

## Romans 5:12-21

“One For All”

This morning we enter into the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of Ch 5, the 1<sup>st</sup> section (Vs1-11) dealing w/the personal/practical blessings *of* our justification before God in Christ. This 2<sup>nd</sup> section deals more w/the basis *for* our justification, why we needed it, & how was it possible. I mean we understand the message of the gospel; that J.C. came into the earth, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sin of the world, 3 days later was resurrected from the dead. & God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son for *us* so that whoever would simply *believe* on Him would not perish but have everlasting life. That’s the message, that all the world could be saved, if they’d just place their faith personally in Christ. Trust in Him for the work He did on our behalf.

But the question that confronts us in this particular portion is, how does that work? What’s the basis by which the act of one Man can have an eternal impact upon the entire human race throughout all time & for eternity? **Now let me make one thing clear as mud right from the beginning. As for how it works *practically* we have no idea, how can one Man (though sinless He may be) hanging on a cross, spilling His blood 2,000 yrs ago, save my soul making an eternal impact upon me today?** I don’t know, it’s rationally & intellectually beyond my finding out, I can’t comprehend it. But that’s ok, if I could search out the depths of the heart & mind of God, He wouldn’t be a very big God. Isaiah tells us, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, ‘says the LORD.’ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*” Isa 55:8-9 So for us to run into mind boggling, unfathomable concepts in the Word of God should be no surprise, the bottom line is that God never asked me to understand it, He asked me to believe it. **How many times as your children were growing up, or as you were growing up as a child did you hear this phrase from your parents, “Because I said so!” & Sometimes that’d drive you crazy, you wanted an explanation, & granted it’s generally best when possible to explain a situation to your children, “Because I said so” is not generally the best answer.** But there are times when a small child won’t understand the concept your seeking to communicate w/them no matter how basic you try to make it, it’s just beyond their ability to grasp it, they have to take your word for it. **So to w/the Word of God, sometimes there are things we really struggle getting a grip on, & when you come to that place you have to just take your Heavenly Father’s Word for it. So as for the practicalities of the cross, I don’t really get that, but I take His Word for it. As for the *principle* of the cross, the basis by which one Man can by one act reap a consequence that has eternal impact on the entire human race, that I can wrap my brain around, & that’s what Paul pours out before us in this portion.**

Theologians love to splash around in this area of scripture because it has the propensity to engage your intellect, & though the concept it communicates is definitely deep, we shouldn’t be intimidated by it because the overall truth of it is simple, & straightforward.

**As our time together closed last week perhaps you noted in vs 6-11 the overwhelming emphasis of our justification & reconciliation being *through Christ*. We have phrases like, “His blood,” “through Him,” “His Son,” “His life,” “through our Lord J.C.” “Through *whom* we have now received the reconciliation.” It’s all about the one Man, J.C. & our identification w/Him, the natural question that then might arise is, how is all this possible through 1 man, how can 1 do for all? Paul explains.**

Vs12

Now had Paul finished his thought here he'd have probably said something like, "...even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life." Because that's what he says when he picks this thought back up in vs 18, but when he brought up this topic of sin entering the world he was sidetracked momentarily to expound on the fact that it doesn't take a broken law to constitute sin. We spoke earlier in the book of Romans about the difference between sin & transgression, we sometimes think that where there's no law, there's no sin. "I'm not breaking a law; I must not be doing anything wrong." Wrong, sin is sin whether its spelled out before you or not, but once there's a written rule spelled out before you, & you choose to violate that code, now it's no longer simply sin, it's qualified as transgression. It's a willful crossing of a specified boundary. & So Paul takes a few vs to clarify the fact, or remind us of the fact that sin was in the world well before the law was ever uttered to man & the *penalty* of sin serves as the tangible proof of the *presence* of sin. (We'll talk about that in just a moment.)

But here in vs 12 Paul introduces this "One For All" principle that will carry us throughout the rest of the ch. He says, "Just as through *one man* sin entered the world." & Of course the "One man" he's speaking of is Adam. Sin entered the world through Adam, now there's a few things we want to observe from this.

#1 We understand that Paul believed in a literal "Adam & Eve." He considered the Genesis 3 account as historical fact, that they *literally* lived in the Garden of Eden, were in *reality* tempted by Satan who came to them in the form of a serpent, & that they *factually* partook of the fruit of the tree knowledge of good & evil, & that act as partaken of by Adam had a perpetual effect upon mankind that is impacting us even to this day. He didn't in any way see it as an allegory, or a neat story, perhaps a fable to somehow seek to explain mankind's existence & explain our current state. & The reason I take the time to walk us through that is because it's foundational & fundamental to our text. If you don't take Gen 3 literally, you cut the legs out from under the very foundation of our salvation. So we have to understand that the Adam & Eve account is a non-optional passage to be accepted or rejected. Because according to the theme of Romans ch 5, if you remove that passage, or allegorize it away somehow, then the very principle that lays the foundation that would make for our salvation is suddenly stripped of its veracity or legitimacy. Because as we'll see, the same "one for all" principle applies across the board.

