

# **RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH, THE BELIEVER'S HOPE**

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**GALATIANS 5:1-5 • TV082A**

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### **Galatians 5:1-5**

*“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”*

I invite your attention today to the **Book of Galatians chapter 5**. I'm going to be reading **verses 4 and 5, Galatians 5**.

Now, my message is on this subject: **“RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH, THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.”**

Now, let's read the Word of God together. If you will, follow with me in your Bible as I read **Galatians 5:4**, *“Christ is become of no effect; (that is of no value to you), whosoever of you who seek to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace.”*

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You have departed from the hope of mercy in Christ.” That’s what Paul is saying, “*You have fallen from grace.*” You have departed from the hope of grace, from the gospel of grace, and the message of grace, “*For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*”

Now, I’m going to make two or three statements before I get into the main body of this message. And I want you to listen carefully to these statements and I want you to think about them.

First of all: Salvation by grace through faith is the very heart of the Gospel, salvation by grace through faith is the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

In fact, this is the Gospel. Paul said in **Ephesians 2:8 and 9:** “*For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.*”

And as long as this message is proclaimed, the truth of the Gospel of God’s mercy is maintained, just as long as this truth is preached; salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. That’s the heart of the Gospel.

Now, what we are saying is this, that God’s mercy alone purposed salvation, God’s mercy alone planned salvation, and God’s mercy alone provided salvation. Moses said, “*Lord; show me your glory.*”

And the Lord said, “*I’ll cause my goodness; (my glory’s my goodness, my grace), to pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.*” That’s in **Exodus 33:18 and 19.**

God’s mercy alone, God’s grace alone, provided, purposed, and planned salvation. And Jesus Christ alone is the complete and sufficient Redeemer having secured for us through His righteousness and through His sacrifice acceptance with God.

“*He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” That’s what we’re saying when we are saying that salvation is by grace through faith and that is the heart of the Gospel.

We are saying that God planned salvation, that Christ secured salvation, and that the Holy Spirit alone quickens the dead sinner, convicts the guilty sinner, and applies the blessings of Christ to the believing sinners.

The Scripture says, “*You who were dead hath He quickened (or made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins,*” the Holy Spirit hath quickened and made alive.

Salvation by grace; that’s the heart of the Gospel and without that message you don’t have any Gospel, you don’t have any good news. You don’t have any glad tidings, which brings me to the second statement; now listen to it.

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Secondly: Salvation by grace through faith is the only real hope for a guilty sinner, the only real hope that a guilty sinner has!

Now, you're holding your Bible open there to **Galatians 5:4 and 5**; look right across the page on the left. Look at **Galatians 4:21** and listen to Paul. Here's what He says over there in **Galatians 4:21**; "*Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, (you that desire to be redeemed by the law, you that desire to be judged by the law, you that desire to be under the law as a way of life, and unto works as the way of life); "Do you hear the law?"*" Do you hear what the law says?

Now my friend; if you wish to stand before God someday and be judged according to your religious works, according to your good works, according to what the law says, if you wish to do that, if you wish to stand before God with the law of God as your judge and as your measurement for righteousness, you're welcome, but first I want to ask you this, the same thing Paul asked.

*"Tell me, do you hear the law?"* Do you hear what the law requires? Do you hear what the law commands? Do you hear what the law demands of you?

Now, we're not talking about a church standing, we are talking about God's standard. That's what we're talking about, not what your preacher requires or your church requires or your denomination requires.

But here's what Paul is saying; "You who would be justified by the law, you who want the law to be your standard of righteousness, you who want to be judged by your good works; do you know what the law of God requires?"

This holiness we're talking about here; this is not man's holiness, this is God's holiness. This is not human business; this is God's business. This is not religious piety; this is God's righteousness.

This is not man's praise; this is God's glory we are talking about. He says, "Tell me, do you know what's required by the law of God? Do you know what's required by the holiness of God and the righteousness of God?"

If you be weighed in the balances of God's law, of God's righteousness; do you know what would be required of you? Listen to what Paul is saying in **Romans 3:23** when he said, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

Now, some of you haven't come short of what you demand of yourself or what someone else expects of you or what even your church expects of you or your pastor expects of you, but you'll come short of what God expects of you. "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

This was the glory that Israel saw at Sinai, the glory which made them back off away from that mountain with its lightning and thunder and its clouds of glory. They saw the holy law of God. They saw what it required when God Himself gave it to them and they backed off.

