

"It Is Well With My Soul"

Reconciliation

How to Receive a Peaceful Life

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul!

"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

(Romans 5:5-8)

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Monday:

- (1) Read "Day 1: Nailed to the Cross"
- (2) Answer Questions for "Day 1"
- (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
- (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."

Tuesday:

- (1) Read "Day 2: How to Have Peace with God"
- (2) Answer Questions for "Day 2"
- (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
- (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."

Wednesday:

- (1) Read "Day 3: The Manifestation of God's Love"
- (2) Answer Questions for "Day 3"
- (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
- (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."

Thursday:

- (1) Read "Day 4: The Mastery of God's Love"
- (2) Answer Questions for "Day 4"
- (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
- (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."

Friday:

- (1) Read "Day 5: The Measure of God's Love"
- (2) Answer Questions for "Day 5"
- (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
- (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."

Saturday:

- (1) Read "Supplement: Thomas Watson on Peace"
 - (2) Answer Questions for "Bonus: Supplement"
 - (3) Memorize Romans 5b-8
 - (4) Memorize Stanza of "It Is Well With My Soul."
 - (5) Write a Testimony: Choose one of the truths learned from the lesson and explain how you personally experienced that truth in your life during the week.
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1. Day 1: Nailed to the Cross

- (1) What three lessons may we learn from the words "my sin"?
- (2) Why is there much joy "of this glorious thought" that my sin is nailed to the cross?
- (3) Why do we praise the Lord for the gift of His Son?

2. Day 2: How to Have Peace with God

- (1) What does it mean to have peace with God?
- (2) What is justification and how does a sinner receive it?
- (3) Why did Christ have to shed His blood in order for us to be justified?

3. Day 3: The Manifestation of God's Love

- (1) What great truth distinguishes Christianity from all other religions?
- (2) What is the definition of love and in what way does God love?
- (3) What two terms in verses 5 and 8 express the revelation of God's love?

4. Day 4: The Mastery of God's Love

- (1) Describe how some people believe God saves sinners with a 50/50 partnership.
- (2) Name two reasons why man cannot partner with God in saving himself.
- (3) How does God accomplish salvation for the sinner without the sinner's partnership?

5. Day 5: The Measure of God's Love

- (1) How does verse 7 help us to measure God's love for His people?
- (2) Does the *average man* pass the test or fail the test?
- (3) Explain how God passes the test and what measurement you would give to His love for you.

6. Bonus: Supplement

- (1) According to point 1, how can we ask God for peace?
 - (2) According to point 2, how can we make war with sin?
 - (3) According to points 4 and 5, how does the blood of Christ enable us to walk closely with God?
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The Scripture Frame

Romans 5:1-11

(These notes are to be used in conjunction with the daily studies)

(1-5a) Our Relationship with God: Justified by Faith - Peace and Hope

5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed;

(5b-8) God's Relationship with Us: Commending His Love Toward Us - Christ's Death

The Manifestation of His Love: Shed upon Us - poured forth like water into a cup
 because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Mastery of His Love: Animates the Sinner - through His death

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

The Measure of His Love: Exceeds Man's Love for a Just Man

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:

The Measure of His Love: Exceeds Man's Love for a Faithful Friend

yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

The Manifestation of His Love: Commended to Us - set forth like words onto paper

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that,

The Mastery of His Love: Conquering the Sinner - through His death

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(9-11) Our Relationship with God: Justified by Blood - Peace and Joy

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Day 1: Nailed to the Cross

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul!*

Introduction: There are many attractions competing for attention in our regular routine of life. However, there are relatively few things which are worthy of our invested time. Very seldom do we consider that which is most pressing upon our hearts, most endemic among our neighbours and most offensive against our God. We do not even like to call it by its name. In fact, to just whisper the word on the street would engender a mocking response, for *sin* is looked upon as an antiquated invention of religion which only exists to oppress society with "rules" created by hypocritical tyrants. Nevertheless, whatever the critics might say, the righteous Lord has imprinted His moral law on the heart of every person and the guilty conscience is proof that His law has been breached and it is that transgression we call sin.

