

# Unstoppable Joy

Romans 5:1-5

## Introduction:

Over a 100 years ago in a Scottish seaside inn a group of fishermen were relaxing after a long day at sea. A server was walking past the fishermen's table with a pot of tea, one of the men made a sweeping gesture to describe the fish he caught. His hand collided with the teapot and sent it crashing against the white wall and left an ugly brown splotch. Standing nearby, the innkeeper said, "That stain will never come out". "The whole wall will have to be repainted". "Perhaps not", said a stranger at a nearby table. All eyes turned to the man who had just spoken. "Let me work with the stain, and if it meets with your approval, you won't need to repaint the wall". The stranger picked up a box and went to the wall. He took out pencils, brushes, and some glass jars of linseed oil and pigment. He began to sketch lines around the stain and fill it in here and there with dabs of color and swashes of shading. Soon a picture began to emerge. The ugly tea stain had been turned into the image of a deer with a magnificent rack of antlers. At the bottom of the picture the man inscribed his signature, paid for his meal and left. The stunned innkeeper examined the wall and said, "Do you know who that man was?" Sir Edwin Landseer, the famous painter of wildlife." God transforms the stains and disappointments of our lives if we turn them over to him. He does not merely erase them. He transforms them into a thing of beauty.



The gospel of grace gives hope. People need hope like they need oxygen. When hope is gone we suffocate under the pressures of life. Hope gives life. Whoever gives the greatest hope carries the greatest influence. People don't need answers they need hope. When one is justified by faith in Christ alone he has a sure and certain hope - hope in this life and the next. The same gospel that gives hope enables us to choose joy in every circumstance of life.

## Scripture text:

*"Therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 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" (Romans 5:1-5)*

## Body:

Romans 5:1-5 teaches us to choose joy as a way of life. The Greek word means to boast, to glory and to rejoice. Rufus Jones was once asked, "Did Jesus ever laugh?" Jones responded, "Don't know, but he sure fixed me up so I could". Someone has said that a Christian is one who is continually cheerful, completely fearless and constantly in trouble.

Joy is often associated with a mindless, unthinking irresponsibility. Depression is often accompanied with an attitude of hopelessness, which sees no way out of life's problems. What should be the Christian's attitude? Paul suggests that we should rejoice intelligently. He then gives us some reasons for rejoicing.

### **1. Rejoice in your past privilege 5:1-2(a)**

We have been justified by faith. Justification is God's act of declaring us righteous. Because of our faith in Christ we are declared not guilty, innocent, and as he ought to be. This makes us absolutely acceptable by God. Justification is legal. Reconciliation is relational. (5:10-11)

There are three results of being justified by faith:

- **We have peace with God**

This means that your war with God is over. When we raise the white flag of surrender, He raises the flag of peace over our hearts. We are in a position of safety, rest and harmony with God. In that position of peace we begin to experience the peace of God. (Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:15)

- **We have access to God**

*Prosagoge* is the Greek word used here. It is a technical word for ushering someone into the presence of royalty. Jesus ushers us into God's presence, opens the door to the king of kings and when we go in we find grace, not judgment, condemnation, or vengeance. Instead we are met with the sheer, undeserved favor and kindness of God.

- **We have security in God**

Here we are pictured as standing in grace. It's like standing in the ocean. There are troubling waves, but if we fall, we fall into grace. We are surrounded by grace as the ocean's water surrounds us. We live in the sphere of God's amazing grace.

## 2. Rejoice in future prospects 5:2(b)

“We rejoice in hope of the glory of God”. This is the promise of heaven, of eternal life in God’s glorious presence. So we rejoice not only in our past privilege but also our future prospects. Our destiny is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

## 3. Rejoice in present problems 5:3-5

God has a unique plan for your life. His plan is dynamic, not static, ever developing, and deepening into that one thing He has planned for you. Trials prepare you and position you for that plan. Here is the five-fold process God uses.

- **First there is a Crisis**

*“We rejoice in our sufferings”*

The word for suffering is *thlipsis* which literally means “pressure”. The KJV translates the word “tribulation”, coming from the Latin *Tribulum*. This was a heavy piece of timber with spikes to thrash the grain. A *Tribulum* was drawn over the grain separating the wheat from chaff. God uses pressures to purify our lives of useless chaff.

- **Then comes Commitment**

*“Suffering produces endurance”*

The crisis of suffering is the sphere where lasting, life-changing commitments are often made. The word for endurance is *Hupomeno* meaning “to abide under pressure”. During times of pressure we come to the end of ourselves and commit to his Lordship. Endurance is not passive but highly active. It takes initiative. It makes commitments. It overcomes the world, enabling us to be “more than conquerors”. Romans 8:37

- **Then Character is formed**

*“Endurance produces character”*

The word Paul uses for character is *dokime*. It describes a process of purifying metals like silver and gold. The Smith uses intense heat to melt the metal and skim away impurities. The silver or gold is tested and proven pure. The word came to describe proven character that has stood the test of fiery trials. Reputation is what you do in the limelight, when people are watching. Character is what you do when no one is watching. Character is what God knows to be true about you, who you really are.

- **Then Confidence is born**

*“Character produces hope”*

The word for hope is *elpis*. This is the word for overwhelming confidence. It is not conceit or arrogance but a firm reliance upon God that has developed in the crucible of pain and suffering. It is a humble trust that boasts in God alone. And

this hope, this confidence, does not put us to shame. We may be disappointed with human hope but God's hope, *elpis*, never disappoints. This hope does not lead us to shame or disgrace or disappointment. The final stage tells us why.

- **And then Compassion floods our heart**

*"Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is given to us"*

The final step of God's five-fold development process is He floods our hearts with His love. This creates genuine compassion, which becomes the spring motive for our lives. We cease being disappointed with God because we are satisfied in His unstoppable love. Compassion compels and controls us.

An American businessman traveling to a remote village in Africa saw a missionary nurse dressing the wounds of a leprosy patient. He said, "I wouldn't do that for \$10,000". She replied, "and nor would I".

## Conclusion:



The majestic Emperor moth is trapped inside a cocoon. To develop into a perfect insect, it must force its way through the neck of the cocoon by hours of intense struggle. Entomologists explain that this pressure is nature's way of forcing a life giving substance into its wings. One day an observer, wanting to lesson the struggles of the moth to escape from it's cocoon, took a small pair of scissors and cut

the restraining threads. The moth quickly escaped without pain or intense effort. But could only crawl for a brief time before dying. The moth never realized its destiny of flying with those beautiful wings.

Sorrow, suffering, and trials, are wisely designed to grow us into Christ likeness. The process may be slow and painful but when the refining and developing processes are complete, by His grace, we emerge triumphant, fit for the Master's use.

