

Reading: Romans 5:1-11

Theme: ‘Therefore’ – what’s it there for?

Thomas Brooks, in his book *‘Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices’*, wrote at the start of chapter 4 of the devices, the ways by which Satan keeps a person (a soul) in a sad, doubting, questioning and uncomfortable condition, then continues *“Though he can never rob a believer of his crown, yet such is his malice and envy, that he will leave no stone unturned, no means unattempted, to rob them of their comfort and peace, to make their life a burden and hell unto them, to cause them to spend their days in sorrow and mourning, in sighing and complaining, in doubting and questioning. Surely we have no interest in Christ; our graces are not true; our hopes are the hopes of hypocrites; our confidence is our presumption, our enjoyment is our delusions.”*

The devil uses these attacks on us all, we can end up doubting our salvation and what God offers us in the gospel and has done for us as believers. We waver, struggle; our Christian life becomes such a hardship and we wonder if we are saved and if so, if it is worth carrying on as a Christian, but we may be too scared to quit just in case it really is true! By these means, the devil will make us miserable in the things of God, miserable for worldly enjoyment and we will be left as a miserable, confused and ineffective Christian.

With an eye on such things, I want to work through Romans 5 to consider not only the great truths concerning our salvation, but also to try and apply the comforts, the sweet and wholesome comforts this glorious chapter contains concerning the certainty, the assurance of our salvation and our final salvation. Yes, we may have our ups and downs now, but that which is going to bring us a degree of stability in our lives, we need to be anchored in the truth of God’s word concerning our salvation - we are saved, we

are eternally secure and not in the hands of a divine being who deals with us according to the outcome of a celestial daisy game of “*he loves me, he loves me not!*”

Paul wrote to Christians at Rome, ones he had never met before, yet he was concerned for them - to build them up and give them a solid foundation. To do that he wrote this amazing book of Romans. There are so many arguments, logical arguments that express great truths here in the book of Romans, which was written to ordinary people, with ordinary and everyday lives. We are not to think that Romans is too deep for us - that’s my job, especially about some parts in Romans 5 - as I try and work them out to preach its glorious truths!

Paul writes the start of this chapter and says “*Therefore...*” Anytime Paul writes “therefore” we are to ask “*What’s it there for?*” Paul has an amazing use of the word “therefore” - 27 times in Romans alone, 104 times in his letters [*and that does not include Hebrews (15 times).*] I want us to note 3 things in the light of this word “*Therefore...*”:

1. It Marks a Turning Point.

From 5:1 onwards we move into a new area of Paul’s letter. It brings us into a new range of material and the details of it are foundational to understanding the rest of the letter. We are to be careful not to get confused here as we read it (*or as someone preaches it*), as it could prevent us making sense of the rest of this letter. This chapter has in it some amazing, exciting truths, which if we understand and apply them to our lives, we should be encouraged, stirred, excited and even exhilarated!

We need to apply Christian, Pauline, biblical logic in and to our lives. The use of the word “*Therefore...*” will hopefully also cause

a turning point in our Christian lives. Very often we leave the Scripture, leave the comforting truths and promises as verses only, as sermon material, but we need to personally apply them – “*God says... and this is true of me! Therefore...*” Many believers can be sad, low, struggling - even though they can quote verses, handle complex Bible studies, can know amazing things about the Bible and theology - because they then fail to apply it and live it out, or enjoy its encouragements and comforts. I had friend in University who knew all about rugby, its rules, its players, the techniques and coaching skills, but he was so uncoordinated that he could never play it properly!

We need to use the word “*Therefore*” as a turning point in this book, also in our lives and attitudes - to deduce, to work out what is true of what Jesus has done for us, who we are in Christ, what we are to do in the light of such. Paul is about to show us that in the light of what he has written and so we need to:

2. Glance Backwards.

Nimble fingers will be needed to quickly turn to and look up the references I mention, especially if you are doing it electronically! Thankfully I will work through them in chapter order... Paul wrote to the Roman believers and in 1:11-12 he states what he would like to be able to do - to mutually strengthen and encourage them and himself in the faith, but he had been prevented from doing so. It was not because he was ashamed of the gospel, not at all - 1:16-17 “*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*” The power of the gospel, what it does, has done and will do is the

glorious theme of this letter to these believers in great city of Rome and to us.

Yet in 1:18ff Paul shows why the wrath of God is on all mankind and exposes mankind as those prone to sin and rebellion against God. It is a devastating exposure of man without God and he highlights temporal judgements of God within time and space on people.

Then in chapter 2, Paul turns his attention to expose the sinfulness of even religious people - focusing on the Jews. Here again is a devastating opening up not only of actions or words, but hearts and desires - showing that we can give lip service to God's standards and yet delight in such wickedness in secret - 2:4 is a clear warning not to presume on God's goodness, for it should lead us to repentance.

Paul goes on to show that religious privileges and backgrounds are not enough, are not sufficient - we could have great religious privileges, know Bible verses in many versions and languages, have many religious rites done to us, or for us and can still be lost and be under even greater condemnation because of those privileges and the knowledge we have.

