

More Than That We Rejoice

Romans 5:9–11

Studies in Romans #21

© 2015 Daniel R. Hyde

The decorations have been on display in stores. Last night Cyprian and I saw the first Christmas lights already up. If you're like me and you sign up for every deal and coupon code imaginable, your inbox is being barraged right now! And in all the print ads, radio ads, and television ads, everyone is happy, happy, happy. This is the season for giving thanks, for celebrating, for rejoicing. I don't know about you, but I've always found this a little artificial. We're supposed to know turn on our happy switches. But time with co-workers, time with family, and even time alone during this season may be depressing and harsh for some of us.

I want to bring you encouragement today. There is something to be truly thankful for. There is something to celebrate. There is something in which you can rejoice and find true happiness: the good news of what Jesus Christ does for sinners. Amen? That's what this letter to the Romans is all about, the gospel that is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (1:16). And now that we are saved, here in chapter 5 it's like Paul has been opening up a gift with us and saying, "Now here's what you can do with it. You can have peace with God (v. 1). You can access God's heavenly grace (v. 2). You can rejoice in the hope of your ultimate salvation in glory (v. 2). And more than that, you can rejoice in your sufferings (v. 3)." Now note how here in verse 11, Paul brings everything full circle: **More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Rejoice in God (v. 11)

Let's start there in verse 11 where Paul calls us to *rejoice in God*. It's important to know that this word **rejoice** here was also used back in 2:17 in a different sense. Turn there for a moment. This is where Paul writes a litany not of praise for the Jews but a litany of the pride of the Jews. And notice where he says, "and boast in God." Depending on the context, this word can mean rejoice or boast. You can't have to more polar opposites. It's like fire and ice, life and death. The Jews were full of arrogance and pride. Paul calls us to give ascriptions of praise. Note that in contrast to the Jews' boast because they relied on the law and their obedience to it to make them acceptable to God and better than the Gentiles, Paul tells us to **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**.

It's this spirit of joy and rejoicing that I have been addressing recently. The elders and I are concerned that we as a congregation have a spirit of joy when we come together. Yes, we have financial challenges, but **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. Yes, our membership is down, but **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. Yes, there has been some discipline among our membership that you may or may not be aware of, but **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.¹

Recognize What God Has Done (vv. 9–10)

Why rejoice? Let's look at verses 9–10 where Paul teaches us to *recognize what God has done*. And notice how each verse is what is called an argument from the lesser to the

¹ From the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

greater. For example, if I love my child in my wife's womb, how much more so when he or she is in my arms? Verse 9 says, **Since, therefore...much more**, and verse 10 says, **For if...much more**.

The first reason to rejoice in verse 9—for simplicity's sake—is *justification*. But notice how Paul says this: **Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.**

I rejoice because as we've already seen from 3:21 up to this point, I am justified. That means God has done two things, right? Don't forget this! There is something God takes away and something God gives when he justifies us. First, God has taken away all my sins and put them on Christ. Second, in the place of my sins he gives to me Jesus' righteousness. And because of this I can now stand before God acceptable to him and without any fear. Note well that in Paul's argument this is the thing already done: **Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood**. And note doubly well that up to this point Paul has always said we are justified by something. What's that something? Faith. Faith is how we subjectively receive justification. But note here that Paul says **we have now been justified by [Jesus'] blood**. He's taking all the way back to the cross and saying that there everything we need and will ever need to make us right with God was accomplished. In the argument, this is the so-called "lesser." And what a lesser it is!

So if that is true, Paul then gives the stronger thing: **much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God**. What is this **wrath**? It's not the wrath that he said was already being poured out on societies in 1:18. Here we are and we see it all around us everyday and as citizens of this nation we are not immune. But remember that

in 2:5 Paul spoke of a future “day of wrath.” All the wrath that God is now pouring out is just a drop from the bucket; on the final day he will dump it all out! As one hymn says,

Horrors past imagination,
Will surprise your trembling heart,
When you hear your condemnation,
“Hence, accursed wretch depart!
Thou with Satan
And his angels, have thy part!”²

But Paul says that since you have already been justified, and he points us back to the cross, with the same assurance you can know now that on the final day in the future Jesus will save you from **the wrath of God**. Let me put it to you like this: When Paul says you **have now been justified by** [Jesus’] **blood** he is saying that Jesus’ death in your place satisfied the justice of God once and for all, Jesus’ death in your place expiated or carried away your sins once and for all away from God’s sight, and Jesus’ death in your place propitiated or turned away the wrath of God from you once and for all. Christian, brothers and sisters, you have already passed through the final judgment. When? When Jesus died for you on the cross!

On yonder hill of Calvary,
Where Jesus bled and died for me:
‘Twas there from sin He set me free,
On Calvary, dark Calvary.³

Did you hear that? You already passed through the final judgment when Jesus hung on the cross. Is this reason to rejoice and give thanks this season or what?

² From the hymn, “Day of Judgment, Day of Wonders,” by John Newton.

³ From the hymn, “On yonder hill of Calvary,” by John R. Clements.

And there's a second reason to rejoice in verse 10, which, for simplicity's sake, we'll say is *reconciliation*. And again notice the contours of how Paul says this: **For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**

I rejoice because I am reconciled to God! Amen? Now notice something about verses 9 and 10. There are in a relationship we call synonymous parallelism. For example, in our evening liturgy we responsively pray from the Psalms, "Praise the Lord! The Lord's name be praised!" Are we saying two different things? No. We're saying the same thing in two different ways, and each one adds its own flavor, if you will. So obviously you can see the parallels between the **since...much more** in verse 9 and the **if...much more** in verse 10, but note especially these lines: **we have now been justified by his blood** in verse 9 and **we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son** in verse 10. The blood or death of Jesus we were what? Justified and reconciled. We don't usually bring these two together but Paul does here to show us how justification is reconciliation; my being counted righteous by God is my being accepted with God. As Paul says in Colossians 1:21-22: "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death." Reconciliation is the change from being an enemy of God to being a friend with God because of Jesus' death, where he the Son of God's eternal love was punished in our place.

To God I'm reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear:
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,

And Father, Abba Father! cry.⁴

And when Paul says **if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son**, notice again how he takes us back to the past to the cross on Calvary's hill. If there I went from an enemy to God to a friend of God, **much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life**. What do you see in this verse? What's the reason we were reconciled to God? Jesus' death. And what's the reason we will be saved ultimately? **His life**, that is, his resurrection and present ministry for me at the right hand of God! And this is in parallel with the line in verse 9, **much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God**. Paul takes us back that he might assure us of the future! What Christ has already done for me is the basis for which I hope with confidence that he will act for me again in the future.

And what implications this has for how we relate to one another as brothers and sisters! As Paul says in Ephesians 2 to our vertical reconciliation with God leads to our horizontal reconciliation with each other. Let me encourage you this Thanksgiving season to give thanks to God in prayer for your brothers and sisters gathered together here. And as you give thanks for them, you will grow closer to them in love. And as your love increases, God's love increases. And as his love increases so will our church family be an attractive place of love for all kinds of weary and wounded, beaten and broken sinners. Amen!

⁴ From the hymn, "Arise, My Soul, Arise," by Charles Wesley.