

Romans 8:14-17 – Life in the Spirit is knowing who we are in Jesus

Justified before God by believing in Jesus, we know we have peace with Him

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

"Therefore" – referring back to Romans 1:18-4:25, the whole argument about the state of humankind, the folly of aspiring to righteousness through any kind of works or observance, and the grace whereby "righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe," Romans 3:33.

2 ...through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

"Access" – the heavy dividing temple curtain was ripped open in the earthquake, part of the spiritual battle surrounding the crucifixion, Matt. 27:51, Hebrews 10:19-22. Jesus gives His own direct access at any time into the presence of God.

"The hope of the glory of God" – actually, for those who have asked Jesus into their lives, the certainty. The biblical word translated hope is not the common meaning of optimism, but speaking of

IN PRACTICE The text doesn't actually call it the voice of hope, but you know that voice. It is something like the reassurance of joy in the Lord -- "the joy of the Lord is your strength", and how true that is when life seems to have put you in the ditch. Hope is no brave optimism, but a cool and clear assurance that God's order of things is much greater, His plan has not been derailed, and you have a confident expectation that He will bring you through. The last word is 'glory'. Life in the Spirit brings all kinds of grace to reverse setbacks and press through to victory, but almost by definition, there are going to be difficulties and things we have to endure. The Bible calls it suffering, and says it builds our faith and character. Not that it seems like it at the time, but then again, those difficult times are when we hear 'the voice of hope' best and feel closest to God. Who loves us, never lets us go and has a repertoire of ways of showing His love and encouragement when we need it.

QUESTION *What is your experience of knowing a peace and a sense of trust in God you couldn't explain? How would your story encourage someone else?*

PRAYER Lord, we are so grateful that You speak to us, with wisdom, guidance and the assurance of hope -- and in many other ways. Help us to get better at hearing. Echoing the words of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening". Amen.

something certain, but not yet realised: a confident expectation. Jesus Himself secures the promise of our sharing in the glory of God, 1 Timothy 1:1

• **For further study**, read Romans 8:29-30; John 17:22; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-2.

3-4 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

"Suffering produces... hope" – not morbid but rather, joyful and triumphant despite the attacks and difficulties that come to all of us. In God's providence, the experience of maintaining trust in Him in difficult circumstances produces character, strengthens faith and reinforces hope. See also the similar teaching of James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7.

5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

"Shame" – in the OT, sometimes used for a negative verdict in God's judgment, but believers need not fear this because, as the Holy Spirit witnesses to us, God loves us, we belong to Him, and that love fills us and overflows through us.

The Living Word

www.thelivingword.uk PRINT EDITION

The Bible readings for Sunday, June 16, 2019 with commentary notes

RCL readings for Trinity Sunday, **June 16** in Bible order

Prepare for Sunday by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on Sunday's teaching

Theme The Holy Spirit speaks of the delight of Father and Son in us

Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31, Ps. 8 – Wisdom testifies to our Creator's esteem of mankind

John 16:12-15 – The Spirit makes known to us the full truth of Jesus

Romans 5:1-5 – Hope is our assurance of God's love and future glory for us

Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31, Ps. 8 – Wisdom's voice and mankind's honour

"We are crowned with honour and entrusted to look after His world"

1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?

"Does not wisdom call out" – God's voice of wisdom is depicted as a person, a woman who openly makes her speech. At the beginning of Proverbs, 1:20-23, we heard her at the city gate meeting place: "How long will you who are simple love your simple ways... [Delighting] in mockery and [hating] knowledge?... Repent... Then I will make known to you my teachings."

2 At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand;

"She takes her stand" – the worthy woman called "Wisdom" is contrasted with her counterpart, "Folly" who is described as loud and seductive, Prov. 9:13 NLT

"At the highest point" – both women appear to dwell in vantage point locations which suggest ancient temples, and therefore making a choice between the true God and false deities.

• **For further study** of Wisdom and Folly read the whole of Proverbs 8:1-9:6 and 9:13-18.

3 beside the gate leading into the city, at

the entrance, she cries aloud:

"Beside the gate" – Near Eastern cities of this time had substantial gate buildings with built-in chambers for governance and business meetings, so this was like standing on the steps of the town hall.

4 "To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.

"O people, I call out" – Wisdom appeals publicly and, like a prophet, wants all to respond to her message.

