EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #20

Romans 5:12-21

It doesn't matter who we are or what we are - time is ticking away and if the Lord does not return soon, we are all going to die. It is just a matter of time.

Now of course the real theological question is, “_Why_?” Why does _death_ exist? Especially when one is supposedly _right_ with God, why should he die? After all, Paul says in Romans 5:1 that when we have been justified we are at _peace_ with God. Why do we have to _die_?

**JUST AS DEATH IS A JUDICIAL NEGATIVE THAT AFFECTS ALL _SINFUL_ PEOPLE, SO GOD’S FREE GRACE IS A JUDICIAL POSITIVE THAT AFFECTS ALL _JUSTIFIED_ PEOPLE.**

Death is actually part of a highly _calculated_ plan of God, which enables God to bring us into a right relationship with Him. **If the death penalty comes to us by judicial calculation, then _justification_ may also come to us by judicial calculation.**

When we think in terms of death Biblically, the key word to remember is “_separation_.” In death something is separated from something else. There are three types of death in the Bible:

1) There is _physical_ death - the body is separated from the soul/spirit.
2) There is _spiritual_ death - every sinner is separated from God due to sin.
3) There is _eternal_ death - unbeliever is separated from God forever in hell.

The big question is, “Why is there death?” This text makes it very clear that we die because of _Adam’s_ sin. We are facing the death penalty because of _Adam_. Every human is related to Adam and the proof is we will die - the death ratio is still one for one.

What we will see here is that death is not only an Adamic _penalty_ for sin, but it is also part of a carefully calculated judicial system of God that enables Him to declare people _righteous_ in Jesus Christ. Paul said it this way in I Corinthians 15:22 - “For as in Adam all _die_, so also in Christ all shall be made _alive_.”

**THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION #1 – What all people have in _Adam_. 5:12-14**

**Negative Reality #1** - We received _sin_ from Adam. 5:12a
**Negative Reality #2** - We received _death_ from Adam. 5:12b
**Negative Reality #3** - We received the death _penalty_ from Adam. 5:12c

The key verb of _verse 12_ is “all _sinned_.” This verb is in a tense which looks back on a specific _moment_ in history, in the mind of God, in which - 1) all _sinned_, 2) all were sentenced to _die_, and 3) all were given the _death_ penalty. That specific moment was in the sin of _Adam_.

Now here is a critical theological point to realize. **We are not going to die because of our personal sin even though we have all personally sinned; we are going to die because of Adam’s sin** and we may prove this in three ways:

(Way #1) - The **context** is a contrast between two federal heads - what we have in Adam as opposed to what we can have in Christ.

(Way #2) - The **text** specifically says exactly this - **5:16, 17, 18, 19**.

(Way #3) - The **illustration** in **verses 13-14** prove this. The “for” introduces an **explanatory** illustration of Paul’s point in **verse 12**.

There are three specific points that Paul makes in his illustration in **verses 13-14**:

**Point 1** - Sin was in the world **before** the Law. **5:13a**
**Point 2** - Sin was not imputed or calculated by God against an individual **until** the Law. **5:13b**
**Point 3** - All people still **died** from the time of Adam until the time of Moses. **5:14**

Since these people did not disobey a direct command of God like Adam did, why did these people **die**? There was no **law** to give them direct commandments. If God was not imputing personal sin against an individual, **why** did they die? The answer is they died for the same reason you and I will die, because of the sin of **Adam**. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “When Adam sinned, the world was turned into a vast **cemetery**.” However, what Jesus Christ is judicially able to do for us is a far greater antithesis of what Adam can do to us:

1. Adam is the head of all _sinful_ people.
   Christ is the head of all _righteous_ people.

2. Adam was born to live but brought _death_.
   Christ was born to die but brought _life_.

3. Adam was tested in Eden and _failed_.
   Christ was tested in the wilderness and _triumphed_.

4. Adam died as a result of _his_ sin.
   Christ died as a result of _our_ sin.

5. Adam brings judgment _upon_ us.
   Christ takes judgment _from_ us.

6. Adam gets _ousted_ from Eden.
   Christ gets us _entrance_ into heaven.

7. Adam _ruins_ our fellowship with God.
   Christ _restores_ our fellowship with God.
THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION #2 – What justified people have in Jesus Christ.

