**Reflections 15-21 June – God invites us in**

**Bible study on Romans 5.1-5**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Hospitable God,
thank you for inviting us into your presence.
May we come with joy and with a desire to meet with you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Give us the will to welcome others into your unfailing love,
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

Acts: 1-5

### Peace and Hope

**5**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%205&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28049a)] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2**through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%205&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28050b)] boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3**Not only so, but we[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%205&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28051c)] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4**perseverance, character; and character, hope. **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.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Here Paul is summarising the argument so far of this letter, a complex rollercoaster ride of human plight and God’s provision, a contrast of faith and works, of grace and keeping impossible rules, and it all lands here: God has welcomed us into his home because of what Jesus has done. So, we have peace.

There is a celebratory tone to this passage. We are invited to rejoice in the benefits we can enjoy through Christ: access into God’s home (there is definite Temple language in v.2), which means an end of striving to please him (‘we have peace’, v.1) and hope that the glory we were robbed of by our rebellion will be restored. We even celebrate in setbacks and troubles, suffering and challenges because these are the ways that the hope we have is made certain. There is nothing that can shame us in any of this, nothing that can tell us we are wrong to live this way.

All this is confirmed by the fact that God pours his love into our lives (the first mention of ‘love’ in Romans) and that comes through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us and is with us to give us the strength to weather the storms we face.

Again, we are reminded of the Trinity not as an abstract doctrine, something obscure that Christians are called on to believe, but as the investment of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in us so we might prosper in the ups and downs of our walk with Jesus. Through his faithfulness we are rescued, welcomed and given peace.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

We often think of God in a chronological order of development – God the Creator, then God in Jesus, then the sending of the Holy Spirit. However, the Old Testament reading suggests that the Creator and the Holy Spirit have always existed and work together in the act of creation and salvation. Other Bible passages, such as Colossians 1:15-17, suggest that Jesus, too, was present from the beginning. In the creation account in Genesis 1:26, God says ‘Let us make humankind in our image’. We are privileged to be invited into this company. How do we respond?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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* How would you explain the Trinity to someone new to faith?
* In what ways does this image emphasise the invitational approach of God as Trinity?
* How might we model this invitation to our communities?

**Prayer to end the Bible Study**

Lord God, our finite minds can’t comprehend your vastness, your majesty, your awesomeness.
We come to you now in humble adoration.
We praise and bless you because you gave us the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with your wonderful love and brings us into relationship with you.
We worship you, mighty Lord. **Amen**.