#2 I want you to notice that this doesn't teach that sin *originated* w/Adam, only that it entered the world through Adam. Sin originated w/Satan, 1 John tells us, "*He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.*" 1 John 3:8

#3 This is where you ladies get off the hook, the bible doesn't anywhere blame Eve for the fall (except for when Adam tries to pass the buck). Sin didn't enter the world through the 1 woman, but through the 1 man. The bible is clear that Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned willfully, knowing that God had commanded him not to eat of that particular fruit, but he chose to do so anyway. (1 Tim 2:14) & So as much as we'd like to blame you ladies for this whole mess, the fact is, Adam has brought it on us all.

& We read here that it was through Adam that, "Sin entered the world" you should know that the word, "Sin" there is singular, its speaking of sin in its essence, not a particular act of sin, but rather the inherent propensity to unrighteousness that's innate w/in us all. The sin nature that is woven into the very fiber of who you are was brought into the world, passed on to you through Adam.

So sin entered through man, (& notice) death entered through sin. Remember God told Adam, “*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” Gen 2:16-17 What’s the wages of sin? Death & the bible speaks of 3 types of death, all of which were introduced into the equation of man upon Adam’s disobedience. **There is spiritual death, which is the state of every natural person on the face of the earth, which happened immediately to Adam upon his partaking of the fruit. He committed spiritual suicide; the bible says that apart from Christ we’re dead in trespasses & sin. So there is that relational separation from God whereby the spirit of a man is for all intents & purposes dead apart from Christ & is made alive in Christ.** Eph 2:1 “*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*”

Then there’s also physical death, which started working in Adam at that moment & finally finished him off some 900 yrs later. The mortality rate in this world is 1 out of 1, death is a fact of life. Now & then we’re referred to as the land of the living, it’d be more accurate to say that we’re the land of the dying because death is at work in us all, physically.

**But then there’s also eternal death, that is eternal separation from God in outer darkness to make its final resolve in the lake of fire where there will be weeping & wailing & gnashing of teeth. Having rejected J.C. God honors your choice & allows you to spend eternity in the antithesis of His presence.** In His presence, no more pain, no more tears, no more suffering, the former things having passed away, apart from His presence, constant pain, weeping & wailing, the smoke of your torment ascending day & night forever, the bible refers that as the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. **Now 2 of the 3 carries complete finality w/them, the physical (1<sup>st</sup> death) & the eternal (2<sup>nd</sup> death), however the 1<sup>st</sup> of those 3, (dead in sin) doesn’t have to be that way. & To be made alive in Christ alters the destiny of man in suffering the 2<sup>nd</sup> death apart from Christ.**

But we don’t even need to go that far to get the gist of the text here, we can stop at physical death, we all die. Every grave serves as evidence to the reign of sin since the time of Adam, & so we read here that death spread to *all men*, because *all* sinned. (Remember all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God.)

Now what you need to understand about *this* phrase (then we’ll begin to pick up the pace) is that what this is saying is that it was *in Adam* that all sinned. Since all of humanity was bound up in the genetic make up of Adam, God holds all of humanity accountable for the *sin* of Adam. What this is saying is that when Adam sinned, you sinned, I sinned, mankind in general sinned. You say, “I’m not sure I like that.” Listen, you need to love that, “What do you mean?” Because Adam represented perfect humanity, there isn’t anyone here who would’ve done any differently, you prove that by sinning everyday. But if God had allowed us to all individually sin, then we’d all individually need a Savior, (there would need to be about 6 billion potential Saviors running around in the world today) but if God holds all humanity accountable on the basis of 1, then He can offer forgiveness & grace to all humanity on the basis of 1. **God only has 1 Son, so if we individually need representation, it would be a real bummer for the 5.9/10 billion of the rest of us. & That’s where Paul is headed w/this; one for all is another display of God’s amazing grace, wisdom & compassion for man.**

& Really this idea of another man’s actions being representative of our own isn’t a foreign concept to the scripture. Now it’s a bit strange to us in our individualistic “army of 1” society. But the scripture gives multiple examples of collective accountability in a single identity. **Perhaps the most popular would be the fact that scripture reckons Levi as paying tithes to Melchizedek 2-300 yrs before Levi was even born & over 500 yrs before the order of the Levitical priesthood was ever formed.**

But because Ab paid tithes to Melchizedek, the scripture accounts Levi w/that act due to the fact that he was in the loins of Ab when Ab tithed to him. So collective accountability over the act of one man singularly is no new thing to scripture, originating w/mankind in the sin of Adam.

