



“When You’re Feeling Unloved”

Romans 5:8

Faith Stories: Did anyone seize an opportunity to share their faith with an unbeliever this week? Describe what happened.

Pray: “And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness” (Acts 4:29)

Group Talk: What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Getting Started

In Romans 5, the apostle Paul is developing his grand gospel narrative, the epic story of the redemption that is available for sinners in Christ Jesus. He shows us that God demonstrates his righteousness even in the forgiving of sins because he has placed the punishment for those sins on his sinless Son. This is how God’s righteousness comes not to condemn us, but to save us! In Romans 5, Paul begins to explore how the gospel can be applied to the life of saved sinners.

Read Romans 5:1-11 together with your group and discuss the questions that follow.

- What is the main point or points?
- What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?
- What does this passage tell us about Jesus? What does it teach you about God’s character?
- Paul’s hope is not a speculative thing. It is a joyful expectation. Why?
- How is Christian hope (5:2-6) different from the way most people think of hope?
- Why does Paul say “hope that does not put us to shame” (5:5)?

- How is good character related to good hope (5:4)?
- What is the significance of noting that “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (5:8)?
- How does this passage call on you to change your attitude, or the way you live?

Read Romans 5:1-11 out loud together again.

Conclusion

On the cross, Jesus Christ absorbs the wrath of God, the due punishment for our sins, and thereby satisfies the justice of God and purchases our pardon. This is often called “penal substitution,” because it describes the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifice as our punishment (penal) in the place of the sinner (substitution). But though penal substitution is the center of Christ’s atoning work, the Scriptures explain it in other important ways as well. One of these views of the atonement is traditionally called “Christus Victor,” a Latin phrase that essentially means what it looks like: Christ the victor. Jesus on the cross became not just the propitiating sacrifice for sins, but the conqueror triumphing over sin and the powers of evil. This is good news for everyone who is in Christ!