

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

GALATIANS 5:4-5 • TV82A

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

This sermon has been edited for language translation. Numerous words and phrases have been simplified with the hope that a more accurate translation could be obtained.

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

I ask you to look in your bible with me at **Galatians Chapter 5**, verses 4 and 5.

My sermon is on this subject; **“Righteousness by Faith, the Believer’s Hope”**.

Please read the word of God with me.

Galatians 5:4:

“Christ is become of no effect (no value) unto you, whosoever of you (who seek to be) are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace.”

This is what Paul is saying to those who are seeking to be justified by God’s law:

“You have departed from the hope of mercy in Christ.”

“You have departed from the hope of grace.”

“You have departed from the gospel of grace.”

“You have departed from the message of grace.”

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Now look at verse 5:

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

I am first going to point out three of four things before I get into the main part of this sermon. I want you to listen carefully and think about them.

The first point is this:

Salvation by grace through faith is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, this is the gospel.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9, *“For by grace are ye 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 of Paul is proclaimed, the truth of the gospel of God’s mercy is maintained.

Salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the heart of the gospel. This is what I am saying to you:

God’s mercy alone purposed salvation.

God’s mercy alone planned salvation.

God’s mercy alone provided salvation.

Moses once asked the Lord,

“Lord, show me your glory.” And the Lord replied, *“I will cause my goodness (my glory, my grace) to pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”* This is in Exodus 33:18-19.

It is God’s mercy and grace alone that has purposed, provided and planned salvation. It is Jesus Christ alone who is the complete and sufficient Redeemer for this salvation. He has secured acceptance for us with God through His righteousness and His sacrifice.

“He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” 2 Corinthians. 5:21.

Salvation by grace through faith is the heart of the gospel. It is God who planned salvation. It is Christ who secured salvation. And it is the Holy Spirit alone who brings the dead sinner to life. The Holy Spirit convicts the guilty sinner and applies the blessing of Christ to the believing sinner.

The Scripture says, *“You who were dead has He made alive.”* The Holy Spirit has made alive you who were once dead in trespasses and sins.

Salvation by grace is the heart of the gospel. Without this message you do not have the gospel. Without this message you do not have good news. Without this message you do not have a glad report.

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This brings me to my second statement. Please listen to it:
Salvation by grace through faith is the only real hope a guilty sinner has.

If you are holding your Bible and looking at Galatians 5:4-5, then look at Galatians 4:21 and listen to Paul.

Paul says, “Tell me, ye that desire to be obligated to the law”
Tell me, you who desire to be redeemed by the law,
Tell me, you who desire to be judged by the law,
Tell me, you who desire to be under the law and works as a way of life,
Tell me, Paul says, “Do you not hear the law?” Do you not hear what the law says?

My friends, if you wish to stand before God someday and be judged by your religious works, then you can be.

If you wish to be judged by your good works, then you can be.
If you wish to be judged by God’s law, then you can be.
If you desire to stand before God as your judge with the law of God and as your measurement of righteousness, then you can do that.

But before you do that, I first want to ask you what Paul asked in our text:
Tell me, do you not hear the law?
Do you not hear what the law requires?
Do you not hear what the law commands?
Do you not hear what the law demands of you?

We are not talking about a church standard. We are talking about God’s standard.
We are not talking about what your preacher or your church requires. We are talking about what God requires.

Here is what Paul is really asking,
“You who want to be justified by the law of God, do you know what the law requires?”

“You who want the law as your standard of righteousness, do you know what it requires?”

“Tell me”, Paul says, “You who want to be judged by your good works, do you know what works the law requires?”

This holiness we’re talking about is not man’s holiness, this is God’s holiness. This is not human goodness; this is God’s goodness. This is not religious righteousness; this is God’s righteousness. This is not man’s praise; this is God’s glory we’re talking about.

“Tell me”, Paul says, “Do you know what is required by the law of God? Do you know what is required by the holiness and righteousness of God?”

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If you want to be weighed in the balances of God's law and righteousness, do you know what is required of you?

This is what Paul is saying in Romans 3:23, when he said, "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*"

Some may have come short of what you or someone else expects of you, or of what the church expects of you, or what your pastor expects of you, but you've come short of what God expects of you!

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

This is the glory that Israel saw at Mount Sinai. This glory made them back away from the mountain with its lightning, thunder and clouds of glory. They saw the holy law of God. They saw what the law required when God gave it to them. They had to back way off.

This is the glory the Prophet Isaiah saw when he cried, "*Woe is me! I'm a man of unclean lips.*"

This is the glory Job saw (in Job Chapter 40 and 41). It made him say, "*I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes.*"

This is the glory the Prophet Daniel saw. This glory made him see his corruption.