22 "The LORD brought me forth as the first of His works, before His deeds of old;

23 "I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

"I was formed... at the very beginning" – God acquired wisdom first, to be like a craftsman in the creation.

"The first of His works" – an expression of God's nature, and a way of saying wisdom does not exist apart from God.

24 "When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water;

25 before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,

26 before He made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.

27 "I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep...

"I was there" – Wisdom has a claim to being involved with everything in the created order; Wisdom can tell us how the world works, and testify to God's greatness.

28 ...when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,

29 when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth.

30-31 "Then I was constantly at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind."

"Constantly at His side... day after day... always in His presence" – and therefore completely reliable.

"Delighting in mankind" – humans, made in the image of God, represent the high point of God's creation.

Psalm 8

1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory in the heavens.

"Lord, our Lord" – not a title but the personal name of Israel's God, Yahweh 'Adonay, covenant God of Israel and king of the earth. "Yahweh" has become 'Jehovah' in older hymns.

"How majestic is Your name" – 'name' stands for the whole person, character and reputation.

IN PRACTICE There are a lot of competing voices attracting our attention (and that's not counting the politicians). Who do we believe? Folly's tone is more seductive than Wisdom's, but Wisdom has the track record, hands down. This is a picture of how God is always speaking to us, but we may be distracted and not

2 Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

"Praise of children" – Jesus later considered children with their simple faith model representatives of God's kingdom, Matt. 18:4. This may also be an allusion to the people of Israel, viewed as weak and helpless by comparison with the mighty Gentile nations that surrounded them – but divinely empowered by their declarations of faithful praise.

3-4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

"The work of Your fingers" – the pagan nations worshipped the sun, moon and stars, which were positioned by the fingers of the Almighty, more reason to praise Him.

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.

6-8 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

"Made them rulers" – these verses form a commentary on Genesis 1:26-28.

"Crowned them with glory and honour" – mankind, literally son of Adam, might seem insignificant by comparison with the universe and complexity and diversity of creation. However, God so esteems the part of His creation which is in His own image, He has appointed them as honoured stewards to manage the rest of creation.

tuned in to Him – or in a phase of (unhelpfully) going our own independent way. The message is, choose to hear His wisdom and remember His delight in us, despite Adam's failure, the ones He trusts to look after His creation. And telling the politicians to set environmental priorities...

QUESTION *If we are honoured almost as much as angels, how does that influence how we approach God?*

John 16:12-15 – The Spirit makes known to us the full truth of Jesus

He takes from the Father and the Son to show believers God's kingdom purposes

12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

"More than you can now bear" – more than you can presently process, coupled with being more than you can carry without the enabling, empowering presence of the Spirit.

13 "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.

"Spirit of Truth" – or reality, leading the disciples into the full implications of the truth bound up with Jesus.

"What is yet to come" – the consequences of His life, death, resurrection and exaltation, and future coming, together with the continuation of His ministry apart from His physical presence. As the Spirit spoke to

them, the first and most lasting effect was the writing of the Gospel accounts, followed by the rest of the NT. Awareness of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity continues to bring the bigger picture, the perspective of the kingdom of God and God's overall purposes.

14 "He will glorify Me because it is from Me that He will receive what He will make known to you.

"Glorify Me" – the Spirit promotes the glory of Christ and the Father without reference to Himself.

15 "All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from Me what He will make known to you."

"Receive from Me... make known to You" – a difference of role, not hierarchical position. Father, Son and Spirit work in perfect unity, but in different ways. All NT truth (and the theme of the OT) revealed by God, finds its focus in Christ, and is disclosed to believers by the Spirit.

IN PRACTICE Hearing God's wisdom, and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice and leading seem like two different pictures of something quite similar. That's one of the reasons it is good to read Scripture in its own sequence – there is a 'progressive revelation' from the patriarchs and the law, through the prophets (looking ahead to change), Jesus showing how in Him the Old Covenant was realised, death and resurrection, coming of the Spirit and the era of life in the Spirit. So, two different pictures and different language but God speaking wisdom and the Holy Spirit's leading look at least complementary. And good – because trying to apply human logic to the Spirit's revelation is surely Folly!

QUESTION *In what sense is it right to ask God to show us what is to come, and in what sense would this be wrong?*