

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Adult Bible Study – Week #7 – 2026 & 2027

Romans 4:23 – 5:11

October 27 & 28, 2026

Review

1. It is important in today's lesson to remember where we are in the overall flow of Paul's presentation of the gospel, because with today's passage there is a major shift
2. Overall, Paul is saying that: "In Christ God has acted powerfully to save Jew and Gentile, offering righteousness and life, to be received in faith. The righteousness of God originates in the divine nature acting to effect pardon or acceptance with God, a relationship that is not a human achievement but God's gift." (Oxford Study Bible)
3. After introducing himself and his essential message, Paul has gone on to show that:
 - a. God has been revealing himself and the truth of all creation from the beginning of time
 - b. All people – Jew and Gentile alike, before Jesus or after Jesus – can know something of God
 - c. All people, however, sin – they fall short of God's glory and of their intended purpose as given by God
 - d. Not even the Jews, who have a unique role to play in God's action in the world, are exempt from sin
 - e. Through the Jews, though, God has been acting, especially in God's grace and favor given to Abraham, and in the history of the people of Abraham, a history in which God has always acted graciously in order to reveal his love for us and his wisdom for how we are meant to live
4. To this point, Paul has been speaking of *the past*, and now, with 4:23, Paul will shift to a discussion of *the present*
5. Note: The chapter and verse notations of the Bible were added much later by scholars merely wishing to have a convenient way to locate specific texts, and sometimes, as here, the real shift in the argument is *not* between chapters 4 and 5, but between 4:22 and 4:23
6. Note: Paul is interested in the past *because it so powerfully influences the present*

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7. The second major portion of Romans intends to discuss:
 - a. The significance of human sin, and
 - b. God's grace for the present time
8. Here is the essential message of this passage as it unfolds:
 - a. What God did for and with Abraham, God also does for us
 - b. In Christ, the penalty for sin is paid and our relationship with God is restored
 - c. The result of this is nothing less than peace with God (restoration of life-giving relationship)
 - d. Again, all comes through Christ
 - e. This peace engenders confidence in us for the future
 - f. This confidence holds even in the face of adversity
 - g. This confidence and hope in adversity produces patience within us (to live through adversity)
 - h. This patience even further nurtures our hope and confidence
 - i. This power comes from God – not from us – and is a result of God's love for us
 - j. God's love is so powerful that it exists and was offered even while we were still "enemies" of God
 - k. Therefore, we are not afraid of future judgment
 - l. Since we are now friends of God (not enemies) we can have that much more confidence, hope, patience and fearlessness

- m. The reconciliation – born of love – through Christ’s work on the cross – takes us back to complete confidence in God
- 9. All of this is further explanation of the many dimensions of God’s righteousness: God is so righteous that he works to turn enemies into friends
- 10. Within this complex and intricately interwoven argument, Paul touches on the very human and all-pervasive problem of *suffering*
 - a. Peace, grace, hope, and confidence are what strengthen us to withstand suffering
 - b. Here is a glimpse of God’s “redemptive strategy” (Achtmeier) – to achieve victory (over death, evil, estrangement from God) even in the midst of tragedy
 - c. And...in fact...the tragedy (of Christ’s death) becomes the very means by which God “puts all things right” again (NT Wright)

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. Identify your own suffering. How does this message about living through and achieving victory over suffering make sense to you? Or not?
- B. Explore the image of being a “friend of God” rather than an “enemy.” How does this color your religious practice, your self-image, and your approach to other people?
- C. God loved us – all of us – before we were even born. This is the justification for baptizing infants, who are loved before they even know that God exists. How do you live out your own baptism?
- D. God loves others. What does this mean for how you relate to them?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Primary Source: Romans, Interpretation Commentary, Paul Achtmeier

Other Sources: The Message of Romans, The Bible Speaks Today, and Romans: God’s Good News for the World, both by John Stott and The Epistle to the Romans, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries, C.K. Barrett