

## Romans

Justification by Faith - Part 5

March 01, 2015

### I. Justification by Faith – the final part

A. As I stated last week, Romans 5 is divided into two parts, with each part beginning with the word “Therefore.” We looked at the first part of Romans 5 last Sunday, and today we will look at the second part.

1. As a reminder, in Romans 5:1-11, Paul’s primary point is that justification by faith brings us into a standing of righteousness before God and a reconciled relationship with God. And Paul also reminds us that the normal Christian response to tribulation is exultation. Why? Because tribulations are one of God’s main methods of transforming us into the likeness of Christ. Finally, Paul links justification to sanctification, and sanctification to glorification.
2. Romans 5:12-19 is an explanation of how one man, Adam, brought sin and death into our world in a way that affects all mankind, and how one man, Jesus Christ, brought redemption and eternal life into our world in a way that effects all who repent, believe in the redeeming work of Jesus, and live a life of faithful obedience.
3. Interestingly, Paul gives a succinct summary of Romans 5:12-19 in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 . . . For since by a man (*Adam*) came death, by a man (*Christ Jesus*) also came the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.
4. There is one more thing I want to say about Romans 5:12-19 before we begin looking at it, and that is that this portion of scripture has produced numerous debates, speculation, and several competing theologies about the topic of original sin, that is, how sin and death have been passed from Adam to all mankind, and the extent of the depravity that has been passed on (*total or partial*).

### B. Prayer

### II. By one man sin and death entered, and by one man, righteousness and life was restored.

A. Romans 5:12 . . . Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

1. Here in verse 12, Paul begins to compare the effects of Adam and Christ, and sin and righteousness. But for some reason, he gets half way through his comparison and then detours into several somewhat

complex explanations of the comparison he is making. We have to look down to verses 18-19 to see the completion of his initial comparison. And to help you keep his initial comparison in mind while we look at his more complex explanations, I will read verses 18-19.

2. Romans 5:18-19 . . . So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men (*Adam's one sin lead to all being condemned to death as sinners*), even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men (*Jesus' sacrifice led to justification and eternal life for all who believe*). [19] For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
  3. Now, before moving on to Paul's detour into more complex explanations, I want to rephrase the message of verse 12. And remember, because it is an incomplete statement, my rephrase will be an incomplete statement: "In the same way that Adam brought sin into the world, and death came into the world through sin, and death spread to all men, because all sinned . . ."
- B. Romans 5:13-14 . . . for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. [14] Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.
1. Now we know from verse 12 that everyone is a sinner (*death spread to all men, because all sinned*). Here in verses 13-14, Paul is making sure we understand that when he says everyone is a sinner, it includes everyone from Adam until God gave the Law to Moses.
    - a. Why? Because someone is sure to point out that where there is no written or established law, there is no law to break and therefore there can be no lawbreakers. And of course, it was assumed that between the time of Adam and Moses, there was no divinely written or established law to break.
    - b. This is not an unreasonable argument, because Paul himself points to this same truth in Romans 4:15b, "but where there is no law, there also is no violation."
  2. However, even though the first written law came at the time of Moses, we know from Romans 1 that God, from the beginning, established His laws in the heart and conscience of each person, and confirmed them through nature.
    - a. And we know from God's dealings with Cain over murdering Abel, and from the account of the Flood, and from the fact that sinners

from Adam to Moses experienced physical death, that even before the Law of Moses, mankind was required to live according to the established, though as yet unwritten, laws of God. And we know that God handed out the same consequences for obedience or disobedience before the time of Moses as after.

