

Eternally Reconciled
Dr. Jerry Nelson
Romans 5:1-11

Why are some of us afraid of God? Is God disappointed with me, maybe even angry with me? Remember the children's song: "Be careful little hands what you do; be careful little hands what you do; for the Father up above is looking down in love, so be careful little hands what you do." Is that our impression of God? Does God have a hidden video camera that watches everything we do to see if we "mess up" so he can punish us?

In the first 2 ½ chapters of Romans, Paul demonstrates we are under the "wrath" of God. God's anger is not personal pique or wounded pride; it is a righteous anger at how his creation is being destroyed and how his holy character is being defiled. Our greatest problem is not that we are angry with God but that God is rightfully angry with us.

But in the last half of chapter 3 and chapter 4, as we have seen, Paul makes it clear that while wrath is our deserved destiny - God in grace has poured out his wrath on the person of his Son instead of on us. Christ has paid the penalty for our sin so that we might be granted the righteousness of Christ - a righteousness we must have if we are to have a right relationship with a holy God. And we see in 3:22 that this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Then Paul spends all of chapter 4 making the point that in no way can we earn that relationship with God - it is a gift of grace through faith alone.

And now in Chapter 5 Paul tells us how everything has changed between God and us. In the first two verses he sets forth three specific changes: 1. We have peace with God. God no longer looks on us as his enemy but our relationship is now one of unhindered friendship. And best of all, nothing we can do, will change God's attitude - because God's attitude toward us is not based on us but on him. 2. We now have access to his grace. We now live with God's grace continually upon us. In Christ we have been moved, as it were, to a whole new house - before we were in the prison-house awaiting execution. But now we are in the house of the king sitting on our

Father's lap in the family room. We are surrounded by grace. 3. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We have a certainty that when Jesus comes again the glory of God will be seen in all its fullness. In that day we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Our great hope is the restoration of all things to their created glory, which reflects the glory of God.

Verses 3-5, about suffering now, don't argue against this new relationship with God but actually argue for it! By his Spirit, God uses our sufferings to produce a Christ-likeness in us. And if we doubt God's good objectives through our suffering, we must remember (verses 6-10) that God fixed his love on us while we were still ungodly sinners: "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, **much more**, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." And so Paul concludes: Yes! We have been reconciled to God. Rejoice!