

PASSPORT TO THE KINGDOM OF GRACE

Unlimited, Unrestricted Access to the Realm of Grace

Romans Series
PBC 2025

Text: Romans 5:1-11

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**.² **Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**³ Not only that, **but we rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ More than that, **we also rejoice in God **through our Lord Jesus Christ****, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

If you could have an all-access pass to anywhere in the world—the White House, Buckingham Palace, the Vatican—where would you choose and why?

Through justification by faith, believers receive a "Grace Passport" that grants unlimited, unrestricted access to God's presence, permanent standing in the kingdom of grace, and access to grace's transforming power for daily living.

- Continuing our series through Romans, the greatest letter ever written about how and why God saves the world for His glory!
- We are in the theologically magnificent, doctrinally rich section of the book where Paul discusses Salvation—how and on what basis God forgives guilty, condemned sinners and declares them fully and permanently righteous in His sight (3:21-8:39).
- Chapter 5 focuses our attention on a remarkable change that came about when we were justified by faith: We were reconciled to God

(5:11). Two amazing things happened when we were reconciled to God: 1) we now have peace with God; 2) we have obtained access to the grace of God.

- Romans 5:1 reminds us that because we have been reconciled to God, we have ongoing, unbreakable peace with Him.
- Romans 5:2 reveals **a second change in our standing**—we also have been granted ongoing access and given permanent standing in a new and better realm/kingdom – the realm/kingdom of grace.
- **The Passport Illustration:** The U.S. passport has dropped to #12 globally in 2025. But there's a far more valuable passport—the Grace Passport—that grants access to something infinitely better than any earthly kingdom: the kingdom of God's dear Son, where grace reigns!
- **Key Insight:** When you were justified by faith, you received a Grace Passport with unlimited access to God and permanent standing in His kingdom. (*Col 1:13-14 – “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*)
 - We got this passport when we were justified (Romans 5:1a).
 - This passport comes as a gift (Romans 3:24; 6:23).
 - This passport grants us access to ***four spiritual realities that greatly influence how we live as ambassadors*** of the Kingdom of Grace to those living in the kingdom of darkness.

I. Access to the Realm of Grace

A. Meaning of “Access” – “we have obtained access”

The rare term “access” (προσγωγή) appears four times in the NT Epistles. It is used in contexts where someone is being introduced to a higher authority or to a restricted area or place. (*Here are the other three times: Ephesians 2:18; Ephesians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:18*).

Ephesians 2:13–18 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place

of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ **For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

Ephesians 3:8–12 (speaking of Gentiles being made fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel) To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² **in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.**

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, **that he might bring us to God**, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Access occurs when someone grants us permission or authority to be in the presence of a powerful person (like Esther in the OT) or to access a restricted area or realm (such as permanent access to the president and ongoing standing in the White House).

1. We have been given permanent, unrestricted access to a person – God (5:11; Eph 2:18; 1 Peter 3:18).
2. We have been given irrevocable standing in a place – the kingdom or realm of Grace (5:2; 3:12)

How did we gain this kind of access to God and this standing in the Kingdom of His Son? How did we get a Grace Passport?

B. Means of Access – “through him . . . by faith”

Our access is not based on our own merit or credentials but on the merit of another—Jesus Christ. We have standing in this new kingdom because of our relationship with Lord Jesus—He is our Lord and King. And we received this relationship with Jesus Christ **when we were justified through faith** (5:1a), not by works of righteousness which we have done (Titus 3:5).

Given our familiarity with the concept of our access to God, I want to make sure we don't overlook something truly magnificent about this incredible privilege granted to us through faith and Christ!

C. *Magnificence of this Access* – “into this grace in which we stand”

We have received something that no Old Testament Jew ever could have imagined—permanent, unrestricted access to God and an irrevocable place in the Kingdom of His Son!