I. An Evaluation on My Sin. "My sin...my sin." (1) Sin is personal, not just universal. It is not his sin, or her sin, or their sin, but "my sin". We clearly see it in others, but we are easily blinded by it in ourselves. For instance, we judge the murderer for taking a life or the thief for stealing a car, but we fail to judge ourselves for hating another or coveting our friend's success. Ah, I am as guilty before God as any other, for my heart is desperately wicked just like theirs. (2) Sin is a piercing reality, not just an abstract idea. It is as if the words should read, "Ouch! My sin!" Like a needle pricking the finger and drawing blood, so sin pricks the heart and draws out all manner of evil. We feel its pinch and know its pain. (3) Sin is pervasive, not isolated. "My sin" penetrates every crevasse of the heart and therefore manifests itself in every action of the will. No doubt, "my sin" is a personal offense against God which pierces my heart with potent force and saturates my life in a state of misery and wickedness.

II. An Examination of the Cross. "Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more." (1) A Substitutionary Deliverance. My sin is "nailed to the cross", for Christ "was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Is. 53:5,6) (2) A Complete Deliverance. My sin, "not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross", for "by one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:14) (3) A Satisfying Deliverance. My sin, "not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more", for I now have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Yes, there is much "joy in the glorious thought" that all my offenses against God have been nailed to the cross and I bear them no more!

III. An Exaltation of the Saviour. "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my Soul!" Unless God purposed, procured and applied this saving grace to me, I would be without help and hope. "My sin" is the reason for His sacrifice, and His sacrifice is the reason He is "My Saviour". Oh, that we could all embrace the Saviour in exchange for our sin! We owe all honour to God for the gift of His Son in that "when we were yet without strength...Christ died for the ungodly."

Day 2: How to Have Peace with God

"Therefore being justified by faith...Christ died for the ungodly...much more then, being now justified by His blood..." - Rom. 5:1-11

Introduction: Peace is often thought of as an end to a war. For instance, two countries in conflict sign a "peace treaty" that brings a close to their fighting. However, there is something more to this word as it relates to peace with God. Not only does the war between the sinner and God stop, the sinner is also reconciled to God - enemies become friends. How can the war between the sinner and God be resolved and a friendship be established? It can only be done when God justifies the sinner. Justification is "the judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner." (L. Berkhof) Consider three aspects to this judicial act of God:

I. The Means: Justified by Faith. Verses 1-5a emphasizes *our* relationship with God. We are told that we are "justified by faith"; that through the Lord Jesus Christ "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." This means that the pronouncement of God in declaring the sinner righteous is received through the agency of faith. Like a river bed and river bank provide a channel through which water flows, so faith is the channel through which sovereign grace flows from the "fountainhead" of Christ to the "desolate land" of the soul. The sinner cannot earn this judicial act of God's grace. It is an act that is accomplished by God alone and a gift that can only be received through faith. As a result, we not only "have peace with God", but we also "rejoice in hope" and "glory in tribulations", for our friendship with God makes us content in all things, guaranteeing that He "will never leave [us], nor forsake [us]." (Heb. 13:5)

II. The Method: Justified by Blood. Verses 9-11 also emphasizes *our* relationship with God. We are told that we are "justified by His blood"; that we are "reconciled to God by the death of His Son". This means that the pronouncement of God in declaring the sinner righteous is based on the death of Christ. In order for justice to be upheld, judgment has to be administered in accordance with law. The LORD has said, "Behold, all souls are mine...the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) If the sinner is to be freed from the penalty of sin, then another must pay the debt. God forgives the sinner because "we have redemption through [Christ's] blood." (Col. 1:14) It is therefore obvious the sinner does not deserve this judicial act of God, but receives it as the gift for which Christ Himself "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh." (1 Pet. 3:18) As a result, we are not only "saved from wrath", but are "reconciled to God" and "joy in God", for our friendship with Him "satisfieth the longing soul". (Ps. 107:9)

III. The Motive: Justified by Love. Verses 5b-8 highlight *God's* relationship with us. We are told that the "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"; that "God commendeth His love toward us". This means that the pronouncement of God in declaring the sinner righteous originates in the supreme perfection of divine love. "We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 Jn. 4:19) What a marvelous truth! The depraved and condemned sinner who delights only in the wickedness of his own defiled heart is justified by the blood of Jesus Christ "who loved [us], and gave Himself for [us]." (Gal. 2:20) This gift is unearned, undeserved and is not initiated by the sinner. This is why it is called "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." (1 Tim. 1:11)

Day 3: The Manifestation of God's Love

"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us...but God commendeth His love toward us..."—Rom. 5:5b,8a

