

Romans 5:1-5

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have PEACE with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

²through whom we have gained ACCESS by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

³Not only so, but we also REJOICE in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.

⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his LOVE into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (NIV)

INTRO - Did you go to any graduations this year? I did, and I heard the speeches again. Actually, the student speakers I heard, are getting better and better. It seems they have a self awareness, a poise, and a speaking ability I don't remember when I was growing up and graduating. But, in some ways, the speeches remain the same. Pretty much the speeches encourage the students, 'Go change the world.' You know what, I hope they do make a difference for good.

I. Youth are not the only ones who, not only hope to make a difference for good, but expect good things in life.

A. Adults, consider your lives, your experience.

1. Everyone has at least dreamed of a job they not only enjoy, but makes a lot of money.
2. Everyone has at least dreamed of meeting someone, falling in love, and living happily ever after.
3. Everyone has at least dreamed of doing something that makes the world a better place.
4. We all have dreams, and that's actually good, even as Christians.

B. In many ways these dreams are simply wanting to fulfill our potential of who God has made us to be.

1. After all, we all are special people, with special gifts from God.
2. God did create us for joy in this life through serving Him.
3. God still wants us to make a difference for good.

II. So, we are honoring our graduates today. Have you ever gone back and looked at your high school year book? I did that yesterday. Many of those who were leaders, who were popular, who looked to have great careers in front of them, many of them did not necessarily end up fulfilling the dreams they had. Some who were couples got married, but the marriage didn't last. For others with potential, life got in the way. There are those who died very young. We may be full of dreams, but life is full of trouble.

A. Please consider Pau's words from God in today's Epistle lesson.

1. In verse 2 he talks of the joy, saying, **we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.**
2. But, in verse 3 he follows with the following statement about suffering in this life, **³Not only so, but we also REJOICE in our sufferings,**

B. People hope and dream for all sorts of success.

1. But life is full of struggle on the job, pain in relationships, and dashed dreams.
2. The word in Greek that is translated suffering in our Bible verse is actually a word that is more often translated to mean 'tribulations.'
3. People begin life looking for glory, and end up receiving difficult trials - or tribulation. Life brings suffering, disappointment, and Pain.

C. Graduates, please know your parents have gone through all this.

1. But they are not the first.
 2. Adam and Eve had the potential before them of a perfect life in a perfect world, but their acts of selfishness, their sin ruined their lives.
 3. Our sin, our rebellion against God, our selfishness, our hatred, all this causes tribulation and suffering and pain in our lives, and the lives of those around us.

III. So, am I saying you should give up on your dreams?

A. No, but I am saying We should all expect trouble in life.

1. Garrison Keillor describes the attitude of Norwegian Bachelor Farmers in the mythical town of Lake Wobegon as men who expect the worst, and are surprised by the best.
2. We should all expect disappointments and trouble.
3. All of us have sinned, and we do not live in a perfect world.

B. But, please realize that God has overcome the sin that causes our troubles.

1. Jesus died to pay for our sins, and rose again, defeating the sin that causes death and judgement.
2. Yes, we have trouble in life, but, we also have victory over the cause of that trouble through faith in Jesus.
3. That victory is not only when we receive heaven by faith, through Jesus' death and rising. It also happens in this world.

C. So, while we expect troubles or tribulation, we can also trust God to work in what ever troubles we have.

1. Romans 5:3-5 tells us to rejoice in sufferings, because **we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.**
2. You see, if we expect the troubles, but trust God to work in them, there really is joy, and peace and love in life.

A. Verse 1 says, **¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have PEACE with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** God gives us PEACE through trusting, not in ourselves and our dreams, but through trusting in His love for us in Jesus.

B. Verses 2 and 3 tell us, God gives JOY, **And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also REJOICE in our sufferings,** Even in the midst of trials and suffering God gives joy. But again, that joy comes from God.

C. You see, we don't hope in ourselves, and our dreams, but in God. Verse 5 tells us, **hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his LOVE into our**

hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. In a world of disappointment and pain, the constant, now and eternally, is the fact that God loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die for us.

3. We may have troubles in life, but God can work in His mystery and power as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to give us peace, and joy, and love.
4. We may have troubles in life, but God can even use life's troubles, to give us, not so much *our* dreams, but what HE knows is best for this life, and eternity.

CONCLUSION - I read a book years ago called 'Joni', about Joni Earickson Tada. This book is the true story of a young girl, a young teenager full of dreams and promise. But, while swimming one day she dove into shallow water and broke her neck. She continues today, paralyzed. All her dreams were gone. Yet, God has used her sufferings to teach his love. Joni learned to trust in the reality of God's love in the midst of life's trials. Her maiden name was not Tada, but Earickson, Joni has gotten married. She has written books, made music, and even produced artwork. Her life was not her dreams. But, God worked through her tribulations to give her faith, and joy, and love.

How does God do it? We can't understand, but neither can we understand God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But work he does in power and love in the lives of His people. I pray you may all look to God as you pursue your dreams. Graduates, I pray you may most of all know the blessings of God in your life.