

Holy Trinity Sunday

May 22, 2016

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God and Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, filling and renewing all creation by your eternal Spirit, and manifesting your saving grace through our Lord Jesus Christ: in mercy cleanse our hearts and lips that, free from doubt and fear, we may ever worship you, one true immortal God, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, living and reigning, now and forever.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia! Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory. Alleluia! (Isaiah 6:3)

Sermon Text: Romans 5:1-5

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² 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. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ 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 turn on the television to watch a family sitcom. You watch as a toddler scampers across his bedroom floor, hops into bed, and burrows under his bed sheets. Sheer terror hides behind his eyes. Darkness terrifies him. He does not want to be alone. He will not rest.

Ever notice what the television-parents do? They plug in a nightlight. The light from that little bulb pierces through every uncertain shadow. Yet, do the parents just suddenly leave? No! After turning on a nightlight, they walk over to the closet, open the door, and stick their heads inside. Then they walk over to the bed, fall to their hands and knees, and look under it. All the while this little toddler watches his parents search his room. If anything is out of place, then his parents would certainly address the problem. Do the parents just stop there? No! They even go so far as to say: *"No monsters in the closet! Nothing hiding under your bed!"*

Have you ever noticed that? The nightlight is really enough to calm the toddler's fears, and still the parents do even more to silence every single terror. They search for so-called "monsters" and then actually declare every monster "gone!" You have a light, actions, words— assurance after assurance poured out so that this toddler can sleep in peace.

Does it feel like God gives you such careful, thorough, constant assurance? Do you ever wish that he would just reveal a glimpse of his mighty power, reminding everyone in this world that he does exist? Do you crave just one spoken word that God is actually watching over you? Do you just want one unmistakable sign to know for certain that God is in control?

Challenges in life can lead us to lose sight of God, and losing sight of God can leave us feeling hopelessly lost in despair. Yet, discover the reason you have to **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD** *who gives you a sure hope, who shapes your Christian character.*

It would be comforting to have one solid, concrete reason to point at and boast that God is at work in your life, right? Because when you look in our world today, sometimes it looks like either (1) God is nowhere to be found or (2) that God is losing to the world.

You live in a society that continues its rebellion against God's commandments— a rebellion which started the moment Cain killed Abel ([Genesis 4:1-12](#)). You see aggression poured out against God's natural order of birth and relationships. It seems that many are more comfortable to merely have their name appear in a church directory rather than having their own body appear in Sunday worship. Even here, you may look around and visualize certain faces who worshipped with you, wonder when they last worshipped, and recall that others joined your heart in praising God. You look around and notice that life constantly changes— and that change is not always welcome.

So, what do you do? How do you fix feeling hopelessly crushed by so many troubles? Electing (and then trusting) the “right” politicians? Changing your Bible-based beliefs to line up with the teachings of the world? Simply live frustrated that things do not go your way? Where do you start? Might I suggest to **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD?**

The apostle Paul urges you to do just that. He writes: **“We boast in the hope of the glory of God.”** Paul is not being naïve about the afflictions you face daily. Nor does he instruct you to grow numb or brush off the challenges in life.

He writes this letter to a Christian church nestled in the national capital of the Roman Empire. The madman emperor Nero enforces the age-old law of outlawing Christianity. So, when Paul is writing, people are being jailed, tortured, and killed for confessing faith in Jesus. Not to mention, Roman society defended its own views of marriage. Women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. Men abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another— even committing indecent acts with other men! ([Romans 1:26-27](#)) In the Christian church itself, Jews point to their nationality (and not faith) as some kind of automatic ticket into heaven ([Romans 2:17-28](#)). Non-Jews [the Gentiles] carry the name “Christian,” but do not practice their faith ([Romans 2:5-16](#)).

Is Paul's world really that much different from yours? Still he writes: **“We boast in the hope of the glory of God.”** Would you write that? Or would you demand that God give you just one reason to boast?

In this world it is all too easy to look at the problems in life and conclude that God is doing nothing. That God does not answer your prayers for deliverance. That God will not give you the comfortable life you have dreamt up for yourself. That God must stroke your ego by making your Bible-based beliefs “popular.” Instead of living under God's rule, how often we want God to live under our rule! To demand that God make our worldly hopes happen! Yet, to do that will cause us to lose sight on our eternal hope!