Privilege #1: Unrestricted Access to God

- Moses did not have this kind of unrestricted access – God allowed him to see a portion of His glory after He passed by (Exodus 34).
- Not even Aaron and the high priests after him enjoyed unrestricted access to God's presence. They could only go in once a year after making a sacrifice for sin (Leviticus 16).
- But when Jesus Christ died, He opened the way for us to have this kind of unrestricted access to the Father!

Hebrews 10:19–22 Therefore, brothers, since **we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** ²⁰ **by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,** ²¹ **and since we have a great priest over the house of God,** ²² **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

Privilege #2: Irrevocable Standing in the Kingdom of Grace

- Not only did Jesus provide access to God, but He also brought us into this realm of grace where we have a permanent, immovable, and irrevocable standing (note the use of the perfect tense verbs).
- It is permanent – our standing in His Kingdom will never be revoked
- It is ongoing – we will never be denied entrance to God

What is Paul talking about when he refers to grace as a realm?

Paul views all of life and all of reality through the lens of two very real realms: The realm of the Kingdom of Darkness and the Realm of the

Kingdom of God's Son. There are many NT texts that confirm his view, but there is one text that clearly talks about these two realms and our standing in them.

Col 1:13-14 – *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

The Two Kingdoms Described in Scripture:

Kingdom of Darkness Ephesians 2:1-3	Kingdom of God's Son Colossians 1:13-14
Ruler: Satan (Prince of the Power of the Air)	Ruler: Christ (The Son of Man)
Operating Principle: Sin reigns in and over them. (Rom 3:9 – “under sin”)	Operating Principle: Grace reigns in and over us (Rom 6:14 – “under grace”)
Result: Death	Result: Eternal life
Status: Born into it	Status: Transferred into it (born again from above)

*And there are three amazing benefits that Paul points to that belong to those who are in the Kingdom of God's Son! Those benefits can be summed up in the term “rejoice” (boast) – **confident exultation**.*

- *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (5:2)*
- *We rejoice in suffering (5:3)*
- *We rejoice in our reconciliation to God (5:11)*

Not only do we have access to the realm of grace, but we also have access to the throne of Grace! We are not visiting God's kingdom as tourists; we are permanent citizens of this kingdom with full rights and privileges! ***And chief among those privileges is access to a throne!***

II. Access to the Throne of Grace

Hebrews 4:14–16 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

A. Old Covenant Limitation:

- Under the Old Covenant, the only way to approach God for help was to come to the right place (the temple) through the right person (priest and/or High Priest).
- The “ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies” was called the “footstool of God” and represented His throne in Heaven on earth.
- Only one person, the High Priest, had access to that ark/throne, and only once a year.
- A thick curtain separated the “ark/throne” from everyone else.
- If you were a Jew, you could approach God by coming to the courtyard of the temple and standing before the magnificent gate that led into the holy place and the holiest of holies, where the “ark of the covenant” (God’s throne) resided, serving as the “mercy seat” for Israel.
- If you were a Gentile, the closest you got was a court in the outer temple that was marked off as a place where righteous Gentiles could come and approach God and pray to him from a distance.

B. New Covenant Access through Jesus

- But when Jesus died, the thick curtain that separated God from His people was torn from top to bottom and the way to the throne of God was opened for all who come by faith in Jesus!
- The throne mentioned in this text (Heb 4:16) is God’s throne. All of humanity will stand before this throne. Those who reject Christ will face wrath and judgment from this throne. For them, it will be a “throne of wrath.”

- However, for believers, this throne has become a “throne of grace.” We can come as often as we want, and when we do, we will receive two things that will help us in our time of need.
 1. Mercy for our sins – grace for when we sin (undeserved pardon).
 2. Grace for our weakness – help when we are weak (supernatural enablement).

We have been granted access to a realm where grace reigns. And because we have permanent standing in that realm, we receive abundant grace from the One sitting on the throne who rules that kingdom through His Son! ***And that grace has power!***

III. Access to the Power of Grace

Sometimes we think of grace as a bigger and better word for “mercy.” **But grace is more than mercy; grace is power from God at work in us!** Let me share some key texts that highlight this aspect of grace, which energizes us to conquer sin, serve Christ, and endure suffering.

