

XXXV. Romans in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of God
“The First Adam and the Last Adam – Part 2”
Romans 5:12-21
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This is God’s Word that is inerrant and infallible. Romans 5:1-11 says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

[6] For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. [11] More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

As I think about parenting and being parented there is one aspect of parenting we call the rites of passage – for instance when dad gives you the keys to the car that is a rite of passage. I had to go in and out of that rite of passage in my life when I got the keys and then they were taken away, but there was another one of these moments I was thinking about in my family. That was being at the dinner table as a family for that was a big deal in many ways growing up in my family. One aspect of it was that when the meal was over you didn’t leave the table until you were dismissed and the adults didn’t leave for a while because they would push back and start talking. Then we the children would be dismissed. At about age 13, my dad said ‘ok, you can stay’ while my three younger sisters had to leave and I got to hear all that was going on with my parents and grandparents. I wished I had not only taken mental notes but physical notes. I can still remember so many maxims of life I would hear.

One of them you have probably heard. It started like this; ‘There are only two things you can be assured of in life...death and taxes.’ I want you to pull up to the Lord’s table for there are more than a couple of things that you can be assured of but I think there are two that are absolutely essential that Paul is trying to get in front of us as clearly as he can and he is doing it repeatedly. There are multiple propositional truths from God’s Word revealed but there are two in particular and there is a reason why we have to go deep for this. Before I get to these two essential questions there is something else I want you to see.

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul is giving us an exposition of the Gospel and he initiated it in Romans 1:16-17 which says [16] *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. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written,*

“The righteous shall live by faith.” The Gospel is the power and righteousness of God and in Romans 1 through 5 he is trying to explain to us why that is Good News and how great it is. As we get into Romans 5 which is not an easy text, but once it’s understood it becomes a foundational text for the Christian life.

There are two things I’ve noted about the Gospel of God here in Romans. One is, that Paul has two patterns he is working with. One is what I call the teacher trajectory pattern. In other words, Paul is on a linear thought as he tells us that the Gospel reveals the righteousness, love, grace, and power of God then he tells us how important that is by building step by step. This is important because every human pagan is undone and apart from God’s grace is given over to their sins. Then in Romans 2 he talks about the religious pagan being lost. In Romans 3 he says the Jew is lost and he sums it up in Romans 3:23 which says *[23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* What is our only hope in life and death? It’s Jesus. Then he starts telling us about the glorious solution to our situation in Romans 4 and now we’re in the meat of it in Romans 5. This isn’t milk, it’s meat and it’s so important to grasp.

Two, he is not only a trajectory teacher but he is a pedagogy teacher. In the Old Testament a teacher was called a rabbi. In the New Testament is a pedagogue. It means someone assigned to take someone from immaturity to maturity. Paul has a pedagogy that is unmistakable. He presses you and takes you from level to level to level, higher and higher and higher yet when he does it, he never forsakes the foundation. The closest I can come is it being like boot camp in the military where you get stronger and stronger and stronger but always goes back to repeats the rudiments. In my weightlifting class in school each week I had to go back to where I started and work up to where I ended but always adding more on to the end. The reason you always go back to where you started is it is putting muscle memory into you. When crisis or adversity comes it’s the muscle memory that tells you what the next thing to do is.

Paul is doing the same thing spiritually – he is putting soul memory in you because you will be persecuted. We live in a broken world. There will be challenges and adversity. Paul wants us to have a certain spiritual memory that you automatically go back to. We see it in Paul himself. In II Timothy 1 he is about to die and then says in II Timothy 1:12, *[12] which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.* This is what I know which is the foundation of my soul, Paul says.

I believe there are two essential questions Paul answers that we need to understand how and why he answers them. The question being answer in Romans 5 is – is it true that **every human being** without exception is a sinner and therefore justly under God’s righteous judgment, apart from Divine intervention? I know of two cases that are an exception because God intervened and that is Elijah and Enoch. Enoch walked with God and was no more and Elijah was taken up. There are specific reasons for both of those cases that we won’t go into for this study. Otherwise, it’s a 100 percent mortality rate – all die. It’s a 100 percent reality – we all sin.