Introduction: That God "made the earth by His power", that He "established the world by His wisdom", that He "has stretched out the heaven by His understanding", that He "is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works", that "the LORD is the true God", that Jesus Christ is the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" is utterly astounding and causes even the earth to tremble "at the presence of the Lord." Many religions even borrow these divine perfections in creating a god that fits into their scheme of belief. However, what is more staggering than all of the foregoing attributes, and what no other religion but Christianity alone embraces, is the "love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (Jere. 10:10; 51:15; Ps. 145:17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16) Consider:

I. The Definition for Love. "The love of God." In its most essential qualities, we may say that "love is the personal delight in a desire of happiness and devotion of well-being for the object of interest." For instance, when a husband loves his wife, he personally delights in desiring her happiness and committing himself to ensuring her well-being. With reference to God, we may observe two distinguishing marks. First, divine love is present in God in an absolute sense. For example, who was God loving before He brought creation into existence? Scripture teaches that (1) love exists eternally in the Godhead shared equally and entirely between the three Persons of the Trinity; and (2) love excels in the Godhead since He is necessarily the highest good that may possibly be loved. Second, divine love is extended to creatures only as God delights in Himself through them. As Herman Bavinck noted, "[God] does everything with a view to Himself, because He cannot rest [or love] in anything less than Himself." (1) His universal love for the creation is centered in the delight He has in Himself: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11) (2) His special love for the redeemed is centered in the delight He has in Himself: God has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph. 1:5) We may therefore conclude God's love for others is secondary to His love for Himself.

II. The Revelation of Love. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts...God commendeth His love toward us." Along with the virtue of love are the "acts of love", or the manifestations of God's delight expressed for His creation. Two expressions are used to describe the unveiling of God's love to His people: (1) "Shed", meaning to "pour out" or "disperse". Like water poured forth from a cup and dispersed into another container, so the love of God is poured forth into our hearts. (2) "Commend", meaning to "set forth" or "establish". Like an essay sets forth words, sentences and paragraphs therein establishing thoughts, propositions and arguments, so God sets forth Christ thereby establishing redemption for His people. Whether His love is "shed" or "commended", the general idea is God making known to His people the nature of His love by means of a revelation. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 Jn. 4:9,10) Furthermore, the love of God in Christ is given us "by the Holy Spirit", for He indwells the believer. (Jn. 14:17; Gal. 5:22) Let us therefore rejoice in that we are loved by God!

Day 4: The Mastery of God's Love

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Rom. 5:6,8b

Introduction: There appears to be a great deal of uncertainty among Christians on whether or not God will be successful in saving sinners. However, it is not only a lack of confidence which overshadows their evangelistic efforts, it is also a false Gospel that is preached to the lost. It is assumed that salvation is dependent upon a 50/50 partnership between God and the sinner. At first, the claim looks legitimate, for it is argued that God has accomplished His part by preparing the gift of redemption; man must now do his part by receiving it. In other words, it is not enough that Christ has paid the penalty of death - salvation has not yet been secured until each person steps forward and embraces Christ. However, if God has done the first half and it is now up to man to achieve the second half, then it is clear man is elevated to a position, if not above God, then at least equal with Him. To imagine God twiddling His thumbs and hoping as many people as possible will come to Him for salvation is to construct a pathetic deity based on humanistic philosophy. Such a god is to be pitied rather than worshipped. Shall God checkmate Himself in His strategic plan of salvation? Let us examine what the Scriptures teach about the inability of man and the mastery of God's love in conquering the sinner.

I. The Nature of Man's Condition. "For when we were yet without strength...while we were yet sinners." (1) Man is incapable of coming to Christ, for he is "yet without strength". Even if he wanted to receive salvation, he cannot do it in his own strength. The Scriptures teach that man is spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). In this condition, he is incapable of exercising any kind of spiritual activity, including the reception of God's gift. (Jn. 3:1-8) (2) Man is unwilling to come to Christ, for he is "yet [a] sinner". Even if man could receive salvation in his own strength, he would not do it because he is a sinner. The Scriptures teach that man is not only a transgressor, but despite his knowledge of God's wrath, continues to have pleasure in rebelling against the Lord. (Rom. 1:31) After all, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?" (Jer. 13:23) Hence, this two-fold problem, man's spiritual death and his sinful defiance, prevents every sinner from choosing Christ in his fallen state and condition. (Rom. 3:11)

