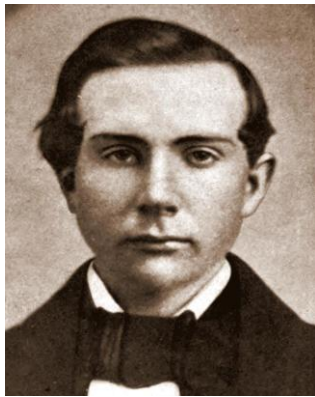


So Much More Romans 5:1-11

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 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. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

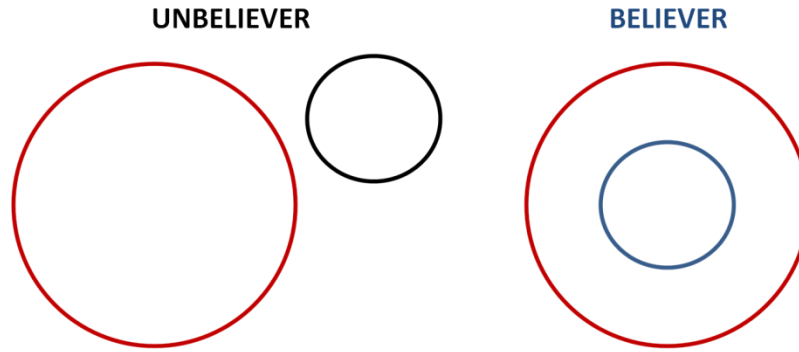


When John Davison Rockefeller was just a boy he had two great ambitions—to make \$100,000 and live to the age of 100. Just to put things in perspective, his \$100,000 goal would equal about 3 million dollars today, so it was a massive amount of money from He fell 26 months short of making it to age 100, but he vastly exceeded his financial goal. Rockefeller was the world's first billionaire. In inflation adjusted dollars, when he died in 1937, his net worth was somewhere between 300-600 billion dollars. Many consider him to be the richest man who ever lived. Despite his ridiculous wealth, he was asked how much money would be enough for him and his famous reply was, "Just a little bit more."¹

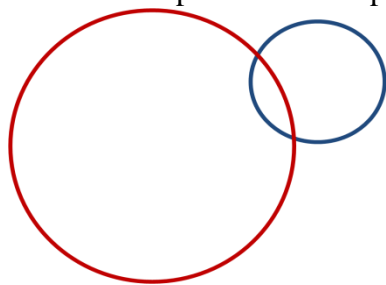
We look back on this statement as one of immense greed. How is it that the richest man who ever lived could not be satisfied with all of his wealth? How could he have desired to have even more? In the financial realm, this was a statement of greed but in the spiritual realm, it is exactly what we should be doing. If someone asked us how much God it would take to satisfy us, our answer should be, "Just a little bit more. Just a little bit more Jesus, please."

Now before I develop this thought, let me stop and clarify something. Isn't God already fully satisfying, so in what sense would we need to ask for more? Can we get more Jesus than we already have? The answer is yes and no. Let me illustrate with these concentric circles.

As an unbeliever, we were completely outside of Christ. We were enemies of God (Romans 5:10). We were children of the devil (John 8:44). The wrath of the Father remained on us (John 3:36). But the believer has been redeemed and justified. The believer is fully "in Christ." He or she is completely consumed by and in Christ Jesus. That is the reality of our salvation.



However, the experiential nature of our relationship with God looks more like this. What we experience in our relationship with the Lord comes in varying degrees. The overlap between the two circles represents our experience of God. This is what it means to experience the reality of



all that we have in Christ. Put another way, positionally we are already in the middle. Positionally, every believer is filthy rich. Our spiritual riches are inexhaustible. God is sufficient for all things. But it doesn't always feel like God is sufficient. It doesn't always feel like we are spiritually more wealthy than any Rockefeller was rich.

Let me explain this yet a different way. We know that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as Ephesians 5:18 says. We often think of being filled with the Holy Spirit like a glass being filled up with a substance. We are empty vessels and the Holy Spirit fills us up. In this sense, we have more or less of the Holy Spirit. But I like to think about being filled with the Holy Spirit like these two overlapping circles. As we lean into God, unlike the glass analogy, instead of us having more of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has more of us. After all, we really don't possess him but rather he possesses us.