Secondly, it is true that without exception that all of God’s elect are forgiven of all of their sins, justified and declared perfectly righteous before God? The reality is that the answer to both of those questions is ‘yes.’ Paul has painstakingly said it in a trajectory and he has gone back and restated it time and time again. We saw it in Romans 3:23 and Romans 3:10, that says there is none righteous, no not one. We see it in Romans 3:11 that says none seek God for all have gone astray. He will continue to say it for in Romans 6:23 he will say the wages of sin is death. All of us are helpless, hopeless and born unwilling to come to Christ and even if we were

willing, we're unable to come to Christ. Paul sums it up by saying we were dead in our sins. Our sins penetrated and polluted us in all that we were and are apart from Christ. In answer to the second question, Jesus said 'All that the Father has given Me I lose not one, but I will raise them up on the last day' (John 6:39). Also, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

We see in Romans 8:33-35 says [33] *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* [35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* Nothing separates us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Now I have two more questions. Why are those two questions true? And how are those two questions true? There are two Divine acts. The answer to why those two questions are true is federalism. This is a theological term. We are familiar with this term based on how our nation was founded but our nation is not perfect by any means. We see this when there is a representative in an election that represents the people that elect him – so when he has voted, they have voted with him. Federalism was so important to understand there was something called the Federalists Papers and this was drawn right out of this theological concept – the one for the many so when the one acts, the many have acted through the one. Federalism is all over the Bible.

A Biblical illustration of federalism is found in Psalm and Genesis. Another time in the Bible is in the ceremonial law when the high priest goes into the Holy of Holies with the offering, he brings the sins of the people and God built the concepts in the vestments he wore. The breast plate had twelve stones which represented the twelve tribes of Israel. When the priest went before God with the sacrifice all Israel went with him.

Jesus is our Messiah and that means He fulfills three offices – Prophet, Priest and King. The prophets came from any of the twelve tribes. The kings came from the tribe of Judah for it says the scepter shall not leave the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). Jesus could be our Prophet because He was from one of the twelve tribes and He could be our King because He was from the tribe of Judah. Two genealogies point that out – the genealogy of Mary from the book of Luke and from Jesus' stepfather Joseph in the book of Matthew. The high priests came from the tribe of Levi so how can Jesus be a High Priest if He is not a Levite? The way He is our High Priest is because of a certain Messianic Psalm. Let's look at Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm and we're told what He is going to do. Psalm 110:1-4 says [1] *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."* (Jesus is ruling and reigning from the right hand of the Father.)

[2] *The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!* [3] *Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments;* (He will empower them by the Spirit of God and be born again because they will volunteer freely because their wills have been set free through the new birth and will be justified) *from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.* [4] *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You (the Messiah) are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

So, Jesus does away with the Levitical priesthood which is a temporary priesthood because He is the eternal priesthood as revealed in the priest encountered in the book of Genesis and included in the Messianic Psalm, the priesthood of Melchizedek. This comes from Genesis

14 after Abraham had won the war and on his way to back to his home we see this passage from Genesis 14.

Genesis 14:17-20 says [17] *After his (Abraham's) return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). [18] And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) [19] And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; [20] and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"*

We see in the book of Hebrews that this Melchizedek is an eternal Priest for He has no genealogy or father or mother and this is what is called a Christofany – a pre-Incarnate appearance of Christ. Now this King Priest, Royal Priest, Magisterial Priest appears before Abraham. What does Abraham do in the book of Genesis that is affirmed in the book of Hebrews? He does three things – he pays Him a tithe, he worships and he bows (Genesis 14:20-24, Hebrews 7). It is the lesser to the greater. Who is in Abraham's loins – Isaac and in the loins of Isaac is Jacob and in the loins of Jacob is his twelve sons of which one is Levi. So when Abraham bowed Levi bowed and the greater does away with the lesser. The greater priesthood is what Christ is – the eternal priesthood, Melchizedek. This is federalism at work again – headship stands in its place.

