

**Abundant Grace for the Fallen, Part 3**  
**Romans 5:12-21**

**Intro**

I imagine it's a familiar story to many in this room who grew up in the church.

A young boy of 5 or so is addressed by his mother one afternoon - "Son, you don't want to go to hell do you?" and of course that young boy vigorously nods his head no. "Son if you don't want to go to hell, you should ask Jesus to come into your heart." And this young boy scared of eternal punishment kneels beside the couch down his mother, repeats the sinner's prayer, and rises up from that living from floor to grow up into a life completely opposed to the will of God - immorality, theft, violence, addiction - Completely opposed but convinced that it's all good - I said a prayer - I'm good to go.

I know this story well, because that 5 year old boy? That five year old boy is me. And maybe you even find something of your story in mine.

I said a prayer. I'm good to go. I'm going to heaven. Here's the deal - becoming a Christian is not just a matter of repeating some well-meaning prayer. Say the right words and you're good to go. That's superstitious.

Becoming a Christian is to see something of the glory and beauty of Christ, to feel our need for him to save us from our sin and judgment and to take him as he is. To grab hold of him with the empty hands of faith as though your life depends on it because it does. God graciously opened my eyes at 27. TERROR

"Don't let them sin like their dad"

Hear me well I'm not saying a five year can't trust Christ - whether 5 or 105 there is salvation for all who trust him

Of course this involves praying to God, asking for forgiveness, expressing our trust but we should never be deceived that we said the Christian incantation, got the get-out-of-hell-for free ticket and move on with our lives. The main problem with that sort of thinking is in expecting that we can receive the benefits of salvation from Jesus apart from the person of Jesus. Apart from a living, faith relationship with him.

**The benefits of the gospel are *in Christ*. They do not exist *apart from him*. They are *ours only in him*. They cannot be abstracted from him as if we ourselves could possess them independently of him. (Sinclair Ferguson, *The Whole Christ*, p. 44)**

It is biblical that we ask Christ to be "in us" - though gloriously he is by grace through faith - but perhaps it is more in keeping with the language of Scripture is that we would be found "in him. In union with him - united to him. Paul uses over 100 times in 13 letters.

**[8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,**

**but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—  
(Philippians 3:8-9)**

Following along Romans is unfolding the glories of the gospel and of justification by faith apart from works: This is what Paul is eager to continue to help us understand in our text this morning. He continues to explain that there are fundamentally two identities - one is either “in Adam” - found to be included in his sin and ruin or “in Christ” - raised to life, forgiven, declared righteous

**READ TEXT**

Paul helping us understand - free grace - free gift of righteousness for the undeserving - continue examining the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. V. 18-21 The grace of Christ is infinitely superior to the sinful ruin of Adam that each one of us is born into. The grace that is ours when we are “in Christ.”

Paul describes 1. The Scope of Grace 2. The Abundance of Grace 3. The Reign of Grace

**I. The Scope of Grace**

- A. v. 18 “Therefore” - Paul is, in effect, tying together the threads of v. 12-17 - he resuming the argument of v. 12 “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned”
- B. v. 18 here’s his thesis
  - 1. 1 Trespass of Adam = Condemnation for all men
  - 2. 1 Act of righteousness in Christ = Justification and life for all men
- C. To restate it another way - v. 19
  - a) One man’s disobedience - Adam = the many made sinners
  - b) One man’s obedience - Christ = many will be made righteous
- D. This is the argument, is it not that we have examined over the past few weeks
  - 1. When Adam sinned in the garden - his trespass - his breaking of God’s command - his disobedience to God - he did so as our representative - his sin and condemnation and death is imputed to us his offspring - we are born sinful - with an inclination away from God and towards self - that is what it means to be “in Adam” = sin and condemnation - we are sinners - we verify that reality with the many sins we choose to do
  - 2. But in Christ - we find the undoing of Adam’s ruin. Instead of trespassing God’s commands - his life was perfect righteousness. Instead of disobedience - his life was lived in perfect obedience to the Father. What is the supreme, saving act of obedience to God? It was in his substitutionary, wrath-bearing death - one act of obedience

**And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)**

- 3. In his obedient death he bore our sin and condemnation and died in our place that he might impute to us his righteousness and life
- E. Look again at verse 18 - trespass = condemnation for all men, righteousness of Christ = justification + life for ALL men. What’s Paul saying here? Is Paul saying that all people, everywhere, regardless of what they believe or what they do with their lives are justified and

have life in Christ? Some people propose just that - universalism.