All this is to say that our daily lives are like the overlap between the two circles. We either experience much of Jesus or we experience little of him. But the unfortunate part of this scenario is that there is always potential for so much more. We have infinite riches in Christ but we live as if we are poor. If you had 300 billion dollars, would you be concerned about how to pay your electric bill? If you owned three hospitals, would you ever wonder if you get an appointment to see the doctor? We live like spiritual paupers yet we have untold riches at our disposal. It's like we are starving to death in a grocery store. We are dying of thirst while standing next to a water tower. We have an infinite God with endless riches available to us yet our experience of this infinite God is just a small slice. Do you tend to feel like this? As the title of this message states, there is so much more available to us as believers. This is what Paul was driving at in verse ten. *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.*

As we move into chapter five of Romans, the overall theme begin to take a definitive turn where we get more into the application of our salvation. This chart gives a quick summary of the differences.

	Ch. 1-4	Ch. 5-8
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<i>Faith/believe</i>	33	3
<i>Live/life</i>	2	24

The first four chapters established our lost condition and our justification by faith. Having laid this foundation, Paul begins to apply our justification to our present life. In other words, salvation is not merely a past event which secures our future state. As is often said, it's not merely "fire insurance" against the flames of hell. Salvation is meant to be a present experience.

The first benefit that we can claim is peace with God. *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Notice that this peace is based on what has already been done for us--*since we have been justified by faith.* This is nothing that we did nor is it anything that we yet need to do. Our peace with God is based on the finished work of Christ. Notice also that this is not the peace of God, per se, but peace with God. In other words, this is not the feeling of peace but the reality of peace. What were we prior to our conversion? Verse ten tells us that we were enemies of God. Now you may not have felt like you were actively fighting God before you were saved, especially if you were only six or seven years old at the time, but you were. Every one of us was in rebellion against God. If we never actually raised our fist against the Lord, we most certainly did this in our hearts.

But now we have peace with God. We are no longer his enemy but now his adopted child. So going back to our circles again. In reality, we have peace with God. Our circles is within his circle. But the practical experience of peace *with* God would be the peace *of* God. The peace that passes understanding is ours--not because we work for it--but because it just is.

The next spiritual benefit that we have is boasting in God. *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* The word for rejoice is usually translated as boast. It is almost always used in a negative sense, like boasting and bragging about yourself. Nobody likes a braggart, do they--except maybe the braggart himself. No one likes to listen to you talk on and on about all of your accomplishments. That is boasting. But boasting in God is the same thing as rejoicing. And specifically, we boast in the glory of God.

It is remarkable the change that God has done in us. In Romans 1:23, the pagans *exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.* The glory of God means nothing to an unbeliever. Without Christ, you and I would throw away the glory of God and choose something worthless in its place. Romans 3:23 says, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* The glory of God is out of our reach and means nothing to us, apart from Christ. But now that we have been justified, we can boast in the glory of God.

But what does that even look like? I think Paul boasted in the glory of God all of the time. he says as much in Galatians 6:14. *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Also, in 1 Cor. 1:31, as it is written, *"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."* In chapter fifteen, Paul instructs about how to boast. *Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of anything except what*

Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed (Romans 15:17-18--NASB).

What if we all adopted that principle? I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me. What would that look like? Do you realize that this would touch every aspect of your daily life? Can you take a single breath without what Christ accomplishes through you and in you? He created your body so that your diaphragm muscle would move downward and suck air into your lungs. He created your lungs with a combined surface area of 1000 square feet. That means that the surface area of just one person in this room would cover half of this sanctuary. He created you in such a way that the oxygen molecule that enters your lungs can be transferred to a hemoglobin molecule inside of every one of your 25 trillion red blood cells, which your body produces at a rate of 2 million every second! Your powerful heart muscle, which beats 3.5 million times per year, pumps these red cells all throughout your body. You can boast in the Lord about the 30 breaths you take every minute.

You can boast in the Lord for the income that comes into your household so you can pay your bills and live another day. On Friday I spoke with a young man who is living in Lillie Tryggestad's basement. Kevin, his wife and young baby live there with a very low rent because he has been supporting his family through working part time at Walmart. Kevin told me that they are simply living by faith. I appreciate their simple living and large faith they have in our infinite God.

That is boasting in the glory of God. This is the exact same thing that happened in the wilderness for forty years.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?" (Exodus 16:4-7 ESV)

Every day for forty years the Israelites picked up manna from the ground—a daily, miraculous provision from the Lord. God himself defined this as “the glory of the Lord.” Boast in this. Brag about God’s provision of breath, food, drink, shelter, freedom to worship, answered prayer, sustaining grace. Did the Israelites experience the Lord? Did they feel his provision? To use our circles, God has them inside his circle, didn’t he? He hemmed them in on all sides with sovereign protection and provision. They were dead center in the Lord, yet their experience of God was one of complaining and grumbling. The reality was in the center but their experience of God was at the fringes.

