

The Benefits Of Righteousness

Introduction. The first four chapters of Romans deal with the sin problem of man and the grace of God which has provided a means of justification by faith. Now, the apostle sets out to enumerate the benefits or advantages which belong to those who are justified by faith. All that is written in chapters 5-8 is the specific application of Romans 3:21-26. So for the people who make the monumental decision to obey God, what do you get?

I. Peace

- A. Sin has separated man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2); but by faith we are reconciled to Him. Rather than being recipients of God's wrath (Romans 1:18), we have peace with Him. We are no longer enemies, but God's friends. Paul says that Jesus is our peace (Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:20).
- B. Our peace is a contentment because we have a harmonious relationship with God. This peace is objective, not subjective. If I were to rob a bank, and fled to a country that would not extradite to the United States, a state of enmity would exist. It would not matter how peaceful and tranquil I might feel within my heart, I would not be at peace with my country. So it is with the person who has rebelled and sinned against God.

II. Grace

- A. We are justified because of His grace; and His grace has become the state of our justification (Ephesians 2:8; cp. 2 Corinthians 8:7-9). Therefore, we stand in God's grace. This means we are on firm ground. We are firmly established.
- B. While the ground of God's grace is a firm foundation, we must stand. The scripture does not refer to this grace wherein we lounge, or lie, or sprawl. We stand (Ephesians 6:13)!

III. Patience

- A. This is also called perseverance, steadfastness, or fortitude. This means to actively overcome; to keep on keeping on in the face of all tribulations or pressures (Revelation 2:10).
- B. We not only rejoice in hope of the future, but we glory in the very midst of tribulation. Though it is not joyful for the present, yet we still rejoice. This is in line with the whole tenor of New Testament teaching (Matthew 5:11; Acts 5:42; 2 Corinthians 12:10).
- C. Suffering can prepare us for greater usefulness in the kingdom. Suffering will make us long for Heaven with greater intensity (Romans 8:18).

IV. Experience

- A. The word refers to what has been tried, as a metal that has been put through the fire. It speaks of being put to the test. Such a trial shows what we are. It demonstrates our true character.
- B. This produces proven character and a stronger faith; one that is better prepared for the next level (1 Peter 1:7; cp. 2 Corinthians 2:9; Philippians 2:22).

V. Hope

- A. This is the second time Paul has mentioned hope in this passage. He has now come full circle. Proven character increases our hope (James 1:3-5, 12).
- B. Worldly hope often brings disappointment. Hope in idolatry, sorcery, or astrology has always brought disappointment. Hope in armaments and human counsel often disappoints. Hope in business or the stock market may disappoint. But hope in God will never disappoint us (Romans 8:24; Titus 3:7).

VI. Love

- A. Love is very elusive in that it is difficult to define with words. It is not drawn out of any excellency in us (Ephesians 2:4; 5:1-2). It can only be known from the action it prompts. God's love can be seen in the gift of His Son (1 John 4:9-10).
- B. God's love for us has been communicated abundantly. How has this been revealed? By science? By study? By observation? No. It has been poured out by the Holy Spirit. It is by His revelation of the gospel that our minds are filled with the knowledge of God's love (1 Corinthians 2:10-12).

VII. Justification

- A. To justify a person is to pronounce him free from any guilt or blame. Paul had been arguing that we are made righteous by faith in Christ, instead of by works of the Law.
- B. With Paul, faith in Christ means full acceptance of Christ as He is revealed to us and the faithful ordering of our lives according to His will. He is then declared to be righteous (Luke 18:13-14; Romans 5:18; Galatians 3:24).

VIII. Salvation

- A. Salvation excuses us from the wrath of God on the day of judgment (Isaiah 53:10-12; John 10:9; Acts 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).
- B. The point is, since God has already done what is really difficult — justified the sinner — we may be absolutely confident that He will do what is by comparison very easy, namely, save from His wrath in the judgment those who are already righteous in His sight.

IX. Reconciliation

- A. "Reconciliation" means "to exchange enmity for friendship." Where reconciliation is mentioned in the New Testament, God or Christ is always the reconciler, and human beings are the object (or among the objects) of His reconciling act. We receive the blessing of this recovered favor only from God.
- B. The fact that we are "enemies" expresses man's hostile attitude to God and it also shows that until we change this attitude, we are under condemnation. The death of Jesus removes this and we "receive the atonement (reconciliation)" (2 Corinthians 5:18; Hebrews 2:17).
- C. Let's go back to our example of my robbing a bank. If I received a presidential pardon and could return to the United States to be with my family without fear of prosecution, and without having to run for the rest of my life, I would be foolish to pass on the pardon. Likewise, today you have the opportunity to take the deal of

reconciliation through God's gracious provision in Christ. God's abhorrence of sin does not make Him the enemy of sinners; His desire is for all "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Don't pass up this deal!

Conclusion. Just like our parents used to reward us for doing what was right or what we are supposed to, God also rewards us for acting the way that we should or by being in the correct relationship with Him. The rewards are these nine benefits of which Paul wrote. If we have not responded or we have fallen away after starting a life of righteous living, we can no longer partake of these benefits. Give serious thought today to see if you can make it without these benefits (Proverbs 10:27-28).