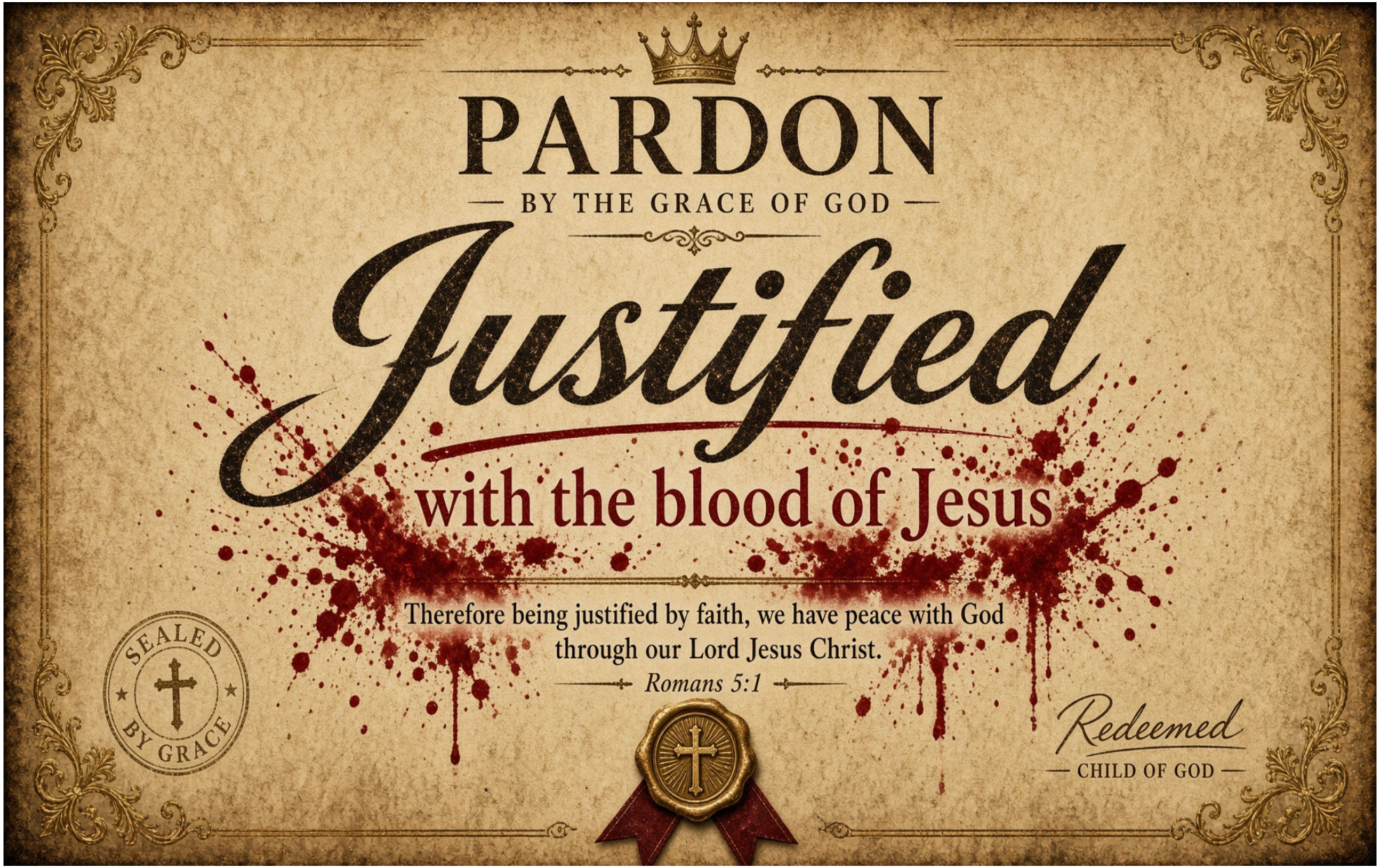
PARDON
BY THE GRACE OF GOD
Justified
with the blood of Jesus
Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 5:1
SEALED
BY GRACE
Redeemed
CHILD OF GOD

**1. The Linguistic Root: *Dikaioō* (δικαιόω)** In classical and Koine Greek, *dikaioō* is a verb carrying distinct legal weight. It does not mean "to make moral" or "to transform internally" (which would be *hagiadzo*, to sanctify); rather, it is a **forensic, declarative act**.

- **The Judge's Verdict:** In a court of law, when a judge *dikaioō*s someone, he declares them righteous, acquits them, or pronounces a verdict of "not guilty."
- **Objective Standing:** It describes a change in *status*, not a change in character. The guilty party stands before the bar, but instead of receiving condemnation, the judge issues a judicial decree: **righteous, acquitted, justified**.
- **Paul's Usage in Romans:** When Paul writes in Romans 3:24 that humanity is *"justified* [dikaioumenoi] *freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* he is using courtroom language. God acts as the righteous Judge who legally declares a condemned sinner pardoned.

**2. The Legal Grounds: The Blood of Jesus (*Hilastērion*)** A legal pardon cannot simply ignore the law without violating justice. In human courts, dropping charges arbitrarily is corruption; a just judge must uphold the law. Paul solves this dilemma in **Romans 3:25**:

> *"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement [hilastērion], through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith."*

- **The Propitiation / Mercy Seat:** The Greek term *hilastērion* points directly to the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement.
- **Satisfying Justice:** The "blood of Jesus" represents the substitutionary payment of the penalty. The wrath and judicial demand of God's holy law against sin are fully absorbed at the cross. Therefore, when God declares a believer *dikaioō* (justified), He remains entirely "just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). Justice is not compromised; it is satisfied.

**3. The Instrument: Faith (*Pistis*) as the Receiving Instrument** If *dikaioō* is the verdict and the blood of Jesus is the legal payment, **faith (*pistis*) is the instrument of receipt**.

- Paul stresses throughout Romans (particularly in chapters 3, 4, and 5) that justification is *dia pisteōs* (through faith), completely apart from human works or moral achievement.
- Because justification is a forensic declaration based on someone else's merit (Christ's finished work), it cannot be earned. To try to earn a legal pardon is to misunderstand the courtroom metaphor. Faith is the empty hand extended to receive a verdict that the defendant did not earn.

**Summary of the Paradigm in Romans**

1. **The Human Problem:** All have sinned and stand guilty under the divine law (Romans 3:19–23).
2. **The Basis (The Blood):** Christ's substitutionary sacrifice pays the penalty, satisfying the demands of justice (Romans 3:25).
3. **The Divine Verdict (*Dikaioō*):** God legally pronounces the believing sinner acquitted, righteous, and pardoned (Romans 5:1).
4. **The Means (Faith):** This unmerited legal standing is appropriated solely through trust in Christ, resulting in permanent peace with God (Romans 5:1–2).