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Blessed Assurance

Romans 5.1-11

Series: The Pure Gospel

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The Village Church

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I. Introduction

- A. What hath Aristotle to do with Joe Friday?
 - 1. You're familiar with Joe Friday
 - a. The famed detective in the TV series *Dragnet*
 - 2. Joe Friday, in investigating a crime, would inevitably find himself interviewing a witness
 - a. Usually, the witness was female
 - b. And in the process, the witness would start spilling details
 - c. And in spilling details, would stray into all kinds of presumptions, speculations, and conjectures
 - d. Whereupon, Joe Friday would interrupt, famously, and say, "Just the facts, Ma'am."
- B. As it turns out, "Just the facts, Ma'am" is a modern day application of a philosophical doctrine known as *Septem Circumstantiae*, or the elements of circumstance
 - 1. And it has been traced to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*
 - 2. Concepts that Thomas Aquinas summarized in his *Summa Theologiae* in this way:
 - a. "For in acts we must take note of *who* did it, by what aids or instruments he did it (*with*), *what* he did, *where* he did it, *why* he did it, *how* and *when* he did it."
 - 3. In other words, "Just the facts, Ma'am"
- C. You never knew, did you, how steeped Joe Friday was in classical philosophy!
- D. But then, you yourselves have been steeped in Aristotelian epistemology as well!
 - 1. You were taught, probably early on in your education, to analyze stories by using the "5 W's and an H"
 - 2. 5 W's and an H
 - a. Who?
 - b. What?
 - c. When?
 - d. Where?
 - e. Why?
 - f. How?
 - 3. You can now thank Aristotle for how your grammar school teacher relentlessly afflicted you with those questions!

II. The Flow of Romans

- A. We have been studying the book of Romans in our series entitled **The Pure Gospel**
1. Romans, after all, is about the gospel
 2. Paul introduces it that way
 - a. **Romans 1:16–17** (ESV) — 16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
- B. We have just concluded the first main section of the book – having completed chapters 1-4
1. And one way of summarizing what this section is all about is to analyze it through the 5 W’s and an H
- C. **Who**
1. The gospel is, first of all, about **Jesus Christ**
 2. **Romans 1:1–4** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the **gospel of God**,
 - b. 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
 - c. 3 **concerning his Son**, who was descended from David according to the flesh
 - d. 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord...
- D. **What**
1. So the who is Jesus Christ
 - a. So what did He do?
 2. **God sent Him to be a sacrifice to save us from our sins**
 3. **Romans 3:25** (ESV) —
 - a. 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood...
 4. Oh! There’s that word again – “propitiation”
 - a. Propitiation is a wrath removing sacrifice
 - b. Refers to Jesus’ death on the cross, in which He took upon Himself the just punishment that all of us deserve
 - c. He was our substitute
 5. **Isaiah 53:6** (ESV) — 6 ... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
 6. But not only that, He was raised from the dead!
 - a. Conquering the final enemy – death
 - b. Validating His righteous life and the effect of His death to save us from our sins
 7. **Romans 1:4** (ESV) —

- a. 4 ... declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord...
- E. **Where**
- 1. This all took place in **Israel-Palestine**
 - a. In both Galilee, where Jesus was raised, as well as in Jerusalem, where the main events of passion week took place
 - b. Well attested by both the Bible and extra-biblical sources
 - 2. But the gospel has ramifications all over the world
 - 3. **Romans 1:8** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.
- F. **When**
- 1. This all happened about **2,000 years ago**
 - 2. Well attested by the people that are mentioned in the gospels
 - a. Annas and Caiaphas – high priests in Jerusalem
 - b. Tiberius Caesar
 - c. The Herods
 - d. Pontius Pilate
 - 3. That's all chronological time
 - a. From a biblical perspective, there is God's time
 - b. Time of life-altering, history influencing occasions
 - 4. **Galatians 4:4–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 But when the fullness of time had come,
 - b. God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,
 - c. 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
 - 5. That's the “when” of the gospel
- G. **Why**
- 1. Because **we are sinners in need of a Savior**
 - 2. **Romans 3:9–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 ... For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.
 - 3. **Romans 3:23** (ESV) —
 - a. 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...
- H. **How**
- 1. **Through the redemption of Jesus Christ**
 - 2. And
 - a. **By faith in Jesus Christ**
 - 3. **Romans 3:24–25** (ESV) —
 - a. 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus,
 - b. 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, **to be received by faith....**

