

I. Introduction:

- A. I am currently reading a book entitled *“Creating Christian Indians.”*
1. It was written by Bonnie Sue Lewis and was published 18 years ago by the University of Oklahoma.
 2. It describes the work of Presbyterian missionaries primarily among the Dakota Sioux and our own Nez Perce Indians from about 1830 to 1930.
 3. I can see perhaps a couple of messages, or at a few least illustrations, coming out of what I am reading.
- B. One of the things I’ve learned is that in some ways the Holy Spirit prepared those people for the gospel.
1. Although not stated in the book, their ancient religion flowed down from a corrupted form of the faith of Noah and his family.
 2. Some indigenous tribes remained closer to the truth than others, and the Nez Perce seem to have been one of those.
 3. For example, they have always believed in a creator, and they knew they needed to please him.
 4. The plateau Indians of Oregon and Idaho recognized the need for some sort of holiness.
 5. And like Abraham, they sought for *“a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*
 6. They wanted peace with their God, and they yearned for eternal life in a good state.
 7. Some of them had their own kind of scriptures with dreams and revelations.
 8. But their dreams never materialized, their scriptures lied to them, and their shamans deceived them.
- C. Then along came men and women with another holy book with similar promises and stories about a similar kind of tribal people – often persecuted like themselves and yet blessed by God.
1. As white settlers moved into their lands, the Indians’ old promises and protections failed them.
 2. But then they heard that these interlopers had new, but similar promises, backed up by their holy book.
 3. As the natives learned about sin, righteous and judgment, the Holy Spirit touched some of them and a few were genuinely converted.
 4. Their testimonies, when understood in their context, are really quite impressive.
- D. As I was reading **Romans 5** the other day, it occurred to me that some of those natives from Kamiah, Umatilla and Walla Walla, were looking for the things of which Paul was speaking.
1. There are great, great blessings described in these verses – righteousness, peace, grace and hope.
 2. These are things which many honest Spokanes and Coeur d’Alenes, Chinese and Koreans, Hindus and Buddhists are seeking.
 3. There they are, like ripe fruit, laid out on the table of the Lord for anyone – no matter what the color of their skin or the history of their tribe.
 4. But as we know from personal experience, it’s not until the Spirit moves will any of us reach out for them.
 5. My interest this morning is primarily in only one of Paul’s points, but they ultimately tie together.

II. Let’s begin by considering the context:

- A. This book, and this chapter, were originally written to people who were already believers – Christians.
1. But at the same time, **Romans** is one of the most evangelistic books in the Bible.
 2. It says, *“Here are some of the blessings of Christ,”* and in the process it implies, *“Don’t you want these?”*
 3. And this is one of things I’ve taken away from the history that I’m reading.
 4. It took years, but once the Lord saved Mazakutemani, and Fish Hawk and Ehnamani, others like Nez Perce Chief Teutacus (eventually called Joseph) could see in these new Christians something they had always sought.
 5. God wants His current Christians to represent Him, possessing and expressing the blessings many lost hearts desire.
 6. When people can see in us the things Paul describes in these verses, gospel evangelism can take off.

B. "Therefore being justified by faith...."

1. Paul, in the earlier chapters of **Romans**, has explained what he means by "**justification.**"
2. It is God's declaration that a former sinner has been made righteous by divine grace – God sees that person as holy in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. "**For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God**" – **Romans 3:23.**
 - b. But "**the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (is) unto all and upon all them that believe**" – **verse 22.**
 - c. He that "**believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness**" – **Rom. 4:5.**
3. Here in **chapter 5** Paul says, "**standing in a position of justification, you are righteous in God's sight.**"
4. And how is it we have come to understand the position in which you now stand?
5. By faith; by trusting the promise of God which was given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God...."

1. The Plateau Indians – the Nez Perce, Spokanes and Coeur d'Alenes – as representatives of all humanity – knew the importance of peace with their god.
2. But they also knew, down in the depths of their hearts that they did not have it.
3. And then along came the good news with a message about the sacrifice of God's son.
4. Those who repented before the holy God of Bible Christianity, began to enjoy peace with Him.
5. The Lord Jesus has said, "**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid**" – **John 14:27.**
6. This peace is a gift of God – a gracious gift – it is totally undeserved – unearned.
7. Neither their faith nor repentance purchased that peace; it came as a gift from God's grace.
8. No one – not Dakota or Nez Perce; not Baptist or Presbyterian; not white or red can earn peace with God.