5:15

Superiority #1 - Those in Christ have something greater than the Adamic penalty. 5:15

We may observe that in this section, there are two nouns that keep showing up several times. Both nouns have an article with them. The first is “the gift” (15, 16, 17, 18). The second is “the grace” (15, 17, 20, 21). We could call this “the great grace gift” which is justification.

What Paul means is that the great grace gift in which God declares a sinner righteous is something far greater than anything we received in Adam. Of course the first thing we received in Adam was the penalty or sentence of death. The penalty for the offense in Adam was death. But for those who have received the great grace gift of justification, that penalty is removed. Grace abounds to the many (τους πολλους), which is a reference to those specific people who have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

The world is comprised of two groups of people: 1) The many (οι πολλοι) who are still condemned in Adam because of his sin and 2) the many (τους πολλους) who are justified and not condemned in Christ in spite of their sin. Every person here right now is in one of these two groups. This is an either/or group classification. You cannot be in both groups. You are in one or the other. You are either justified and not condemned, or you are not justified and you are condemned.

Superiority #2 - Those in Christ have something greater than the Adamic judgment. 5:16

God made a judicial judgment - He judged us condemned in Adam. This then enables Him to make another judicial judgment which judges us righteous in Jesus Christ.

We were judged guilty in Adam because of his one sin, but when we believe on Jesus Christ we are judged righteous in Christ in spite of all of our own sins. Our condemnation was determined by one sin, but our justification covers all of our many sins.

Notice carefully, justification is the free grace gift. It is not a works gift, an earned gift, a merited gift, a deserved gift. It is a free grace gift.

Superiority #3 - Those in Christ have something greater than the Adamic destiny. 5:17

There are two epoch moments in the theological history of mankind: 1) The action of Adam which brought condemnation to this world, and 2) The action of Jesus Christ which brings justification to this world.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer says that in reality God sees but two kinds of people in this world - those in Adam and those in Christ.
We are in Adam and the proof is we will ___die___. However, if one is not in Christ, not only will he die, but he is headed for eternal _condemnation_ in the lake of _fire_ (Revelation 20:15).

However, if you are in Christ, your _destiny_ is entirely different. **You are heading to everlasting _life_ in which you will reign forever with Jesus Christ.**

You may carefully observe from this verse that justification must be “received.” Grace must be received. Not everyone has justification. Every person has received the Adamic curse of death, but not every person has received Jesus Christ, the justification gift of life. But for those who receive Him, they are heading to reign with Jesus Christ forever.

**Superiority #4** - Those in Christ have something greater than Adamic _condemnation_. 5:18-19

These verses tell us that those in Adam have been condemned and “were made _sinners_,” whereas those in Christ have been justified and “made _righteous_.”

The verb “made” (v. 19) is _passive_. We have nothing to do, in and of ourselves, with the action of being _made_ a sinner in Adam. We are the _recipients_ of Adam’s sentence. Also, we have nothing to do, in and of ourselves, in the action of being made righteous in Christ. We are the _recipients_ of His work on our behalf. Dr. S. L. Johnson said, “We are condemned through no _fault_ of our own and we are justified through no _merit_ of our own.”

How actually are we made righteous? By God’s judicial calculation. God calculated you dead in Adam and He will calculate you alive in Jesus Christ.

**Superiority #5** - Those in Christ have something greater than the _Law_. 5:20-21

These verses show there is a sharp distinction between Law and grace.

The purpose of the Law was to “_increase_ sin.” The purpose of “increased sin” is to super increase and abound “_grace_.”

The more you have broken the _Law_ of God, the more you have _sinned_ against God. The more you realize you have _sinned_ against God, the more you realize the _grace_ of God.

God has never been in the business of saving righteous people. He has always been in the business of saving lawbreaking sinners. Will you believe on Jesus Christ today? If you will, you will be justified forever by the Sovereign God of the Bible.