

## The Blueprint: Building a Framework that's Grounded in the Gospel!

### Week 1: Therefore

I. Today we're kicking off a brand-new series of sermons through the heart of Romans. All Scripture is God breathed and we have the 66 books of the bible for a reason, yet there's just something special about Romans. This is the benchmark of Pauline Theology and one could dig into Romans for a lifetime and still just be scratching the surface. I would love to be at Tab for a long time and preach many messages in the book of Romans, so this won't be a one and done kind of series. In fact, we won't be covering every chapter of Romans because it's just too dense to bite off in one piece. So, we're going to journey through Romans 5-8 over the next several weeks and my goal is to give you enough to whet your appetite while giving us a foundation and framework for our faith.

A. Romans 1-4, which we'll do a series through soon, is all about:

[Slide]: Justification

1. In Christ, God has dropped all charges against us! Because of our sin, there was hostility between God and man, and we were not in the right. Our sin deserved a penalty which is a much more pleasant way of saying God's wrath. Paul takes 4 chapters to define reality! Every human is guilty deserving of God's wrath, it is a penalty that sinful humans are incapable of digging out of even by adhering to the law, and God loves us so much that he took the wrath that should have been dished out to us and took it upon himself! I don't understand fully the wrath of God, but I look at the cross and what Jesus did, taking on the wrath of God, and I realize the wrath of God is no insignificant matter. And I want to soberly define reality for us today. There are only 2 options. One day we're all going to stand before God and we'll either be 1) in Christ or 2) standing in our own merits. And our own merits compared to the perfect standard of God will be called into account and it again will not be a pleasant experience. This is not God being unfair, conversely, it's God being just. Praise God he has justified all those who place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ! In Christ we have the righteousness of Christ imputed upon us and receive as a gift an acquittal of our sins!! Thank you, God!

B. That's a lot of ground we just covered through some really important chapters, but it is at least an idea of what our justification, i.e., right standing before God entailed. Paul then switches gears in chapter 5 to explain that if God went to that extent to justify us, we can go all out and lean all into the gospel in our everyday life! Our assurance and hope in Christ are a firm foundation and framework that saturates any situation we might find ourselves in, even the doorway of death (Romans 8). Paul is about to shed light on the significance of our justification in our lives now and beyond and he transitions with one of his powerful uses of a conjunction.

C. Conjunctions are some of my most favorite words in Scripture. We've looked at some really big 'buts' before, but the conjunction Paul uses to start off chapter 5 is so important that it's the main idea for the message today. The conjunction is:

[Slide]: Therefore

1. 'Therefore' is such an important word because it reminds us that God spared no expense to bring us out of wrath into adoption as sons and daughters of God! If God justified us through the blood of Jesus, how much more will God see us through the afflictions of this world until we're united with our Lord eternally. Too often we walk through this world as if we have a wimpy gospel, but we don't! It's a sure foundation and framework we can build our lives upon!

Let's dig in! Romans 5:1-5

**Romans 5:1-5 (CSB) [Slide]:** 1 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, 4endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. 5 This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2. Life is hard, and no one would deny that. We are new creation people, empowered by the Spirit of God, but we live in a sin-sick world. Tensions flare up, relationships are hard, loved ones get sick, loved ones die, we lose the job, someone steals out from under us what is rightfully ours, our culture goes in an ungodly direction and it grieves us, and the list goes on. I don't want to minimize any of those things. But how can Paul talk about faith, joy, peace, and love when his own life often times looked as if it was in shambles? How can we do the same? I believe Paul understood the incredible weight of the 'therefore' as he was penning these words in Romans 5!
3. Too many Christ followers grow numb to what the reality of God's justification means for us! We're prone to focus on the negative around us and complain about various situations, but when is the last time we just sat and allowed ourselves to be overwhelmed at what God has done? If we have grown numb, I pray that God would open our eyes to what our justification means, and we would delight in our salvation today! Because of our justification by faith, we have a new reality. A new foundation and framework! Not based on us, but on the work of Christ!

**D. Let's consider what the Apostle Paul has to say about the results of our justification.** This is some next level stuff!

1. [Slide]: Peace with God (Romans 5:1)

- a. God's means of justifying sinful humanity was so radical and extreme it demonstrates the heart of God to go beyond forgiveness to reconciliation. God desires to be in a relationship with humanity. Peace with God isn't like peace between countries. It doesn't end with a cease-fire. Peace from a biblical perspective refers to the word "shalom" or well-being. The cross cries out the proactive heart of God to freely give his favor to those in Christ. We rarely see the big picture, but every day (24-7) God is actively looking out for our well-being. What a thought to consider!

2. [Slide]: Abundant Grace (Romans 5:2)

- a. Grace is God's goodness and generosity that can't be earned. And while grace is a characteristic of God, here Paul is referring to a state of being that our salvation through Christ gives us complete access to! It's a grace party that we're experiencing today and none of us deserve to be here. Christ paid the price for our admittance. No one earned anything. That's why it is so important that we "clear the path to Jesus." God has an abundance of grace to give but it's only in Jesus Christ that we obtain access. Once we experience grace and remember the cost Jesus paid to grant us access, it changes us from the inside out!