D. Then verse 2 says – by the Lord Jesus Christians also "have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

1. Peace is only one of God's gracious gifts – we stand in the doorway to a room **full** of grace.
2. As Spurgeon said in his devotional for yesterday –
 - a. "**Forgiveness is only a tithe of what God has for the one whom he saves.**"
 - b. Maybe it's only a tithe of a tithe.
3. **In what grace** do we now stand?
 - a. We are not only strangers who have been forgiven by a gracious and merciful God, but we have been born into His family and legally adopted as His heirs – "**heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.**"
 - b. Once we were God's enemies but now we are considered his "**friends.**"
 - c. Christ has told us, "**Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends...**" – **John 15:15.**
 - d. "**Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends**" – **Verse 13.**
4. Now we can pray – through faith in Christ we can come boldly unto God's throne, asking Him for further blessings – both spiritual and physical.
5. Not only can we live **in peace WITH God** in the world, we may also have **peace OF God** while living in a world filled with chaos and crisis.
6. And we can have assurance of God's direction in our choices and decisions.
7. There is a grace in **Christian friends** and **fellowship** – there is grace even in Christian **leadership.**
8. Every day, the child of God is blessed by the grace of God – grace, more grace, unending grace.
9. "**By (the Lord Jesus Christ) also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand...**"

E. And we "rejoice in hope of the GLORY of God."

1. God is infinitely glorious – beyond anything we can find in His creation or beyond our imagination.
2. Picture that Nez Perce native, now that he is a child of God, walking out into the night.
3. He looks up into the sky, as he has done a thousand times, but now he sees a billion stars, which individually and collectively suggest that God is **glorious.**

4. He learns of God's angels who minister to Him awestruck by their Master's glory.
 5. His old faith is cleaned up and reaffirmed that God spoke the world into existence.
 6. What a glorious God this is who has saved him.
- F. But each of these things are practical blessings flowing out of this sinner's justification.
1. This reference to *"the glory of God"* is **not to God's nature and position** – who He is.
 2. The Apostle is speaking about **the glory** of God which **He shall give** to His people.
 3. **Peter** in his **First Epistle** said that he was a partaker of the glory which is soon to be revealed.
 4. And the **Apostle John** said, *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" – I Jn. 3:2.*
- G. In 1862, Presbyterian missionaries had been working among the Dakota Indians for several years when war broke out between the unsaved natives and the white settlers.
1. The American army successfully put down the revolt and indiscriminately incarcerated about 400 Dakotas, among whom were a few believers.
 2. Outside the prison camp were about 1500 of their family members.
 3. The Christian Indians, possessing God's gifts of righteousness, peace and grace, and with an expectation of eternal glory, began to speak of God's grace to their brethren, and the Holy Spirit began to work.
 4. They began having worship services – praying, singing hymns, reading the scriptures in the Sioux language.
 5. Then one Dakota brother, Robert Hopkins, started preaching repentance to men who had killed and massacred other human beings.
 6. As the white missionaries were eventually permitted into the compound, they were amazed at the number who they found humbly praying.
 - a. One of them testified, *"they prayed with such copiousness and fervency as to make it manifest they are taught of God's Spirit.*
 - b. *They pray not only for themselves and absent families, but also very appropriately for the soldiers who guard them, the officers, the President of the United States and also for those who are angry at them and seek their destruction."*
 7. That missionary went on to point out that their prayers were being answered.
 - a. The guards who didn't know that prayer was being made for them, because they didn't know the language, began to feel a change of heart toward them.
 - b. *"Instead of looking on them with scorn and contempt, and rejoicing in their sufferings, they now manifest a disposition to make them as comfortable as possible."*
 - c. Shackles were removed, greater freedom to move around in and even out of the camp was given.
 8. These things occurred because a few genuine believers among the Dakotas had been justified, and they began enjoying and expressing God's peace and grace, hope of glory.
 9. They didn't hide their light under a bushel, but set it on a candle stick for all to see.
- H. And remember that in this case, the gospel was flourishing under the harsh reality of severe trials.
1. In the case of those Dakotas, they were suffering in jail, and their families were starving.
 2. With both the Dakotas and Nez Perce, they were being stripped of their lands and driven from their homes.
 3. That sheds light on Paul's next statement: *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."*
 4. The suffering of the brethren in Thessalonica, in Ephesus, in Oregon and South Dakota, did not hinder their faith or their hope – because it was real and its source was the Lord.
 5. Later Paul said, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" – Romans 8:18.*