- b. Therefore, Paul's underlying logic to the inference that no law existed between Adam and Moses, goes like this: "For there to be sin with its accompanying penalty, there must be an established law. If according to the established law the penalty for sin is death, then everyone who sins must die. If everyone dies, that's proof enough that everyone has sinned."
  - 3. In verse 14, Paul says there is a difference between Adam's sin and the sin of some or most or all of those who sinned between Adam and Moses. So what is the difference?
    - a. Adam received a direct verbal command from God, and a direct verbal warning of punishment if obedience was not given.
    - b. Many, if not most of those who sinned from Adam to Moses did not receive direct verbal commands. However, though unspoken or unwritten, God made His law known to them through their intellect (*ability to think and reason and discern the effect of behavior on others*), through their conscience, and through nature.
    - c. It is also probable that oral history which historically was passed from generation to generation, included Adam and Eve's story, and Cain and Abel's story, which would have provided a warning to succeeding generations of God's expectations of righteousness, judgment of sinners, and the cost of sinning.
    - d. However, though Paul says there were differences, he also tells us that from Adam onward, God treated everyone as being under the law and therefore deserving the penalty for breaking the law.
  - 4. One final comment on verse 14 – Paul says Adam is a type of Him who was to come, that is, Jesus Christ.
    - a. And how could sinful Adam be a type of righteous Christ? After all, Adam brought sin and death to us while Christ brought righteousness and life.
    - b. Adam is a type of Christ in so far as both Adam and Christ were single individuals whose choices regarding sin and righteousness have had a life-changing and eternal effect on the whole world.
- C. Romans 5:15 . . . But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace

of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

1. The first truth we need to consider is “the free gift is not like the transgression.”
  - a. In other words, even though one man’s sin brought death to all men, and even though one man’s redemptive work brought life, Adam’s sin and Christ’s redemptive work are not equal.
  - b. And even though Paul does not provide a precise explanation as to why they are unequal, he does give us enough information in vs 15-17, to conclude that Christ’s redeeming work is greater, more powerful, and more affective than Adam’s sin.
2. Continuing on in verse 15, Paul points out one of the ways God’s grace is greater than Adam’s sin: “For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.”
  - a. In other words, one man’s sin brought death to many, while one man’s redeeming work bring life to many.
  - b. Now even though Paul does not give us a precise explanation of exactly how one is greater than the other, I think it is reasonable to offer some possible explanations, and I hope my explanations encourage you to more clearly see the contrast between sin’s power and God’s power, and between the consequences of sin and the consequences of righteousness.
3. So here are my thoughts on the difference between Adam’s sin and Christ’s redemptive work.
  - a. First, it is easier to take life, or kill, than to restore life once a person is dead. And here is my point: sin kills, but the grace of God and the gift of eternal life redeems us from spiritual death, and from the power of the devil, and from the power of sin, and they restore spiritual life to those who were once dead. In addition, God’s grace and the gift of salvation restores a life of righteousness in place of a life of unrighteousness, and eternal life in place of eternal death.
  - b. Second, it is easier to destroy than to build or rebuild what has been destroyed.
  - c. Third, it is easier to damage a relationship than to resolve the differences, and reconcile those who have turned against each other, and restore the relationship to a healthy condition.
  - d. Fourth, it is easier to get people started in a habit of doing what is wrong than to get them to stop doing what is wrong, break the

bad habit, start doing what is right, and establish a new habit of doing what is right.

- e. If these examples are insufficient, think of it this way – it is easier for one bad apple to spoil the bushel than for one good apple to make a bushel of spoiled apples good again.
  - 4. For me, these are reasonable explanations why the free gift is greater than the transgression, or why God's grace is greater in measure and effect than Adam's sin.
  - 5. Paul continues affirming this difference in verses 16-17.
- D. Romans 5:16 . . . The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.
- 1. Again, Paul affirms that the gift of life and the penalty of death are unequal, even though he is using their comparisons to make his point. And this time Paul says the difference is the number of sins that started the mess (*one sin*) and the number of sins that Christ died for to correct the mess (*innumerable sins*).
  - 2. In other words, God's judgment on sin and His condemnation of sinners became a reality in our world because of Adam's one sin. In contrast, Christ's payment for the penalty of sin and God's justification of sinners became a reality because of an innumerable number of sins that Christ paid for – an innumerable number which includes the first sin of Adam and every sin thereafter until the last sin of the last person on the earth.
  - 3. Once again, the point Paul is driving home is that even though sin is powerful and effects everyone, God's grace and Christ's redemptive work are more powerful – as proven by the number of sins that started the mess as compared to the number of sins that had to be paid for to clean up the mess.
- E. Romans 5:17 . . . For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- 1. In a way, this verse is a repeat of verses 15 and 16, but with a little different slant. Therefore, the essence of verse 17 is this:
    - a. By the sin of one man (*the first man, Adam*), death reigned over all his descendants (*which includes everyone born since Adam*).