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This is the glory that Isaiah saw when he cried; *“Woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips.”* This is the glory which Job saw in **Job 42:6** which made him say; *“I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes.”*

This is the glory which Daniel saw that made him see his corruption. This is the glory which John saw on the Isle of Patmos which made him fall at the feet of the Lord as a dead man, salvation by grace through faith; that's the only real hope that a sinner has, that a guilty sinner has.

The law offers us no hope. The ceremonies of religion offer us no hope and the requirements of God's glory offer us no hope. The only hope we have is that God will be merciful in Christ and show us grace through the merits of His Son. That's the only real hope that a sinner has.

Now, there are two statements that I want you to think about:

First of all: Salvation by grace, unmerited favor, undeserved favor through faith, in Christ's merit, and in Christ's righteousness, in Christ's sacrifice; that is the Gospel. That's the Gospel of the Word of God and that's the only real hope that a sinner has!

Second: I know this is true; salvation by grace and grace alone, by the grace and mercy of God through faith, is contrary to human nature!

It is now, it always has been, and it always will be. And I'm talking about human nature in the world and human nature in the church. Actually, the worst enemy of salvation by grace; (now listen to me), the greatest enemies of salvation by grace through faith are not found in the world, they are not found among the drunkards and the harlots and the prostitutes and the gamblers and the profane swearer.

Do you know where the greatest enemies of salvation by pure grace through the merits of Christ by faith alone; do you know where they're found? They are found in religion. That's right! It was the religious community that cried, *“Crucify him.”*

It wasn't the Publicans and sinners and harlots that cried for the blood of the Son of God; He was their friend. It was the religious community that cried, *“Crucify Him, crucify Him.”*

It was the religious Saul of Tarsus that hated Christ and persecuted the Church. It was the religious Saul, who called himself *“blameless before the law,”* who called himself *“A Hebrew of Hebrews,”* who called himself a *“Pharisee.”* That's the man that hated the Gospel.

It was the religious leaders who killed the apostles. Every one of them were martyrs except John who was exiled in the Isle of Patmos. It was religious organizations and the religious establishment calling on the name of God who sent the martyrs to the stakes and to the prisons and to the dungeons, and to the fire.

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Salvation by grace alone, by the pure unmerited favor of God alone, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by faith alone, is hated by human nature, whether that human nature is clothed in the words of religion or whether it's in the world.

And my friend, if you embrace salvation by grace alone, through the merits of Jesus Christ, your enemies (and this will be shocking to some of you), but you'll find it to be true; your greatest enemy will not be the rebels of the world because all of them know if they are ever saved, God will have to save them, if they'll ever receive mercy, it'll be undeserved mercy, and it will be undeserved, non-merited grace.

But the super religious, the super pious Pharisees who are going about to establish their own righteousness and will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God; they will be your enemies.

They were the enemies of Paul the apostle who wept over them. He cried, *"Brethren; my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have zeal of God but not according to knowledge. For their being ignorant of God's righteousness are going about (with much ado) trying to establish a righteousness of their own and will not submit to the righteousness of God."*

Sovereign mercy is offensive to men who are not guilty. But sovereign mercy to a guilty man is good news. Sovereign mercy is offensive to so-called "good people." But sovereign mercy is a blessed, blessed, and good tidings, to the man who knows he is a sinner.

Sovereign mercy is offensive to the deserving but to the undeserving it's the gift of God. **Matthew 9:9-13**; you turn over there and read that.

Our Lord was eating with some Publicans and sinners one day and the religious fellows came around and they looked over there and saw Him sitting with the sinners and eating and they said to the disciples: *"Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? Why is He friendly with these people?"*

And the Lord heard them. He knew what they were saying and He turned to these religious leaders, these pious, moral, holier than thou, religious leaders, and He said, *"The well do not need a doctor but they who are sick. I am come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. You go and learn what that means. I will have mercy and not sacrifice."* Have you learned what that means, *"The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost?"*

*"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."* Are these just words?

You know these verses; what do they mean? Have you ever experienced these verses; *"Christ died for the ungodly? When we were enemies Christ died for us? When we were sinners God commended his love toward us?"*

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My friend; read the text again. Let's look at it in **Galatians chapter 5:4 and 5**; listen to it again, "*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*"

You have no part in Christ; this is what he is saying. You have no part; Christ is of no value to you at all. You have no part in Christ or His righteousness if you seek to be justified by the works of the law. You have no part in His righteousness. He means nothing to you. You've turned your back on the grace of God. You've turned your back on the mercy of God.

