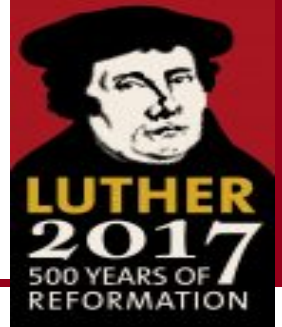


*peace, access, and hope in Christ*

**Romans 5:1-11 Hebrews 10:19-25 John 3:14-21**

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**The Bystander Effect<sup>1</sup>** is a term that arose out of the 1960s. In 1964, Kitty Genovese was murdered in New York City. She was stabbed to death outside her apartment while bystanders, who witnessed the crime, did not step in to assist, to help, or even to call the police. **There were 38 bystanders.** They all knew she needed help, they all witnessed the crime, they all heard her screams and cries; but not one of them stepped forward to help in any way. **Thirty-eight people!** *They didn't want to get involved; they all thought someone else would do something about it.*

**UNLIKE** those 38 “bystanders”, **God does not wait** for someone else to intervene to help you out of the danger of sin and death! **God Himself steps in and helps us!** He comes to your rescue! God sent His Son Jesus into the world to be your Savior!

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** ROMANS 5:7-8

Jesus intervenes on our behalf! Jesus came into the world, He was born in Bethlehem, He taught and worked miracles in Galilee, He fully obeyed the commands of God, and He suffered and died in Jerusalem. **Jesus came into the world for the sole purpose of rescuing you from sin and death.** *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!*

Throughout the book of Romans, St. Paul has been using the term “**righteousness**” to describe how God saves you. **Righteousness** is God the Judge declaring you “**not guilty!**” of sin and setting you **free from death** because of the work of His only Son Jesus Christ. Because of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, you are declared righteous and holy. **God is not a silent, uninvolved bystander watching you die in your sin; God Himself actively intervenes in your life to save you in Christ!**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/bystander-effect>

Remember what we heard in the Gospel lesson for today: *God did not send His Son into the world to condemn you, but to save the world through Him!*

This all comes to you through faith, and not by works. It is a gift of God. In fact, all the gifts of salvation come to you only through faith. In Romans chapter five, St. Paul summarizes **all the gifts** of salvation in three words: **peace, access, and hope.**

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have **gained access** by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the **hope of the glory of God.** ROMANS 5:1-2

### *peace*

In the Bible, peace is **not a subjective feeling**, but **an objective reality**. **peace** means that your relationship with God is restored; there is no more fear, anger, nor hostility between you and God because of your sin. You are reconciled to God! You have a peaceful relationship with God the Father because of the work of Jesus the Son.

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ!*

It means that your sins are forgiven; God does not hold them against you or count them against you. God is not an angry judge who is going to punish you; rather He is your Heavenly Father Who embraces you and helps you. He invites you to look to Him for all good and turn to Him in times of trouble. **You have peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!**

### *access*

That peaceful relationship means that you can now approach God anytime you want in prayer. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you have access to God and stand before Him in grace. Your sins no longer separate you from God! God invites you into His presence!

There is a powerful **word picture** associated with this idea of access.

The word picture comes from the Tabernacle of the Old Testament. **Because of Jesus, you can go into the Holy of Holies anytime you want and talk to God in prayer.** In Old Testament times, only the High Priest, once a year, could enter the Holy of Holies and approach God with the blood of a sacrifice. Now

you can enter the Holy of Holies because of Jesus' "blood sacrifice" on the cross. You can approach God anytime you want because of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

**Remember on Good Friday, when Jesus died, the curtain of the Temple was torn in two? That curtain separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. That curtain symbolized your sin that separated you from God. When Jesus died, God tore that curtain down and now you have direct access to Him!**

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. HEBREWS 4:16

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. HEBREWS 10:22

God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, **so that we may ask Him with all boldness and confidence**, as children ask their dear father.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER, SMALL CATECHISM

This **powerful word picture** teaches you about prayer. God invites you to bring your needs to Him; to look to Him for all good things and turn to Him in times of trouble. And not only that, but you can pray for others. You can bring their needs to God as if they were your very own! Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you live your life in God's presence, you stand before Him by grace, you have peace with God through faith, and you have complete and full access the Lord God Almighty Himself!

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have **gained access** by faith into this grace in which we now stand. We boast in the **hope of the glory of God.***

*hope*

A third blessing that you have been given through faith in Christ is *the hope of the glory of God*. This is the promise of eternal life; it is being in glory of Heaven with God forever. **hope is confident faith in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting**. We know that whatever problems and pain that we have are short term, and that God has promised us a home in heaven, a place without sin, problems, or pain. We eagerly look forward to eternal life; so much so that we can even boast in the *hope of the glory of God!*

*peace, access, and hope* is how we live our lives as believers. They are a summary of all the blessings of salvation that God has given to you: **from the beginning of**

**your faith to its end in heaven --- and everything in between!** The Holy Spirit works through **peace, access and hope** to keep you focused on Christ and His Word. No matter what might happen in your life, **peace, access, and hope** give you a stability in your life. We approach hardships and difficulties and all kinds of suffering differently than those without Christ.

We approach suffering and hardships in faith:  
with **peace with God, access to God, and hope in God.**

- † No matter what might happen, you have **peace with God**. Nothing can change that. Your relationship with God is restored and you are reconciled with him.
- † No matter what might happen, you can **approach God** anywhere and at anytime and talk to Him about it. God is your Father in Heaven, and He invites you to bring your needs to Him; look to Him for all good things and turn to Him in times of trouble. You have complete access to God!
- † No matter what might happen, you have a home in heaven. **You have hope:** confident faith that something better is waiting for you in Heaven. Our current problems and pain is not worth comparing to the glory that God has promised us in Heaven. We boast in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting!

*peace, access, and hope*  
is how we live our lives as believers.

*peace, access, and hope*  
give you a stability in your life.

*peace, access, and hope*  
summarize the entire Christian faith and life!

Think these things through, let them form and shape your life!

Since you have been justified through faith, you have **peace with God** through your Lord Jesus Christ, through whom you have **gained access** by faith into the grace in which you now stand. And you can boast in the **hope of the glory of God**. ROMANS 5:1-2