- b. And by the redemptive work of one man (*Jesus Christ*), those who receive the abundance of (*God's*) grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life (*now and for eternity*).
  - c. Notice, sin causes death to reign or rule over sinners – making sinners servants of death, while righteousness causes redeemed sinners to reign in life, making the redeemed rulers over death.
    - (1) In other words, the power of God's grace and Christ's redemptive work to give life to the dead, to transform sinners into saints and haters of God into lovers of God, and to reconcile once rebellious sinners to God, far exceeds the power of sin to turn those made in the image of God against God.
    - (2) This power far exceeds the power of sin to morally corrupt human character, and to make lies seem true.
    - (3) This power far exceeds the power of sin to make irrational thinking seem sane, and to make selfishness seem wise.
    - (4) And this power far exceeds the power of sin to kill the human body, and to separate the soul from God for eternity.
  - d. Therefore, as powerful as sin is, it is unquestionably weaker than God's grace and Christ's redeeming work – and this ought to give us great confidence that we can be saved from sin's power and sin's practice, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus – beginning now, in this life.
2. The last thing I want to point out about this verse is that Paul says that by one man's sin, death reigns (*over us*), while in contrast to that, by God's grace and Christ's redeeming work, those who repent and live a life of faithful obedience will reign in life by means of or because of the One, Jesus Christ.
- a. When Paul says sin reigns over us, he means that sin makes us its slave and holds us in bondage to its will, with the intent of killing both our body and our soul – so that the body decays in the grave and the soul is separated from God and all that is good, for eternity.
  - b. In contrast to that, God's grace and Christ's work gives us life, the kind of life that frees us from the power of sin and enslavement to sin, and raises us above simple freedom to a position of rule where we have the freedom and power – made possible by God and Jesus Christ – to love God, please God, serve God, live righteously in every area of life, and love others as ourselves.

- F. Romans 5:18-19 . . . So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. [19] For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
1. As I stated at the beginning, these two verses are the completion of what Paul began to say in verse 12. But they are also the summary statement of Paul's comparison.
  2. Verse 18 simply says: Through one sin, condemnation for sin spread to all men. Through one act of righteousness, justification and life eternal is offered to all men.
  3. And verse 19 says: Through one man's disobedience (Adam), many were made sinners. Through one man's obedience (Jesus), many will be made righteous.

### III. Conclusion

- A. There are two truths I want to leave you with today.
- B. First, in telling us that God's grace and Christ's redemptive work far exceed in power the power of sin, Paul is preparing us to believe what he tells us about sin and righteousness in chapter 6.
- C. Second, it is my hope that we can see that sin's sole purpose is to destroy us, righteousness, and God's kingdom in what ever way it can. On the other side is God's grace and Christ's redeeming work with the sole purpose of restoring life, protecting life, restoring righteousness, and promoting righteousness – now and for eternity. May we be people who believe this so that Satan and sin cannot lure us into its deceitful lies.

Romans 5:12 . . . One man brought sin into the world producing death for all men (because all sinned)

Romans 5:15 . . . Through the sin of one man, many died. Through the redemptive work of one man (Jesus), many receive the gift of eternal life by the grace of God.

Romans 5:16 . . . One sin brought God's judgment resulting in condemnation of sin. Many sins brought the free gift (redemption) resulting in justification

Romans 5:17. . . By the sin of one man, death reigned over all his descendants. By the redemptive work of one man (Jesus), those who receive the abundance of (God's) grace and the gift of righteousness (justification and eternal life) will reign in life (now and for eternity)

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