- F. There is great danger in “proof-texting” - lifting a verse out of context and building theology from that verse separated from its context in Holy Scripture.

**Illustration: Mission organization quoting Matthew 4 - “If you worship me I will give you the nations” - stirring words right? Someone pointed out hey guys that’s the devil’s words when he tempted Jesus. Oops!**

- G. What’s Paul saying here? He is definitely not saying that all people regardless of what they believe are justified through Jesus Christ - that would make him an untrustworthy, muddled man for it would fly in the face of and contradict what he has said thus far.

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)**

**[21] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—[22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe...(Romans 3:21-22)**

**And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, (Romans 4:5)**

- H. Can’t be. What is he saying? There are many ways to use the word “all”

**Illustration:** I arrive here on a Sunday and inform you that I brought Chik-Fil-A breakfast for everyone. Apart from rejoicing breaking out you would understand that by everyone I didn’t mean the whole world. Trick question - they’re closed.

- I. Tried and true axiom of Real estate - location, location, location - Scripture - context, context, context

**He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)**

The all here is those who receive the free-gift of grace - he does not graciously give all things to everyone - “all” must be confined to the household of faith

**[14] For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)**

The all are those who live - not everyone, everywhere

**““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; (Acts 2:17)**

All flesh - of course God doesn’t mean that everyone believer and unbeliever alike receive the Holy Spirit - it is that regardless of ethnicity - Jew and Gentile alike receive the Holy Spirit

- J. This text is probably more like the idea - Romans 1:16 - All without distinction - Jew and Gentile, Men and Women
- K. What he's aiming to do here is to show the parallel between Adam and Christ - the superiority of what Christ has done for undeserving, ruined sinners - in his righteous life and obedient death we have justification and life - overturning the sin and condemnation of Adam - he has done this for all - for many - men and women, Jew and gentile, without distinction - this is the scope of the grace of God - people from every tribe, tongue, and nation - according to the mercy and wisdom of God's sovereign grace will be justified
- L. Application
  - 1. Not just a theological insight to be studied - it is the broad, glorious nature of God's grace toward us revealed! All who receive Christ, all who take Christ as theirs with the empty hands of faith have life and are justified!
    - a) Faith? This is yours. In the face of your many sins. Life and justification are yours. Marvel at the scope, at the broad, immensity of the grace of God for YOU'RE INCLUDED!
      - (1) The scope of God's grace is broad - the abundance of grace

## II. The Abundance of Grace

- A. v. 20 - what about the Law? In view here is specifically the Law of Moses. How does the law function?
  - 1. Remember, Paul has already said that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law - so why was the law given?
    - a) It came in to increase the trespass - it came in as a score card shows us an objective record of sin - the law reveals the exceeding sinfulness of our sin

**For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)**

- (1) Speaking to Jewish folks who believed that their obedience to God's Law is sufficient to be accepted - you're doing it wrong!
- b) Apart from divine grace and knowledge of God's Word and commands - we are all aware to some degree that we don't always do what's right - all except the most hardened socio-path has at least a flickering awareness of guilt for sin. We are born in sin and commit many sins. But when the law of God comes to us - when we come face to face with God's written commands we find that we are way more sinful than we previously presumed.

**Illustration:** LA gutting houses - chimney had been leaking for years - clouds of soot poured out of the ceiling - black as night - I knew that I had gotten dirty to some degree - when I looked in the mirror it was a startling sight

- B. The Law is a mirror that reveals the extent of our mess - increases the trespass for we see clearly how we break God's Law

**The law was given by God in order to make manifest the true nature and utter seriousness of sin, pointing all the more clearly to the need for a radical solution to deal with the problem of sin. (Douglas Moo, *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, p. 114)**

- 1. This is what theologians have historically called "the first use of the Law"
  - a) gives us a deeper knowledge of our sin and reveals our need for grace

**Illustration:** Great commandment - love the Lord your God with all your soul, might, strength and love your neighbor as yourself - I'm doing alright at loving - come to 1 Corinthians 13