II. The Nature of God's Salvation. "Christ died for us...in due time Christ died for the ungodly." If man cannot and will not come to Christ on his own accord, then how does he become a child of God? First, let it be clear that God would be absolutely justified if He chose to leave man in his misery and execute the righteous sentence of eternal death. (Rom. 9:20-23) Second, God has chosen to set His love upon the elect. (2 Thess. 2:13) Third, the will of God in redeeming His elect is the outflow of His love for them. For, "He hath chosen us in [Christ]...that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:4) Fourth, it is this supremacy of God's love in Christ which sets the sinner free and gives him a right to be His friend. For, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Eph. 2:4) Fifth, this quickening (spiritual life) is given us in the New Birth, for, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:3) Faith is not the condition of the New Birth, but the product thereof, for we are born again "of God". (Jn. 1:12,13)

Day 5: The Measure of God's Love

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."—Rom. 5:7

Introduction: We know the love of God because He has manifested it to us by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit; we know the mastery of God's love because He has conquered our sinful souls by the death of His Son; however, is it possible to now measure His love in order that we might know the dimensions of such marvelous devotion? Paul gives us a glimpse into the magnificence of God's love by establishing a baseline of measurement. It is as if he creates a case study based on the average man and how far his love would extend if given the opportunity. This case study involves several factors. Consider:

I. The Subject of the Test is the Average Man. "One" would scarcely die for a righteous man, and "some" would even dare to die for a good man. There may be some people who would never demonstrate such love for another and there may be others who would without hesitation, but by and large the average person who is less biased one way or the other is chosen as the subject for this case study. How the average person would react to such a dilemma is the basis for the test.

II. The Object of the Test is the Best Sort of Person. It is a "righteous man" and a "good man" which is made the object of love. A "righteous man" is one with integrity who upholds the law. A "good man" is one with compassion who shares his life with others. We may understand the reluctance of the average man to lay down his life for an unjust enemy, but according to this test, he is reluctant to die for an just and faithful friend.

III. The Scale of the Test is Sacrifice. The average man is called upon to "die" for his friend. Death is the greatest evidence of one's love for another person. For, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jn. 15:13)

IV. The Calculation of the Test Indicates an Infinitesimal Fraction of Success. For "scarcely" would one die, yea, some would "even dare" to die for a friend. The case study demonstrates the slender possibility for the average man to achieve the highest expression of love. If we now have a standardized scale by which to measure the highest form of love, how does this help us calculate the love God has for us?

V. The Purpose of the Test is to Prove the Immeasurable Love of God. Let us remember, "love is the personal delight in a desire of happiness and devotion of well-being for the object of interest". We have already considered in study 3 how God's love for others is only as He delights in Himself through them, yet may we not now think of His love in the more personal terms of how He makes us happy and well? While the average man may hardly express his love for a friend by giving his life as a sacrifice, God has extended His love toward those who are His *enemies* by making His Son a sacrifice for sins. For, we "that were sometime alienated and enemies in [our] mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present [us] holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight." (Co. 1:21,22) Truly, greater love has no man, than the love God has for His people in Christ!

Supplement: Thomas Watson on Peace

How Can Peace Be Attained?

(1.) Let us ask it of God. He is the God of peace; he beats back the roaring lion; he stills the raging of conscience: if we could call all the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul, but the Sun of Righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself, but remains dry and parched till the clouds drop their moisture, so our hearts cannot have peace till he infuse it, and drop it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, 'Lord, thou who art the God of peace, create peace; thou who art the Prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yea, even the bitter cup of death.'

(2.) If you would have peace, make war with sin. Sin is the Achan that troubles us, the Trojan horse. 'When Joram sew Jehu, he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?' 2 Kings 9:92. What peace, so long as sin remains unmortified? If you would have peace with God, break the league with sin; give battle to sin, for it is a most just war. God has proclaimed it: nay, he has promised us victory. 'Sin shall not have dominion.' Rom 6:14. No way to peace, but by maintaining a war with sin. *Pax nostra bellum contra daemonem* [Our peace is a war against the Devil]. Tertullian. When Samson had slain the lion, there came honey out of the lion; so by slaying sin, we get the honey of peace.

(3.) Go to Christ's blood for peace. Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness, not Christ's: they go for peace to their holy life, not Christ's death. If conscience be troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace. Duties must not be neglected, nor yet idolized. Look to the blood of sprinkling. Heb 12:24. That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience. Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Rom 5:5: No balm to cure a wounded conscience, but the blood of Christ.

(4.) Walk closely with God. Peace flows from purity. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.' Gal 6:16. In the text, grace and peace are put together; grace is the root, and peace is the flower. As balmwater drops in distillation, so divine peace comes out of a gracious heart. Walk very holily. God's Spirit is a refiner before a comforter.