

Romans 5:15-21 The Five Contrasts Between Adam and Christ

Romans Chapter 5. I have to let you in on a little secret. There are all kinds of things that happen up here that seemingly go beyond the notice of other people that keeps you humble. But people do not find out because they are liable to take advantage of that. But it is very interesting how I can sit on the stool up here, it gives me a chance, you know, for my legs to rest a little bit as we continue in prayer. But then when I go to stand in prayer and the cord is wrapped around my foot and I cannot get up. "Let's stand together." I have to untangle it and then I can, okay. So things go on up here that are very interesting, to me. {laughter}

We are going to read Romans chapter 5 verses 12 to 21. We have gone through verses 12 to 14. We are going to attempt to finish out this section this morning.

Paul says, verse 12, **On account of this...** He is now summarizing after ministering to us and teaching us the doctrine of condemnation and the doctrine of justification. The doctrine of justification is becoming right with God. So now he wants to give us a summary statement. We have studied the history of sin and now we are going to take on the basic contrast principles that Paul is going to introduce to us to sum it all up.

On account of this (doctrine of condemnation, doctrine of justification) **just as through one man the sin entered into the world.** And again, if you have been in our classes over the last couple of weeks, you know *the sin* is making reference to the source of sin who is Satan, not sin in general.

Through one man the sin entered into the world, and death through sin, (again, the definite article) **and in this way death passed unto all men, because all sinned:** (verse 13) **for until the law sin was in *the* world: but sin was not imputed where there is no law.** (verse 14) **But death reigned** (or *ruled*) **from Adam until Moses, and even over the ones who had not committed the sin as the same as the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the One about to come** (meaning Christ). Each one, Adam and Christ, affected the entire human race and in that way they are types of one another, though in contrast.

(verse 15) **But not as the trespass** (or *transgression*), **in this way also the free gift.** I draw your attention - if you are following the Greek text the word for gift is **χάρισμα** (charisma) and this is a beautiful example of what *charismatic* means.

χάρις (charis) is *grace*. **χάρισμα** (charisma) is *grace in action* or *the expression of grace*. God's free gift - His ministry of grace and it is free. We are told that we also have a **χάρισμα** (charisma) and now you see what it is. It is not a thing. It is not a talent. It is the expression of God's grace, and it can be expressed in any number of ways. But in our culture it is made to be presented that we are all somebody special because we been given a gift. Well it is not the gift that you give to people; this is a gift of the moving of God's Spirit, which is not of us and therefore it is called *a gift*.

(verse 15) **For if by the trespass of the one many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which is of one man, Jesus Christ, abounded unto many. (verse 16) And not as through the one who had sinned, is the gift: . . .** This is a different word, **δῶρημα** (*dōrēma*): *that which is given.*

. . . for on the one hand the judgment was from out of one for condemnation, and the gift - again, χάρισμα (charisma) - was out of the many trespasses for justification. (verse 17) For if by the one trespass (or the trespass of one) death ruled (or reigned) through the one; much more the ones who have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will rule in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Literal translation at verse 18 because in the Greek language itself it expresses a change summarization. It is literally: **then therefore.** Not just *therefore*, but *then therefore*. The word *then*, **ἀρα** (*ara*) expresses result. **The result of all of this, as through one trespass it came upon all men for condemnation; in this same way also through one act of righteousness came upon all men for justification of life. (verse 19) For just as through one disobedience of one man many were made sinners, in this way also through the obedience of One many are made righteous. (verse 20) Now the law entered in alongside, in order that the trespass might increase. And where sin abounds, grace super abounds: . . .** that is the literal translation: *grace super abounds.* (verse 21) **. . . in order that just as sin ruled in death, in this way also grace should (or might) rule through righteousness unto life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

This is probably one of the most difficult places in Scripture. Many people skip over it because it is difficult to follow it in English let alone a literal translation. But summing up for us, in verses 12 to 14 we saw three phases of the history of the sin principle.