And of course the greatest reason to boast in the hope of God’s glory is found in verses 6-8.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What do we learn about ourselves from these verses? We see that we were weak. We were ungodly. We were absolutely helpless. We needed someone to die for us. We must understand that this one word “for” represents a substitution. If I was carrying a heavy box and you came by and said, “Here, let me carry that for you,” you would literally be carrying the box in my place. I would not be helping you because you would be doing it instead of me doing it. You would be my substitute box carrier.

Jesus did far more than carry a heavy weight for us. He was our sin substitute. He died in our place. He died instead of us. He bore the wrath of his Father for us. And there was only one reason that the Father sent the Son and the Son gladly obeyed. Love. *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* For all eternity, this will be the greatest display of love ever shown. The love is so great because he is so good and we were so bad. Do you ever boast about your salvation? Do you ever boast about your great God who died for you while you were still his enemy?

All of this boasting in the hope of the glory of God prepares us for verses 3-5.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

I have a few things to note about these verses. First, the word for rejoicing is the same as boasting, so you can say that we boast in our suffering. Second, the verse says that we boast *in* our sufferings—we don’t merely rejoice through suffering or in spite of suffering but in them, because of them. We boast in our sufferings.

This is exactly what we are instructed elsewhere in Scripture.

- James 1:2-4: *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
- 1 Peter 1:6-7: *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

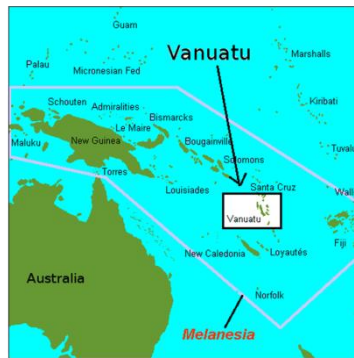
When you think about it, just how many options do we have in regard to suffering? We could cry, despair, fight, doubt, complain or any number of things OR you could rejoice and boast.

There are loads of good missionary stories about suffering and one especially good one comes from John Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, off the coast of Australia, which is now called Vanuatu. The people on these islands were pagan cannibals. The first missionaries to land there were John Williams and James Harris from the London Missionary Society. Guess what happened to them? On November 20, 1839 they were killed and eaten by cannibals only minutes after going ashore.

Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my Resurrection body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.



John Paton



John Paton arrived nineteen years later despite the fact that all of his friends told him he shouldn't go. In his autobiography, he relates the story when hundreds of angry natives hunted him for his life. He climbed a tree to hide from them.

Being entirely at the mercy of such doubtful and vacillating friends, I,

though perplexed, felt it best to obey. I climbed into the tree and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets, and the yells of the Savages. Yet I sat there among the branches, as safe in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly in my soul, than when the moonlight flickered among these chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship. If thus thrown back upon your own soul, alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then?²

Paton was not eaten by cannibals. In fact, he outlived two wives and died at the ripe of age of 83. His ministry among those pagans was so fruitful that the vast majority of them turned their backs on their ancestral ways and surrendered their lives to Christ. John Paton was not concerned about dying. He obviously was not seeking martyrdom or else he wouldn't have hidden himself in a tree in the first place. But boasting in suffering is about more than merely not fearing death. John Paton was also embracing life. He was embracing the life that God had graciously given him, even if it meant hiding in a tree from murderous natives.

This is the truth embodied in verse ten. *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.* What Jesus did affects what I do now. What Jesus accomplished for us then needs to be felt today and tomorrow and the next day. These are not mere brute facts to be memorized. These are penetrating truths that should be palpable to us.

A remarkable modern day illustration of boasting in suffering comes from Lacey Buchanan from Woodbury, Tennessee. I want to show you a [video about her story](#). It is longer than what I

usually show, but it is worth our time to hear her story. It's also very appropriate since this is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.

Wouldn't you love to be able to boast in your sufferings like Lacey does with Christian? Can you see that there is so much more than what we now have?

Rich Maurer
January 19, 2014

¹ I don't know if he was ever a born again Christian, but he was a Baptist who regularly tithed his income. "I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I ever made if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 per week."

² (John G. Patton: Missionary to the New Hebrides, An Autobiography Edited by His Brother [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965, orig. 1889, 1891], p. 200)