusted God for Ishmael's protection. How else could a father cast his son out of his house, except in the knowledge that no harm would come to him? God promised that of Ishmael would come a nation, and Abraham took that in faith,

trusting that even as he sent Ishmael into the wilderness, God's protection would be upon him.

Test #4: The greatest test of all – God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (*Genesis 22:1-13*)

Here Abraham faced the greatest test of all — God told him to offer Isaac up as a burnt offering. Isaac, the long-awaited, celebrated, cherished son of promise, whom Abraham loved deeply. This test tempted Abraham most of all, tempted him to disobey God. He could have protested or questioned God — after all, wasn't Isaac the heir from whom a great nation would come?

But once again Abraham did not doubt or hesitate to obey. He took Isaac and made ready for the sacrifice. Even when Isaac asked him in all innocence where the lamb for the burnt offering was, his purpose never wavered, although that question must have pierced his heart. He was ready to slay his own son when God sent an angel to tell him to stop — he had proven his fear of the Lord, he had passed the greatest test of all.

Notice that in all this Abraham did not only believe, he acted on his belief. God said "Go" and Abraham went, God said "Sacrifice Isaac" and Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son. And so we must act on our belief, for faith without works is dead (*James 2:20-21*).

God never forced Abraham to obey Him. Abraham made the choice to obey God. He submitted his own will to God's will.

Dear friends, apply Abraham's story to your own life. When faced with God's tests, how will you score? Will you, like Abraham, score full marks, or will you struggle with obeying God?

God's will is *always* best. He alone knows how our own stories will turn out. Follow Abraham's example. When God tests you, will you submit to His will today?

22 Jul 07

Jesus and the sinful woman

Luke 7:36-50

Rev Isaac Ong

Divine Providence has brought three people together under one roof, a woman marked by society as a sinner; Simon a self-righteous Pharisee and Jesus the Son of God. Regardless of Simon's motivation in inviting our Lord to his house, He has accepted it. A woman judged by the society to be a sinner had come in with an alabaster box of ointment, stood at Jesus' feet and began to wipe them with tears and with her hair, before kissing and anointing them in ointment. Simon, on seeing this, had spoken within himself, "*This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner*" (Lk 7:39).

There is one obvious difference between the woman and Simon. The woman came in aware of her depravity and sinfulness. However, her heart of devotion is a response to the work of the grace of God. She did not come seeking redemption, but is rather already a regenerated born-again Christian. For her, former things had passed away. "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isaiah 1:18). On the other hand, we have a man here, highly-respected by the Jews but clearly self-righteous. Our Lord knows his heart. God's view of guilt and sinfulness is different from us. Unlike Simon, the woman has loved much because she has been forgiven much. "*Wherefore I say unto thee. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*" (Luke 7:47).

Despite of that, both of them share a couple of similarities. For one thing, they are both sinners. It is God who sees and knows who one is. "*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*" (Heb 4:13). Who do we see ourselves as? A "five hundred pence" sinner or a "fifty pence" one? (see Lk 7:41-43). One way or the other, we are still sinners. Although the latter may be better than the former, one should not pride oneself to be a moral person or give the credit to one's own innate moral goodness. We are totally depraved and unless we bow in deep humility, and pray for the mercy and grace of God to forgive us, we cannot save ourselves. "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*" (Rom 3:10-11); "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom 3:23).

The second similarity: they both have nothing to pay their debts with, and precisely it is people who think that they have nothing to pay with that come to love our Lord. "*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha*" (1 Cor 16:22). Here, a moral man is incapable of paying for his sins compared to an immoral woman. What do we think of ourselves this morning?

Reuben A. Torrey, an evangelist, in one of his visits to a woman prison, went personally to the individual cells to look for those who did not turn up for his talks. He was forewarned

that one of the prisoners was the hardest and vilest of them all and was discouraged from approaching her. However, Torrey insisted. He went to spread the gospel, that he has come to tell her that Jesus loves her. The woman broke down — this is the first time she heard the gospel preached — she always thought that the gospel is for “good people”. How wrong can this be? We also remember John Newton, who wrote about God’s amazing grace. Indeed, “how precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.”

