**Romans 5:1-5**

**The Love of God the Father**

1. **Obtained by God the Son**
2. **Poured Out by God the Spirit**

I’ve been thinking a lot about Father’s Day, this being my first, and noticed that, in my opinion, it might be better called Family’s Day. The reason I say that is this: the father’s purpose in life is simple: the well-being of his family. He is responsible for creating, maintaining and protecting the spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional stability in his home. That’s a God-given directive. But if you ask fathers who are focused on that, then you’ll hear them say they don’t want much on father’s day; they just want their family. To spend time with their wives, time with their kids, they want to see the fruits of their fatherly labor–a healthy home. Now, on Father’s Day, no one, especially the kids, would dare tell you the ways that you could do your job better as a dad. But I want to recognize the reality of fathers and mothers and children and families: we’re not always so good at the family thing! There’s actually a lot of work that goes into building and maintaining a healthy home, and there’s often a lot of frustrating and difficult steps to getting there. I don’t mean to rain on anyone’s Father’s Day parade, but on this day, and every day to follow, I want us to see and recognize the family that our Triune God has created. The family that he has built upon his Son, and the family that he maintains with his Spirit.

Holy Trinity Sunday is somewhat of a recap on the first or festival half of the church year. Advent is the time when we anticipate the birth of God the Father’s greatest gift to mankind, wrapped in human flesh. Epiphany and Lent prepare our hearts to be crushed as we watch that perfect gift of a Savior be crushed by our sins and failures as he’s crucified on the cross. On Easter, watch that Savior rise victorious over sin, death, and the devil. And we see him send his Spirit upon his church to proclaim the completed plan of salvation that the Triune God put into effect long before the world was created. Today, in 5 short verses, Paul reminds us what that salvation is, what it cost, and how he gives it to us.

Firstly, you are at peace with your heavenly Father. Google’s simple definition of peace is this: freedom from disturbance. I ask you plainly. Are you at peace? I bet 98% of you immediately thought no. The other 2% might think you’re pretty close to peace, but will have to admit, you’re not. Peace isn’t something that mankind knows how to do or create. Do this, think of the most peaceful scene you can think of. For many, it will be a sunny day on the beach or some remote place with nobody around, listening to rushing waters, beautiful birds, and the sun shining. And then, while you’re in that peaceful place, what happens? You think about that problem at work you’re gonna have to go back and fix. You think about what your friend said and how badly it frustrated you. That intrusive thought flings open the doors of your mind, knowing that you can’t do anything about it. You remember something you did to hurt that person. Even if we were to find the most peaceful place on earth with the least amount of outside disturbances, we have this thing beating inside our chests that holds onto all the disturbances that it can. Truth be told, it’s actually impossible, despite what anyone on planet earth will tell you, to find true peace, because you will always lug around your sinful heart this side of heaven. And yet, with confidence, Paul says **since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Notice, it’s peace with God, not peace on earth. Jesus doesn’t promise me peace with my neighbors, or coworkers, or the sister that I just keep annoying. He doesn’t even promise that I’ll find peace with myself! But despite the peace that we want to feel and see and hear, the reality is we are already at peace with our heavenly Father. That’s what justification means. God has created peace between himself and me and he’s gonna be the one to maintain that peace.

How is that possible? I was thinking about my son. I’ll have to come to terms with the fact that our relationship is about as peaceful as it will ever be because he’s 6 weeks old and can’t fight back. He can’t talk back. He can’t build tension between us. He doesn’t have that power. But now take a sinful 28 year old man and a perfect eternal God, and tell me how there can be long-lasting, never-ending peace between the two. That peace was obtained by and given through Jesus Christ. We have access to God’s grace through the faith that God has given us by grace! Say that five times fast. God himself puts faith in your heart to look to that splintered cross and see the blood that paid for your peace with God the Father. God himself puts faith in your heart to see that the tomb could not hold your Savior captive; to see that he was victorious over the punishment for sin; to see that God the Father approved the saving work that his Son did on our behalf. You are at peace with God obtained for you through Jesus Christ. It is in this grace, this love obtained by Jesus’ blood, **in which we stand.** This is important. It’s important for you to know your footing. Because you know full well if you’re out on the ice, you’re gonna slip. If you’re in the sand, you’re gonna sink. If you’re on solid ground, you cannot be shaken. Be confident in the peace that you have with God, but see this: **Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patient endurance, and patient endurance produces tested character, and tested character produces hope.**

It’s probably the most common question that believers and unbelievers will ask together: why does God allow the suffering? Why does God allow these things to happen? It’s not because God wants to see the suffering–his heart aches when he sees the suffering. It’s not because God needs to punish you for your sins–your punishment crushed Christ on the cross. It’s not because God doesn’t care about you–he provides for and protects the entirety of his creation. But amidst the suffering that sin causes in the lives of all people everywhere, God wants us to see that he’s always there. God wants us to put our trust in him; hand the suffering to him; give the anxiety to him; let him handle the pain he’s asked you to bear. Because as we suffer with the conviction of Christ crucified, we know that while life here will not be peaceful but rather, painful, we know with confidence that God is going to build us up as he prepares to bring us home. When athletes walk into a weight room, the plan is to literally tear their muscles apart. Muscle fibers split and tear as those weights are lifted because muscles will grow back together, remember the pain and the struggle, and will make themselves stronger. Your pain and suffering does just that. If your suffering were pointless, then we wouldn’t talk so positively about it. But when life doesn’t seem so peaceful, Jesus says shift your eyes to that cross, because that’s where true peace is found.

Finally, that peace and love of God, they are abundantly **poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.** I love the biblical definition of hope. See, it’s common to hope for something and pray and wish that we get that thing or that thing will happen. We can hope for good weather for the party, but have no idea if it’ll rain. We can wish that the Packers go undefeated on their way to Super Bowl 60. We can pray that the economy improves, or the cure is found, or the family and friends overseas come home. The worldly definition of hope is unstable, unreliable. Hope is built upon wishful thinking. Not the hope that is produced by suffering, obtained by Christ crucified, and poured out by the Holy Spirit. Hope is yours. Given as a gift, over and over and over again in God’s Word through the Gospel. In the sacraments. The Holy Spirit does the heavy lifting as he strengthens your faith. As that pain and suffering come your way, the work that the Holy Spirit does to prepare your heart and root you in God’s grace will not be in vain. The hope that is yours in Jesus, through faith, maintained by the Spirit, is not wishful thinking, but rock-solid confidence. Confidence that Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. And because Jesus has done what he promised to do, we have peace with God, knowing we are forgiven, redeemed children of our heavenly Father. Amen.