

## Romans 5 (2017)

- We're moving into a new chapter of Romans tonight, Chapter 5
  - This chapter is the third part of Block 4 (as I count it) in the structure of Romans



- This block in Romans is the core section explaining how we receive the righteousness required to enter heaven
- How sinful men and women, who fall short of the glory of God, obtain a solution outside ourselves
- Paul began in Chapter 3 with the explanation of how we obtain the righteousness of God by faith
  - Then he moved to Chapter 4 where he proved from the Old Testament that grace has always been the Lord's plan
  - Salvation was never by works or Jewish identity
- Now as we enter Chapter 5, Paul addresses two possible objections to his explanation of God's plan
  - First, one might ask how can we be sure that we stand cleansed before a Holy God?
    - How do I know that I have the justification that is promised?
    - Since I'm still experiencing hardship and trials in this life, might those things be evidence that God is still dissatisfied with me?
    - Aren't they an indication I am still in jeopardy?

- Secondly, how can it even be possible for this plan to work?
  - How can a ransom paid by one man, be sufficient to solve the sin problem for millions of people?
  - For example, wouldn't we need one sacrifice for each of us?
  - Can such a sweeping plan of salvation rest on the shoulders of just One?
- So Paul addresses these two concerns in turn
  - The question of how can I know for sure that I am justified, is answered in vs.1-11
  - Paul gives two answers to this question
  - Then Paul addresses the second question – how can one man's death pay the debt for so many sinners – in the remainder of the chapter

**[Rom. 5:1](#)** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**[Rom. 5:2](#)** through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

**[Rom. 5:3](#)** And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

**[Rom. 5:4](#)** and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

**[Rom. 5:5](#)** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- Paul opens with the classic conclusionary word, "therefore"
  - He's moving forward from his previous analysis and drawing conclusions from it
    - As we move into the text, it's important to understand that the conversation in this chapter presupposes we understand justification by faith alone
    - These questions arise from the fact that Paul taught faith alone was sufficient to bring us to God, but some think it sounds too easy

- But such questions never come to mind for the person who thinks they work for salvation
- Notice in v.1 Paul opens with the presupposition that we are justified by faith alone
  - The Greek verb tense is the aorist tense, which means an action that is complete but the consequences continue forever
  - We have been declared innocent, and that declaration has never changed
  - Nor will it ever change
- How can we be sure that this declaration never changes? Because Paul says we have peace with God through Jesus Christ
  - This is an important concept in the New Testament, obtaining peace with God
  - The word “peace” appears 58 times in just the Epistles

[Eph. 2:14](#) For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

[Eph. 2:15](#) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

[Eph. 2:16](#) and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

- In Ephesians Paul says Jesus Christ is our peace
  - Because in His dying on a cross, He put to death the cause for our enmity with God
    - Paul says that cause for God to be our adversary were the commandments of the Law
    - Those commandments convicted us of our sin
    - They stood as silent witnesses against us, reminding us that we were in trouble with a holy God Who must act in justice
  - But when Jesus died, He took the penalty of the Law for us

- So that once a penalty was paid, there was no longer cause for enmity
- God no longer had just reason to be our enemy
- So the Bible's idea of peace with God means freedom from condemnation under Law
  - It's the opposite of enmity with God
    - Instead of God being our adversary because of our sin, we now have a peaceful relationship with God
    - It's the difference between Adam walking with God in the Garden, and Adam being barred from the Garden by angels
  - Our relationship with God doesn't turn on emotion or feelings
    - God is holy and just in all He does
    - Sin sets us against God because we're in jeopardy of His judgment
    - And when the cause for our condemnation is removed, there is no longer jeopardy
- So in v.2 Paul says it's Christ who gave us peace with the Father
  - We obtained peace with God by Christ's death in our place, which is the grace of God by which we stand before Him without condemnation
    - Then at some point, that grace became ours as we were introduced to it by a faith
    - Paul's describing a chain of events
    - First came the payment which made peace with God possible
    - Then secondly came our introduction to that act of grace by our faith in that payment
  - Here we are today, standing by God's grace, exulting or boasting in our hope of seeing the glory of God
    - And we boast of a future hope even as we endure tribulations of one kind or another, Paul says in v.3
    - Our confidence and hope in the face of troubling things in this life is extremely confusing to the unbelieving world