While I was recently in Israel, they have recently discovered under Jerusalem, the city of Salem, and the temple dating back to Melchizedek. It's probably where Abraham entered into a communion meal of bread and wine with Melchizedek, plus where he worshiped, tithed and knelt. It is there in that place that something else happens. Hebrews 7 tells us that when Abraham bowed his loins bowed which would be his coming son Isaac and Jacob who would come from Isaac bowed, and the sons of Jacob bowed which included Levi and when Levi bowed it recognized the supremacy of the priestly order of Melchizedek – better priesthood for a better covenant. That is federal theology – the one for the many.

We see it in events. When you see someone scoring the winning touchdown, if the person has an integrity they say 'We won, for when I crossed that goal line my whole team crossed that goal line' not 'I won.' Here is an example from the Bible. There was a time when there was no champion to represent Israel and then an unlikely one stepped up to fight the giant, Goliath, who was taunting Israel. His name was David. The Bible says when God enabled David to take Goliath down in I Samuel 17 that all the men of Israel and Judah rejoiced and shouted for they had won. When those warriors went home to tell of the event, I'm sure they talked about David but they probably also said 'we won! Israel won the victory!' When David won, they won. Here also is federalism at work.

I'll give you an illustration from our history. I saw a man from my television named Neil Armstrong on the moon's surface and when his feet hit the moon's surface he said 'one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.' Armstrong put himself representing all of humanity – for himself it was a small step down the ladder but for mankind, when he stepped it was a giant leap for all of us. Then he planted a flag and he, the appointed representative of the United States of America, landed we set foot on the moon with him. That is federalism.

How do you and I get saved? How did we get lost? The one for the many. Let's look at the text for this study.

Romans 5:12-21 says [12] *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men because all sinned**— (All sin, all die because all come from Adam for when Adam sinned we all sinned, and when we're born*

we have his sin nature, which means we actually we sin for from the original sin comes actual sin and the actual sin brings forth death.) [13] *for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the One who was to come.*

[15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [16] And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. [17] For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

[18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. [20] Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [21] so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin is the transgression of God's law. Adam had God's law and transgressed it but we didn't get God's law until Moses so how come everyone between there is counted a sinner? It is because every man is not his own Adam. We all have sinned whether we had the law or not we all sinned in Adam. Adam was our federal head and yet Adam was a type of the One to come, another Head to come – the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. This Second Adam has accomplished righteousness, taken the sins of His people who brought the sins of the first Adam, but He brings grace not sin, and not death but life. So, we have these two federal heads – two Adams. Adam and his all are under the curse of sin. Christ and His all are under the blessing of life. The one for the many. The law isn't need for the sin because the sin came from Adam. The law points out or magnifies the sin and magnifies the dominion of sin that is over us. I want to look at a couple of parallel texts.

Let's start with I Corinthians 15:20-23 which says *[20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Adam and all of his seed are born sinners from his sin and die. They sinned in Adam and with Adam. All of Christ's are in Christ and by His grace live. Some people think this passage means universal salvation but we have to look closer at this text. There are two Adams and two alls. There is Adam one and his all is humanity. Adam two and His all according to the text are those who belong to Him. Who belong to Jesus? All that the Father gives Him, He loses not one – those are the elect of God. Inevitably and infallibly, all are born sinners under the reign of sin and death and all who are born in Christ – the elect of God – are now by God's grace under the reign of grace in life. How does that happen? It is imputation.

Imputation is an accounting term. Our sins were placed on Christ. Adam's sin was the original sin and brought our sin nature from which we sin. It's not we sin and then get a sin nature. It's we received a sin nature from original sin and thus we sin and thus we die. In Adam that is what happens through imputation. It means to reckon to or assign to so here is what

happens. Our curses are placed on Christ. His righteousness and blessing are placed on us. With the one sin came many sinners but with the one act of righteousness – the One who dies for all the sins of all of His people, now comes grace that is greater than our sin. Original sin is not identifying the first sin. Original sin is identifying the origin of all sin. Then our sins are imputed to Christ and His righteousness. Let's look at II Corinthians 5.