Here, two people were given great opportunities. Simon seems to have been offered the greater one as he had our Lord in his house. There are many people who have got the chance to know Christ earlier in their lives, be it through family, friends or perhaps Sunday school but remained unmoved. Unlike the knowledgeable Pharisees who are capable of debates on the doctrine of salvation, the woman knew only one thing — that there is no salvation except through our Lord Jesus Christ. In a way, Simon parallels the city of Capernaum whereas the woman parallels Sodom (See Luke 10:12-15) and for the woman, the hair she once used to seduce men is now used to wipe our Lord’s feet; her alabaster box of ointment she once used to entice men is now consecrated entirely to our Lord, who freely accepts our offering — a testimony of His grace. Surely for her, “*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*”

29 Jul 07
A time to die
Genesis 23-25
Rev Isaac Ong

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at her death is revealed. Sarah was 127 years when she died. The Bible tells us that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl 3:1-2). But God has made everything, including death, beautiful in His time.

Every man is given a certain number of days, and except our Lord returns soon, there will be a day of death for us. The question that should concern us is "How will I be remembered?"

Expression of Love at Death

Back in those days, public mourning was the customary thing to do when a loved one died. But Abraham not only mourned, he also wept, indicating his deep sorrow, and also suggesting his deep love for his wife.

Abraham wept even though he was known as a man of faith. Our faith is not to be based upon our human feelings, but faith is not opposed to feelings. In mourning and weeping, Abraham was expressing the grief that is common to all who suffer the loss of a loved one.

Death must have a sobering effect on all (Eccl 7:1-2). To believers, it is a time to re-examine our lives before God to redeem the time. To unbelievers, it is a warning that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27).

Demonstration of Love in Life

The expressions of sorrow at death can only be genuine if there were demonstrations of love in life. Abraham's mourning and weeping were evidences of his affection and deep love for Sarah.

Expression of Faith at Death

In his sorrow, Abraham did not cease to believe. Abraham wept; he did not sorrow as others who have no hope.

A. Choosing a Burial Place

It was the practice to bury the dead in his home country. But Abraham did not bury Sarah in Ur of the Chaldees but in the land of Canaan. Abraham's choice of a burial place for Sarah was significant because it revealed that Abraham had no intention to return to Ur of the Chaldees. To bury Sarah in Canaan was Abraham's declaration of his faith in God.

B. Buying a Burial Place

Abraham bought a piece of land that identified him with the promise of God. It was important for Abraham to buy the burial land because it would represent Abraham's possession (Gen 23:4, 9, 20) and that of his children by rights of inheritance. Abraham demonstrated his faith in his dark hour of death by buying the field at Machpelah. Abraham grieved, but he did not cease to believe.

Demonstration of Faith in Life

Abraham's expressions of faith were real because his faith was real, and when he spoke, his words resounded with truth.

A. Abraham Regards Himself as a Stranger and Sojourner (23:4)

Abraham described himself as a stranger and a sojourner." A stranger is a foreigner, one who has no inherited rights. A sojourner is a temporary resident, one who is passing by.

Abraham and Sarah and others all died in faith. They did not see the fulfilment of God's promises, but they embraced them by faith (Heb 11:13-16).

Abraham dwelt in tents even though he was in the promised land because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:9-10).

The reality of Abraham's faith becomes the motivation for his living. Abraham and Sarah believed God's promises, and they lived their lives accordingly.

B. The Sons of Heth Regard Abraham as a Prince of God (23:6)

Abraham's faith was visible to the sons of Heth. They said that he was a "mighty prince" or literally a "prince of God." When the Hittites saw Abraham, they recognized that the hand of God was upon this man.

Conclusion: Dying and Living for God

If you would be remembered in your death as one who died in faith, then you must be one who lives in faith. And our life of faith must be seen daily. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21). Live and die to glorify God.

05 Aug 07

Paul and the gospel

Romans 1:1-6

Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa

People do not want to die. If there is such a drug called "never-die pill", many people will be eager to swallow it to prolong their lives. But it is no good news if people do not die at all. The world will be filled with a lot of old people.

The apostle Paul, once the greatest enemy of God who persecuted and imprisoned Christians, gave the world the good news in over a dozen of epistles he had written. The good news lies in the Bible alone. It solves the problems of ageing and dying the world is facing today.

When God calls, no man can resist. While on his way to Damascus to persecute Christ's followers, Paul was called by God. He became the greatest of all the apostles of the Lord Jesus.