- They ask questions like how come bad things happen to good people
- And after disasters, they ask how can there be a loving God?
- Meanwhile, we boast that we have peace with God and we hope in a glory to come
  - To our own glorification with Him
  - To God's name praised throughout the earth rather than ignored or cursed
  - To Christ ruling over men in perfect justice
  - Ultimately, to a world without sin and free from the curse
- And even as the world gets worse, we continue to hold to this belief
  - In fact, Paul says in v.3 that further tribulation only serves to cement this attitude among believers looking to the Kingdom
  - It leads to our perseverance in that hope
- What greater proof that we have been changed by our faith and that our standing before God has changed from condemnation to peace?
  - Where before we feared death the way the world does
    - And we feared trials of any kind since we had no assurance of what may come after the grave
    - But now we can see tribulation without concern since, at worst, it merely hastens our transition to glory
  - And as we endure suffering for His name sake, in whatever form, we persevere because of our hope
    - And as we persevere, our perseverance grows our spiritual character, and strengthens our resolve
    - The development of spiritual character through trials is a blessing to the believer, for the character growth is what lasts into eternity
    - A persecuted church is a strong and growing church while a comfortable church is a weak and lethargic church

- Finally, as our character strengthens under trials, we become all the more sure in our hope for God's glory
  - And Paul says in v.5 that our hope will not be disappointed, because it's not without solid foundation
  - Because we have in us proof that we are at peace with God
  - We have the presence of God dwelling in us
  - Clearly, if we were God's enemy He would not set up His temple
  - So as we increase in godly character having persevered in trials, we see the word of the Spirit in our hearts
  - That work is our confirmation that we are at peace with God
- Your changed life, made possible by a hope in God and the presence of the Holy Spirit, is proof #1 that your faith has truly accomplished something real in eternity
  - You have been justified, your salvation is real, your hope will not disappoint
    - Just consider how you have changed since before you knew Christ, to who you are now
    - That's fruit, good fruit
    - And the Bible says that good fruit like that can't come from evil hearts
    - It can only happen when something good lives in you, and only God is good
  - That's our first proof...God is living in us to make His grace known and our hope for what comes grows day by day
    - Even as the unbeliever lives with increasing fear of what lies ahead
    - You exult in God, you feel peace with God

**Phillips Brooks, former minister of Boston's Trinity Episcopal Church, is perhaps best known as the author of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." He was a very busy pastor, yet he always seemed relaxed and unburdened, willing to take time for anyone in need. Shortly before Brooks died, a young friend wrote to him and asked the secret of his**

strength and serenity. In a heartfelt response, Brooks credited his still-growing relationship with Christ.

He wrote, "The more I have thought it over, the more sure it has seemed to me that these last years have had a peace and fullness which there did not used to be. It is a deeper knowledge and truer love of Christ...I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me. He is here. He knows me and I know Him. It is the most real thing in the world. And every day makes it more real. And one wonders with delight what it will grow to as the years go on."