A. ***Grace that helps us conquer sin:***

Rom 6:12–14 *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

Grace doesn't just forgive sin—it breaks sin's power over us. We're no longer "under law" (where sin uses God's commands to provoke rebellion) but "under grace" (where God's power enables obedience).

B. ***Grace that energizes us to serve Christ effectively:***

1 Cor 15:10 *But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is in me.*

Paul's effectiveness wasn't from human effort but from grace working through him. The same is true for us!

C. Grace that enables us to endure suffering:

2 Cor 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Grace is God's empowering presence that enables you to do what you could never do in your own strength—overcome sin, serve effectively, and endure suffering.

Application: Are you trying to conquer sin, serve God, and endure trials in your own strength? Or are you tapping into the power of grace available to you?

Which brings us to the final aspect of grace that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord – all the freedom and fullness of peace with God!

IV. Access to the Freedom and Fullness of Grace

Our Passport of Grace gives us access to:

A. New Freedom in Christ

1. Grace frees us from sin's slavery – Romans 6:14

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

2. Grace frees us from the Law's condemnation– Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

B. New Fullness from Christ

Titus 3:4–7 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- **Regeneration** - The Holy Spirit brings about new life in us

- **Renewal** – the Holy Spirit cleanses us from sin at our new birth
- **Righteousness** - Justified by His grace
- **Riches** - Made heirs with hope of eternal life

Conclusion

A passport is useless if it's never used to gain access to new and better places. Some people own a passport they've never used. Others have passports filled with stamps from wonderful places they've traveled. What does your Grace Passport look like? Is it sitting safely in your theological drawer with pages that have never been stamped? Or is it well-worn from use?

- Have you used the Grace Passport God has given you?
- Have you drawn near to the throne of God to receive grace and mercy to help you and sustain you in the dark places and hard spaces of life?
- Are you experiencing the full blessing available to you as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Imagine having a permanent, immediate access pass to the President of the United States and never using it. You have gained access to someone far greater than any president or king—you have access to the God of Heaven, who has delighted in you, showered you with His love, and given you every blessing in His Kingdom (Eph 1:1-3).

- Are you using your access?
- Are you enjoying its benefits?
- Are you inviting others to receive this access?

Don't hoard your passport – help others to get theirs!

Here are three powerful ways our access to grace ought to change the way we think, feel, and live as ambassadors for the Kingdom of Grace!

1. USE YOUR ACCESS DAILY

"You have a passport—don't leave it in the drawer."

Just as an unused passport represents wasted potential, often we fail to approach God's throne of grace for the mercy and help available to us. Draw near to God confidently—not just once a week, but many times each day. In moments of weakness, temptation, or need, you don't need an appointment, you don't need to clean yourself up first, and you're never bothering Him. Your access to Him is constant and open.

2. LIVE FROM GRACE, NOT FOR GRACE

"You're standing in grace—stop trying to earn your way in."

Many believers exhaust themselves trying to earn or maintain God's favor through their efforts because they forget they already have a permanent standing in the realm of grace. Stop living as if your acceptance depends on your spiritual performance. You're not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14). When you sin, ***run to the throne of grace, not away from it***. Let grace be the fuel for your obedience, not the reward for it.

3. TAP INTO GRACE'S POWER, NOT JUST ITS PARDON

"Grace doesn't just forgive you—it empowers you."

When facing persistent sin or overwhelming circumstances, we must actively rely on the prevailing power of grace to transform us from the inside out and to give us strength to keep trusting, walking, and serving faithfully moment by moment, day by day!

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Compare Old Testament access to God (Leviticus 16, Exodus 33-34) with New Testament access (Hebrews 10:19-22)

- Study the concept of two kingdoms/realms in Scripture (Colossians 1:13-14, Romans 5:12-21, Romans 6:14)
- Examine all four uses of "access" (προσγωγή) in the NT: Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, Ephesians 3:12, 1 Peter 3:18
- Reflect on how grace empowers transformation in Romans 6-8