

Peace, Endurance, Hope

Introduction

...With Romans we begin a new type of literature...the letters...the New Testament cannon includes twenty-one letters gathered in two collections, Pauline(Romans through Philemon) and non-Pauline (Hebrews through Jude).

...The entire Pauline collection concerns the ministry and message of the apostle Paul.

...Paul wrote the letter to the Roman church in the middle to late 50s, from Corinth, or somewhere nearby. He was planning his final voyage to Jerusalem with the intention of going on to Rome and then to Spain.

...The main theme of Paul's letter is found in 1:16-17...God and God's covenant faithfulness and justice.

...Rome prided itself on being the capital of justice, but Paul's letter is a direct challenge to that idea.

...Paul was coming to Rome with the gospel message of Jesus the Jewish Messiah, claiming that, through this message, God's justice was shown once and for all and for all.

...In Jesus, says Paul, God has been true both to the covenant with Abraham and to the demands of justice.

...There is now a Jew-plus-Gentile people of God, the true children of Abraham, marked out by faith in Jesus rather than the works of Torah (Law).

Discussion Questions

1. What is the most unbelievable thing you have ever been promised?
2. If you took a typing class in high school, or were self-taught, what does it mean to have "justified" margins?
3. In terms of this passage, what does Paul mean that we are justified? Is it a given fact?
4. What are the immediate results and benefits of justification? What does Paul say is the chief benefit? (NRSV)
5. Can you think of a time when being "hemmed in with troubles" or a time of suffering, produced endurance, then character, then hope?

6. How do you define endurance...patiently waiting "it" out, or going on despite of obstacles or suffering?

7. Is Christian hope a fragile thing? What is the gift Paul says that keeps it strong?

Prayer

Faithful God, help us to experience daily the mystery of your grace. When we feel hemmed in by the troubles, the suffering of the virus, the increase of violence, the rhetoric that inflames, remind us of the gift of your relationship with us, a relationship we cannot attain on our own, but one that offers us a peace that we cannot fully understand and the hope of new life in Christ. Embolden us, by the power of your Holy Spirit, to stand tall, and in the words of the apostle, boast in our glory. Thanks be to you, O God. Amen

Scripture Passage – Romans 5:1-5 Peterson's Translation, *The Message* AND Romans 5:1-5 NRSV or another translation