- But Paul has a second argument to make in assuring you that your salvation by faith is real

[Rom. 5:6](#) For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

[Rom. 5:7](#) For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

[Rom. 5:8](#) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[Rom. 5:9](#) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

[Rom. 5:10](#) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

[Rom. 5:11](#) And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- Back in vs.1-2, Paul gave a brief chain of events
  - First came the payment which made peace with God possible
    - Then secondly came our introduction to that act of grace by our faith in that payment
    - This order is important to understanding the argument Paul is about to make to answer the first question
    - Which came first? God's act of grace or our act of faith?
  - Obviously, Christ died before anyone in the church placed faith in that sacrifice
    - In fact, God proclaimed His intention to put His Son to death as early as Genesis 3

- So the point should be obvious
- The Lord was working this plan long before we got personally involved
- More than that, His work on our behalf started when we were helpless and ungodly
  - Paul says that while we were still helpless, Christ was dying for the ungodly
  - Helpless refers to mankind's prospects for finding salvation
  - Before Christ made the one and only payment God will accept, there was literally no way for us to find God
  - Even the OT saints that died in faith had to stay in Sheol, waiting for the death of Jesus before they could enter the throne room
  - So God was enacting the plan before we were even in a position to act, much less contribute to the process
- Paul compares God's sacrifice for us, to a human being dying for another person to live
  - Generally, we consider this to be the highest act of sacrifice possible
    - There is nothing greater we can give another than our own life
    - And it's so precious to us that we hesitate to give it at all
    - Paul says that it's exceedingly rare for someone to give up their lives for another person
  - And even then we would only consider the possibility for someone good
    - In our world, good means someone we perceive as innocent or undeserving death
    - Like our own children or spouse
    - Or maybe an innocent bystander or fellow comrade in arms
    - We've all seen news reports of these moments and we admire the one who gives the ultimate sacrifice
  - But what would you say if someone suggested you die for an evil person?



- Would you die to free a murderer from death row?
- The very thought seems ridiculous
- Yet that's exactly what Jesus did
- The ultimate good person gave His life for the ultimate evil people, you and me
- Paul says that demonstrates how much God loves us
  - So that if you doubt whether your faith is sufficient to ensure your justification, you're thinking about the problem wrong
  - You forgetting all the Lord did before you were ever introduced to His faith by your faith
  - You're suggesting that God would put His own Son to death for you, introduce you to His grace by faith and give you His Spirit... but then the plan fails in the end?
- Paul says in v.9 that if God did so much for you while you were still ungodly and unable to seek salvation, then how much more should we expect the plan to work after we have come to know Him and desire to have His grace?
  - In v.10 Paul asks if while we were doing everything wrong, God reconciled us to Himself by Christ's death, then how much more shall we be saved by His life
    - This logical argument is a source of great confidence for any Christian burdened by worries about sin and security
    - How can you worry about the certainty of God's promises to you when He put His Son to death for you?
    - If you had any reason to think the plan wasn't going to work, then how do you explain Christ's death?
  - Imagine two soldiers are at war on opposing sides, when suddenly one of the soldiers acts at great personal risk to save the life of his enemy
    - The one soldier proved his love for the other by risking his life for his enemy
    - After the war is over, the two men decide to meet in a local cafe
    - When they meet, they strike up a friendship made possible by that noble act

- But then imagine that as they leave the table, the soldier who had been saved turns to his rescuer and says I'm sorry but we can't meet again
  - And when his friend asks why, the soldier says I just can't trust you. I'm afraid you will pull a gun and shoot me when I least expect it
  - The other soldier is shocked and asks, if I was willing to rescue you when you were my enemy, why would I kill you now that you're my friend?
  - That's like us wondering if our justification by faith in Christ is a certainty
  - If God was willing to reconcile us when we were farthest from Him, then we have nothing to fear now that we are close to Him
- Which leads us to the second question of the chapter: how can one man's death accomplish so much for so many? Exactly how does this work?

