

Really Living!  
Text: Romans 5:1-11  
Series: Book of Romans [#06]  
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Theme: **God's Full Salvation Brings A Full Life.**

## Introduction

Mark Twain was a well known and well liked man because of his writing and wit. Many of us have read and enjoyed *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court*, as well as other works of his. He traveled the world, rubbed shoulders with the wealthy and powerful, and has been described as an international superstar and American institution. One could have easily looked at him and his life and said, "That's *really living!*"

An entry in his autobiography dated February 2, 1906, just four years before he died at age 75, focused on his daughter Susy, who had died ten years earlier at age 34 from spinal meningitis. He tells us,

"As a little child aged seven, she was oppressed and perplexed by the maddening repetition of the stock incidents of our race's fleeting sojourn here, just as the same thing has oppressed and perplexed maturer minds from the beginning of time. A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their prides and their vanities. Those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing; where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they have left no sign that they have existed—a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place, and copies all they did, and goes along the same profitless road, and vanishes as they vanished—to make room for another and another and a million other myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad, and all the myriads that came after, accomplished—nothing!"<sup>1</sup>

Those words don't picture a man who thought he was *really living*.

Mark Twain's experience has been shared by many other superstars of the arts, politics, sports and business. What does it mean to *really live*? It has to be more than the acclaim, wealth and power that left Twain and so many others empty, disillusioned, resigned to, in their final analysis, being and accomplishing *nothing*.

Before we all succumb to gloom and doom, there is good news, *great news!* Every child of God, every person who has been saved by Jesus Christ can *really live!* The apostle Paul has given us the bad news of our sinfulness and God's judgment on our sin as well as the good news of being saved by God's grace through faith. With chapter 5 he begins to tell us about some of the results and implications of our salvation. There are blessings to be enjoyed and responsibilities and opportunities to fulfill.

In the first eleven verses of chapter five Paul tells about some of the blessings of being saved. He tells us that *God's Full Salvation Brings A Full Life*. Even as he makes this shift, he does not stop reminding us that being justified by faith is all wrapped up in Jesus. Throughout this paragraph he underscores...

### **The Source Of God's Full Salvation.**

He sums it up in two ways. First, our full salvation is *in* Jesus Christ. Follow with me:

- Verse 6. Paul tells us "Christ died for the ungodly."
- Skip down to the end of verse 8, where he writes, "Christ died for us."
- In the next verse he reminds us that we are "justified by His [Christ's] blood."
- And in verse 10 he gives us the good news that "we shall be saved by His [Christ's] life."

Our salvation is *in* Jesus Christ.

He also tells us our salvation is *through* Jesus Christ.

- This chain starts in the first verse. "We have peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ."
- The next link is in the next verse, "*through* whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand."
- He picks it up again in verse 9 as he tells us "we shall be saved from the wrath of God *through* Him."
- It continues in verse 10 where he writes that "we were reconciled to God *through* the death of His Son."
- Paul completes the chain in verse 11 as he states "*through* whom [Christ] we have now received the reconciliation."

You see, Paul does not want us to forget for a moment that the full, wonderful salvation we have is *in* and *through* Jesus Christ. We do not need to look for or try to add anything else. There is nothing else that can add anything to our salvation— it is *in* and *through* Christ alone. We are freed from doubting and wondering if we have done enough, and seeking for more. *Really Living* is all wrapped up in what Christ has already done for us, and what He continues to do. God’s full salvation in Christ brings us a full life.

### **The Blessings Of God’s Full Salvation.**

Now we turn to Paul’s main focus here. The chapter opens, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace is such a beautiful word, a wonderful reality. Quiet instead of clamor. Tranquility instead of turmoil. Clarity instead of confusion. In Philippians chapter 4 Paul tells us that replacing anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving leads to experiencing God’s incomprehensible peace.

But Paul is not speaking of that kind of peace here. In Philippians it is the peace *of* God. Here it is peace *with* God. He is talking about the state of our relationship with God. Peace with God belongs to those who are justified. Christ died for us when we were ungodly sinners (6, 8). As sinners we were, verse 10 tells us, “enemies” of God. Paul told the church at Philippi that people apart from God are “enemies of the cross of Christ” (3:18).

I have yet to meet someone who has told me, “Lyle, I am at war with God. I’m His enemy.” There may be a few people who would actually say that. But say it or not, everyone who has not yielded to God’s rule, who lives life on his or her own terms, who follows a man-made religion or moral code is in a state of rebellion against God.

