

How Jesus Christ Empowered Us to Live

2017 Mark Beaird

Text: Romans 5:1-11 NIV

Therefore, 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 boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while 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! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Introduction

Being at odds with another person is an unpleasant experience. Wanting to be able to change this, but not knowing how, leaves one feeling powerless. Yet, if both want reconciliation, the moment one makes a move toward the other, suddenly the power for the relationship to be better is found.

Concerning our relationship with God, there is no reason for us to feel powerless and hopeless. He wants very much for us to be reconciled to himself!

In our text, not the *blessings* of accepting God's invitation to be reconciled to Him.

I. Faith in Christ Opened the Door for All the Holy Spirit Has to Offer (v.1-5).

A. We were brought into a right relationship with God (v.1-2).

B. We are empowered to overcome our trials (v.3-4).

Additional reference: James 1:12

C. We have been given lasting hope (v.5).

Additional reference: Colossians 1:27 and Hebrews 6:19

II. Faith in Christ Delivered Us from Being Powerless (v.6-8).

A. Sin, both ours and our sinful nature, had rendered us powerless until Jesus (v.6).

Additional reference: John 10:10

B. God had mercy on us and made a way out for us (v.7-8).

III. Faith in Christ Saved Us from Certain destruction (v.9-11).

A. We no longer have to fear the wrath of God if we have trusted in Jesus Christ (v.9-10).

Additional reference: I John 3:3 and I John 4:18

B. We can rejoice in our new-found freedom and power because of the love of God (v.11).

Conclusion

The movie *The Straight Story* is based on a true story and chronicles the pilgrimage of a 73 year-old man to mend a broken relationship with his brother, whom he hasn't seen or spoken to in over ten years. *Alvin Straight (played by Richard Farnsworth) lives in Laurens, Iowa.*

Alvin has lost his driver's license because of impaired vision. When a call comes indicating that Lyle, Alvin's estranged brother, has had a stroke, Alvin determines to find a way to visit his brother and make things right. His only solution is to hitch a makeshift trailer to his 1966 John Deere riding lawn mower and set out on a 500-mile trip that will take him in excess of six weeks. Camping out in fields and backyards made available by hospitable people he meets along the way, Alvin Straight slowly but surely makes his way toward his destination. After crossing the Mississippi River and entering into Wisconsin, Alvin camps out in a church cemetery, kindling a campfire between tombstones. The pastor of the adjoining church sees Alvin from his office, has pity on the "homeless" man, and brings him a plate of hot meatloaf and mashed potatoes. A conversation ensues.

"I can't help but notice your rather unlikely mode of transportation," the pastor says eyeing the riding mower. Alvin makes mention of his brother who lives in the area. The pastor recalls having met a man by that name while making calls in the hospital, but admits that he didn't recall the man making mention of having a brother.

"Neither one of us has had a brother for quite some time," Alvin explained. "Lyle and I grew up as close as brothers could be. We were raised in Morehead, Minnesota. We worked hard. Me and Lyle would make games out of our chores. He and I used to sleep out in the yard most

every summer night. We talked to each other till we went to sleep. It made our trials seem smaller. We pretty much talked each other through growing up."

The pastor asked, "Whatever happened between you two?"

Alvin's eyes tear-up as he explains. "The story's as old as Cain and Abel. Anger. Vanity. Mix that together with liquor, and you've got two brothers who haven't spoken in ten years."

Alvin's manner and voice indicates the depth at which he is grieving the barrier that exists between him and Lyle. He adds, "Whatever it was that made me and Lyle so mad, it doesn't matter anymore. I want to make peace and sit with him and look up at the stars like we used to do."

Like Alvin, many of us have someone with whom we deeply long to be reconciled.

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2001/may/13032.html>