

'LIFE' WITH CHRIST

Articles of Comfort and Blessings Offered to the Reader

*Father Matta continues his short reflections on some verses of the Epistle to the Romans. Note: All quotations are taken from the **New King James Version**, if not otherwise mentioned.*

Volume Three
Chapter 81

"being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Romans 3: 24-26

GRACE COMES IN as the result of the redemption that was completed by Christ on the cross, atonement through faith in His blood. It demonstrates the righteousness of Christ for the forgiveness of sins previously committed. On the cross, Christ gave His blood as a sacrifice for the one who believes in Him. Herein lies the righteousness of Christ: whoever believes in Him is entitled to the gift, resultant of the sacrifice, which Christ offered on behalf of sinners. Christ's sacrifice on the cross demonstrated His righteousness, for Christ is indeed just and justifies all who believe in Him

So Paul says that the redemption that Jesus Christ completed on the cross is grace freely given to whoever believes in the redemption. Christ carried the cross and was crucified on it to redeem the sinner, as well as give to whoever believes in Him, His own righteousness. This is the righteousness He acquired with His death on behalf of sinners. The justifier justifies with His cross whoever believes in Him.

This is how Christ became just and the justifier of the one who believes in Him, for free. Christ acquired the righteousness of the Father by being slain on the cross. The Heavenly Father is the one who poured His righteousness on His crucified Son, who becoming just was then able to justify whoever believed in Him. We then have inherited the righteousness of Christ, through faith. We, therefore, proclaim faith in Christ for the justification of whoever believes in the righteousness of Christ. Righteousness is the most sublime attribute of the believer because he presents himself before God as one perfect in holiness and righteousness, without sin and without blame.

When it comes to faith in Christ, righteousness is the ultimate end of the believer who is saved and genuine in his faith. The righteousness of Christ spread with the spread of the faith, and so the righteous were placed right below the angels, proclaiming Christ, the source of all righteousness. If Christ is true light, then the righteous will shine forth in the kingdom.¹ They are also called the saints of the Most High who will reign in the kingdom of our Lord.² Here they light up the world with their virtues and the grace of Christ which dwells in them. They are considered special witnesses for Christ because they receive from Him, through the Spirit that dwells in them, both their words and their deeds. When Paul refers to, “being justified freely through the redemption,” as the work of grace, he really means the secret work of grace, which works in the righteous to proclaim the glory of Christ and His eternal authority.

Redemption, grace and righteousness are the mysteries which are the outcome of the cross and these have become realities to be tasted, lived and sought after. This carefully guarded mystery Christ has uncovered with His cross, and the believers have inherited it with their faith. The apostle Paul, not only brought it to light, but actually lived it. Paul was at once both the acme and axis of humanity, revealing to us the truths of Christ and the gems of theology. Even as he was undergoing the suffering and tribulation imposed on him as a result of his faith, he imparted those truths to us.

¹ See Mt 13:43.

² See Daniel 7:27.

Now brethren, we are dealing with the gems of theology which encrust the faith in Christ. This is Christ's legacy here and on this earth, given to whoever considers himself not of this world, the world which locks up its children in the prison-house of sin, to live in darkness and not see the light. And whoever dares to see a different reality, is made to suffer. But thanks be to Christ Jesus who told us, "I am not of (this) world" and therefore indicated to his followers and companions that they too "are not of the world."³ Now it is our turn, now we bow our heads before the hand of the Lord and say, "Yes Lord, we too are not of this world," until we are overpowered by the glory of the Lord and become worthy to be counted His disciples and followers so that He can protect us from evil and deliver us by the power of His divinity and love. We can then go forth to preach the salvation we inherited from the cross and the Crucified.

Listen to me dear reader, humble yourself under the hand of Christ, and give Him your life so that you become worthy of Christ as Lord and God. With your faith you can receive the righteousness of Christ.

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³ John 17:16.

Chapter 82

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace
with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have
access by faith
into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the
glory of God.
And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations....because
the love of God
has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who
was given to us."

Romans 5: 1-3, 5

THE APOSTLE PAUL opens a new vista in the matter of justification by faith, in order for us to be familiar with our God-given peace. He directs our attention towards the life we now live in the faith of our Lord Jesus. He says that by faith we have access to this grace in which we now stand.

Peace with God was totally lost to humanity from Adam until Christ, but through the cross we received faith in Christ and the Father. Man then entered into peace with God because of the justification we received through faith in Christ. Only through justification can we acquire enough boldness and confidence to come before the Father.

What we were not aware of before, and now realize, is that we now live and stand in grace as an outcome of the faith which we unwittingly had access to. Because we inherited the faith from our fathers, it started working in us without our giving it much thought, prayer or joy. But the fact remains that through the faith which we received, we had access to the grace of God and are now standing in it. This is the precious legacy which we received from those who lived before us in the faith.

In fact, we have acquired the right to be proud of the hope we carry within our ribs, hope which is the fruit of faith. This hope means that we will see the glory of God and will live with him. That is how we can live in grace and in the hope of the revelation of the glory of God. All of this has been unveiled by grace: we are loved by God, and the love of God has poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us.

Peace had departed from man in the old ages, a harsh punishment as a result of sin. We first learned about peace on Christmas Day when the heavenly host sang out, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"⁴ This was the Good News of the angels which filled the heart of man with peace and filled the earth with joy, the trajectory of glorifying God in the highest. Peace on earth and glorifying God in heaven are therefore inter-related because after Christ was born, we found out that He was the Prince of Peace⁵ and its giver. Afterwards, peace with God was dependent upon faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. And so with faith in Christ, man started tasting the blessing of peace with God after a breach which lasted ages.

The birth of Christ was only the beginning of the fulfillment of the gospel of peace. It was only after Christ completed our salvation and redemption, and we

⁴ Luke 2:14.

⁵ Is 9:6.

came into the age of faith in Christ, that peace with God was revealed to us. It has now been given to the one who believes in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Since we have been justified by faith, we have received grace, along with that peace, which has dwelled in our hearts and brought us much closer to Christ and the Father. We have become worthy of soaring on high and claiming our inheritance which has been kept for us, on the merit of faith in Christ and His righteousness.

And now we stand in the grace of God and live in the hope which will pass on to us our lot in heaven. We boast, especially in tribulations, knowing full well that Christ sees our tears, trials and persecutions which are inflicted on us from the enemy and even from our own people, as a result of holding on to the blessed name which we proclaim and the hope which we adamantly hold on to. No matter how the world turns against us, we are conquerors all the way. Even if we are in the last breath, we call out the name of the living God and die because we have another life to live, one without tears or pain.

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