Paul understood what it meant to be transformed from being an enemy of God to being a child of God. His heart broke when he thought of those who were still at war with God. Turn ahead to Philippians chapter 3. Verse 18,

“For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now *tell you even weeping*, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.” (18-19)

Can we say this? Are our hearts broken over, do we weep over those who do not have *peace with God*? The first blessing of our full salvation is that we have peace with God. It is ours by God’s grace through faith. It is ours to share with others.

The second blessing of our salvation Paul mentions here is that we have a firm standing in the realm of God’s grace. Verse 2. “through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.”

The term *introduction* is a bit difficult to translate. The concept is getting an introduction to see someone. If I want to see Prime Minister Harper, I can’t just go to 24 Sussex Drive, open the door and sit down with him. Someone must give me an introduction so I can see

him, have access to him. So, some versions go with the result of introduction in translating this term as *access*.

What is crystal clear is that Christ *has* introduced us into a realm of grace in which we now and forever will stand. Paul gives a sharp contrast between having and not having this standing at the end of this chapter. Look at verse 21. "... as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are no longer in the realm of sin and death but in the realm of righteousness and eternal life. When Paul deals with the matter of sin for the believer in chapter 6, he says in verse 14, "sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." Christ made our introduction, we have access to the throne room of God, we now stand firmly in the realm, the kingdom of God's grace.

The realm of grace,

- God's grace to instruct, to guide and strengthen us.
- God's grace to lift us up when we fall.
- God's grace to conquer sin.
- God's grace to free us from trying to be accepted or be kept by what we do.

*That's really living! Praise God for your firm standing in the realm of His grace!*

The next blessing of our full salvation is that we have a certain, joyful hope of sharing God's glory. Notice the end of verse 2. "and we exult in hope of the glory of God." Glory refers to the pure, radiating splendor of God.

What really is it in which we are to joyfully boast? Let's allow Scripture to interpret Scripture here as we walk through some other passages. Turn ahead here in Romans to chapter 8, verse 29.

"For those whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, *He also glorified.*" (29-30)

Then on to chapter 9 verse 22.

"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so *to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called ...*"

(22-24)

Let's move on to Philippians chapter 3, verse 20.

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; *who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory...*” (20-21)

The last one is 1 John 3, verse 2,

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, *we will be like Him*, because we will see Him just as He is.”

When I read these verses, there are some wonderful things I can grasp and other's I can't grasp. For example, what will it really be like to have a body like the resurrected body of Christ, a body of *glory*? Here I have to bow in awe and thank God that this is my certain hope, this is every believer's certain hope no matter how much of it is beyond us now.

We move on to the blessing of having a new perspective and purpose for our troubles. Let's pick it up at verse 3.

“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 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.” (3-5)

We can come to the first phrase in verse three about exulting, joyfully boasting in tribulations, and close our Bibles, or at least close our minds. In our troubles it may not seem possible but impossible, even useless, unless I decide to be a hypocrite and pretend. As I looked at these familiar verses again, my mind went back to Orban Bellamy sharing with us three weeks ago. He is a teacher who loves to teach. He went to the Ukraine to teach and help lead the Bible School But, with changing conditions, declining enrollment and other missionaries returning home, the Bible School closed. He asked us the penetrating question, “What do you do when God takes your Bible School away?”

That's where this new perspective and purpose for our trials comes in. First, note that Paul says we *know* these things, they *are* true. The word he chose for *knowing* does not emphasize knowing in or through my experience, but to know as an established, objective fact or truth. Reality is what God defines it to be, not what I think it is on my best or worst days. This new perspective is for all who are justified. Experiencing it involves our choice. So hang in there as we walk through this new perspective and purpose for our trials.

Paul lays it out as a process with four steps. First, “tribulation brings about perseverance” (3). Trouble strikes. What do we do? We can blame others, the world, or God. We can try to bury our head in the sand, not face it, and hope it will go away. We can strike back. We

can cave in with the attitude “whatever will happen will happen.” We can try to run away or escape. Or, we can respond in God’s way, which starts with facing the trouble and going through it. It is built on the same principle as God’s provision for strength to endure temptations without sin, which comes as we go through and endure them (1 Corinthians 10:13).

So, when disaster strikes, we are to focus on the truth that tribulation can produce perseverance, the spiritual, God-given ability to bear up under pressure. Now, if this were all there is, it would not be encouraging. “Great, I’ll be more able to endure. But who wants to go through life just hanging on?”

This is where the second step comes in. Verse 4, “perseverance [brings about] proven character.” “Proven character” is the rendering of a single word that has the idea of being tested. The quality is proved by the testing. It is actual, proven character. Job understood this. He said “When [God] has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (23:10). Perseverance in tribulation tests, refines, matures, proves our character to be like Christ.

