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The Roman Road: Inspired by the Love and Power of the Resurrection

April 7, 2024

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Romans 5:1-9 (ESV)

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

John 16:7-15 (ESV)

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Mr. Yates owns some land in the rolling hills of south central Texas, and he loved this land richly. He raised sheep on this land. It had been passed down to him from several generations before him. He loved his morning walk out in the fresh air, gazing at the sheep on his land. He had great hopes of this land staying in his family, passing it down continually from generation to generation until the Great Depression hit. Then Mr. Yates grew worried. He didn't know if he could keep the land. He saw the markets crashing and the principal and interest payments

on his land were going to be much more difficult for him to make. He grew hopeless and cynical and discouraged, even despairing at times.

He applied for a government program that helped him hold on to the land a little longer, but Mr. Yates could see he wasn't going to make it. He continued needlessly in despair and hopelessness, with a feeling of powerlessness. Have you ever felt that way in your life? Life really is hard to predict, and you never know what's around the corner. Well, for Mr. Yates, he had no idea what was coming his way out of the blue.

One day, a seismic team from a major oil company showed up at his door. They said they had reason to believe that there might be oil under Mr. Yates field. They wondered if he might afford them the opportunity to drill a few wildcat wells and check out the possibilities of oil being under his land.

In those days, a landowner also owned the rights to the natural resources underground, so they assured him in signing a contract for them to drill a few wells that he would share in the royalties of oil should they find any, and find oil they did. At 1115ft, the first wildcat well surfaced oil. Soon an oil pump construction team was on site, assembling the first well pump, which began pumping 80,000 barrels a day. With that much oil flowing from one well, they reasoned, there might be more oil around over and over there and over there and over there. And sure enough, there was oil everywhere under Mr. Yates land before all was said and done, just the first well itself was pumping 125,000 barrels a day, and Mr. Yates Field became known as Mr. Yates Pool.

And you might guess it, Mr. Yates had a new spring in his step, a new, optimistic, hope-filled, joy-filled, purposeful outlook. He was approaching life differently. He had a sense of renewed power to live his hopes and his dreams. I tell you that story today because I believe a lot of people are living their lives unaware of some spiritual resources that are available to them. Not physical, worldly resources, but deep, powerful spiritual resources that are available to them. Not only are they unaware, they don't know how to access it, just like Mr. Yates was unaware of the resources under his land, and even if he knew about it, he wouldn't have known how to access it.

But someone helped him and it changed his life. And if people help us in the spiritual journey, like I've been helped by many others, then our lives can be changed as well. My life has been changed. The spiritual richness of my life has been radically transformed by those that have

gone before me and informed me of what was available to me and shown me how to gain access to it.

And so today, after the Easter celebration of the death and the resurrection of Jesus, we look at what that means for us and what that can provide to us. In Romans chapter five we read this: We have been justified by faith, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. What is he saying here? We can be made just with God, just right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, and we can have peace with God. These are spiritual riches being declared just before God and no longer having animosity with God. This is when a person comes to faith in Jesus. They're justified in their faith and they have a new peace with God. Their sins are not counted against them, their sins are forgiven.

And then Paul goes on in his letter and he says, through him, through Christ we have also obtained access. So not just riches that are given to us, but we have access to others by faith. We have access by faith into this grace, God's riches at Christ's expense, all kinds of unmerited favor. And this grace is like a verb. Here we have access into this grace in which we stand. We stand in God's unmerited favor by grace, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We're given a new outlook, looking ahead into all eternity, where we'll experience more and more the glory of God.

What has Easter done for us? A person can come and have peace with God. Be made right with God. Have a sense of by faith, standing in God's unmerited favor their whole life and looking forward with great hope to all eternity for being in the presence of the glory of God. And these are the riches that come to us, friends. And this kind of outlook, once it's come to believe, starts to change a person's life. And we need not only access revelation and understanding, we need to be shown that this is true, and then our mind can believe that it's true. And then things start to change and things start to happen in our lives.

Just like the discovery of oil riches changed Mr. Yates' life. So the discovery of true spiritual riches in the soul of a person can begin to change that person. They can start to understand that they're a child of the Most High God, that they can live differently, that they can live with their head lifted high. They can operate in a sense of new strength and new power that comes to them.

Here's where we're heading in this text. Not only that, Paul says, do we get this standing with God and unmerited favor of God and the hope of God? Not only that, we rejoice in our

sufferings. We now begin to understand that God uses all things. His promises are true. The resurrection is true, so the promises are true. We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that God uses our suffering to produce in us endurance, and there's nothing wasted in our lives. And endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because and here we are now, getting into something deeply rich in the spiritual life, because Romans five five, God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Oh, friends, do you have any idea what this means? I mean, this is an under-taught aspect of the Christian life in so many Christian circles. We have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote something similar to the believers in Ephesus when he said, and it's recorded for us in Ephesians 1:13-14 he wrote this:

"You also were included in Christ. When you heard the message of truth, you believed the gospel of your salvation, the good news of Jesus. And when you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing, guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory."