So, Paul encourages you: **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD!** He witnesses the effects of sin blanketing the world— the same sin you see today in its various forms. Yet, Paul does not give you 10-Steps to battling worldly problems. Instead he deals directly with the root issue plaguing everyone: sin.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Paul sets your minds on what Jesus has already done for you. God has “justified” you. To “justify” means that God has declared you “not guilty” for sin. Imagine standing in a courtroom. God the Father has given his law. He carved it on two stone tablets at Mount Sinai. He engraved it on your beating heart. He expects you to love him above any other thing— to never challenge his love, to never question his devotion for you, to never dare think that you know more than him. If you have ever despaired because it seems that this world is outside of God’s control, you can only expect to hear the Judge’s gavel slam and sentence you to the hell you deserve.

Yet, God the Son enters the courtroom. He offers to suffer your sentence so that you never have to. So, Jesus lives in your world. He witnesses injustice, chaos, confusion, uncertainty. Through it all Jesus locks his eyes on the unshakable conviction that his Father is truly in charge over all things. He lives a perfect life to set you free from fear. He dies so that you never will. He rises again to declare your sin paid in full. Now you stand “not guilty” in the sight of God.

God the Holy Spirit has taken this wonderful fact and creates the trust to accept this Word as truth.

Three reasons to **BOAST ABOUT YOUR TRIUNE GOD!** *who gives you a sure hope.* Because your Triune God *gives you a sure hope,* you can **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD** *who shapes your Christian character.*

Whenever you recognize challenges in this world, first remember who you are: you are a child of God! That is your primary identity. Every day you can point at the heavens and declare that you are entering that eternal place of rest because Jesus has opened those doors for you.

Because you already are a child of God, you **also boast in [y]our sufferings.** Yes, Paul is saying that you can (literally) stand with chin up in any kind of suffering: from sickness to lack of money to family arguments to moral decay. It is not that you become numb or heartless about such troubles, but rather when such struggles flare up [...] **suffering produces perseverance...** Whenever you feel the world pressing down on you, look up to the cross and see Christ dying for you. If God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for you, how could he possibly abandon you now? ([Romans 8:32](#))

So you persevere in the sight of troubles; you continue grasping the sure promises of God. He has promised to remain with you always ([Matthew 28:20](#)). He has promised never to leave or forsake you ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#)). He has promised that all things work for your good (in his timing) ([Romans 8:28](#)).

For you, **perseverance [produces] character...** Constant trust in the promises of God results in a growing Christian character. It means that although you might be

frightened by things going on in the world, you are still strong enough to know that God is in charge. It means that even though your loved one gets sick, you are confident that their health rests in God's hands. Confidence in God's protection leads to a stronger relationship with God.

[... and] character [produces] hope... This Christian character looks past the troubles of this world and sees the treasures of heaven open wide. God loved you so much that he gave you Jesus to forgive you. He still loves you that he constantly assures you of your forgiveness. He will never change his promise. He will never get tired of forgiving you. He will never get so irritated or frustrated with you that he will leave you. Your God walks beside you through every mistake, disappointment, and failure. Your God picks you up and sets your sights on him. **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD** *who shapes your Christian character.*

Continue doing this! Life has changed over the past 45 years. Yet, **BOASTING IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD** puts your life into perspective. The amount of people in your church does not get you into heaven. What is going on in society does not give you eternal life. You are a child of God. Boast about this wonderful truth always!

This is the reason you have to be glad! Only as you better see what God has done for you personally are you then able to take this light further out into this world. Your Christian character lifts its eyes off of the world below and onto the true reason to share the Word of God: it is life-saving hope. As Christians, you have a character which seeks to share the love of God with so many.

Just like that toddler, God gives you careful, thorough, constant assurance. Your Triune God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—has given you the triple assurance of real peace in your life. God the Son came down from heaven and removed the consequences for your every sin. God the Father sees you through Jesus as his dearly loved child. God the Holy Spirit assures you of eternal life in heaven.

You may confront different challenges in life. They will try to lead you to lose sight of God, and losing sight of God can leave you feeling hopelessly lost in despair. Yet, discover the reason you have to **BOAST IN YOUR TRIUNE GOD!** *who gives you a sure hope, who shapes your Christian character.*