Peter was called to spread the gospel to the Jews while Paul to the Gentiles. The apostle Paul received his education in Tarsus and was conversant in both Hebrew and Greek. Ignorantly, he became a persecutor of Christians until the time was right for God to call him to be His servant. People do not choose to be servants of God. They must be "called" into the ministry. There is no greater privilege than to be a servant of the Lord and suffer for the gospel.

The gospel of Christ was not concocted by Paul. He received it from God and became an apostle tasked with spreading it to non-Jews. God wanted people in the great Roman Empire and beyond to hear the good news too.

To whom is the good news for? Sinners. All of us are sinners and bound to die. Therefore, we need the gospel so that we will not die spiritually. The apostle Paul described himself as the chief of sinners as he was "a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious" (1 Tim 1:13) but he obtained God's mercy and was saved.

Believers too need mercy in their everyday life. We still sin every day because we live in the world and are clothed in human bodies. Therefore, we need to pray for God's mercy and cleansing power.

The gospel is free of charge, given by the grace of God. Grace is unmerited favour from God for men to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour. When we hear the gospel and accept the Lord, our hearts must be cleansed with the blood of Christ. We would then belong to the family of Christ and become beloved of God. God looks at our hearts, not our bank accounts or educational qualifications. We ought to live like children of God, citizens of heaven. We are called to be "saints", separated unto God.

The wages of sin is death. But for those who believe in the gospel of Christ, the apostle Paul shows us a mystery in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."*

The gospel of Christ alone will carry believers into eternity where pain and sickness are no more. The gospel is given to us by grace through faith. We need no other good news from the world.

12 Aug 07

Paul's motivation for the ministry

Romans 1:8-17

Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. Paul was a native of the City of Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia (presently in southern Turkey).
2. Saul, as a Pharisee, had been a great persecutor of the Christians (Acts 26:9-11).

I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE BELIEVERS

1. The background of the Church of Rome
 - a. The origin of the church at Rome
 - b. How was it founded?
 - c. Other Christians also went to Rome to minister to the believers.

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" (Rom 16:3-5).

- d. Probably, the church at Rome was merely a group of believers, meeting in different places throughout the city.
2. Why did Paul want to visit them?
 - a. Paul had heard of their Christian faith (1:8).
 - b. He prays for them.
 - c. He expresses his desire to visit them (1:10).

II. PAUL'S MOTIVATION

1. Mutual encouragement (1:11-12).

He says, *"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1:11).*

- a. Paul wishes to impart some spiritual gift to the believers.

- b. Paul also knows that the benefit would be mutual.

He says, *"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me"* (1:12).

2. A sense of obligation (1:14–15).

Paul describes his sense of obligation in 1:14 to 15.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise (v.14). So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (v.15).

3. He was eager to visit the Roman Christians (1:15).

"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

4. The love of "Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor 5:14).

III. PAUL'S CONFIDENCE

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (v.16)

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (v.17)

1. Paul's confidence in the Gospel.

The fifth and the greatest motivation of Paul was his confidence in the Gospel.

Here is the very heart of Paul's motivation.

- a. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (1:16a).

He was not afraid of believing and preaching the Gospel.

He was not ashamed of sharing and witnessing for Christ.

- b. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel.

In fact, he had great confidence in the message of the Gospel.

He gave us several reasons for not being ashamed of the Gospel.

- (1) The origin of the Gospel.

(2) It is the power of God.

(3) The righteousness of God.

Paul says, *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"* (1:17).

CONCLUSION

Let me summarise the message.

- First, Paul was motivated by mutual encouragement.
- Next, He was motivated by a sense of debt.

God had given him so much that he could never repay!

- He was eager to visit the believers.
- The love of Christ constrained him.
- Later, He was motivated by his confidence in the Gospel.

He confidently proclaimed, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..."* (1:16).

- Christ can change our lives and make them better.
- It is all a matter of faith.
- Do you believe?

19 Aug 07

The universality of sin

Romans 1:18-32

Rev James Chan

Introduction

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

- It can change lives.
- It can save the souls of man.

I. THE WRATH OF GOD REVEALED

Paul says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed"* (1:18a).

1. What is the wrath of God?
2. The wrath of God is revealed against the world.

Paul says, *"is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..."* (1:18b).