- I. Those are the 5 W's and an H of the gospel
 - 1. Who?
 - a. Jesus Christ
 - 2. What?
 - a. God sent Him to be a sacrifice for our sins
 - 3. Where?
 - a. Israel-Palestine
 - 4. When?
 - a. About 2,000 years ago – 1st Century CE
 - 5. Why?
 - a. We are sinners in need of a Savior
 - 6. How?
 - a. Through the redemption of Jesus Christ
 - b. To be received by faith in Jesus Christ
- J. But there is one thing that must be considered in the gospel
 - 1. One thing not covered in the 5 W's and an H
 - 2. Not included in the who, what, where, when, why, and how
- K. And that's this question:
 - 1. **So what?**
- L. What difference does it all make?
 - 1. I'm sure Aristotle got around to that issue at some point
 - a. But I don't know where
 - 2. I'm sure Thomas Aquinas talked about somewhere
 - a. But I haven't read *Summa Theologiae*
 - b. (I just steal quotes here and there!)
 - 3. Maybe even Joe Friday thought about it
 - a. Probably never made it into the show
 - 4. But, so what?
- M. What difference does the gospel make?
 - 1. Well, that's what this next section of Romans is all about
 - 2. It's about the effect of the gospel, the fruit of the gospel, the results of the gospel
 - 3. It starts in chapter 5 and runs through chapter 8
 - 4. To sum it all up: **The Security and Assurance of the Salvation that Comes Through Jesus Christ**
- N. Lloyd-Jones: ... the apostle is concerned primarily, from this point onwards, to show us the absolute character, the fullness and the finality of the salvation which comes to us in the way he has already described, names, as the result of justification by faith.
- O. **Romans 5:1–11** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,
 - a. we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith
 - a. into this grace in which we stand,
 - b. and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,
 - a. knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 - b. 4 and endurance produces character,
 - c. and character produces hope,
 - d. 5 and hope does not put us to shame,
 - e. because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
4. 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
5. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—
 - a. though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—
6. 8 but God shows his love for us
 - a. in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
7. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood,
 - a. much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
8. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,
 - a. much more, now that we are reconciled,
 - b. shall we be saved by his life.
9. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - a. through whom we have now received reconciliation.

III. The Fruit of Justification

A. Peace with God

1. Peace here is not what most people think of
 - a. It is not what most people even desire
2. Most people desire a subjective feeling of peace
 - a. We want our souls to be peaceful
 - b. We want the absence of anxiety
 - c. We don’t want our lives to be chaotic or filled with turmoil
3. True for both Christians and non-Christians
 - a. **Philippians 4:6–7** (ESV) — 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - b. Paul in this text speaks of the “peace *of* God”
 - c. An internal sense of well-being
 - d. And whether a person is a believer or not, we all would love to have that internal sense of well-being
4. But what Paul is talking about in Romans 5 is not the peace *of* God, but peace *with* God
 - a. And like so much else in the New Testament, a lot turns on the prepositions!
5. The peace here is not subjective

- a. It is the objective peace that exists by being in a right relationship with God
 - b. Most people in the world who want peace assume that there is nothing wrong with their relationship with God
 - c. God is a grandfather in the sky – a cosmic Santa Claus
 - d. About whom they think about once a year; twice at most
 - e. And they always think of Him in benevolent terms
6. Paul has spent a great portion of the first section of Romans detailing why this is not the case
- a. Our relationship with God is seriously problematic
 - b. It's problematic whether we feel peaceful or not
7. Human beings are not, by nature, at peace with God
- a. We are enemies with God
 - b. That is the objective state of affairs whether we feel peaceful or not
8. Paul declares that God is angry with us
- a. He doesn't feel peaceful! At least in the natural human state
9. **Romans 1:18** (ESV) —
- a. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
10. God is angry
- a. Angry with our truth suppression
 - b. Angry with our unrighteousness
 - c. Angry with our lack of thanksgiving
 - d. **Romans 1:21** (ESV) — 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
 - e. He's angry with the state of our minds!
 - f. He's angry with our failure to acknowledge Him as God and honor Him as God
11. Human beings need peace
- a. Christians want the peace *of* God (Philippians 4)
 - b. This passage is about peace *with* God
 - c. That is an objective state of affairs
12. This peace with God comes to us as a result of our justification based on the finished work of Jesus Christ
13. Here's where the issue of security and assurance come in
- a. You need to know that if you trust Christ for your salvation, you are no longer God's enemy
 - b. You have waived the white flag
 - c. You have now become an ally
 - d. And more than an ally – you have become God's friend!
14. His anger is set aside
- a. Actually, His anger was poured out on Christ on the cross
 - b. That's why He is no longer angry with you

