

Romans Study
Session 7 - Romans 5:12-21

In the last section we saw how Paul brought home the truth of the certainty of salvation for those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. God's unbelievable love for mankind demonstrated by Jesus dying on the cross in our place for our sin, proves God's intention of saving us fully upon Christ's return. In the meantime, we have been reconciled and exist in a state of perpetual and eternal peace with God which causes hope to flourish in our souls that what God has promised, He will deliver in His timing.

Now Paul is going to turn his attention to how this good news was accomplished. This passage is really only one paragraph, one thought long. It has a few twists and turns to it but for the most part the main thought follows this format "so then - even so" (NASB) or "just as - so also" (NIV). What provides the twists and turns is that Paul gets sidetracked while making the main argument. So what he's going to start in v. 12 he's not going to sum up until vv. 18-19. The key is looking for the "so then - even so" wording to find the main train of what's being said. We use the same sort of wording in our thoughts sometimes. This is similar to the thought of many this year. *"The Phillies are disappointing their fans this year, so they will probably continue to disappoint them next year, too."* In this the Phillies are a model of futility. Just as Paul is going to compare Adam and Christ, who he is going to refer to as the second Adam. The first Adam, as we'll see, is a model of futility whereas the second Adam is the model for eternal life and fruitfulness.

1. Adam, sin and universal death

[Romans 5:12]

There are four clauses in this verse and we need to understand each of them to understand the rest of the passage. The "therefore" at the beginning of this sentence has the meaning of *"in order to accomplish what I just taught..."*

Q: What came into the world through one man (Adam)? (*sin*)

Q: What did sin bring with it into the world? (*death*)

Q: What did death do once it got its foot in the door of the world? (*it spread to everyone*)

Q: Why did death spread to everyone? (*because everyone sinned*)

[Genesis 2:16-17]

Q: What did God mean when He told Adam and Eve on the day they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they would die? (*It wasn't a physical death immediately but a spiritual death - separation from God yet this separation would later result in a physical death. Everyone would be subject to this same experience.*)

Q: Doesn't it seem unfair of God to punish all mankind, including us, even though Adam lived thousands of years before we were even born? *(yes it may seem unfair but we're going to see how it isn't later in this passage.)*

The problem that Adam unleashed upon the world was that of sin and with sin comes death.

[Romans 3:23]

We've already studied this passage a few weeks back. Sin is missing the mark. The mark is the target, it is the very best God has for us - it's represents the highest and best potential of why He created us. Sin is missing that mark. As a result, sin leads us to be separated from God. Thus through the deception of sin, we find ourselves hopelessly separated from the source of life and peace who is God.

[Romans 6:23]

Q: According to this verse, what are the wages of sin? *(death)*

Q: Why do you think that the payment for sin is death based on our discussion thus far? *(Sin separates us from God who is the source of all true life - both physical and spiritual. The payment for sin is an immediate spiritual death - separation from the presence of God and access to God followed by an eventual physical death. Death is what sin pays out.)*

Q: Why does v. 12 say that death spread to everyone? *(Because everyone sinned)*

The question that we are eventually going to have to confront is how did sin spread to everyone? How did Adam's one sin impact the entire race of humans even thousands of years later? Doesn't it seem a bit unfair of God to hold us all accountable for a single sin that took place thousands of years before we were even born and we had no part in? We will answer it but not until a bit later in this session.

2. Sin and death apart from the law.

[Romans 5:13-14]

Q: Which came first, sin or the Law? *(sin)*

This doesn't mean that there was no law in existence anywhere but that the Jewish Law given at the time when the old covenant was put into force was not yet in existence. Even though sin was not taken into account before the requirements of the Law were given, sin still existed and that is evidenced by the fact that people died. Remember that God gave people an innate sense of right and wrong in their conscience and through the worldly, laws of their culture. When these ethical standards were broken, it was proof of sin's existence. So the nature of sin which was passed down from Adam to the rest of mankind, continued to cause death even in the

absence of the Law of Moses. Thus we see the penalty of sin evident even without a covenant in place between God and man. When that Law was put into effect, sin also became transgression as the offenses were taken into account by God.