- a. It is against all ungodliness.
- b. It is against all unrighteousness.
 - (1) The first thing, the heathens do: Paul says, *"they glorified him not as God"* (1:21).
 - (2) Reversed the order in religious teaching.
3. It is against those who *"hold the truth in unrighteousness"* (1:18c).

II. THE WRATH OF GOD DESERVED (1:19-23).

In this passage, Paul anticipates an objection concerning the wrath of God being revealed.

Paul says they do deserve the wrath of God!

1. There is a great deal that men can know about God.

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them (v.19). For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (v.20).

- a. Man had the revelation of God.
- b. God made it plain to them.
 - *"For God hath shewed it unto them" (v.19)*
 - *"Are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (v.20).*
2. **They glorified Him not as God.**

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful..." (v. 21)

They knew God but refused to worship Him for who He is.

"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (1 sa 42:8).

III. THE WRATH OF GOD INFLICTED

1. How did God inflict His wrath on the heathen world?

"Wherefore God also gave them up..." (1:24, 26, 28).

2. The result of God's abandonment.
 - a. They became depraved in their hearts.

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts..." (Rom 1:24a).

- b. They became depraved in their bodies.
- c. Finally, when God gave them up, they became depraved in their minds (1:28).

So, man ended up with a depraved **heart**, depraved **body** and depraved **mind**.

3. The result is man is totally depraved.
 - a. Paul gives us a list of sins in the following verses:

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers (v.29),

Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (v.30),

Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful (v.31):

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (1:32).

b. They know that God is righteous and must judge sins, but they still keep on doing them.

c. Paul says, in fact, they have been doing them (v.32b).

d. This is God's case against the heathens.

(1) No wonder God says that they are *"without excuse."*

(2) Whether the heathens in the days of Paul or today, those who simply know God and leave Him out of their lives, are without excuse.

(3) They are guilty before God.

(4) They are condemned already (Jn 3:18).

e. Man will be judged (1:32).

(1) There is no escape!

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"
(Heb 9:27).

(2) The only way is to come to Jesus for salvation.

(a) **Romans 6:23**

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

(b) The Lord wants you to return to Him, to come home.

(c) Will you?

26 Aug 07

Jesus and the rich young man

Mark 10:17-31

Rev Dr James Tan

Mark 10:17-22 depicts a very brief meeting between this rich young man & the Lord Jesus Christ. Though brief, it is one of great importance because very essential principles pertaining to our lives can be drawn from this account.

In fact, as we meditate & examine this short conversation, we can actually rephrase the title of this sermon to "Jesus & the lovely, yet lacking young man" as you would have noticed in verse 21a: "*Then Jesus beholding him loved him, & said unto him, One thing thou lackest...*"

Indeed, this young ruler has many desirable & lovely attributes in him. Yet, it is utterly unfortunate that he lacks so crucial an aspect which disqualified him from the Kingdom of God — the love of the riches & mammon of the world rather than the Lord our God. Likewise, may our Lord correct & direct our hearts to have the right focus & yearning in our lives.

As mentioned beforehand, it is time that we see the many virtues that lie within this rich young ruler. Indeed, he possessed almost everything that one desires — namely, riches, sound reputation, formal religion, etc. Besides, it can be especially noted of his uprightness in moral virtues because he seemingly lacked nothing in the knowledge & the obedience to abide by the moral laws, i.e. the Ten Commandments.

v19-20: "*Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*"

It is of great rarity to find such a man of uprightness, decency & temperance amidst the world where people are prone to immorality, impulsiveness, rashness & vileness.

In addition to all these, it is also very true that this rich young ruler possessed the yearning for things which are spiritual. With sincere zeal for the truth of God's Kingdom, he sought spiritual insight to the most pertinent question of life after death. "*Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*" (v.17b). His earnestness for the truth of God's Kingdom can be deduced to be of great sincerity in his conversation with our Lord Jesus.

However, herein lies the very abrupt & sad turning point that each one of us ought to seriously consider.

"... One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." (v.21).

Herein lies the weakest link, the most vital lack. The rich young ruler is truly lacking. He is deprived of the total submission & surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ. A great idol in his

heart stood between him & the Lord Jesus. *"... for he had great possessions"* (v.22b). Thus, this was his reaction — *"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved"* (v.22a).

