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BIBLE STUDY.**LETTER TO THE ROMANS. — NO. 7.**

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Chapter five contains a partial enumeration of the blessings which are fruits of such a faith as that portrayed in chapter four. It shows the Christian development of the life of anyone who has the faith of Abraham. Two words form the keynote of the chapter—MUCH MORE. If you have the glory, the patience, or the Christian experience spoken of in this, or any other chapter, know that God has them in store, and is willing to give much more, for he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

"Therefore being justified by faith," that is, being made conformable to the law by faith, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The only way that man can be made conformable to the law, and live free from condemnation is by having faith in the promises of God. In Christ there is no unrighteousness, therefore there is nothing but righteousness. By believing on Christ, the Christian has the righteousness of Christ.

But does not James say that there must be works, or the faith is of no avail? It is true that faith is made perfect by works. Jas. 2:22. But it is by faith and faith alone that men are justified. The very text which speaks of Abraham's being justified by faith, states that the works were only the out-growth of underlying faith, and that by this work the scripture was fulfilled which says: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." Works are the outgrowth of faith. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We give ourselves into the hands of Christ. He comes and *takes up His abode* with us. We are as clay in the hands of the potter; but it is Christ who does all the good works, and to Him belongs all the glory.

"We have peace with God." What is peace? It is not a feeling, but a fact. Many think that they must experience a "certain feeling" which they will know is the "peace of God." But they have never had the peace of God, and therefore cannot know what kind of feeling it ought to be. Satan might give a certain happy feeling, and if the Christian

had only the feeling to go by, he would be deceived. The Lord does not deal in feelings, but in facts. Peace is the opposite of war, strife, and emulation. We are either at peace with God or else at war. If at war, it is because we are carrying on rebellion.

How do men fight God? By following sinful practices. Any one knowingly indulging in one sinful practice is warring against God. God is a God of peace. Christ left his peace with his followers. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Between God and his dear Son in heaven there is a "counsel of peace." They counsel for the peace of man. There is only one condition on which man can have that peace—unconditional surrender, surrender all to God, and then there is peace in the heart, no matter what the feeling may be.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." What rich comfort in these words! Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." So his peace is likened to the continual flowing of the river, and the never-ceasing roll of the ocean wave; therefore it matters not what the feeling is, for if all sins have been confessed, God is faithful and just to forgive them; and we are at peace with him. The condition of peace is the condition of being justified by faith.

"By whom [Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace [unmerited forgiveness and favor] in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Righteousness can be wrought in men day by day by the same power by which Isaac was born of parents who were practically dead. When people once gain this experience, the next thing they will be constrained to rejoice in the hope of the coming of the Lord.

How often do we look forward to the coming of the Lord with fear? If we do not rejoice in the Lord in the present life, we have no hope that we will rejoice in him in a life to come. Why should Christians "rejoice in hope of the glory of God?" Because they are at peace with Him. Seventh-day Adventists are bidden "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." We praise him that he is coming soon, it is one of the most glorious and cheering assurances we have.

We live in the present, not in the future. Read 1 Pet. 1:5-9. Salvation belongs to us to-day just as much as it will when in the kingdom of God. No one but ourselves can deprive us of it. Says Peter, "Receiving [present time] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Our present salvation is our only hope of a future salvation. "Kept by the power of God" is the expression used by Peter, and it denotes precisely the same condition—"being justified by faith"—in the fifth chapter of Romans.

The same power that will make men immortal in the life to come, justifies them—makes them conformable to the law—by being in harmony with it, every day. Says Paul in the letter to the Philippians, chapter three, and verse twenty-one: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, *according to the working* whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

In Eph. 3:16, Paul in an inspired prayer prays that they might be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, according to "the riches of his glory." The grace of God is equal to the glory of God. God's throne is a throne of glory, and the grace wherein we stand is backed by the glory of God.

"We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Some say that tribulation worketh *impatience*. This is not true. If a man is not justified by faith, tribulation will develop the impatience that is in him. How is it, then, that tribulation worketh patience? Let these texts answer: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1 Pet. 5:7. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Ps. 55:22. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28.

He takes the heavy loads away. What is that burden? Anything that worries or vexes us. It matters not whether it be a small thing—a little trial—or a great one. Cast it on the Lord. We rejoice in tribulation because we have Christ with us, and we cast all the burden on him. He is able to bear them. He has already borne them for all the world, so we cannot add to his burden.

How do we get rid of the burdens? Give them to Christ, and then say, "He has them." And he has them whether you feel any different or not. Then you will experience the truth of the words, "I will give you rest." It is rest even though the physical pain still racks the body. For Christ bears that tribulation, and you are lifted up above all pain.

How did the martyrs go to the rack and the stake with songs of joy on their lips? Was that mere bravado? No, Christ bore their burden, and in him they had peace. Out of a full heart they sang their praise to him. Thus they were happy and joyous, and scarcely noticed the pain while the flames crept around them. We will have to "pass through great tribulation." It may be the lash on the naked flesh, or it may be the thumb-screw. Human nature shrinks from such torture. In Christ we can bear it. Gain an experience in him now, and in the trying time he will not forsake you. He can bear that great burden as well as a small one.

Christ will be ours then as well as now, and the life we live will be in him. No man in this world will be able to stand in that time unless he has previously learned the lesson of faith. Now is the time, while the lesson may be learned under easy circumstances. Great as will be the tribulation of that time we will pass through it with rejoicing. That rejoicing must be learned now.

"Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect, wanting nothing." Patience shows us to be perfect men.

"Patience worketh experience." It is a Christian experience that is referred to. "Experience" signifies that men who have it, have been proved and tried. They have laid hold upon God and proved Him.

Experience, or the fact that we daily prove God, develops hope—hope in God. If God is proven every day, then every day there is hope. That is, we have reason to expect the things we desire. We have present salvation, therefore we glory in the hope of an eternal salvation. This is indeed a chapter of hope and rejoicing.

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