15. Regardless of who you are, or what you have done
 - a. If you've been justified by Christ, you are in a state of peace with God
 - b. That's an objective, factual, state of affairs that will not change because you, through faith, have appropriated the work on Christ on your behalf
 - c. And there is nothing insufficient about the work of Christ in securing your peace with God
16. Now, is there a relationship between peace *with* God and the peace *of* God?
 - a. I certainly hope so!
 - b. But for the believer, the only way you can be sure that your sense of internal well-being, the peace *of* God, is legitimate is if you actually have peace *with* God
 - c. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, if you trust Christ alone, for your salvation – the Bible declares that you are no longer an enemy of God – you are His friend
 - d. You have peace *with* God!

B. **Access into Grace**

1. Another fruit of justification by faith in Christ is access into grace
2. **Romans 5:2** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand...
3. Access into grace is another objective state of affairs that we enjoy by virtue of our justification
4. A key biblical issue is access
 - a. In the OT access to God was severely restricted
 - b. The presence of God as He dwelt with His covenant people was separated from the people
 - c. In both the tabernacle and the temple there were three chambers
 - d. An outer court, and then the holy place, and then the Holy of Holies
 - e. In the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant, covered by gold mercy seat
 - f. And over the mercy seat were two gold cherubim
 - g. And the presence of God dwelt above the cherubim
5. The only one able to enter was the high priest
 - a. And him only once a year – on the day of atonement
 - b. And that not without the blood of the sacrifices
 - c. For himself, and also for the people
 - d. Sprinkled on the mercy seat
 - e. The mercy seat – whose Greek translation is **hilasterion (Gk) – propitiation!**
6. But when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom

- a. Symbolizing what Christ accomplished by His death on our behalf
 - b. Enabling us to have direct access to God through the blood of Christ!
7. If you are justified by grace through faith, you now stand in the presence of God Himself, with direct access to Him
- a. You do so, not on the basis of what you have accomplished
 - b. Not on the basis of who you are
 - c. Or even on the basis of who you were!
 - d. You may be, or have been, a very important person from the world's perspective
 - e. But that has nothing to do with your capacity to stand in the presence of God
8. You can only stand in the presence of God by grace through faith
9. OT illustration – story of Esther
- a. Jewish woman following the exile in Babylon
 - b. Selected by King Xerxes to replace the deposed queen following an elaborate selection process
 - c. Wicked Haman had hatched a plot to kill all Jews in Persia and managed to get Xerxes to issue a decree that would accomplish that
 - d. Esther was informed about it by Mordecai, her cousin
 - e. Mordecai told Esther that she had the obligation to her people to tell Xerxes about what was about to take place
 - f. Problem – Persian law forbade anyone to approach the King without invitation
 - g. Penalty was death
 - h. And Esther hadn't been summoned before the King for some time
 - i. She didn't have access
10. Mordecai pressed the issue, telling Esther that she was appointed queen “for such a time as this”
- a. Esther agreed to go
 - b. She fasted and prayed for three days, as did the Jews
 - c. She approached the king, sitting on his throne, to see what he would do with her
 - d. He was so struck with her beauty that he extended his scepter and received her into his presence
 - e. The plot was averted; Haman was executed; the rest is history
11. We, likewise, have obtained access into the throne room of heaven by virtue of the beauty of Jesus Christ
- a. **Ephesians 2:18** (ESV) — 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
 - b. **Ephesians 3:12** (ESV) — 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

12. If you are justified by Christ you now stand in the very presence of God, able and even invited to make your requests to Him who graciously listens and responds for His glory and for your benefit
 - a. That is an objective reality
 - b. And a great boost to our assurance!