How great a disappointment it is that this young ruler (& many of us) has fallen at this great stumbling block because he trusted in worldly riches & gains! Alas, he was rendered unfit for the Kingdom of God! *"But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"* (v.24b).

Herein lies the heart treatment for many who trust in riches rather than the promises of God. *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (I Timothy 6:10). *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24).

Though not all of us may be materially rich like Abraham, yet how much ought we, as children of God, to be rich like Abraham in faith! Indeed, our individual hearts & affections should be placed upon our Lord Jesus. For it is within our hearts where our love for our Lord Jesus begins. Thus, may our hearts be ones which are renewed & purified entirely from the love or the idols of the world. Truly, from thence, our Lord will surely bless & strengthen us by His grace. Likewise, may the lord guide us to serve & persevere in Him — solely out of love for Him. May God guide us. Amen!

02 Sep 07
Principles of God's judgement
Romans 2:3-21
Rev James Chan

Introduction

In Romans 1, Paul declared the heathen world to be guilty and inexcusable (1:20, 32). God will bring all evil into judgment.

But what surprised his listeners was when he turned on them and said, *"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest..."* (2:1).

To whom is the Apostle Paul referring in Romans 2?

1. Many commentators and expositors believe that Paul, having portrayed and condemned the Gentile world in Romans 1:18-32, now turns his attention to the Jewish people.
2. Others believe that Paul was referring to the moralists, to all the hypocrites regardless of their race or religion, to the Jews and Gentiles who think that they are better than others.
3. The key word in this passage (Rom 2:1-16) is *"judges"* or *"judgement."*

So, let us consider the principles of God's judgement.

I. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE MORALIST

1. The background of the moralist.
 - a. A moralist is a person who lives a moral and clean life.
 - b. The moralist is the kind of person who likes to judge others. Paul says, *"O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things"* (2:1).
 - (1) The word *"judge"* (krino) means "to criticize, to find fault, to condemn."
 - (2) It is being full of pride and arrogance.
 - (3) Paul knew that there would be a group of people who would say, "Amen" to what he had said about the heathens in Romans 1. These were the self-righteous moralists.
2. The condemnation of the moralists.

a. Paul expands his arguments to show that *"all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"* (1:18) includes the moralists as well as the heathens.

b. Paul says, *"for thou that judgest doest the same"* (2:1c).

c. So, the conclusion from verse 1 is this:

(1) Man is condemned by his own judgement.

(2) There is no excuse.

II. THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT.

Now, Paul explains four great principles of God's judgement.

1. God's judgement is according to truth (Rom 2:2).

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth..." (2:2).

a. When God judges, it is always according to truth or in accordance with the facts.

(1) His judgement will not be according to the likes and dislikes of men.

(2) He does not have one set of standard for the Jews and another for the Gentiles.

(3) His judgment will always be in accordance with the truth or evidence.

b. When we read the list of sins in Romans 1:29-32, we are guilty of at least one of them.

2. God's judgement is according to a man's deeds.

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds" — Rom 2:6)

a. This truth is taught throughout the Scriptures (Prov 24:12; 2 Tim 4:14; Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12).

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl 12:14).

b. Let us look at verses 4 and 5.

(1) Imagine a man who ignores God's judgement.

(2) Romans 2:6 tells us that God *"will render to every man according to his deeds."*

- c. Let's look at verses 7 and 10.
 - (1) Imagine a different kind of person.
 - (a) He is full of desire for heaven.
 - (b) He does good and never gives up his well-doing.
 - (c) He seeks to be honoured by God.
 - (d) He always seeks God's approval and His glory.

His rewards will be eternal life, glory, honour and peace because these are the things he seeks (2:7).

- (2) However, there is one problem here.
 - (a) You and I are not such a person.
 - (b) Nevertheless, the principle still stands.

d. Let's look at verses 8 and 9.

- (1) Imagine another kind of person.
 - (a) He is utterly self-centred.
 - (b) He obeys unrighteousness (2:8).
- (2) Every such person will be judged according to his deeds.

3. God's judgement will be impartial.

a. It applies to the Jews as well as the Gentiles (2:9-10). Romans 2:11 says, *"For there is no respect of persons with God."*

b. Everyone will be judged as he deserves to be.

(1) How terrible it would be, to fall into the hands of God, the righteous Judge.

(2) There is no escape!