Here is imputation. II Corinthians 5:21 says [21] *For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.* My sin He bore in His body and the unmixed wrath of God for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity fell upon Him and He said 'It is finished!' It is paid for. He drank the cup of judgment for us that we might be forgiven. Our sins were imputed to Him but that's not where it stops because heaven is not for the forgiven, it's for the righteous. There's another imputation for His righteousness comes to me. Every time God sees His elect, He sees them in the robes of the perfect righteousness of Christ. We have been saved by the power and righteousness of God through our Adam – Christ, who took our sins and gave us His righteousness therefore none can be lost. Why? The same God who says 'the soul that sinneth shall surely die' does not demand two payments for the same sin. Jesus paid it all!

Here is your takeaway. All those questions give me a third question – how come? I know why – federalism – one for the many. I know how – imputation. The how is because God had a love for us – a love that was unsought, unmerited, undeserved and unstoppable – [4b] *In love* [5] *He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will,* [6] *to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.* [7] *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,* [8] *which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight* [9] *making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ* [10] *as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth* (Ephesians 1:4b-10).

He emancipated His people by the grace of God through the Son of God for the glory of God in the love of God to the praise of God forever. In Adam I am unwilling. In Christ I am seeking. In Adam I'm unable, in Christ I've been born again. I believed in Jesus and that He lived and died for sinners. I believed in Christianity but before I came to Christ I just said 'no.' I tried to suppress it. Why? It wasn't because I didn't believe it wasn't true, it was because I didn't want it and I wanted to be free to do what I wanted to do, but what I didn't know was that I wasn't free. I was a slave under the dominion and reign of sin, death and darkness. I also didn't know that when you became a Christian, not only were you set free from the dominion and reign of sin, but God changed your want so that now you want Him. Now, you want what matters for eternity. Now, what you ought to want you should want. When you come to Christ you are now given a new dominion of grace as He changes all you want and starts in a trajectory of life of growing you in His grace.

Jesus breaks the power of canceled sin. He sets the prisoner free. He doesn't barely save us or begrudgingly save us. Jesus extravagantly, lavishly saves us as we heard in the text words like 'even more,' 'much more,' 'abundantly' and 'abounding' and His grace is greater than sin. When His grace meets my sin there is no contest for it's far greater. He takes away the penalty and breaks the power. Yes, I still have remaining sin but no longer is sin reigning. This is what God does in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. There are so many glorious truths of what He has done. The Gospel is not a message of a begrudging Divine benefactor. It is a message of lavish abundant grace from a beautiful, loving Savior.

I remember the moment I gave my life to Christ in a hallway where I got down on my knees. I got up, left the hallway and then came back and said ‘God, now that I have made this commitment to You, if there is anything You want me to do will you just let me know?’ I’ll never forget saying that. What I did not know, is not simply what I could do for Him, but what His grace was going to do to me, in me and through me and praise God is continuing to do in me, through me and to me. This can be true for you too. Come from the reign of sin, darkness, death and its dominion to Christ to have life evermore.

He has abundant grace for you, greater than your sin. He gives you spiritual gifts. He has a ministry for you. He gives you resources to use for Him. He lets you bring Jesus to people. Bring them here for me to have a shot at them too and then you can mop up what I do wrong. What a great privilege we have! Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, I pray You would take this effort to unfold this absolutely astonishing astounding text of the redeeming work of Christ who has taken us from death unto life and sends us with the message of life to this world of death and darkness, with humility, confidence, courage, boldness, kindness, mercy and love. Holy Spirit do Your work in us and through us. Father, if there is anyone reading this today that hasn’t come to Jesus may they today leave the reign of sin under Adam and come to Christ and grace. If you want to make this decision to come to Christ and want to pray with someone, please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we’d love to pray with you for what a glorious privilege this would be for us. God, I give You praise and thanksgiving for to God be the glory in Christ – great things He has done, Amen!