& Since mortality is the result of sin that's how we know that we're made sinners through Adam, not through any particular act of our own. In Adam "all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God." If it took a particular sinful act, or willful disobedience to qualify as a sinner we'd never see any still births or infant deaths. Because they're incapable of committing a sinful act or even willfully disobeying for a certain brief span of their life. But because infants die, that bears witness to the fact that sin is present in the very nature of who we are, the bible teaches that sin is present upon the moment of conception. So we don't sin & therefore become sinners, we're sinners therefore we sin, you never have to teach a child to act out, you have to teach them to behave. Because sinful behavior is natural to us, inherited through Adam.

Vs13-14

Now this is that which I mentioned a moment ago, the penalty of sin (death) is the tangible proof of the presence of sin, even apart from the law. Now we note in vs 14 that Adam *transgressed* he did have a law (so to speak) God told him not to eat of that particular fruit, he willfully crossed the specified boundary, that's called transgression. Now in that moment his spirit died, now it's impossible for Adam to pass on that which he no longer had, so now all he was capable of passing on was a physical shell w/the spirit dead through sin. & So all throughout the Genesis account you see men acting in sin, murder, lying, deceit, idolatry, to the point where the record states, "*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" Gen 6:5 Now if that's not descriptive of the nature of sin I don't know what is. There may not've been perpetual transgression, but that's only because there was no law, but there was definitely sin, the wages thereof being death.

Then Paul throws in this statement regarding Adam saying that he was a "type" of Him who was to come. Namely Christ, how was Adam a "type" of Christ, in so much as they were both sinless from the beginning & their one act was representative for all mankind. That's the comparison, beyond that everything is a contrast, but that's why the bible refers to Christ (in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Man, & the last Adam). & As to where Adam's 1 act resulted in death for all, Christ's one act resulted in life for all who believe in Him. That's why the bible says, "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*" 1 Cor 15:22 Notice

Vs15-17

Now this is a mouth full but the overall thrust is that what we gain in Christ is way more than we ever lost in Adam. That the justification in Christ is greater than the condemnation in Adam. That Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy. The free gift is *not* like the offense; it brings *much more* to us than the offense took *from* us. Christ did more than simply reverse the effects of Adam's sin; He causes us to share in the very life, righteousness, & glory of God. Adam's offense brings death, Christ's gift is grace, abounding grace, excessive, superfluous grace, "& The Word became flesh & dwelt among us, & we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, *full* of grace & truth.

& When it speaks of the offense applying to many it's speaking of the entirety of humanity, when it speaks of the gift abounding to many, it speaks to the fact that its *available* to the entirety of humanity. Christ's gift of grace is more than sufficient for all of mankind, but it'll only be attributed to those look *to* Him & trust *in* Him for salvation, the forgiveness of sin.

Vs16

This vs in essence says 2 things to us, #1 That sin is so atrociously appalling before God that it only took 1 to condemn the entire human race in Adam. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing this vs says to us is that as much as God *hates sin*, the amazing thing is that He loves the *sinner*. God loves the sinner, more than He hates the sin. & The free gift is so overwhelming that not only is it big enough to cover the one sin that in essence damned the whole human race, but it provides justification for all sin from all men everywhere throughout all time. That's how much greater God's grace is, than man's sin. It only took 1 sin for all of humanity to be collectively condemned, but God's grace is sufficient to do away w/every sin that all of humanity has ever or will ever commit. That's why the bible says, "...that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them," 2 Cor 5:19  
Vs17

In Adam, death reigns as a vicious dictator, In Christ you will reign in life as kings & priests unto your God through Christ. Remember there in Rev ch 5, the saints sang a new song, & these are the lyrics of the song you'll one day sing before the throne as Jesus takes the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits on the throne, "*You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.*" Rev 5:9-10  
Vs18

So as Paul passes out of his parenthetical thought pattern that he was on as the result of mentioning sin before the law, he now returns to his, "One for all" concise statement that he began in vs 12. & The idea is that of 1 man representing all humanity, & the consequent results in each case. The technical term for this concept is called, "Federal Theology." In America we have a Federal Government, one man representing the people, we elect one person from our state to represent us in Washington, you get the idea. The primary thing we need to concern ourselves w/is which "Adam" (the 1<sup>st</sup> or the last) do we identify with, which one represents *me*, or *you*.