4. God's judgement will be based on the law of God (Rom 2:12-15). This is made clear in verses 12 to 15.

a. Let us consider the heathen Gentiles — those without the Law (v.12).

- (1) He has never seen God's law.
- (2) Let us look at his action.
 - (a) They reveal that he has some knowledge of God's law.
 - (b) He has never been taught the Ten Commandments.
 - (c) Does he obey the law?
 - (d) God will judge him according to his conscience (2:15).

b. Let us consider the Jews.

- (1) *"Behold, thou art called a Jew"* (2:17a).
- (2) The Jews possess the law.
 - (a) In fact, they know the law and the will of God (2:17).
 - (b) They believe the law would save them.
- (3) Does the Jew obey the law?
 - (a) Paul says, *"As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law"* (2:12b).

Verse 13, *"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."*

- (b) In other words, it is not possessing or even knowing the law which saves a person.
- (c) It is doing it.

5. In conclusion

- a. All Jews and Gentiles alike, are under the power of sin, and have failed to keep God's law (3:9).
- b. Therefore, there is none righteous no, not one (3:10).
- c. The Bible says God will judge every man (Eccl 12:14).
- d. There is no escape.
- e. Thank God for the Gospel, the Good News.

Jesus says, *"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life"* (Jn 5:24).

09 Sep 07

The righteousness of God

Romans 3:21-31

Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa

We all need a passport to travel, but as our ultimate destination lies in heaven, do we have a passport for heaven? I imagine being stopped at the gates of heaven and asked for validation for entry. Our answer should be "The Righteousness of God." It's the one thing that can bring us to heaven.

God has one simple system for saving man. Jesus Christ taking our place. By suffering our death, He purchased our redemption and opened the way for us to God's heaven.

The Righteousness of God is not something we can earn by keeping the law. It is given freely, by faith, and if even adhering to simple laws given by man seems impossible to us, how then are we to keep God's laws? We break them all the time and what happens then?

Verse 23: *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* None of us qualifies because we fall short of the glory of God. We cannot find salvation until we admit our sin. All of us have sinned, and all that do not have His righteousness falls to the wrath of God after death. It's a fearful thing. God is now kind, gracious and loving. It is still the time for grace, redemption and salvation. However, it is only a matter of time before we face the Judge, and we shall have to face the wrath of God.

Verse 24 tells us that we are "*justified freely through the redemption*" and that being justified means we are accepted, undeservedly accepted freely by God, through His grace. We have forfeited our lives to sin, to Satan, and God has sent His Son to pay the price through the cross for the redemption of our sins.

We cannot earn our salvation through good works or righteous living. It is given to us freely through God's plan. All we have to do is believe and accept Him. When you trust in the Lord and are grateful for His death for us, you put your faith on the blood that was shed on the cross. That alone is sufficient payment for our sins. Jesus makes peace between us and God through dying for our sins so we can now come freely to God. We can do so because we have honoured Jesus and accepted Him as our Saviour. Without the blood of Jesus shed for us, there is no forgiveness of sins.

Jesus was sent down from heaven so that the world through Him might be saved. We can die a thousand times but it will never take away our sins. When Jesus died, He was the only Person qualified to do so — the sinless and spotless Son of God. God preserves His justice from us because He has already punished our sins. That on His own Son, on the cross, and we through believing in Him are delivered from our own sins and punishment.

We are justified by faith even without the works of the law. We are not required to keep the law for salvation but it is essential for us to keep the law after salvation. It is our duty and our joy to learn how to keep the commandments and love the law.

I imagine Jesus having to not only coming down to earth to suffer and to die, but even worst, to carry the sin, dirt and filth of all mankind on Him. He accepts that it is God's will for the greater good and despite that agonising cry from Gethsemane, God gave His only Son for that one reason — for His sinless and spotless Son to take our place so that we can be justified, and go scot-free.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. This to be made sin for him who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That none may perish and all should gain everlasting life.

Herein lies the meaning of the gospel, the mystery of redemption, the righteousness of God. God's only begotten Son carrying our sins. God gives us His righteousness the moment we look unto Jesus, who bears our sins on the cross, and believe Him and accept Him as our Saviour. Not because we are better, or deserving but simply because we are honouring His Son.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* Pray the Lord will keep, guide and direct us.

The Sinner's Prayer — *"Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. I want to receive the Lord as my Saviour. I know He died on Calvary's cross for me and I accept Him as my personal Saviour."* That is the way to the righteousness of God.

