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NEWSLETTER



U.S. MARINE CORPS/STAFF SGT. LUCAS VERA

SO HELP ME GOD

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U.S. NAVY/2ND CLASS CODY BEAM



U.S. MARINE CORPS/LANCE CPL. CEDAR BARNES

ROMANS 5

An OASIS for the tired sojourner

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana
USA (Ret.)

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



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. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endur-

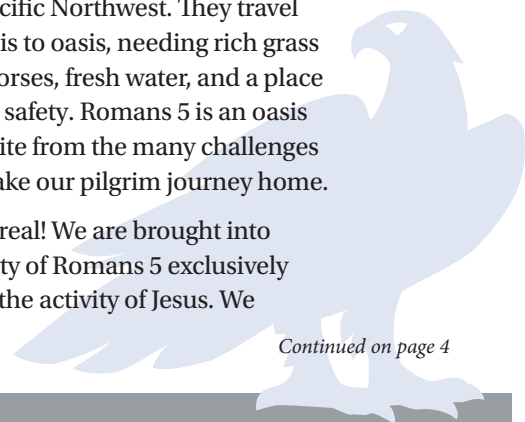
ance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” ROM. 5:1-5

In the Army, I was taught to plan. Before taking the first step off the “Line of Departure,” you had better know what you’re doing. A major part of any successful design is “rest and resupply.” So for journeys, road marches and convoys, there is a need to inten-

tionally rest and resupply. In Stephen Ambrose’s book *Undaunted Courage*, he describes the Lewis and Clark expedition traversing the mountains of the Pacific Northwest. They travel from oasis to oasis, needing rich grass for the horses, fresh water, and a place to rest in safety. Romans 5 is an oasis and respite from the many challenges as we make our pilgrim journey home.

Let’s get real! We are brought into the beauty of Romans 5 exclusively through the activity of Jesus. We

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U.S. ARMY CAPT. DAVID GASPERSON

Service to God and Country

A LIFELONG RENDERING

“Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, ‘Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.’ So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.” **MATT. 22:15–21 (NKJV)**



by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana
USA (Ret.)

These are famous words of Jesus: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” So how is it that we who wear the uniform or are connected to those that serve our country consider these words of Christ?

Luther said:

This honor is due to God, that we are to hold him as a true, almighty and wise God, and attribute to him all the good things that can be named. And even if I do not render him this honor, he still keeps it; nothing is added to or subtracted from it.

The words of Jesus convey more than the importance of paying of taxes to the government. There is more here than Jesus confronting the Pharisaic scholars and political “pro-Roman wonks” the Herodians. This is a trap. Well-laid and ready to slam its verbal jaws shut around the Lord. “Hey Jesus, awesome and wise, do You support an oppressive government or intentional sedition?”

Let’s put this in context. We are now in the 22nd chapter of Matthew. Jesus has been baptized in the Jordan River, the Sermon on Mount has been given, numerous miracles have been performed confirming Jesus as the promised Old Testament Messiah. Palm Sunday, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, has just occurred. Now He is in Jerusalem. Jesus knows His betrayal is near at hand. The Lord knows it will soon be time to volunteer His life for you, me and the whole world.

Talk about profound ignorance! Without knowing it, the parties are talking to the living fulfillment of the Old Testament and the source of life eternal. For all their smug intelligence, they address the deliverer of all humanity, Jesus — the Lord, the Messiah. He already has all the kingdoms of this world resting in the palm of His hand. He is a King who will soon suffer and die for the people of Israel and all humanity.

Jesus’ response was astonishing: “Render,” which means to give back what is due. What do you owe the government? The answer is simple but enacting it takes a lifetime: Be a good citizen of the God-given state, without violating your allegiance to the Lord Christ.

Jesus wants us to consider the question “what do you owe the Lord God?” Look at the Creed! Walk through the First Article: life. Our expanse of years and the air we breathe are gifts from God. What do we owe God? Look at the Second Article: redemption. Jesus



is the fulfillment of God's promises and the promise of life eternal, in His suffering, death and resurrection from the grave. Look at the Third Article: eternal belonging to the Body of Christ. We are bound and created by the Holy Spirit. We receive forgiveness of sins, the true hope of life eternal.

