

Adam and Christ; Overwhelming Grace; Union with Christ

Romans 5:18-21; Romans 6:1-4

Romans 5:12-21 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

I. Overview

1. Paul's Goals

- a. Minor point: How did sin & death come to reign universally?
- b. Major point: comparison of Adam & Christ so we can understand the gospel
- c. Grace in Christ overwhelms all sin
- d. BUT grace in Christ is not permission to sin

2. Summary

- The obedience of Christ is parallel, but vastly superior, to the disobedience of Adam.
- The righteousness imputed to those who are in Christ is parallel, but vastly superior, to the sin imputed to those who are in Adam because of his disobedience.
- The life that comes to us who are in Christ through that imputed righteousness is parallel, but vastly superior, to the death that comes to those who are in Adam through that imputed sin.

II. Adam and Christ Compared and Contrasted; Christ's Grace Infinitely Greater Than Our Sin; BUT Christ's Grace Battles Our Sin Day by Day

1. NOTE: The repeated parallel between Adam and Christ

vs. 14 [Adam] is a type of him who is to come (Christ)

Summary:

vs. 18 "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass [by Adam] was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness [by Christ] was justification that brings life for all men."

vs. 19 "For just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man [Christ] the many were made righteous."

2. But also... key difference between Adam and Christ:

vs. 15 "But the gift is NOT LIKE the trespass."

What difference? Christ's effect on those in him is **abundantly superior** to Adam's effect on those in him

vs. 15 "...how much more

Jesus did not come simply to return us to ground zero... back at the Garden of Eden where Adam was before he sinned... He takes us light years beyond that!!

3. Why Paul teaches this at this point in Romans:

We MUST understand justification by faith alone apart from works of the law

[We have a constant tendency to revert to our own good works... the doctrine of original sin obliterates that!!]

We MUST see how superior Christ is, and what a great SALVATION we have in him!

NEXT:

Paul expands on the "how much more" sense of the superiority of Christ to show that his work on the cross is abundantly sufficient to handle all the sins exposed by the law. The grace of God in Christ is an infinite ocean able to swallow up all our sins in his goodness, kindness, and love. The law cannot save us, but it exposes our abundant need for salvation. That exposure is so pervasive and comprehensive that we can begin to drown in discouragement at how sinful we are. Paul wants to give justified Christians full assurance

of the infinite measure of God's grace in Christ. We can never sin our way out of that grace, no matter how much we sin.

BUT THEN, Paul has to address the opposite tendency we have to throw off all restraint and sin more and more. So he begins to address the next stage of our salvation...

SANCTIFICATION. Romans 6-8 is the Bible's handbook on sanctification... progressive growth into Christlikeness.

III. Final Summary of the Comparison Between Adam and Christ

Romans 5:18-19 *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*

¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Q: How does verse 18 summarize Paul's comparison between Adam and Christ? What is the "one act of righteousness" that Paul has in mind? How is Christ's entire life of righteousness part of our justification? (18)

Q: How does Christ's one act of righteousness bring life for all? (18)

Q: How is Adam's disobedience contrasted with Christ's obedience? What "obedience" do you think Paul had in mind here? (19)

Q: In what way are we "made righteous" through Christ's obedience? (19)

Q: How would you answer someone that says this comparison teaches universalism, since every single human being sinned in Adam, and (so someone might say) every single human being is saved in Christ? How does Paul protect himself from that misunderstanding by his choice of words in verse 19?

Summary: just as there was a spiritual union between Adam and all he represented, and just as Adam's sin was IMPUTED to all he represented, so there is a spiritual union between Christ and all he represents, and his righteousness is IMPUTED or credited to us

IV. The Purpose of the Law and the Greater Effect of the Gospel

Romans 5:20-21 *The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Q: Why do you think Paul talks about the Law here? [Law here means the Laws of Moses, the Ten Commandments, as well as all the rest of the 600+ laws of the Old Covenant]

Q: According to this passage, what is the purpose of the Law?

Q: Why would God want Adam's original sin to "increase"?

Look at the flow of history since Adam:

- The fall of Adam

- The spread of sin... Cain & Abel; the wickedness of the world at Noah's time
- The flood of Noah
- The call of Abraham
- The slavery of the Jews in Egypt
- The exodus, the Law under Moses at Sinai
- The history of Israel... the cycle of sin in Judges; all those evil kings, all that rebellion
- The many warnings by the prophets, none fully heeded
- The exiles to Assyria & Babylon
- The coming of Christ... all his suffering on earth
- The crucifixion... Christ's bloody death on the cross
- The resurrection
- The coming of the Holy Spirit
- 2000 years of church history... the faltering advance of the gospel by sinful Christians

Why not skip all that and go straight to the perfection of heaven?