16 Sep 07
Sola Fide
Romans 4:1-5
Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. Story of a frog.
2. Romans 4 reveals the unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - a. To Paul, God's saving activity is a unity.
 - b. Salvation is by grace through **faith** only.
3. It is difficult to understand Romans 4, unless we know the situation of the men to whom it was addressed.
 - a. Paul is writing to men who were self-righteous.
 - b. They quoted Abraham as an example of a man who was justified by his works.
 - c. Paul was well qualified to write to them on this matter because he himself had been in that position.
4. Paul's reasoning in Romans 1 to 4
 - a. In Romans 1 to 3, Paul has proved his conviction by logical argument.
 - b. In chapter 4, Paul confirms this argument by EXAMPLE.
 - c. The key verse in Romans 4 is verse 5.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

I. SOLA FIDE FOR ABRAHAM (Rom 4:1-5).

1. Paul begins with the case of Abraham.
 - a. How did Abraham justify?
 - b. What does the Scripture say?
- (1) Paul quoted Genesis 15:6.

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

(2) The Jews may say,

“But had God not promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars, and that through his offspring, all nations would be blessed because Abraham obeyed God and kept His commandment?” (Gen 26:4, 5).

c. By quoting Genesis 15:6, Paul shows that when properly interpreted, it supports the **exact opposite** to what the Jews understood.

(1) Abraham had just returned after a great military victory against the four Eastern kings, and had rescued Lot.

(2) Then, Abraham was afraid that the four Eastern kings would take revenge.

(3) While he was wondering about the consequence, God spoke to him in a vision.

“Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Gen 15:1).

(a) God took Abraham outside the tent, and showed him the stars of heaven (Gen 15:5a).

(b) Then 15:6 says, Abraham *“believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness”* (Gen 15:6).

2. The Jews asked, “Didn’t works have something to do with it?”

Paul answers this question in Romans 4:4 to 5

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt (v.4).

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (v.5).

a. There are two ways you may get your righteousness.

b. Paul is going to discuss those two ways.

(1) Verse 4, *“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”*

(2) Verse 5, *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

(3) So, *“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”* (4:3).

II. SOLA FIDE FOR DAVID (4:6-8)

Paul presents another great Old Testament saint who was justified by faith.

Here he refers to David, the King of Israel.

1. David was not saved by works.
 - a. He had broken three of the Ten Commandments.
 - b. The Old Testament sacrificial system made no provision for such pre-meditated sin.
 - c. David's case was hopeless.
 - (1) That's why David cried in **Psalm 51:16**, *"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering."*
 - (2) The only thing he could do was to cast himself on God's mercy.
 - (a) In **Psalm 32:5** David confessed his sin, *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."*
 - (b) That's why David was able to praise the Lord that his sin was forgiven in **Psalm 32:1, 2**.
 - (c) This was quoted by the Apostle Paul in **Romans 4:6, 7** to describe David's blessedness.

Romans 4:7, 8

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (v.7).

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (v.8).

III. SOLA FIDE FOR GENTILES (4:9-12)

1. Paul's argument could lead to some at this point, to think that salvation by faith alone was for the Jews only.
2. He answers his own question in favour of the Gentiles in verses 10 to 12.
 - a. Justification by faith is for all, both Jews and the Gentiles.

b. He points out that when Abraham was justified, he had not, at that time, practised any particular religious rites or ceremonies.

c. If circumcision and its many blessings had nothing to do with Abraham's justification, the law had even less to do with it.

(1) Paul explains it in verse 13

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

(2) The law came 430 years after Abraham was made heir to the promise by faith (Gal 3:17).

(a) Salvation is by faith.

(b) To make the promise conditional on obedience, the law would be impossible to fulfil it.

(3) That's why God's promise of salvation is easy to receive.

(a) It is by faith.

(b) It is trusting God in His promises.

(c) This promise is for everyone. Whosoever will may come!

Will you come to Him?

23 Sep 07

A meeting with the savior

Luke 19:1-10

Rev Dr Elbert Lim

I. THE SEARCHING SINNER

- A. Position and wealth could not satisfy him.
- B. Religion could not save him.
- C. Determination to meet his personal need.