**Verse 5**; "*For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*" "*For we,*" we are fallen sons of Adam, unworthy creatures, guilty creatures; that's what He's talking about. "*We*" Gentiles, "*we*" aliens, "*we*" strangers, "*we*" guilty men; we have experienced His grace.

We know something about His grace. We've been brought to look to Christ: "*We've passed from death unto life,*" but we are not yet like our Lord, we are waiting. "*We see now through a glass dimly. We know in part, we prophecy in part, but we wait through the Spirit.*"

Now listen to this, the Holy Spirit of God is spoken of here, for it's the Holy Spirit of God who revealed our guilty nature, who revealed our sin, who brought us to see Christ as our substitute. We wait; we are not yet like our Lord.

We're not perfectly conformed to His image yet but through the Holy Spirit we are waiting, waiting for what? We're "*waiting for the hope of righteousness*" that absolute, perfect holiness, which we have in Christ, which some day will bring us into the full glory of His presence and we shall be just like our Lord. That's what we are waiting on. We're not there yet.

John wrote in **1 John 3**: "*Beloved; now are we the sons of God, (now, right now). It's the gift of God, eternal life. Right now we are the sons of God. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know this, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see him as he is.*"

And that's what we are waiting on. That's what our text is saying; it's saying this: you have no part in Christ or His righteousness or His blood if you seek to be justified by the law. The fountain of blood is offensive to those who are clean but its good news to the unclean. The righteousness of Christ is offensive to those who have a righteousness of their own but to those who are clothed in rags it is good news.

So, to you have tried to be justified by your works and your religious righteousness, Christ is of no value to you. Christ is of no help to you. You have fallen from the system of grace. You've departed from the Gospel of grace.

You've departed from the righteousness of Christ. "*For we wait, through the Spirit, for the hope of righteousness, by faith.*" How, by faith? That's the sole and only condition. "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life.*"

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*“It’s not he that worketh (or he that striveth or he that earneth or he that speaketh) but he that believeth.”* That’s what our Lord said, *“You go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. And he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

When the Philippian jailer came to Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi he said: *“Sirs; what must I do to be saved?”* And Paul said this to him, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”*

That’s the sole condition. *“We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. He that believeth on the Son of God hath life and he that believeth not on the Son of God shall never see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

Listen to this hymn:

**“My faith has found a resting place  
Not in device or creed  
I trust the ever living one  
His wounds for me shall plead.**

**Enough for me that Jesus saves  
This ends my fear and doubt  
A sinful soul I came to Him  
He’ll never cast me out.**

**I need no other argument  
I need no other plea  
It is enough for me that Jesus died  
And that He died for me.”**

I want you to write down five things that I’m going to give you now as I close this message, salvation by grace through faith, righteousness by faith, the believer’s hope. I want you to write down five things that clearly define the believer’s hope and here they are:

**First of all:** Our hope is in Christ and Christ alone!

Now, the old Pharisees had a hope in their heritage; they said: *“We have Abraham for our father. We know that Abraham is in our background. He is our father and we get our religion from Abraham and we are resting in our heritage.”*

My friend; we know this; our heritage brings us nothing but misery: *“In Adam we died.”* That’s what our heritage gave us. Our heritage gave us death and condemnation and judgment *“for in Adam all died. By Adam judgment and condemnation passed upon all men.”*

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But here's the good news: *"In Adam we die; in Christ we are made alive."* So, we have no hope in our heritage.

And then others build their hope on outward ceremonies, circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and all of these rituals and ceremonies of religion they practice. But we know this, that no infant sprinkling, no circumcision, no immersion, no sacraments, no place of worship, no religious right, only Christ: *"In Christ there's neither circumcision nor uncircumcision."*

And then others find their hope in moral virtue. But we know the Scripture says: *"There's none good, no not one. There's none that understandeth. There's none that seeketh after God."* None are really good. Even our most solemn times are full of self and sin.

But we wait for righteousness in Christ. Christ is our righteousness. That's the hope of the Christian. That's the hope of the believer; his hope is in Christ, not in a profession, in a person. Not in a proposition, in a person. Not in a plan but in a person. Not in a ceremony, in a person. Not in a law, in a person. That's where our hope is.