C. **Hope of the Glory of God**

1. **Romans 5:2** (ESV) — 2 ... and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
2. This refers to the glory of Jesus Christ
 - a. Which we have beheld – **John 1.14**
 - b. And of which we are partakers
3. **1 Peter 5:1** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed...
4. **2 Peter 1:3–4** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
 - b. 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
5. **Colossians 1:27** (ESV) —
 - a. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
6. **2 Corinthians 3:18** (ESV) —
 - a. 18 And we all, with unveiled face,
 - b. beholding the glory of the Lord,
 - c. are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.
 - d. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
7. But not only do we have the present taste of this glory, we have the hope of the glory of God in a final, complete, consummation
 - a. Hope – always future
 - b. Biblical hope – always certain
8. And through justification, we have the certain hope that when we see Jesus, we will be transformed with His glory
9. **1 John 3:2** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 Beloved, we are God’s children now,
 - b. and what we will be has not yet appeared;
 - c. but we know that when he appears we shall be like him,
 - d. because we shall see him as he is.
10. This is the beatific vision

- a. The final transformation of the believer in the image of our Lord Jesus Christ
- b. Our glorification
- 11. And this is our hope
- 12. Now, here's a pop quiz
 - a. Can you say what is the mission of TVC?
 - b. We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ
 - c. Hope is one of the central features of the mission of TVC
 - d. As we all look forward to eternity – and many of us are not far from it! – if we have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ, we can have that kind of hope!
 - e. A sure hope; a certain hope
- 13. **1 Peter 1:3** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
 - b. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again
 - c. to a living hope
 - d. through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...
- 14. Do you have that hope?
 - a. The hope of the glory of God?
- D. **Rejoicing in Suffering**
 - 1. But Paul is not finished
 - 2. **Romans 5:3–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,
 - b. knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 - c. 4 and endurance produces character,
 - d. and character produces hope,
 - e. 5 and hope does not put us to shame...
 - 3. Because we are justified by grace through faith, we don't have to cringe in the face of tribulations and sufferings
 - a. We now have the capacity to see how God uses each and every experience in our lives to shape us into the glory-destined vessels we were meant to be!
 - 4. For the Christian, there really is no such thing as an ultimate tragedy
 - a. God turns every tragedy into comedy – in the theatrical sense!
 - 5. Tribulations produce positive changes in the lives of Christians
 - a. Far from becoming bitter or confused or despairing, trials produce character, confidence and hope
 - b. That's very different from what tribulations produce in the lives of non-believers
 - 6. This is really describing a dimension of sanctification – the process through which we are being conformed into the image of Christ
 - a. It introduces us to chapters 6-8 which describes in more detail the process of sanctification

- b. Sanctification is one of the means by which God assures your of your salvation in Christ!
 - c. The more you grow, the more sure you become!
 - 7. How have tribulations and sufferings affected your sanctification?
 - a. Have you persevered?
 - b. Has your character grown since you first believed?
 - c. Has your hope grown?
 - d. If so, all these are evidences of your standing in grace through justification
- E. **God's Love in Our Hearts**
1. Now, what else serves to assure us of our security in the salvation that is ours in Christ?
 2. **Romans 5:3-5** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 - b. 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
 - c. 5 and hope does not put us to shame,
 - d. because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
 3. The love of God has been poured into our hearts!
 - a. The Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit of love
 4. You see, justification is a legal declaration
 - a. In justification we are declared "not guilty"
 - b. In justification God has transferred our sin and guilt into Christ's account for which He paid on the cross
 - c. And in justification God has transferred the righteousness of Christ into our account
 - d. Those are all actual, legitimate transactions in the courtroom and in the accounting room
 5. But that doesn't mean nothing else has happened
 - a. Something wonderful has happened
 - b. Something astonishing has happened
 - c. As a result of justification, as a fruit of justification, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in you!
 - d. The Holy Spirit has infused you with the love of God in Christ Jesus!
 6. Your affections have thus changed
 - a. Things you used to love, you find empty and unsatisfying
 - b. Things you used to despise, you find you now love
 - c. Like God, for instance
 - d. Or other Christians
 - e. Or the beauty of holiness
 7. And the love of God having been poured into our hearts is an objective reality
 - a. That begins to change our subjective experience