In turn, proven character brings about hope. Hope in the Bible is much more than a wish. Biblical hope has certainty. It is knowing God will do what He has said He will do. We’ve already seen one particular hope in verse 2, the “hope of the glory of God”—that certain knowledge, expectation and anticipation of sharing God’s glory. People without God often find their hope battered and shredded by the terrible things in their lives and world. There is no certainty or optimism about the present or the future. This was the case for Mark Twain. Believers find the character developed and refined in them through enduring the terrible things increasingly reinforces and energizes their expectation that what God has said He will do He *will* do.

Tribulation brings about perseverance. Perseverance brings about proven character. Proven character brings about hope. And, finally, this hope does not disappoint. This is where we all want to be! We want to experience the fulfillment of our hopes!

The words “does not disappoint” come from a verb which literally means to dishonor, disgrace; to be put to shame. Many see this referring to the final judgment when we face God. There we will not be condemned, or put to shame. We will not be disappointed. I don’t see it being limited to that. This new perspective and purpose for our troubles gives us hope that will not disappoint us in this life as well as when we face God.

The fifth blessing of God’s full salvation is that we have been saturated to the core with God’s love. Verse 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.” I am amazed and awed every time I read these words. God loves all His creation, including those who still are His enemies. But this is much more, much different. God has not just given us His love, but He has poured it out, He has drenched us, He has flooded us with His love. And not just within us, but within our hearts, to the very core of our being, into every nook and cranny. We have been saturated with His love through the Holy Spirit. This outpouring of God’s love is an objective fact that took place when we received Christ which has great and wonderful

personal and experiential implications.

As astounding as this is, a critical question is “What does this really mean?” If a single drop of rain falls on your head you may not even notice the moisture. But if you are caught in a downpour and have nothing to cover your head or a place to take shelter, you will be drenched. *And you will know it.* God has drenched us with His love. We experience, sense it. In fact, this verse tells us, experiencing this love is the reason we will not be disappointed with our hopes, even though their fulfillment seems to be so distant at times.

We move on to the blessing of the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit within us. Paul notes in verse 5 that the Holy Spirit was given to us. When you received Christ as your Savior the Holy Spirit took up residence within you. Jesus told His disciples in John 14 that the Father would give them the *Helper*, the Holy Spirit, to be with them forever (16-17). After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, Peter told those who listened to his sermon and asked “What shall we do?”, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins ; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit permanently lives within each believer. As Paul says later here in Romans, “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (8:9). What a blessing! We don’t have to try to go it on our own. We don’t have to ask or plead for the Holy Spirit to come to us, He is within us! We don’t have Christ here physically to teach and guide us but, as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will teach us “all things.” He will guide us into all the truth. He will disclose the things of Christ to us (John 14:26; 16:13-15). *That’s really living!*

Finally, the last blessing of our salvation Paul notes here is that we are now saved from wrath. “What wrath?” By now we probably have a good picture of it. Chapter 1, verse 18,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Chapter 2 verse 5, directed to the moralist apart from God who looks down on others,

“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.”

Being saved by God’s grace through faith means that we will never face God’s righteous wrath and judgment for our sin. Christ took all of it upon Himself at the cross. In 1 Thessalonians 1:10 Paul tells us we were saved to serve God “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” Later in chapter 5 he wrote, “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:9). What a great hope that will never disappoint us in this life and throughout eternity.

## Conclusion.

*God's full salvation brings a full life!* It is everlasting tragic that so many people never come to accept this gift of God. Mark Twain died 99 years ago and, from what we know, never placed his faith in Jesus Christ. In a letter to his wife Olivia he wrote that he wanted

“to keep out of the reach of ... the caricature of [god] which one finds in the Bible. We (that one and I) could never respect each other, never get along together. I have met his superior a hundred times—in fact I amount to that myself.”<sup>2</sup>

Satirical or not, if he held to that to the end of his life, he never knew or experienced *really living*. What about you? Have you come to God through Jesus Christ, have you received His gift of salvation by grace through faith? If not, or if you are not sure, in the words of the apostle Paul, “we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Consider that in these next quiet moments and talk with me before you leave here today.

If you know God through Christ as your Savior, in these moments, Thank and praise God for the great work He has done in providing redemption. Thank and praise God for redeeming you. Thank and praise God for His indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15).

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<sup>1</sup> Twain, Mark. Albert Bigelo, ed. *Mark Twain's Notebook*. (New York: Harper & Brothers), 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Twain, Mark. *Letter to Olivia Clemens, 17 July 1889*. <<http://www.twainquotes.com.html>> Accessed 12 November, 2009.

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