This is the glory John (the apostle) saw on the Isle of Patmos. This glory made him fall like a dead man at the feet of the Lord.

Salvation by grace through faith is the only real hope a sinner has. That's the only hope a guilty sinner has.

The law does not give us hope. The ceremonies of religion do not give us hope. The requirements of God's glory do not give hope.

The only hope we have is that God will be merciful in Christ and show us grace through the merits of His Son. This is the only real hope a sinner has.

Now, here are two statements. I want you to think about them:

First, salvation is by grace (unmerited, undeserved favor) through faith in Christ's merits. Salvation is by Christ's righteousness and Christ's sacrifice...this is the gospel! This is the gospel of the word of God. And this is the only real hope a sinner has.

Now, here is the third statement. I know this is true! Salvation by grace (grace alone) is contrary to human nature. Salvation by the mercy of God through faith is contrary to

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human nature. And I'm talking about our human nature in the world and the human nature that is in the church. It is contrary now, it always has been and it always will be.

Actually, the greatest enemies of salvation by grace through faith are not found in the world. They're not found among the drunkards, prostitutes, gamblers and the profane swearers. Do you know where the greatest enemies of salvation by pure grace are found? Do you know where the greatest enemies of the merits of Christ by faith alone are found? They are found in religion.

It was the religious community who cried, "Crucify Him!" It wasn't the publicans and sinners and harlots that cried for the blood of the Son of God. He was the friend of sinners and harlots!

It was the religious community that cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" It was a religious Saul of Tarsus who hated Christ and persecuted the church. It was the religious Paul, who once called himself blameless before the law. He called himself a Hebrew of Hebrews. He called himself a Pharisee. That was the man who hated the gospel.

It was the religious leaders who killed the apostles. All the apostles were martyred except John, who was exiled to the Isle of Patmos.

It was religious organizations calling on the name of God who sent the martyrs to prison and to the stakes to be burned.

Salvation by grace alone is hated by human nature. Salvation by the pure unmerited favor of God alone is hated. Salvation by faith alone through the merits of Jesus Christ is hated. Men will be clothed by the robes of religion or the robes of this world, but it hates salvation by grace alone.

This will be shocking to some of you, but you'll find it to be true. If you embrace salvation by grace alone through the merits of Jesus Christ, your greatest enemies will not be the rebels of the world.

My friend, rebels know that if they are ever saved then God will have to save them. If they receive mercy, it will be undeserved mercy. It will be grace (undeserved and unmerited).

But the super religious and super devout Pharisee who is trying to establish their own righteousness will be your enemy. Those who will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God are who will be your enemy.

They were the enemies of Paul the apostle. Paul wept for them, crying, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I am a witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They are ignorant of God's

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righteousness. They go about, with much activity, trying to establish a righteousness of their own. They will not submit to the righteousness of God” Romans 10:1-4.

Sovereign mercy to men who are not guilty is offensive. But sovereign mercy to a guilty man is good news.

Sovereign mercy is offensive to so so-called “good people”. But sovereign mercy is blessed, blessed good tiding to the man who knows he’s a sinner.

Sovereign mercy is offensive to people who think they deserve salvation, but to the undeserving, it is the gift of God.

Read Matthew 9:9-13. Our Lord was once eating with publicans and sinners. Some religious folks came by and saw Christ sitting and eating with sinners. 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 moral, “I’m holier-than-you” religious leaders and He said, those who are whole don’t need a physician, but those who are sick do.

“I have not come to call the righteous, but I have come to call sinners to repentance. You go and learn what this means. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.”

Have you learned what that means? The Son of Man has 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” I Timothy 1:15.

Are these just words to you? Do you know these verses? Do you know what they mean? Have you 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.

My friends, read the text again. Let’s look at it in Galatians 5:4-5.

Listen to it, this is what he is saying: You have no part in Christ if you seek to be justified by the works of the law. 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. Christ means nothing to you. You have turned your back on the grace of God. You’ve turned your back on the mercy of God.

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Look at verse 5, “*For we,*” Paul is talking about fallen sons of Adam, unworthy creatures, guilty creatures.

“*We,*” that’s who Paul’s talking about. We, who are Gentiles. We, who were aliens. We, who were strangers. We who are guilty; we wait.

We, who have experienced His grace know something about His grace. We have been brought to look to Christ. We have passed from death until life. But we’re not yet like our Lord. We are waiting! We see now through a glass dimly. We know in part, we prophesy in part. But, we wait. We wait through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God is spoken of here. It is the Holy Spirit of God who revealed our guilty nature and our sin. It is the Holy Spirit of God who brought us to see Christ as our substitute. We wait on Him.

We are not yet like our Lord. We’re not yet perfectly conformed to His image. But through the Holy Spirit we are waiting.