In chapter 3 Paul begins to show us such privileges are not to be despised, but are a great honour and give us a head start, many benefits that we must not waste. He begins to wind up his argument in v9ff and shows that both Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin and in v19ff they are all accountable to God and can have no argument. Paul shows that there is no hope by doing, by trying to earn, to feel good enough before God. Paul not only reinforces his argument so far, but prepares us for the way ahead - v23 *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"* but

he does not leave it there, and follows on immediately with v24-25 *“and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished”*.

He shows us we are not made right with God by works, by doing, by keeping the Law of God, nor by any rite or ritual, but it is being **justified by faith** (*we will encounter this term again and open it up then in more detail*). For now, it is sufficient to say that we are accounted just-if- I’d never sinned, or better, just-if-I’d always had the perfect righteousness of Jesus. This means we are accepted by God and before God we have no sin, no guilt, but God’s Fatherly welcome.

In chapter 4 Paul opens up and shows in more detail to be right with God is not a matter of doing or achieving an acceptable standard but accepting what God has provided for us - trusting God, faith in God, even as Abraham found in v3 *“What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to Him as righteousness.”*” Abraham had this righteousness credited to him before any physical action on his part or upon him. We all understand the idea of credit to a bank account, but we have, if we are a believer (*can have if we are not yet a believer*) a righteousness credited to us that we can never go into the red on, never be overdrawn on - as Paul says in v24-25 *“but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

Isn’t that an amazing thought, that the moment we believe, trust in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, ALL our bankruptcy of sin, our

debt, all its pollution and guilt is taken off us and we are credited for ever with Jesus' righteousness by God and declared to be righteous with Jesus' level of righteousness for ever! This is where chapter 5 begins "*Therefore...*" This is true of and for us! We were under God's wrath, but if we trust the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, then we will have Jesus' righteousness credited to us, we will be justified by faith and therefore we will have peace with God...

We need to reflect in a right way on these things, not in a morbid, introspective way, at what we were without Christ and what we are in Him. We are to glance backwards to see how God has been dealing with us and use it to thank Him, even maybe to see the goodness of God leading us to repentance. Yet this word "*Therefore...*" Doesn't just make us glance backwards, but also:

3. Look Ahead.

If these things are true of us, then we can look ahead with anticipation, with certainty, with confidence and assurance "*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith...*" - we will see there are knock-on, cascading consequences for us. The major note and theme of the consequences for all those who are justified by faith is the security and certainty of our salvation. Here we are, we all can have various concerns, fears, worries and succumb to pressures on us, but Paul's message here is that we need not be concerned or worried about our salvation being secure and he will especially open up on the character, the fullness and finality of this salvation in chapters 5 to 8.

If, or since we are justified by faith, these things are as true of us as they were for the apostle Paul and all Christian people throughout history. Paul doesn't waste much time in bringing us face-to-face with the assurance of salvation - even in v2 we are

presented with the hope of the glory of God - justification by faith means we are soon faced with the hope of the glory of God i.e. heaven and being in God's presence. Then in v3-5 we are shown that nothing can remove that sure hope and even troubles, tribulations should cause the hope to be burning brighter. In v6-11 Paul shows the logical working out of our hope in our thinking and therefore in our lives. If when we were the enemies of God, He did this; now we are justified by faith, right with God, how much more... *(Personally I am really looking forward to dealing with the 'how much mores' in this chapter!)*

Paul then deals with the consequences of what we were in Adam and what we have in Christ in v12-21. By nature, we were in Adam and all his guilt and condemnation was ours, but now being justified by faith we are in Christ. There is no halfway house. All of mankind are either in Adam or in Christ. Where are we at this moment? If it is in Adam, or if we are uncertain, then we are to get into Christ by faith in Him. If we are in Christ, then we are to realise the honoured, exalted position we are in and stop wavering, stop acting as if we are in Adam, in love with the world, as if Christ has done nothing for us and we are to live as in Him, as one who has a secure salvation.

In chapters 6 and 7 - Paul deals with the real concerns Christians can have - how can I sin, is it okay to sin so grace may abound, what about the battles I find in me? Chapters 6 and 7 are a parenthesis, a tangent argument to Paul's main argument and then in chapter 8 he takes up again theme of the blessings Christians have - 8:1 *"Therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"*. This term *"in Christ Jesus"* once again points us to the truth and reality of our union to and in Christ and then Paul concludes chapter 8 with glorious truths in v38-39 *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,*

neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Yet before he reaches those glorious verses, he again touches on our justification and glorification in v28-30 *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, **he also glorified.**”* Paul again assures his readers that salvation is assured and secure – realise that includes you and me!

For us all here as a church, as individuals in the church, as we are facing an unknown future and what it holds; we need to recognise that as believers we are in Christ, we are justified by faith. The consequences, the ramifications of these truths are awesome for our lives, our faith and for worship. God willing, we will go on to consider these glorious things in the time ahead and my prayer is that they will do us all good and cause us to rejoice in the hope of glory as they are lived out, worked out and applied in the nitty-gritty of the everyday ordinary, messy, mixed up and even painful situations of our lives.