What are some reasons you can think of for God want the sin to increase?

Q: How could Romans 7:13 give some insight?

Romans 7:12-13 the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. ¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

Possibly: God wanted the trespass to increase so that all his ransomed might understand how wicked is sin, how evil it is... that we might utterly repudiate sin forever from personal experience

By the time we get to heaven, we can personally testify to the absolute wickedness of sin, and can say from our hearts that we never want any more to do with it

That we would be conformed to Christ:

Hebrews 1:8-9 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

Q: What is the significance of the statement, "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more."? How does that statement relate to all of redemptive history? How does it relate to individual Christians?

Q: Why is it actually wrong for us to see our sins as more significant than Christ's blood shed on the cross? How then do we make much of our sin but even more of Christ's grace?

There is a bottomless ocean of God's grace available through the blood of Jesus Christ to cover the river of sin that flows out of our lives

How many times have you confessed sin to God and asked him to cleanse you again?
How many times has his grace been sufficient for you?

Q: Why is it actually wrong for us to see our sins as more significant than Christ's blood shed on the cross? How then do we make much of our sin but even more of Christ's grace?

Q: How does the chapter end? What does it mean that "sin reigned in death"? How does that connect with the statement "grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord?"

Q: How does grace "reign" in the life of a Christian? How is grace like an unconquerable King?

Summary statements on Romans 5 and original sin:

John Piper: "The ironic thing about the doctrine of original sin is that, while being one of the hardest doctrines to accept, it helps explain most of what we see: namely, the universality of evil. People who believe what the Bible teaches about this doctrine are not baffled about why history is strewn with corpses and why every society that has ever been has had to deal with the evil of its people."

Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin* : "This doctrine teaches us to think no worse of others than of ourselves: it teaches us that we are all, by nature, companions in a miserable helpless condition: which under a revelation of the divine mercy, tends to promote mutual compassion. And nothing has a greater tendency to promote those amiable dispositions of mercy, forbearance, longsuffering, gentleness, and forgiveness, than a sense of our own extreme unworthiness and misery, and the infinite need we have of a divine pity, forbearance and forgiveness, together with a hope of obtaining mercy."

IV. But Let Us Not Sin That Grace Might Abound!

- Paul's doctrine seems to lead one way: sin all you want
- If we are totally secure in grace, let's sin more and more
- Thus "justification by grace through faith alone" seems to be a dangerous doctrine

How will Paul answer this question?

And what of the deeper question... what should I do about the sin I still see in my life? Does it matter at all? OR does it prove I'm not really a Christian?

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Q: What is the connection between the end of Romans 5 and the beginning of Romans 6?

Q: Why is it just as dangerous to underestimate sin in the life of a believer as it is to overestimate it?

Q: How does Paul answer the question, "Shall we go on sinning that grace may increase?" What does his answer show you? [Note: "By no means" is also translated "May it never be!" Or "God forbid!" Or "Absolutely not!"]

Q: What does Paul teach about the Christian's relationship with sin in verse 2? What does it mean "We died to sin"?

Q: What is Paul's apparent attitude toward Christians going on living in sin?

Q: What significant truth does Paul teach about our relationship with Christ in verses 3-4?

Q: How does our spiritual union with Christ affect our daily lives, especially in relationship with sin?

Summary of Romans 1-5

The Theme of Romans: The Powerful Gospel

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes

Everyone in the world needs this gospel: Romans 1:18-3:20

Romans 1 [Gentile pagans described as under the wrath of God]

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 2 [Self-righteous, religious people and Jews also under the wrath of God]

2:13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Romans 3 [Summary: Everyone under sin and judgment]

3:9-12 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ's death

3:21-25 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Justification = God's declaration of "not guilty" over anyone who has received the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ

Justification is through faith in Christ alone apart from works of the law

3:28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

Romans 4 [Example of Abraham]

4:3 *What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

No works! Simply believing a promise God made to him

Assurance of final salvation if we have been justified

Romans 5:1-11 [Unbreakable chain of assurance]

"Since we have been justified through faith...": "Peace with God..." "access by faith into this grace in which we stand" "hope in suffering" "God's love poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit"

All combine to give total assurance... if you have been justified by faith in this mighty gospel, you will most certainly survive the day of God's wrath and live with God forever in heaven!!

Assurance based on Adam/Christ analogy

Romans 5:12-21

[Adam a type of Christ; Christ's grace gift GREATER than condemnation in Adam]