- 1) The cause of sin is that through Adam - through one man. And remember the word *one* is found twelve times through verses 12 to 21. The emphasis is on *one*. **Through one man - that would be Adam - sin entered into the world. The sin.**
- 2) The coverage of this sin. **And so sin passed upon all men because all sinned.**
- 3) Verses 13 and 14, the condition of sin. Sin has passed upon all. As a matter fact, before the law was even given sin was in the world before sin was even imputed to people because there is no law. If there is no law there is no way for those people to know that they are sinners. But God did not impute sin to them but sin was still in the world and is evidenced by death.

And so, as we began in verse 15. In verses 15 to 21 we have five contrasts between Adam and Christ. Through each one of these the human race has inherited certain things.

First, the trespass versus the gift of grace, verse 15. **But not as the trespass, in this way also the gift.** So he is saying, *not in the same way*. That means that the trespass came through Adam to the human race, automatic. The free gift of grace is given by grace but it is not automatic. He says, **For if by the transgression (or trespass) of one many died,** (that is your consequence: died because of sin) **much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which**

is of the one man Jesus Christ, abounded unto the many. So it abounds to the many. But the consequence of sin and death comes upon all automatically.

It is interesting, we studied last Thursday night from Romans chapter 6 verse 23 for the consequence of law: **The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Sin pays wages. God does not pay wages. Death is the consequence of sin. But God's gift, and again Romans chapter 6 verse 23 it is the word **χάρισμα** (charisma), His gift. His grace offers it to mankind and provides it for mankind.

Secondly, verses 16 and 17, the contrast between condemnation and justification. Again, **Not as through the one who had sinned, is the gift:** (and again, this gift is one that is given) **for on the one hand you have judgment from out of one for condemnation, but the gift (χάρισμα, charisma) is of many trespasses** - that is, all of the trespasses of man have been put on Christ and it is available to everyone - **for justification.** So through one man who had sinned judgment comes from out of that one man unto condemnation. Right now every, not just now but it has been since the beginning of time. And I was reading an article this week from somebody that talked about the age of accountability. The age of accountability is at conception, of course, in the Bible. David himself expressed how that people go astray as soon as they are born speaking lies because he says, **At conception did my mother conceive me that was sin born within me.** Psalm 51 verse 5. So the Bible teaches that the moment that you are conceived you inherit the sin nature. Not by your choice, not by my choice, but we inherit it. So as soon as we are born into this world we are responsible.

Now listen to this. From John chapter 3 verse 18, **The one believing upon Christ is not being judged: but the one not believing has been judged already, because he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God.** We have two perfect tenses that are used in this sentence. He has been judged already because he has already not believed. So we need to get this straight. The way God sees people is a person does not experience or be under the judgment of God because they rejected the gospel; they are under the judgment of God already just because they are still in the state of having not believed.

When I was younger I had it backwards. I used to preach to people in revivals and tell them, "Now that you are hearing the gospel if you reject it then you under God's judgment." No, they were under God's judgment before they even got there. They are not going to hell or being sent to hell because they have rejected what I preached to them. They are on their way already. This is a rescue effort. This is not one of those things where you meet somebody on a path next to a river and you tell about them about the gospel message and they say, "No, thank you." And you take them and throw them in the river, "Okay, you are doomed." They are in the river already, we are throwing the life preserver. And then we are telling them all about it as they are floating by heading for the falls. Where the life preserver came from, who the life preserver is, and how it is free. They will live if they receive it and they will die if they do not, but they are already on their way to dying.

So judgment and condemnation. *Condemnation*, the word itself is a judicial term or legal term and it has to do with somebody having a sentence of punishment against them. So the

judgment is there already. The sentence has already been passed for the human race. But the gift of God is to provide for the trespasses of many for justification.