Q: What does the phrase “had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam” mean (v.14)? *(It means that Adam was given a commandment from God. Those who lived between Adam and Moses, when the Law was given, didn't have a direct word from God or a commandment given so as to have anything to break. Yet, by sinful actions they still managed to sin and violate God's holiness thus bringing condemnation and wrath upon themselves.)*

At the end of v.14, there is the statement that Adam is a type of Him to come. In Scripture, a type is an example or figure that in some way corresponds to something or someone else in some way. In this case, Christ, who we have seen over the past few chapters, impacted the entire world with His grace. What He did, He did for everyone on the planet. It is in that same way that Adam is a type of Christ. It is just a reverse or anti-type in that what Adam did, which was sin, impacted the entire human race. Instead of for the good, Adam's impacted us all for the bad. This comparison of types is the main teaching of this passage.

3. The difference between the first and second Adams

[Romans 5:15-17]

Notice that the word “grace” and “gift” show up eight times (NASB) in these three verses. This section portrays what happened to as a result of Adam's sin is entirely a matter of just desserts. But what happened as a result of Christ is completely different.

Q: Who were the recipients of the transgression of the first Adam? *(v.15 - the many - i.e. - everyone)*

Q: What were the recipients of the grace of God? *(v.5 - the many - the same group)*

There is an important side note here. This isn't teaching universalism. Universalism is the heretical teaching that everyone will eventually get into a right standing with God and thus into heaven. As we see here this is a gift and while the gift is free, it must be received as a gift. We've seen this earlier in the teachings on justification. Justification is gained by putting one's faith in Jesus Christ by receiving His work on the cross as payment for one's own sins. Hell will never lack for occupants. What is being said here is that all those who have fallen through their transgressions are eligible to receive God's grace.

Q: What arose from the one transgression of the first Adam? *(v.16 - judgment which resulted in condemnation)*

Q: What do you think that the phrase “the free gift arose from the many transgressions...” v.16? *(Due to the overwhelming number of sins committed by Adam's descendants, God needed to provide the free gift in order to bring mankind back to Himself)*

Q: What is the result of the free gift (v.16)? (*justification*)

Then comes the whopping big news. If the transgression of the first Adam resulted in death reigning or coming to power over mankind which is terrible news, then those who receive the abundant grace of the free gift will reign in life through Jesus Christ, the second Adam. (The second person to impact all of humanity, except for the betterment of the race.)

The word abundance means surplus, more than enough and it shows us how much grace was given to us by God. It was more than enough to satisfy God's wrath and set us in a right relationship with Him. It was more than enough to establish perpetual, eternal peace between us and God. It was abundant enough to not only cover our sins but transform us into creatures of grace who now reign with Christ in this life.

How do we reign with Christ in this life? We are still subject to illness and death and hardships and trials and persecutions. How can Paul say that we reign with Christ in this life when we are still subject to so much of the effects of sin? The truth is that we reign with Him as victors over sin just as Christ rose from the dead to a new resurrected life we too have a new life in which sin has no jurisdiction over us any longer. The free gift has affected release through forgiveness of sin that has allows us in the here and now to live in a manner filled by the Holy Spirit apart from sin. This doesn't mean we don't sin but it means we don't have to sin any longer.

Q: If we are free of sin, what else are we free from? (*death and separation from God*)

4. Completing verse 12 and the differences between the two Adams

[Romans 5:18-19]

This is actually the end of the sentence Paul started back in v.12. However, these two verses put complete both thoughts together. Notice that the format is "what Adam did" followed by "what Christ did". The most important thing mentioned is the contrast between the results of Adam's sin with the results of Christ's obedience.