Our rendering, giving back, is done in repentance and thankfulness. The Pharisees knew it and the Herodians got "schooled" by Jesus. Both parties knew of their wickedness. John the Baptist, the great herald of Christ, indicted the Pharisees and Sadducees before Jesus appeared on the scene: "But when [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham'" (MATT. 3:7-9).

Caesars will come and go. Governments in all their forms will not last forever. But the Word of the Lord endures forever.

As you explore your "rendering," consider the words of Psalm 116:

What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people.

A joyful task given by Christ. A lifelong rendering.

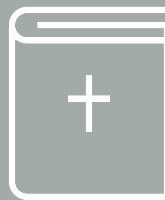


What should a sojourner carry in their rucksack?

As you sojourn through the military, it is important to consider your packing list.

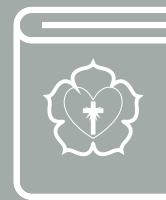
When it comes to a packing list, always follow what the leadership requires. After mandatory items are packed, there is room for more. How much extra you carry depends on the unit mission. In the infantry or airborne, be careful! What you ruck in, you ruck out. In an armor unit or wheeled transport organization, "when in doubt, throw it in."

Here are some important items you should consider including in your packing list:



BIBLE

Choose one bound together and made of real paper. Make sure it has both the Old and New Testament.



LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

This is a manual containing answers and questions which provides hope.



LUTHERAN HYMNAL

This great book fills you with joy, reminds you of home and helps keep you connected to the church.

With these books along with you, you can write, underline and always refer back. I'm sure there are other items. But these have helped me on numerous deployments and when separated from church and family. So, throw them in your rucksack, lace up your boots and continue sojourning!



Continued from page 1

are here because of His death and resurrection. This emboldens us. We navigate through the challenges of life led by the Holy Spirit.

We are a people justified by faith. We are united in peace with God through the Lord Jesus. Through faith we have access to God. As children of God redeemed under Christ we are set apart. It's not that we won't have problems in life — we will. But we are a people of hope because of Christ's death on the cross.

Our culture is in desperate need of help. We are a nation on life support, morally speaking. It's not looking good. We reside in a world of great and growing hostility. We are a divided people. It seems to be getting worse. We have become suspicious of our neighbors, our government and our own family members.

Then we hear these words: promise, hope, comfort, healing.

As Romans 5:1 says:

Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wow! Peace with God. Access to His grace. Despite all the foibles, nonsense, sin and our flesh, all fade as we stand by Christ the crucified. Paul concludes with “the hope,” a hope rooted in the justification by grace through faith won for us by Jesus.

We are a changed people. As redeemed in Christ Jesus, as forgiven and restored,

we take time to say “thank you.” Thank you to our Lord Jesus for His coming into the world to redeem us. We hear God's Law and are reminded of our fallen humanity and sinful condition. We are helpless and pathetic, beaten up and tired, authors of our own misery, and threadbare due to our fallen condition.

We are indeed a thankful people. In 1523 Luther lectured on Romans 5. Especially the words of verse 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.”

Luther said this:

When we have received the Holy Spirit through faith, we are immediately justified by this very faith, apart from any work of our own, by the gift of God alone; and we feel peace and a good conscience toward God and exclaim in joy and security: Abba father! There is no more fear of the wrath of God or servile flight from it, but a filial access to God through the grace in which we stand.

We have a mission. We have purpose. The Lord God is not finished with you. The harvest is so rich. We engage society and lovingly confront the world and point the way to peace, hope and salvation. Our journey is not an arduous one. We walk with Christ beside us, to our left, our right, behind us. Christ in us.

Romans 5 tells us we are at peace! Redeemed! Loved! Forgiven!

CHECK IT OUT!

WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS
worshipanew.org

MILITARY ONE SOURCE
militaryonesource.mil

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
veteranscrisisline.net

WARRIORS OF FAITH
thelc.ms/lhm-warriors

FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE
shoplhm.org/forgiveness-is-a-choice

PTSD THE WAR AT HOME
shoplhm.org/the-conflict-at-home-soldiers-confronting-ptsd

VICTIM, VALIDATED, VICTORIOUS
shoplhm.org/victim-validated-victorious

STRENGTH AND HONOR
shoplhm.org/strength-and-honor-the-spiritual-warfare-against-pornography

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