

Sermon Series: The Pilgrim's Progress
"Climbing the Hill of Difficulty"
by Rev. John C. Tittle

Scripture Readings: *Romans 5:1-5*

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Discussion Questions:

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. Can you think of a time in your life where you overcame a real challenge or obstacle? How did you do it?
3. How would you define peace? Is it possible to have internal peace when there is external chaos?
4. Peace doesn't pretend conflict isn't there, rather peace goes to conflict to lovingly engage it. Why is it so tempting to try to bypass the Hill of Difficulty and go around it, rather than through it? What happens when we avoid conflict in our lives?
5. Paul helps us see the progression that can take place when we experience difficulty. How might troubles build endurance, character, and hope? Why do challenges sometimes not do this in our lives?
6. How does Paul say it is possible to have such hope, peace, and love in such situations?
7. As Christians we're not supposed to boast, yet Paul says here that we boast in our sufferings. What is he talking about?
8. Why does hope not disappoint us?
9. What are some situations in your life and in the world right now that you would like to see God wage "peacefare" on?