What are we waiting for? We’re waiting for the hope of righteousness. We’re waiting for that absolute perfect holiness which we have in Christ, which someday will bring us into the full glory of His presence. And we shall be just like our Lord. That is what we’re waiting for, but we’re not there yet.

John wrote in First John 3. “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God.*” We are sons right now; it’s a gift of God. We have eternal life right now; we’re the sons of God. But, “*it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” And that’s what we’re 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, ...the fountain of blood is offensive to those who are clean. But it’s 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’s good news.

So to you who are trying 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’ve fallen from the system of grace. You have 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, ...(and how?), ...through faith.*”

That is the one and only condition. “*He that believes on the Son of God has everlasting life*” (John 3:36). It does not say he that works, or he that strives, or he that earns, or he that seeks, but he that believes.

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That's what our Lord said. *"You go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be damned."*

When the Philippian jailor came to Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi, he said, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* And Paul answered him and said, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your household."*

That's the only condition. *"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness through faith."*

He that is believing on the Son of God has life: and he that does not believe the Son shall never see life; but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36).

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 that Jesus died, and that He died for me."**

As I complete this message, I want you to write down these five things that clearly define the believer's hope.

First of all, our hope is in Christ and Christ alone. The Pharisees hoped 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. We're resting in our heritage."

My friends, our heritage brings us nothing but misery because in Adam we died. Death is what our heritage gave us. Our heritage gave us death, condemnation and judgment. In Adam all died. By Adam, judgment and condemnation passed upon all men. But here's the good news, though we died in Adam, we're made alive in Christ. So then, there is no hope in our heritage.

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And then others (Pharisees) built their hope on the outward ceremonies of religion they practiced (circumcision, Sabbath keeping, rituals and ceremonies). But we know this, our hope is not in infant sprinkling, circumcision, baptism, sacraments, places, worship, or in religionist rites, our hope is in Christ alone. In Christ there's neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.

Then, there are others who find their hope in moral virtue. But the scripture says there are none good, not even one person. There is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks after God. There are none who are really good. Even our most solemn duties are full of self and sin.

But we look for righteousness in Christ. Christ is our righteousness. That's the hope of the Christian. That's the hope of the believer. The believer's hope is in Christ. It is not in a profession, but in a Person. It is not in a proposition, but in a Person. It is not in a plan, but a Person. Not in a ceremony, but a Person. Not in a law, but a Person. That's where our hope is.

Secondly, our hope is in His grace (pure grace). Our hope is in pure mercy, plus nothing, minus nothing. God chose us, not because we loved Him, but because He loved us. We know that. We love Him because He first loved us. *“And herein is love, not that we love God but He loved us and gave his son to be a propitiation for our sins.”* God blessed us, not because we're gracious, but because He's gracious. And God Almighty saved us, not because we're 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,
but wholly lean on Jesus name.**

**His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;**

**When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and 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 will 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.

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Thirdly, our hope is in the honored law, in Christ. Our hope 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 will 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). Anytime we feel that God is obligated to us, we don't know anything about our sins or about God's sovereignty. But our hope thirdly is in the honored law.

Now listen to me, we need to examine ourselves. We need to examine our experiences and our hope and our foundation. The scripture says, "*Examine yourself 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, in what we're trusting, in 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.

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 if the hope you have for acceptance with God (salvation) destroys, diminishes, 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?" It is this: Christ honored the law. That's right, He honored God's law, He was tempted in all point as we are, but without sin. The Father said, "*This is my Son in whom I'm well pleased.*" Christ 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. 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 not only redeems us by an act of mercy, but also by an act of honoring His law.

Now fourthly, our hope is in an act of justice. 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're saved right 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 sins, 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 brings 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 sins in His body and paid for them. He paid all the debt we owe. God can be just and justifier through the sacrifice of His Son. He honored the law through His perfect life and satisfied justice by His death.

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Now here's the fifth thing. Our hope is sure. It's sure!

Let me ask you some questions. Suppose you were perfectly holy and righteous. What would you expect from God? Well, I'd expect God to receive me. Well, in Christ we are holy and righteous. We have a perfect righteousness. It's not our righteousness; 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 what it means to be holy and without guilt. So what do I expect from God, if I'm holy and without guilt? I expect to be received (accepted). Well, we will be if we're justified in Christ.

Suppose your debt was fully paid. What would you expect from God? I would expect God to let me into His kingdom. If I owed no debt, 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 8:30-34. He said, "*If God be for us, who can be against us? Who can lay anything to charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemns? Christ died, was buried, 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 will be revealed someday when He comes), ... for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Our hope is Christ.
Our hope is in His grace.
Our hope is in His mercy.
Our hope is in His honored law (an act of justice),
And our hope is sure.