Continuing in verse 17 with condemnation and justification. **For if by the trespass of the one death reigned through the one; much more (your contrast) the ones who have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will rule in life through the One, Jesus Christ.** Again the emphasis is on *the one*, those who are in Adam. Everyone is in Adam at the moment of conception. Everyone has been born, conceived even, with a sin nature.

Now here is the emphasis. If or since we have been born with a sin nature, in order to be saved we must have our nature changed. If I have a sin nature being religious or participating in a religious system does not change my nature. It might change my disposition. I might be disciplined, it might be a discipline tool in my life, but it will not change my nature any. A person needs a change of nature, which is the emphasis of being born of the Spirit of God. I can be a Christian in my mind and yet reject Christ with my heart. Does that make sense? Many, many people understand and believe the truth about Jesus Christ but have never received Him, never surrendered their life to Him by saying, "Come in, take over, literally save me, rescue me." And they think that believing the truth with their mind that they are saved. But everybody must experience a spiritual birth.

Peter said in II Peter chapter 1 verse 4 that the moment that you receive Christ you are now participating with the divine nature, God Himself. There is a change of nature. I take on His nature and His nature delivers me from my sin nature.

Verse 18, condemnation versus the righteous act. Here is a summary statement. **Therefore then as through the trespass of one (resulting in the whole human race) unto all men is for condemnation; in this way also through the righteous act of one is for all men for justification of life.**

So, **through the one man's trespass**, understanding what that trespass is. It was not just that he disobeyed God. This is not doing something wrong. Something happened to Adam, something happened to the human race because of what he did. Again, his nature changed. People can do "bad things" and it not change their nature. We are born with a sin nature so we do things out of our sin nature. But if I have been born of the Spirit of God, if I do a bad thing that does not mean that I am right back in the garden situation again and I have broken fellowship with God and need to be saved again.

It is not just any type of disobedience, this was serious stuff. So serious that if you get into Genesis chapter 3 and study about that particular disobedience you realize that they did not succumb to disobeying God because they saw fruit on the tree was good. They saw that too but the presentation was, "God knows that if you eat of the tree He told you not to eat of that you are going to become like God and He is keeping that from you." Wow! That is appealing. And you can see why the very basis for the response of disobedience itself is a serious thing because it is the same sin that Satan committed. We have recorded for us in Isaiah and Ezekiel of how Satan said, "I will be like God," and that is what got him removed from his place in heaven. And that is what he does for other people, he tells them, "You will become like God. You will be your

own God." Or tells them, "You do not need God because you are powerful enough to be your own God and you are successful as your own God." All of these lies.

Verse 19, the fourth thing, disobedience and obedience. **For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, in this way also through the obedience of the One many were made righteous.** I do not know about you but that takes a load off of my mind. My salvation is not based on my obedience. My salvation is based on His obedience. He obeyed God. You say, "Well, wait a minute, does that mean we do not have to be obedient?" No, it is not based on that or else you and I would be saved and unsaved about every minute. It is based on the Lord's obedience over and against Adam's disobedience. Because Jesus obeyed I can receive the free gift of God. And it is all based on His obedience, for which we are thankful.

Lastly, verses 20 and 21, the comparison between law and grace. He says, (verse 20) **Now law entered alongside**, that would be the literal translation. Alongside of what? The human race and sin. Purpose: **in order that the trespass might abound.**

We are learning in our Thursday night studies from Paul that the law did not enter into life for people to live the law and therefore experience life. The law entered in order to give us the knowledge of sin. This is Romans chapter 5 verse 20, but back in Romans chapter 3 verse 20 that is what he said, **Through the law is the knowledge of sin.** The more I study the law, the more it revives sin in me. Just coming in contact with the things of God revives sin in me that I never even knew I had, which is another reason why people who profess to be Christians try to stay away from the word. It is powerful. Very revealing. So the law revives sin.