You're born into the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam physically; your identity lies in him. How are we identified w/Christ (the last Adam)? By being born again spiritually, remember Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is born again he'll by no means see the kingdom of God. In Adam death, in Christ abounding grace & abundant life, Adam represents the old order of creation, Christ, the new order. That's why the bible says, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*" 2 Cor 5:17 & Again, "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*" Gal 6:15 So in Adam its judgment resulting in condemnation, in Christ it's the free gift of grace resulting in justification. & Again we want to emphasize that the phrase "To all men" here in vs 18 means that in Adam judgment & condemnation belongs to man by default, humanity is born under the condemnation passed on through Adam. But when he speaks of the free gift coming to all men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the vs we need to understand that as saying that the gift is *available* to all men, but accredited only to those who believe on J.C.

Vs19

You see this takes us back to the Genesis account, if you somehow allegorize or spiritualize Adam & Eve as being the literal 1<sup>st</sup> humanity, you undermine this whole, "All for one" principle that ultimately makes for our salvation. Because if one man's disobedience can't be imputed to us all, then so to one Man's *obedience* can't be imputed to you either.

& So we're able to see God's grace & wisdom in His approach to saving us because He only has 1 Son, not billions of Sons, if it had to be one Savior per sinner, we'd be in trouble. But because God in His mercy confined *all* under sin, He's free to give the promise of everlasting life by faith in Christ to *all* who believe.

& When Paul mentions the obedience of Christ here he's speaking both actively & passively. His obedience to God's commandments is *active* obedience; His willful submission to the penalty of the law, being crucified for the sin of the world is called *passive* obedience. Jesus said, "I always do those things that please the Father." Both actively & passively He led His life in perfect obedience, which makes for your righteousness in Him through faith.

Vs20-21

Few brief things here & we're done. The law entered that the offense might abound, so that we might recognize our sinfulness, see God's righteous standard & our need for a Savior God initiated the law. The law also causes our sin to abound in another way; it brings out the sinful nature in me. **If I see a sign that says, "Keep off the grass," as I'm walking down the sidewalk, what's the 1<sup>st</sup> inclination I have? To step on the grass, I just don't like rules & regulations, it goes against my nature, there's nothing-wrong w/the sign, it's well & good, maybe it was new sod needing to establish a strong root system.** Doesn't matter, there's nothing wrong w/a sign that says, "Keep off the grass." Yet it provokes rebellion in me, the law is good, but it causes sin to abound in me.

But here's the good news, where sin abounded, *grace* abounded much more, or more literally, grace, "Super abounded." We say it often, there's more grace in God than there is sin in you, you can't out sin the grace of God, it's an inexhaustible ocean ready to be poured out abundantly, overflowing into the thimble of your life. **That's the amazing thing about the love of God, we might've expected it to say, "Where sin abounded, God's wrath, or God's judgment abounded much more." But it doesn't say that, God's *grace* abounded still more, as much as He hates sin, He loves the sinner more.**

Last thing, I want you to note, or perhaps underline the phrase here in vs 21 that highlights the fact for us that *grace reigns through righteousness*. This is the proper perspective of the grace of God, there's this carnal mentality out there that says, "I'm under grace, I can do what I want, if I'm blowing life all the time, hey that's what God's grace is for..." & **Some people hesitate to teach grace because they're afraid it'll result in just that mentality, a *disregard* for righteousness, & a casual attitude towards sin. Listen, that's not the *reign* of the grace of God in my life at all. That's not what God's grace teaches us (leave Rom, look quickly at Titus 2:11-12, read).**

Grace *teaches* righteousness, & reigns *through* righteousness, wherever grace is reigning, God's righteous standards will be respected, revered & upheld. & Notice where it leads, to eternal life (not only in the age to come but a quality of life to be secured here & now) through J.C. our Lord.

Prayer Points: God thank You for Your wisdom, in knowing that we would all need Your Son to stand in the gap on behalf of us all, one act of obedience availing eternal benefits for us all. & It blows our minds to realize that we gain so much more in Christ than we ever lost in Adam. Thank You for Your mercy & for availing your gift of grace to us freely, & thank You that though our sin abounds, Your grace abounds still more.

**If you're here & you've never partaken of the free gift of God's grace, the forgiveness of sin & granting of eternal life through Christ, why don't you do that today? God loves you so much that He allowed His only begotten Son to become sin for you, that you might become the righteousness of God in Him.** It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done, you can't out sin the grace of God. You can be born again, a new creation right here & now, if Christ is calling out to you, respond to His voice, open your heart & invite Him in, believe on Jesus & you'll be forgiven of your sin.