- b. And works to build our sense of security and assurance

IV. Foundations of Fruit

- A. Paul goes on to establish the foundations for this fruit
 - 1. What is it that even more assures of this glorious state of affairs?
- B. Christ's Death for Sinners
 - 1. Romans 5:6–8 (ESV) —
 - a. 6 For while we were still weak,
 - b. at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
 - c. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—
 - d. though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—
 - e. 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - 2. Argument
 - a. Almost no one will die for a righteous person
 - b. Certainly, no one would die for an unrighteous person
 - c. Our human love is not that great
 - d. But God's love far surpasses human love
 - e. He demonstrated His love in the Christ died when we were ungodly, sinners!
 - 3. Christ didn't wait until you cleaned yourself up!
 - a. He didn't send you to a training institute so you could qualify for the kingdom
 - b. No! He died for you when you were still a sinner!
 - 4. That's another objective event – Christ's death on the cross
 - 5. If you are justified by faith in Christ, the extraordinary love of God ought to assure you
 - a. Christ didn't die for you because you were a good person
 - b. He died for you as an ungodly sinner
 - c. What makes you think that love will change?
 - 6. The love of God in Christ's death for you is an incredible source of assurance
 - 7. And then what?
- C. Saved from Wrath
 - 1. Romans 5:9 (ESV) —
 - a. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
 - 2. Now we're back to where we started – peace with God
 - a. It's a "how much more" argument
 - 3. If we were justified by His blood, much more we'll be saved from wrath
 - 4. No longer is God angry with us!
 - 5. You don't have to keep looking over your shoulder to see whether God will strike you down!
 - a. If you experience difficulties, He's not striking you down – He's building you up

- b. He chipping away the extraneous rock off His masterpiece sculpture!
 - c. All for your benefit – for the hope of the glory of God!
 - D. **Saved by Christ's Life**
 - 1. And then finally, there is the assurance that in justification you are saved by the life of Christ
 - 2. **Romans 5:10** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 For if while we were enemies
 - b. we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,
 - c. much more, now that we are reconciled,
 - d. shall we be saved by his life.
 - 3. Behind all this is the resurrection of Christ
 - a. The word “resurrection” is not used; but it’s clearly here
 - b. “Saved by His life”
 - c. Not just the death of Christ assures us; His resurrected life does also
 - 4. If Christ had died only, and not been raised, a grand question mark would have remained over our status with respect to God
 - a. But the resurrection has removed all doubt
 - b. We shall be saved by His life
 - c. We know that because of His resurrection

V. **Our Response**

- A. So what is our response
 - 1. Well, let’s listen to Paul
- B. **Romans 5:11** (ESV) —
 - 1. 11 More than that,
 - 2. we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - 3. through whom we have now received reconciliation.
- C. With all of that to boost our security and assurance
 - 1. Peace with God
 - 2. Access into grace
 - 3. Hope of the glory of God
 - 4. Rejoicing in suffering
 - 5. God’s love in our hearts
- D. **How can we not rejoice?**
 - 1. And I mean, rejoice in an extravagant, uninhibited way
 - 2. I know there are bunch of Presbyterians here – it’s hard to do that
 - 3. But I’m talking about your hearts
 - 4. You have don’t have to dance in the aisles
 - a. But you can if you want!
 - b. But be careful – don’t fall
 - c. Don’t want’ anyone to get hurt!
 - 5. But joy is what we must express when we consider these truths
- E. I learned something this week

1. I try to learn something every week
2. But I learned that the biblical term most used for a believer is the term “in Christ”
 - a. Not “Christian” which is only used three times in the NT, and usually it’s a put-down
 - b. But “in Christ” best describes a believer
3. And everything we’ve described this morning comes to us by virtue of being “in Christ”
4. And then I learned that one of the great theologians of the early 20th Century – Benjamin B. Warfield – once said that the term “in Christ” should never be spoken
 - a. He said it should only be sung
5. Because there are some things you can’t express without singing