**[4] Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant [5] or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; [6] it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. [7] Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)**

- C. So the trespass increases but God does not give us the law as a sadistic monster who loves to see us squirm under the terrible weight of our sin - it is his kind and merciful provision to reveal our need for grace and GOOD NEWS. "Where sin increased - Grace abounded all the more"
- D. Application
  - 1. You don't know what I've done - GRACE ABOUND!
  - 2. I failed for the 10,000th time - arrived here this morning aware of sin
    - a) My anger at my spouse - losing it with the kids
    - b) Abortion
    - c) Adultery
    - d) Squirming in your seat - listen if you are aware of your sin and cast yourself on Christ - GRACE ABOUND!

**[14] and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. [15] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. (1 Timothy 1:14-15)**

- 3. OVERFLOW more grace in Christ than sin in you - where sin increased - Grace abounded all the more - super-abundant!

**The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope. (Tim Keller)**

- 4. Popular phrase - you are enough - I will not speak this way to you - I will not seek to heal the wound lightly - peace, peace - you are enough - YOU AREN'T ENOUGH! You are enough to stumble into everlasting destruction
  - a) CHRIST IS ENOUGH - GRACE ABOUND!

### **III. The Reign of Grace**

- A. v. 21 - sin has reigned in death - Paul's been telling us all through this text
  - 1. We are born under the reign of sin and death - cruel, tyrannical enslavement to and under the judgment of death - JUST AS - PARALLEL - SUPREMELY GREATER
- B. Grace reigns over those who receive the free gift of righteousness
  - 1. God's grace - the Gentle, kind, humane reign of grace
- C. Leading to eternal life - grace of justification is not the end-game - eternal life is the end-game - justification is the wardrobe door into the Narnia of eternal life
  - 1. Not disembodied - resurrection! Glory! This world redeemed. Entered into this domain of grace and eternal life now - consummation is coming - it is ours now we wait for the consummation.

**since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. (Hebrews 11:40)**

- D. Work, Explore, Worship - v. 17 - we will reign in life! New heavens and new earth!
- E. All through - final words of our text - ALL THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord - through him - in him - united to him this is ours
- F. You have a new Master - the Lord Jesus Christ
- G. You have a new government - the reign of grace - not under law but under grace
  - 1. Grace reigns over our lives - abundant grace

**Nothing could sum up better the blessings of being in Christ than the expression 'the reign of grace'. For grace forgives sins through the cross, and bestows on the sinner both righteousness and eternal life. Grace satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry with good things. Grace sanctifies sinners, shaping them into the image of Christ. Grace perseveres even with the recalcitrant, determining to complete what it has begun. And one day grace will destroy death and consummate the kingdom. So when we are convinced that 'grace reigns', we will remember that God's throne is a 'throne of grace', and will come to it boldly to receive mercy and to find grace for every need. (John Stott, *BST: Romans*, pp. 157-158)**

- H. Application
  - 1. Rest
  - 2. Rejoice
  - 3. What do people who live under the reign of grace look like?
    - a) Humility, godliness, fellowship, serving, generosity, gratefulness, joy
    - b) Does your life reflect that you live in the domain of grace?
      - (1) Those around you experience someone who lives in the good of God's grace?
      - (2) Patient, gentle, generous, forgiving
      - (3) ASK THOSE AROUND YOU - START WITH YOUR WIFE - DOES OUR HOME REFLECT THE REIGN OF GOD'S GRACE?
      - (4) Look to God for grace - it abounds

## **Close**

Thank God there is grace enough for that little 5 year old boy. Abounding grace for the most wretched of sinners.

The righteousness is greater than the ruin

The grace is greater than the guilt

Christ is greater than our condemnation

Death is conquered in life

There is abundant grace for the fallen! ABUNDANT GRACE All for those who are in Christ by faith.

**Have you on the Lord believed?**

**Still there's more to follow.**

**Of His grace have you received?**

**Still there's more to follow.**

**Oh, the grace the Father shows!**

**Still there's more to follow.**

**Freely He His grace bestows,**

**Still there's more to follow.**

**Refrain**

**More and more, more and more,**

**Always more to follow,**

**Oh, his matchless, boundless love!**

**Still there's more to follow. (*Have You on the Lord Believed? Bliss*)**

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