Even though transgression resulted in condemnation for all men, the one act of righteousness by Christ, resulted in justification being available to all men. Notice the parallel use of the word "all". Again, like the many, it's speaking of the same group of people. The difference is that while sin was thrust upon us without our consent (though had we been with Adam and Eve in the garden, we would have taken a bite of the fruit as well) the free gift of righteousness is given to us as a choice - an alternative to condemnation.

Q: What was the end result of the first Adam's disobedience to God? (*we were all made sinners*)

The word "made" in v.19 means to be designated or appointed. Like he was made the CEO of the company. It's not speaking of creating but rather designating. So in Adam, we were all designated or appointed sinners.

Q: What was the end result of the second Adam's obedience to God? (*the many will be made righteous. We were appointed or designated righteous before God*)

Q: How is righteousness imparted based on our past week's lessons? (*It is accounted to us by faith in Christ. We believe God and it's reckoned to us as righteousness.*)

So now we have what we need to answer the question brought up earlier about the fairness of God in declaring everyone sinners based upon the sin of one person. Adam, which also means man, was the representative human being when he was first created. Adam was all there was and he stood for everyone who would come after him. Sin has two properties to it that allowed it to enter into the entire world through Adam. It is both infectious and inclusive. Once the first Adam broke fellowship with God through his sin and the selfish, rebellious motive of his heart, that nature of self-centered rebellion against God spread to everyone that came after him. Like a plague, sin spread. Everyone who was exposed to it partook of it, involuntarily or voluntarily but in either case they were infected by sin. Sin is inclusive in that the sin of Adam is the same sin of everyone else. It's the same rebellion against God and it's the same missing the mark of what God wants for us.

During the conquest of the Promised Land by Israel, under Joshua the Israelites met initial success against the massively defended city of Jericho. The rule was that of the spoil in Jericho, no was to take certain things are spoils after the battle. However a man named Achan took some of the spoils under the ban. As a result, in the next battle against the cockroach of a town Ai, the Israelites lost and lost big. The Lord showed Joshua that someone had violated the ban and that was the cause of the stinging defeat.

[Joshua 7:11-2] - Notice how this reads. God didn't say that Achan sinned (and out of the 2 million Israelites present he's the only one who did sin) but He said that Israel sinned. One person sinned and yet all paid the price. It's important to note the idea of the inclusiveness of sin.

Paul has mentioned this earlier in Romans. **[Romans 2:1]** While not everyone has committed every single sin, we all possess the capacity to sin in the same manner as every other sinful human being. Thus we are included in the troop of sinners. Some people call this thought "original sin". I don't like that particular phrase because it actually is a technical phrase in dispute by theologians. There are at least four rivers of thought concerning original sin and one is heretical, one is pure Calvinism and the other two are incomplete without each other. At any rate, it is important to come to grips that even though we weren't present when Adam sinned, we are just as guilty as Adam due to our own sin whatever it may look like.

5. Grace trumps sin

[Romans 5:20-21]

Q: What was the result of the introduction of the Law of Moses? (*v.20 - transgression increased*)

Notice that the introduction of the Law didn't bring relief from the condition Adam caused for all of us rather it made things worse. By the introduction of the Law, now transgressions or violations of the Law became possible and we were accountable to God for them personally. The commands actually stimulated rebellion in mankind. The more something

is prohibited, the more appealing it is. So the Law made the situation initiated by Adam worse.

Yet, no matter how bad sin was, no matter how pervasive and rampant the transgressions were, no matter how heinous the rebellion against God raged, God's grace more than compensated for the condition of mankind.

Q: How did the reign of sin show itself? (*v.21 - in death*)

Q: How did the reign of grace show itself (*v.21 - through righteousness to eternal life*)

Think on this, while sin has brought untold disasters, devastation and heartaches to those who live under its rule, think about how wondrous and awesome the conditions of those who live under the rule of grace will be. Grace will not just cancel out sin. It is shown here as an overwhelming abundant conqueror over sin. Thus the resulting final state of the person who receives God's grace will be infinitely better than what we can imagine the horror of sin ever were.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?