3. [Slide]: Confident Hope (Romans 5:2)

- a. Paul looks back on justification, looks at the present state of peace and grace, then he looks ahead and the future glory to come. God created Adam to be a reflection of his glory which sin distorted. We experience the tension of having been justified yet awaiting our future glorification. As

co-heirs with Christ we will reflect the glory of God for all eternity and in so doing, and only in so doing, will we fully realize who we were created to be! Our future looks forward to an eternity in the presence of God, free of sin and sickness, in which we experience firsthand the glory of God as we reflect the glory of God through our whole being!

E. Our justification by faith comes with phenomenal benefits. That is a powerful “therefore!” But we easily lose sight. We like the justification part of our salvation, but we like what life has to offer in the here and now too. We start putting weight onto areas of our life that may not be bad, they just don’t make a great foundation or framework because they’ll inevitably crack. That’s why Paul can go from a passage describing the incredible benefits that come forth out of our justification to talking about afflictions in life in a positive light. At first it makes us scratch our heads a bit, but on further consideration Paul’s argument makes sense. Let me see if I can explain it anecdotally.

1. Some of you know that I really like pies and cakes. I have to run a lot of miles every week because I love to eat! I avoid diets like the plague. My mother knows how much I like to eat too, and she has a way of cooking certain things that just encapsulate my idea of home. I’ve had a lot of great food in Norfolk but there’s just something about the way mom does it that is impossible to duplicate. God, as creator, has designed us with certain longings that remind us of home. There are some beautiful things in this life, but even the most beautiful things of this world leave us with a taste for something more. We can easily start leaning into things that can’t bear weight. When they start to crack, it causes affliction, but affliction can hone our searching back toward home.
2. The only sure foundation is our justification by faith and the benefits that result: peace with God, abundant grace, and confident hope, but we easily get distracted by the things of this world. I’m not suggesting that we become monks and disconnect from the world, but what I am challenging us with is the reality that it is easy to begin extending our foundation and erecting a framework on the temporal not the eternal. Sometimes God graciously shakes up the temporal to remind us of our sure foundation in the gospel! No one enjoys having their foundation shaken, I know I don’t, but afflictions refine us and bring the source of our hope back into focus. This hope won’t disappoint us because:  
[Slide]: Hope hones the way toward home!
3. The more difficult our circumstances of this life are, the more we experience the lavish outpouring of God’s love through His Spirit. Just like faith, hope (confidence in God’s ability to see us through) is a muscle that has to be developed. But surrounding us every step of the way is the love of God poured out through His Spirit! Not doled out, not sprinkled out, not rationed out:  
[Slide]: Poured out!
4. The benefits of our justification are incredible, but we miss out because we convince ourselves we can build a framework with things of this world. We’ve been justified (acquitted by God) “therefore” we have peace with God, an abundance of grace, and confident hope. God wants us to enjoy the blessings of this world, we just can’t build a foundation and framework for our lives with them.

**Romans 5:6-11 (CSB)** [Slide]: 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For rarely will someone die for a just person- though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. 8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 How much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son,

then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

F. How much more? If God went to the extent of shedding the blood of his Son so that we might be justified from our sin, how much more should we expect him to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus until Jesus returns! Paul moves from justification to reconciliation to affirm the covenant God has made with us through the blood of Christ. God is tenacious for his children and he is for you today! Far beyond the circumstances we find ourselves in (good or bad), we have the unconditional benefits of peace with God, abundant grace, and confident hope. If Jesus shed blood to declare us righteous, how much more will we be saved through his life! God has boldly declared his commitment to us on the cross. Please don't doubt the love of a Father that would go to that extreme. If he paid that kind of ransom to justify us, can we just imagine for a moment the LIFE he extends to us! Seriously, a God that goes to that extent to justify us and then would leave us looking for life somewhere else or leave us high and dry in the afflictions of life is simply illogical! Let's rejoice in Christ Jesus through whom we now have reconciliation with God!

1. Life isn't for the faint of heart and none of us make it through unscathed. It's a sin-sick world we live in and nothing is as it ought to be. As C.S. Lewis pointed out it's this sense of "ought" that reminds us the only foundation and framework capable of holding firm in this broken world is our justification by faith, Christ's righteousness declared over us, which leads to the benefits of peace with God, abundant grace, and confident hope. That's the salvation that God has made available through the death and resurrection of Christ!
2. My prayer for us this week is that we would read through Romans 5:1-11 and think deeply about our salvation. If you've never trusted Christ, please think deeply on what you're building your foundation and framework on? I don't want to belittle you by any means, but I do want to push into the fact that I bet you're feeling the sense of "ought" about whatever it is you're building your foundation on. If it's a relationship, a career, a certain social status you desire, I bet in those moments when you're alone with your thoughts you feel that sense of "ought." I bet you say to yourself in those quiet moments, "This 'ought' to have satisfied me by now. Why am I coming up empty when I grasp the things of this world?"
3. The only sure foundation and framework that stands is the gospel. Our reconciliation with God that included our justification by faith and the benefits that result. Let's think deeply about our salvation this week!