I. And with that I come to the thought which the Lord first laid on my heart a few weeks ago.

III. And this *“hope maketh not ashamed.”*

- A. In some cases there were Native Americans who were told by their shamans and their old religions that their Nirvana, their Arcadia, their Elysium, or whatever name they gave it, was just around the corner.
1. Some believed that the invading white men would be driven away through one means or another, and they would return to their original Garden of Eden.
 2. Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce condemned violence, but their neighbors, the Cayuse and more particularly the Dakotas felt that they could successfully fight and force the whites to leave.
 3. You may have heard of the massacre of the Whitman Mission down in Walla Walla by a handful of renegade Cayuse in 1847.
 4. That, by the way, ended the mission work among the Spokanes at Tshimakain near Ford, Washington.
 5. Many North American Natives had hopes of a Heaven on earth based on their old lifestyle, but those hopes were being dashed, and they were slowly realizing it.
 6. The whites were never going to leave.
- B. People have many hopes which are based on deception; they always end in shame.
1. There are hopes which are simply very old, and over time they fade away.
 2. Some hopes are absurd and shouldn't be called *“hopes”* at all.
 3. And there are hopes which are too low and earthly to ever give us anything but eventual embarrassment.
 4. But the hope which Christians have in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ *“maketh not ashamed.”*
- C. These illustrations I have been sharing with you today came out of the work of Presbyterian missions.
1. There were no Baptists in our part of the Northwest for some time to come.
 2. I certainly have problems with some of the doctrines and practices of the Presbyterians.
 3. But I will say this: despite their practice of baby-baptizing, 150 and 200 years ago, they preached the gospel.
 4. One of their problems, in my estimation, was their attempt to both *“civilize”* and *“Christianize”* the Indians.
 5. For example, they demanded that their converts immediately cut their hair and throw away their blankets.
 6. Their new little Presbyterians were dressed up like little European dolls.
 7. To the credit of those native believers, they did what they were told, and in the process they stuck out among their own people like sore thumbs.
 8. But many of them did so without shame.
- D. We have no reason to be ashamed of our Saviour, our Christian lives, or our hope.
1. I am *“looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*
 2. If **Titus 2:13** was the only verse in the Bible which spoke of our hope in the return of our Saviour, I would stand on my tip-toes on that tiny verse. But it is one of many verses.
 3. I am not ashamed to say that I believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus for His saints.
- E. We have no reason to be ashamed of our hope because it is grounded in God's grace and love.
1. *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*
 2. I had a difficult time understanding the last part of **v. 5** – the part beginning with the little word *“because.”*
 3. There are a couple ways in which that could be understood and getting it twisted in our hearts would then mislead us.
 4. Is this *“love of God”* **our love** for God or **His love** for us?
 5. Cutting to the chase, it is God's love which the Holy Spirit can make us understand.

6. It is natural for someone as wicked as we have been to have doubts about God's love towards us.
 - a. If we truly understand our own hearts, we will never be able to explain why God loves.
 - b. But it is a mistake to try to understand with our minds; we are commanded simply to believe it.
7. And then as we nestle back into the arms of God's salvation, the Holy Spirit's ministry takes on a different nature.
8. As He reveals and applies God's love, our confidence in His hope becomes more secure.

F. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

- 1. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*
- 2. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

G. If by God's grace we can trust that Christ died for us, then each of the other blessings in this scripture become more secure.

1. I am justified – declared righteous – through the sacrifice of Christ.
2. I am at peace with God because of the sacrifice of Christ Jesus – a powerful "peace treaty" of sorts.
3. And through the cross, I have access by faith into this grace wherein Christians stand.
4. The hope that I have of future eternal glory is guaranteed because *"God commendeth his love toward ME, in that, when I was yet a sinner, Christ died for ME."*

IV. Conclusion:

- A. I hope that the majority of us here today can read these verses and shout, *"Praise God!"*
 1. I have and enjoy each of these blessings – justification, peace, grace, and a hope of glory.
 2. I enjoy these things not because I am worthy of them, or I have earned them.
 3. It's not because I have cut my hair and thrown aside my blanket of traditionalism and culture.
 4. I enjoy these things because *"when I was yet without strength, in due time Christ died for ME."*
- B. If you can claim these things, I hope that you can also testify that others can see them in your life.
 1. By living these things we can show our thanks to God for His salvation.
 2. By living in peace and living in hope, we glorify our Redeemer.
 3. And we testify to our fellow tribesmen that they need these things themselves.
- C. But there are also others among us who have no peace or hope.
 1. Won't you consider the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross this morning?
 2. Repent before God and put your faith in Christ.
 3. Join those happy believers with the blessings of these verses.