

**Title:** Rest and Peace: The Heart of the Reformation

**Central Idea:** Understanding that we are saved by grace, justified by faith, forgiven through Christ, according to God's word, to the glory of God is the key to the Christian faith and to entering God's rest.

**Text: Romans 5:1-2 (ESV)**

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

- I. We are justified by faith alone
  - a. The central tenet of Protestantism's departure from the Roman church
    - i. Luther: "This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification, is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness."
  - b. God alone is the arbiter of righteousness (Ps. 9:7-8)
  - c. We are all guilty of sin, both by nature and by choice
    - i. Rom. 5:12
    - ii. Rom. 3:23
  - d. Justification: the act of declaring or making one righteous in the eyes of God
    - i. Rom. 3:21-23
    - ii. Hab. 2:4 (cf. Rom. 1:17)
  - e. Good works stem from our justification, not vice versa
    - i. Eph. 2:10
    - ii. James is in tension with Paul but not disagreement
  - f. Why faith alone?
    - i. Faith is the only way
      1. Rom. 3:20
      2. Is. 64:6
    - ii. Faith paints the whole picture (Rom. 3:20-25)

- II. We are saved by grace alone
  - a. Grace: a gift of favor from God to men (Eph. 2:8-9)
  - b. Grace is unmerited
    - i. Rom. 9:15-16
    - ii. It is not grace plus works (Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, cult of Jehovah's Witnesses)
    - iii. It is not grace after all you can do (cult of Mormonism)
    - iv. There is nothing in you that catches God's eye (mainstream evangelical Christianity)
    - v. Edwards: "You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary."
- III. We are forgiven in Christ alone
  - a. Christ, as God, has the authority to forgive
    - i. Mark 2:7
    - ii. John 8:58
  - b. Christ is the only mediator between God and men
    - i. 1 Tim. 2:5
    - ii. Heb. 4:14-15
    - iii. John 14:6
  - c. The church tried to insert itself into the salvation process
    - i. Augustine: "He who does not have the church as his mother does not have God as his Father."
      - 1. This quote is true in a very limited sense, regarding being part of the universal people of God or not
      - 2. Church authorities weaponized church membership against the masses to control behaviors (excommunication)
    - ii. We belong to the universal and local church
    - iii. We should love the universal and local church
    - iv. We must remember the universal and local church did not die for us!

IV. The glory belongs to God alone

a. God's glory is the object of salvation

i. Eph. 1:13-14

ii. Phil. 2:9-11

b. God's glory oftentimes gets stolen or misdirected

i. Is. 42:8

ii. It's not about Mary

iii. It's not about the saints

iv. It's not about us (therapeutic moral deism, prosperity gospel)

V. APPLYING THE WORD

a. Why Apply the Word?

i. Scripture is the sole authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

ii. There is a great temptation to elevate our traditions to authoritative

1. Mark 6:7-8

2. Acts 15:8-10

3. Modern examples

a. Popes and Patriarchs

b. Denominational sectarianism

c. Questioning what the Bible says

d. Deconstructionism

iii. Luther: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me."

b. Work vs. Rest

i. Traditions of old morphed into work

ii. The Bible clearly teaches rest

1. Rest is a noun, not a verb
    - a. We can work from rest
  2. Matt. 11:28-30
  3. Heb. 4:9-10
- c. Imagine if you had to...
- i. Prove your worthiness of God's grace
  - ii. Prove your worthiness through your works
  - iii. Rely on others for your forgiveness
  - iv. Follow a list of rules handed down from church leaders
  - v. At the end, hope it was all enough
  - vi. This list is EXHAUSTING and there is NO HOPE!
- d. Invitation: do we believe this is true?
- e. Keller: "Christ will do everything for you, or nothing."

### **Questions for Discussion Guide**

What does it mean that justification comes by faith, apart from works?

What does it mean that salvation is by grace, apart from merit?

In what ways do we tend to wrest away the authority of Scripture?

In what ways do we tend to shine glory away from God?

How does the Reformation (through the 5 Solas) contribute to our understanding of God's rest?

### **Quotes for Graphics**

To add anything to grace is to remove grace from the equation altogether.

"This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification, is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness." – Martin Luther

"My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me." – Martin Luther

“We are already in God’s rest if we are saved by grace, justified by faith, through Christ. There is NOTHING that can remove us from that rest. The work is DONE!”

Having to continually prove your own goodness is exhausting, and you can never know if you’ve ever done enough. You can’t do enough. Christ has done enough already.