

## Stewardship Moment: Video

### Jan 17 A Compelling Life: Compelling Proof

Jesus' identity & His mission put Him in a unique position to serve God & humankind by making things right between the two. We cannot talk about Jesus w/o talking about what He accomplishes for us & how He proves, beyond all doubt, that God loves us!

Began series: (1<sup>st</sup> week) **Who** Jesus Was. Last Week: **Why** He Came. Today: **What** He has done.

The Book of Romans begins by Paul talking about 2 groups. He described the pagans. These are the folks who do some particularly bad things. ***They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed & depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit & malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant & boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*** Rom 1:29-32

The next verse, 2:1, is the big surprise. ***You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*** These are the religious, "good" people. But they are just as "lost" as are the folks in the prior list.

Paul's conclusion: 3:23 ***for all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God***

But the next verse is equally important, and often overlooked: (3:24) ***and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus***

In Chapter 4, he introduces **Abraham**, the Father of the Israelites. He says that Abraham was "justified" by faith, not by works. He believed God.

As **Jenny Conley** reads Romans 5:1-11. I want you to see 2 terms: "**Justified through faith**" + "**Reconciled**."

#### Rom 5:1-11

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through 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. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

### **Justified through faith** (not by works) + **Reconciled**

What has happened? We, who were God's enemies and alienated from Him (and from others, and even from ourselves) have been justified through faith and reconciled to him. We didn't have the slightest chance in the world of pulling this off on our own. This is because of God the Father's action through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Jesus came, died for our sin, God raised Him from the dead, and gave us the Holy Spirit.

There's a story about a bandit in a foreign land who was badly injured and was taken to a Christian mission hospital. After a few weeks of excellent care, he completely recovered. He was so grateful for the treatment that he resolved to never again rob a Christian. But the word eventually got around and when he tried to hold up someone they'd say: "I'm a Christian." This was bad for business. He returned to the hospital and asked the missionaries how he could tell if someone was really a Christian. They said, "Well, every Christian should know The Lord's Prayer and the 10 Commandments." From then on, when his intended victims would say they were Christians he'd ask them to recite the Lord's Prayer and the 10 Commandments. If they couldn't he'd rob them. Salvation is not about memorizing some facts, but it's about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by faith.

**What are the results of being justified/reconciled?** We have: \***peace** w God \***grace** thru faith \***joy** (“rejoice”) Billy Graham’s daughter, Anne Graham Lotz: *It seems like just yesterday that our youngest daughter gave birth to our 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild – a little girl named Ruth Bell Wright. Since that day, my husband and I were totally enthralled with this little girl. She filled my heart. I couldn’t help talking about her to anyone who would listen. I wasn’t afraid to talk about her. I didn’t plan in advance how I would talk about her. I didn’t worry about offending someone with my talk about her. I didn’t go to classes to learn how to talk about her. I didn’t read books on how to talk about her. I would just hug that little girl, feel her snuggle up against me, touch her soft cheek, and melt! Little Ruth Bell filled my heart! And still fills my heart now that she is a teen-ager. And what fills my heart comes out on my lips! Why do we seem to make speaking up for Jesus so complicated? If He fills our hearts, He is going to come out on our lips! Like Peter/John (“We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” **Acts 4:20**) we can’t help “speaking about what we’ve seen and heard” of Him!*

\***perseverance** Our suffering can be redemptive and can have meaning and purpose

\***character**

\***hope**

\***God loves us** (God has “poured it” into our hearts – like God poured out the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost). The proof of God’s love is what He had done for us in Jesus Christ.

This is the invitation God extends to us. If we reject the offer God offers to us in Jesus Christ, then all we have is our original state:

**powerless** – we’ll NEVER have the power to make this change. We are incapable.

**ungodly** – while we are created in the image of God, we have all turned away from God, too

**sinner**, - we have all turned aside – every one of us

**enemies** – God didn’t hate us; our sin messed us up and broke the relationship.

These words show we didn’t bring anything to the table to offer to God as to why He should love us or do anything for us. Again, the proof of God’s love for us is that while we were powerless, ungodly, sinners and enemies, Christ came and died for us. That’s an incredible message.

However, we aren’t justified and reconciled until we respond with faith. That means the ball is in our court. God has done His part – there’s something for us to do. And that “something” is to receive the free gift offered to us by God.

I remember a few years ago hearing about a rescue vehicle which was used on one of the oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. If there was a hurricane or a fire on the rig, the workers could scramble into a bullet-shaped bus and strap themselves into their seats. The vehicle would be released down a chute and projected away from the rig. The rig might be blown over by the hurricane or burn down, but the workers would be bobbing in the water until rescuers came to pick it up. This is a great picture of what “justification by faith” means. We get strapped into a vehicle which we didn’t build. We don’t have to do anything – just get into it and trust. Our welfare depends on whether or not we are in the rescue device.

There was a movie made in the 1950’s about Martin Luther, the great Protestant Reformer. The movie showed how he spoke out about how he felt the church was missing the mark. He nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. He didn’t believe salvation came by buying indulgences, praying to the saints, going on pilgrimages, using relics and images or purgatory. He created an uproar. His spiritual mentor was pressured by the church leaders to bring the maverick monk back in line. He told Luther: “You’re right about many things. They need to be corrected. But Martin, you’re going too far in your protest. You said you didn’t want to correct them, you wanted to eliminate them. Martin, if we get rid of all these things, the pilgrimages, the relics, the saints and the holy days – what will we give them in their place?” Luther is quiet for a moment and then he said, “Why, Sir, we will give them Christ. We will give them Christ.”