Sin entered in alongside in order that the trespass might abound. Now through all of this I have been using the word *trespass*. Some texts say *the offense*. Whatever word your English translation uses the word *trespass*, this form of the word is expressive and represents a deliberate act to show the seriousness of what happened. It was not like Adam said, "Oh! what did I do? I turned the switch, what happened?" He did a deliberate act, he knew what he was doing. So the trespass abounded.

And where sin abounded, grace super abounds. That is the way it literally reads. No matter how much sin is there, grace abounds the more. In other words there is no sin nor sinner that is beyond the reach of God. His grace supplies His salvation to all. So the law is reviving sin, and the person is going, "Wait a minute! all this sin, I'm sure God isn't pleased." Well, He brings the law in to show us our sinfulness and to show us our need for Him. He has to do that because we deceive ourselves. We think that just by joining a religious system and doing good it will take care of the sin problem. No, it does not.

And all of this, verse 21, **In order that just as sin ruled (or reigned) in death, in this way also grace might rule through righteousness for life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.** It all boils down to two people and how each of those people affected the human race. For one it is automatic. For the other it is a gift waiting to be received.

The message of God's word and what this basically tells us by these contrast and comparisons is that there is not anything you and I can do about the sin problem. Cannot do anything about it. You cannot live a certain way. You cannot believe a certain way. You cannot believe or be part of a certain religious system. Only faith in Jesus Christ. Believing that what He did on the cross countered and is the answer to what Adam did and what came through Adam. We are right in the middle. Everything that came through Adam we inherited automatically.

And as I have said to you before that is not our problem. The problem is what the human race does about the problem. We can complain, we can blame God; that does not change things. I have even said in the past - I am sure God forgives me, if not I am going to be in the woodshed as soon as I get there.

"Hey, where is Bill anyway?"

"You see that wooden shack out there? He is there for the next millennia."

But I have said this before, that even if God is evil, He makes up the rules, you know? You find out, what are the rules here? Now there is a way to get to heaven so what is it? So whether I agree with God or I do not agree with God; whether I like what He does or I do not like what He does; or what He allows and He does not allow. And when we have these big catastrophes happen - the hurricanes and the floods and different things happen, the first thing the news media wants to do is get a hold of people and say, "Well, if there is a God, why do you think He let this happen? He is a God of love! Look at this, it is terrible, disaster!"

It does not matter to me whether He did it himself or He allowed it to happen, it happened. The point is, what are you going to do about it? "Well, we will show God! We will blame it on Him." Yeah, that is going to go over real good when you stand before Him. Yeah, You got something on me but I got something on You too. I have my little notebook here." As if God is going to say, "Okay, okay, we are even." But that is just how deep our sin problem is. We think in our arrogance - and we are really rejecting the truth - that we are going to hold God responsible. It does not work that way. I inherited a problem but God has provided the answer to the problem.

As a matter fact, that is why Paul uses the phrase *much more*. Whatever I inherited through Adam that was damaging and destructive, I receive much more through the grace of God. I do not receive God's grace and get saved, then all of a sudden God says, "I am going to put you back in the Garden again how do you like that?" Nah, not compared to walking with the Lord and going to heaven. I get much more. I gain more through Christ than I lost through Adam.

And so the only thing according to Matthew chapter 12, the only thing a person will be judged for is what they did with the solution. Did you reject God's solution or did you receive it? You cannot go over here and say, "Well, you know I was born this way." Hey excuse me, over here, what did you do with God's solution to your sin problem? That is what you will be judged for. You either receive it or you reject it. Because when Christ went to the cross He died for the

sins of the whole world. So that the only thing we answer for is: did you reject God solution for your sin? Then you will die in your sins if you do not.

Next week we begin an in-depth study of sanctification from Romans chapter 6. More in depth about salvation than we took two weeks ago in a Thursday night class - we spent two hours on the explanation of salvation. But we have even more to discuss and to understand in order to be able to understand Paul's reasonings and questions. So next week we will begin Romans chapter 6. Let's close with prayer.