**Secondly:** Our hope is in His grace, pure grace, pure mercy, plus nothing, minus nothing!

God chose us not because we loved Him but because He loved us. We know that: *"We loved Him because He first loved us. And herein is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sin."*

God blessed us not because we are gracious but because He's gracious. And God almighty saves us not because we are good but because He's good and our hope is in His grace.

**"My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and His righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
I holy lean on Jesus' name.**

**His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in this whelming flood  
When all around my soul gives way  
He then is my hope and my stay."**

**Thirdly:** Our hope is in the honored law!

Our hope is in Christ; our hope is in His grace that He'll be gracious to us. We don't deserve it. We don't earn His mercy and grace; if I go to hell that'll be my fault. But if I'm saved and I wake up in glory; God will get the glory for it. God will get the praise and the credit for it.

It's by His grace. I don't deserve it. Any time that we feel God is obligated to us we don't know anything about our sins, or God's sovereignty. But our hope is in the honored law through Christ.



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Now listen to me: any man listening and we need to examine ourselves. We need to examine ourselves. We need to examine our experiences and our hope and our foundation. The Scripture says: *“Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Let a man examine himself and so let him eat the Lord’s Table.”*

Let’s see where we stand and in what we’re trusting and whom we’re trusting. But if any of you have any hope for righteousness or any hope of acceptance by God which diminishes or destroys His holy law; your hope is in vain.

Now Christ said: *“I didn’t come to destroy the law I came to fulfill it.”* God’s law still stands. God’s law has not been repealed. God’s law must be honored. God’s law must be obeyed.

And it’s the hope you have for acceptance with God or salvation. If it destroys or diminishes or takes the edge off or dishonors God’s perfect law then it’s no hope at all; your hope is in vain.

You say: “Well, what is this hope in Christ?” Christ honored the law. That’s right, He honored God’s law. *“He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.”* The Father said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”* He said, *“I always do those things which please my Father.”*

So Christ when He came to redeem us, He didn’t destroy the law; He obeyed it. He honored it, He fulfilled it, and He met every demand. We didn’t keep it; He did. We didn’t honor it; He did. We didn’t obey it; He did. So, God almighty redeemed us by an act of mercy but also by an act of honoring His law.

**Fourthly:** Our hope is in an act of justice!

Now, this is important. Our hope is Christ. Our hope is God’s grace. Our hope is in the honored law and our hope is in an act of justice. We are saved by an act of mercy but also by an act of justice. The guilty must be punished.

You read the Word of God; listen to it: *“The soul that sinneth; it shall surely die.”* That’s never been taken out of God’s Book. He said: *“I will in no wise clear the guilty. Sin bringeth forth death. The wages of sin is death.”*

So, God almighty in redeeming His people by the death of His Son on the cross performed an act of mercy and at the same time an act of justice. Christ took our sin in His body and paid for it. He paid all the debt we owe.

God can be just and justifier through the sacrifice of His Son. He honored the law by His perfect life and satisfied justice by His death.

**Fifthly:** Our hope is sure; it’s sure!

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Let me ask you some questions: Suppose you were perfectly holy and righteous. What would you expect from God? You might expect God to receive me. Well, in Christ we are holy and righteous. We have a perfect righteousness. It's not ours; it's His. So, I expect God to receive me.

Suppose that you were innocent and without guilt. That's what justification means, "Just as if I'd never sinned." That's to be holy without guilt. So, what do I expect from God if I'm holy and without guilt? I expect to be received and accepted. Well, we will be if we are justified in Christ.

Suppose all your debt was fully paid. What would you expect from God? Why, I would expect God to let me into His Kingdom. If I owed no debt and the debt of sin was all paid:

**“Christ paid it all  
All the debt I owe  
Sin left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.”**

That's what Paul is saying in **Romans 8:30-33**; he said: *“If God be for us who can be against us? Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemns? Christ died, was buried, and rose again, and is now at the right hand of God interceding for us.”*

That's the believer's hope. *“We through the Spirit wait.”* It'll be revealed one day when He comes for the righteousness, for the hope of righteousness by faith.

And our hope is Christ. Our hope is in His grace. Our hope is in His mercy. Our hope is in the honored law, an act of justice, and our hope is sure!