II. THE SAVING SAVIOUR

- A. He knows every sinner's need.
- B. He is a personal Saviour to all who receive Him.
- C. He offers immediate and full salvation.

III. THE STEPS OF A GREAT SALVATION

- A. Responded to the extended offer.
- B. Received the Saviour joyfully.
- C. Repented and restoration.

30 Sep 07
Blessed Assurance
Romans 5:1-11
Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. We learn from the Book of Romans that justification is not by works.
2. It is by grace through faith alone. It is by believing and accepting Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour.
3. Justification is to count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to treat, and to look upon someone as righteous.
4. Why is justification necessary?
 - a. Justification is necessary because of the sin, and alienation of man.
 - b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God.
 - c. How do we know for sure of our salvation?

Jesus said so! (Jn 5:24; 10:27, 28).

5. Many Christians think of justification as the first blessing of the Christian life and its value ending at that point.
 - a. Justification is not only the first blessing, but it carries with it many other blessings in our Christian life.
 - b. Paul gives a summary of the blessings which go along with justification.

I. ASSURANCE AS TO THE PAST

Paul says, "therefore, being justified by God."

1. The word "*therefore*" refers back to chapter 4:24, 25.

Once a person believes in the death and the resurrection of Christ, he is saved.
2. The tense of the word "*justified*" gives an important meaning of our justification.
 - a. It is in the aorist tense.
 - (1) It indicates a definite time in which a believer exercised his faith, and was justified in the sight of God.

- (2) It indicates the fact that justification is a thing that takes place instantaneously.
- (3) Another practical lesson here.
 - (a) You cannot grow into justification.
 - (b) It is something that happens suddenly, instantly, in the twinkling of an eye.
- b. It is in the **passive participle** which means that it is God who has justified us.

II. ASSURANCE AS TO THE PRESENT

Now, being justified by faith we have some benefits or blessings!

1. Peace with God

"Therefore being justified by faith" (5:1), come two important words: "we have."

- a. This means we have some possessions that come along with justification.

We have peace with God.

- b. *"Peace with God" means "a sense of security that one has restored his relationship with God."*

2. Access into His grace.

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..." (5:2a)

- a. The word *"access"* means "a bringing in," or "introducing someone into the presence of a distinguished personage."

- b. *"By whom"* we have access. He led us into the throne of God, and introduced us to God.

3. Our standing with God.

- a. Now, we face a real problem. How can a sinner, like us, stand before the presence of the holy God?

Psalm 130:3 says, *"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"*

None of us can stand the scrutiny of God (Ps 1:5, 6).

- b. But *"being justified by faith"* we have a stand.

- (1) It is by the grace of God, our standing is in the Lord Jesus.

(2) We are not sitting down, but we are standing.

III. ASSURANCE AS TO THE FUTURE

1. Our rejoicing in hope of glory.

Paul says, *"Rejoice in hope of the glory of God"* (5:2d).

a. What is the glory of God?

The glory of God here means heaven, because in heaven, God Himself will be fully revealed.

b. Paul means that our hope is to be like the Lord Jesus Christ in every aspect (8:29).

2. Tribulation

Paul says, *"We glory in tribulations"* (5:3).

a. It is commonly interpreted "we rejoice in the midst of tribulation."

b. It means that we praise God for the things that come into our lives.

(1) The unbeliever is unable to do that.

(2) But it is not so with the Christian.

[1] There is a bright and glorious future for him.

Romans 8:17, 18

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

[2] Furthermore, the suffering is *"for a moment."*

2 Corinthians 4:17

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

c. We rejoice in tribulation because we know what tribulation produces.

(1) *"Tribulation"* produces *"patience"* (endurance).

(2) Patience produces experience.

The word "experience" (dokime) means "character."

(3) Experience produces hope

What Paul means is that the maturing of Christian character is evidence that God is working within us.

3. Our assurance is grounded in the love of God.

a. Someone may ask, "How do you know of this hope of glory?"

(1) The answer is in verse 5b. Paul says, *"because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"* (5:5b).

(2) The solid foundation on which our *"hope of glory"* (Col 1:27) rests, is the love of God.

b. How do you know that God loves you like that?

We know it because we have an inner experience of it. God's love has flooded our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

c. The reality of God's love is seen in verses 6 to 11.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (5:6).

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die (v.7).

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (v.8).

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (v.9).

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (v.10).

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (v.11).

---The End---