

**The Father's Heart**  
Romans 5:1-8

Good morning and a very special welcome to each of you on this beautiful morning. As always, it is such a joy and privilege for us to gather together to praise the Lord, to worship Him in spirit and in truth, knowing that we are one body in Christ Jesus – part of God's family. Our call to worship this morning is taken from Romans 8:24-28 and it says:

**“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. <sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”**

**Let us Pray:**

**Opening Song: Good Good Father - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfeZw1ZB\\_2g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfeZw1ZB_2g)**

Our scripture reading this morning is also from the Book of Romans 5:1-8:

**“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through 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. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

When we look at this passage, I want to focus firstly on the opening word – “*Therefore...*” This passage follows on from Paul's teaching about justification. Using Abraham as his example, Paul begins to explain and expand on the truth of what justification means – It was not that Abraham did anything extraordinary to find favour with God. If we recount the story of Abraham, we will certainly find out that Abraham was as human as any one of us. There were instances in his life where we see defiance, disobedience, and self-reliance on his part and yet, Paul reminds us that Abraham was justified before the Lord through one simple act. Paul says that he believed therefore, “it was credited to him as righteousness.” We read in Romans 4 about Abraham's old age, about his hopelessness, and his own humanity... All hope seemed lost for him in waiting for the Lord to fulfil His promise. Yet, we know that even in Abraham's weakness, in his doubts, in his questioning, his faith remained in the Lord, he believed against all unbelief and the Lord credited him with righteousness.

Now Paul moves on in chapter 5 with the word, “*therefore*” telling us that what he is about to say follows on from chapter 4. **Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, [the same faith that Abraham had] we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...**” And the reason why this is possible is the fact that God loves us. We have heard these words time and time again, they are proclaimed throughout the scriptures, in the worship music we sing, in our creeds, in the very ethos of church life. And this is the greatest truth you and I will ever come to realize, God loves you.

This is what the entirety of scripture reminds us of constantly – God's love is greater than our failures. Paul is reminding us today of the greatest love that the world has ever seen. In almost a comparative way, Paul reminds us that what we know of “love” does not come close to what we can experience in Christ Jesus. For who is willing to die for another, whether good or bad? How many times have we tried to love perfectly, to love unwaveringly, to love unconditionally, but have failed?

You see, what I want to remind you of this morning, especially as we celebrate Father's Day, is the fact that we have a Father who is perfect. We have a Father who does not tire, who does not waver in the face of adversary, a Father who is just, who is gracious, who gives hope to His children without expecting anything in return. From the moment of creation, God's love has been on display for all the world to see. He has poured out His love in ways that we could not even imagine, upon His people Israel, upon the poor, the weak, the children, the widows... More than that, God has poured out His love upon the sinner, the restless at heart, the unworthy, and the ungodly.

I love the way that John puts it, in **1 John 3:1** – **“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”** We are children. And what do children do? We like to play games, we push boundaries, we challenge authority... We sulk when we don't get our own way, we lie when we mess up, and we hide away when we get into trouble. Now normally, as parents, what do we do when our own children behave like this? We get frustrated, we moan and groan, we punish, sometimes we scream and shout. Yet God, as the perfect Father, does not respond in the same way when we, as His children, do these things. Paul reminds us of this when he says in 5:8, **“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** While we were unworthy, while we were restless at heart, while we were ungodly, God's love was greater than our failure. In this single, historic moment, we get a glimpse of the Father's heart. A heart that is not wanting to condemn His children, a heart that is not wanting to see any of His children fall away. And this is not a subjective truth, it is an objective reality.

Now this is the Father's heart in three truths that each one of us can hold onto today.

- **When we were less than perfect, God's standard of perfection was met through the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.** If we believe that we have truly been forgiven through the blood of Jesus, then we can also believe that when God looks at us as His children, He sees Jesus' perfection and not our failures. This of course does not mean that we are free to do what we please, but it does mean that we can experience freedom in our faith.
- **God has clothed us with the righteousness of Christ which covers us, even when we fall short.** Jesus' righteousness replaces our filth and our weakness – and because of His sacrifice, his righteousness wipes away our sins – past, present, and future. We are not cleansed of sin because of our own works, but because of the redemptive work of Jesus, which brings us into the presence of God as forgiven sinners.
- **God's love for us is so great that he disciplines us when it's needed and corrects us when we stumble – His love is enough.** Like any good parent, when we see our children fall or mess up, we do not encourage the behaviour or leave them to their own devices. We lift them up, rebuke the mistakes, correct the behaviours, and lead them towards the correct path. The Good News is that we are, through grace, in right standing with God, and when we sin, He, by His Holy Spirit, raises us up, and sets us on the path of righteousness.

The reality that we have in Christ Jesus is one of hopefulness, one of peace, one of assurance. We are the children of the Most High, and we are called by His name. God alone is our perfect Father. Place your hope in Him, and trust that He is with you today and always.

**Let us pray.**

**Song of Praise: Reckless Love - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GGJ8cyYNzQ>**