Friend, do you understand what this means? This means that the moment you and I believe on the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God enters our soul, takes up residence with us in our souls, and we have a portion of God now within us. In our gospel reading today in John 16:7, Jesus said this: "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away." He was telling this to his disciples when he was here, before he was crucified, before he was resurrected, he was preparing them for his crucifixion than in his departure. And he said, "it's to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."

What do we know of this Holy Spirit? What do we know of him? Well, we know that he is the one who raised Christ from the dead. Romans 8:11 simply says this: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life."

Now this is spiritual life, a new life, being born again into the family of God. This, this one, this one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. I want to pause for a moment right here. If you've never opened your heart to the gift of Jesus, you don't know the power of His Spirit. And if you've opened your heart

and intellectual way and you've said, "come into me," but you've never been more open to the work of his spirit, you might not be experiencing all of the supernatural aspects of the Christian life that God wants you and I to experience, and none of us totally are. But we can grow in it, friends.

The Scripture is literally telling us that when we come to believe, the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead will take up residence in our mortal bodies and bring a new life to us. And this is why Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "if anyone is in Christ, they're a new creation. They're given a new nature. The old is gone and the new has come." And this is the same spirit that was there in the beginning at creation. This is the eternal nature of God inside of us.

He was there in the beginning. Genesis 1:1-2. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." The spirit is sometimes referred to as the Breath of God. When God breathed into the first man's nostrils the breath of life, that was his spirit entering that man and man became a living being.

The spirit strives against evil in the world. The Bible says this is a powerful spirit, friends, this is a spirit that can illuminate truth, convict the world of sin and guilt and unrighteousness in this spirit can live inside of you and me. And if we've come to believe in Jesus, he does. The Holy Spirit of God lives in us and wants to sprinkle his love in our hearts and even do more than that.

Ephesians 5:18 says to us, we should not be foolish and get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, which is unrestrained, self-indulgent, immoral behavior just more and more foolish behavior. Don't let wine and alcohol and liquor get you out of control. Instead, be filled with the spirit. Well, why does he use this analogy? I think he uses this analogy because wine changes us. It transforms us. If you've ever watched someone drink too much, sometimes timid people become very courageous when they're drinking, or sometimes courageous people become very timid and lethargic if they drink too much, if they give themselves or filled with wine.

Sometimes they're quiet. People become very loud or loud. People mellow out with wine, reserved, become reckless or reckless people. Wine changes us and so will the power of the Holy Spirit in us, if we'll let ourselves be filled with him and animated by him. The Greek word here for being filled by the spirit has two meanings in the scripture. The first one is like

being filled like a cup, being filled with liquid. And literally, I believe this. The Bible teaches that when we are by faith open to Jesus, his spirit comes in, takes up residence in us, and fills us in that way. And if we don't grieve the spirit and sadden the spirit by behaviors that are dishonoring to God, quench the spirit by saying and doing things that are inappropriate, and you can even resist the spirit with a prideful and sinful heart. If we don't do these things, the spirit has room in us to fill and to flow. And then the second meaning of this being filled by the spirit is more like when wind fills the sail on a sailboat. This is the kind of filling then that animates a person. This is the kind of filling that changes a person. You know, when the early followers of Jesus were first filled with the spirit on the day of Pentecost, people around them thought they were drunk because they were speaking in other tongues, but the spirit was filling their mouths with a different wind of a different language, and they were praising God in this way.

It's miraculous. This is the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead that can animate you, and I can strengthen you, and I give us new renewed power can refresh us. Friends, it's hard to comprehend what the Scripture teaches us about this. Now, you and I can get better at this. I don't know if you've ever watched someone learn how to sail, but it's hard to learn how to catch the wind. With a sailboat, you have to adjust the sail just right. Catch the angles just right. Sometimes move your body in different ways, but you can learn how to sail and you can learn. People can get very good at catching the wind in a sailboat, and so can you. And I get good at catching the wind of God in our lives if we want to. He doesn't scream at us. He doesn't yell at us. He's that quiet whisper from the spirit within us. He's always there if we're listening, if we're open to him and we're tuning in, we can get better at hearing him. And that's what I want for you.

Ephesians 6:18 says, pray in the spirit on all occasions. If we become a people of prayer, we'll hear the spirit more. Romans 12 says, offer yourselves as living sacrifices to God. Be surrendered to God. Have your mind transformed, fixed on the things of the spirit. What God reveals to us, his will, his ways, and His spirit will move us. He'll instruct us and he will guide us. Romans 5:5 says this he has poured his love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He wants to fill us with his love and then empower us into his works, unique works for each of us. But we have to learn how to tune in and catch the wind of the spirit within us. The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead, living in the love and the power of the resurrection. Let's pray together. Father, thank you for this chance to look into your word and remind ourselves of what it teaches us about life. You have given us everything we need for a life of godliness and holiness. Before you help us understand gain the information we need to know how you've set

this up and then help us gain access to these great spiritual riches for our lives so that we could serve you better and more freely with each passing day. For we know that where your spirit is, there is true spiritual freedom. We praise you, father, in Jesus name, Amen.