**Rom. 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 –

**Rom. 5:13** for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

**Rom. 5:14** 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.

- To explain how God is working through Christ to free us from condemnation, Paul takes us back to where our condemnation started: in Adam
  - Paul is going to examine the start of our sin problem in Adam and then compare how Adam brought us down, to the way Christ lifts us up
    - In this comparison, Paul will refer to "one man" who is obviously Adam
    - Later Paul will refer to another Man, Christ
  - The point is for us to understand how the solution draws from the problem
    - That what we're trusting in is based in what happened in Adam, so that if it was true with Adam, it can be true in Christ

- In other words, we can see the effect how Adam (one man) changed all humanity for the worse
- Therefore, we can also understand how another Man can change humanity for the better
- Each man – Adam and Christ – acts as the federal representative of a group of people
  - A federal representative means someone who rules or makes decisions on behalf of a group they represent
  - All democracies work in this way, with elected officials representing groups of constituents
  - Their actions carry consequences for their respective representatives
  - We accept the notion that an elected official may make a decision on behalf of a group
- So it works also with humanity in a spiritual sense
  - In v.12 Paul says that through Adam sin entered the world
    - That when Adam ate the fruit he disobeyed the word of God
    - Before that moment, God proclaimed that if Adam disobeyed he would surely die

**[Gen. 2:16](#)** The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

**[Gen. 2:17](#)** but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

- After Adam disobeyed and ate, he still lived over 900 years
  - Since Adam didn't physically die on the day he ate, then we know the death God threatened was not a physical death
  - It was a spiritual death, which is the Bible's terminology for the arrival of a sinful corrupt nature in Adam
- So as Adam disobeyed God, he changed spiritually
  - He became dead spiritually, and in that sense he died on that very day

- The power for that change was the word of God itself, since it was the decree of God that Adam would experience spiritual death
- Furthermore, the Lord responded to Adam's sin by cursing the earth, that is the ground and all that came from the ground

**Gen. 3:17** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it';

Cursed is the ground because of you;  
In toil you will eat of it  
All the days of your life.

**Gen. 3:18** "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

**Gen. 3:19** By the sweat of your face

You will eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return."

- Since Adam's body was made from the dirt (*Adam* means earth in Hebrew), then God was cursing Adam's body to die one day
  - So Adam's choice brought sin into existence, which brought spiritual death to all humanity
  - And it lead indirectly to physical death for all humanity
- And Paul says this "spread" to all men
  - Spread is *dierchomal* – to go through, pass through
  - Death was passed through Adam to his descendants
- The change in Adam's spiritual nature became part of him, inseparable from his physical existence
  - So that as Adam reproduced, he passed this fallen sinful nature down to his children
  - All humanity has been born in the nature of their father, Adam

- And therefore all suffer death as well, since death is the result of sin
- Therefore, God doesn't individually assess each descendant of Adam
  - God doesn't determine if each individual descendant of Adam has his or her own sin
    - And then pronounce the same sentence against that person
    - Death, the penalty of sin, spread (passed from) one person to the next because all sinned
  - But remember death happens at all ages, even at childbirth
    - So if all die, it means all are sinful immediately right from birth
    - There is no magical age when we suddenly become accountable for our sin
    - We are accountable from birth which is evidenced in the fact that people die at all ages
  - Paul says in v.13 that this principle held true in the world even before the Law came to Israel
    - He says sin was not imputed without Law
    - He means that no one could say definitively what was sin before God defined it for mankind in His law
    - And yet sin existed, and this we know because men died
  - Something was passed from Adam to all his descendants that results in 100% of his descendants sharing in his penalty
    - This is the meaning of original sin
    - Men inherit a nature from our parents that drives us to sin
    - We call ourselves sinners because at some point in our life we begin to act in sin
    - But we are born sinners, even before we have the capacity to act it out
    - But it doesn't take long, since two-year olds are nothing but blatant sinners

- So Paul says in v.14 that death reigned from Adam to Moses even though the Law was around to convict and define the nature of sin
  - Death held people accountable for sin even though they hadn't made the same mistake Adam made
    - Even the best person on earth was still dying
    - That proves that sin was something received through a birth process and not dependent on each person's choices or actions
    - Their choices and actions were the result of that inherited nature
  - That's how you must understand the life of every unbeliever
    - They are programmed to offend God
    - That programming came from Adam, but they agree with it in their hearts
    - It's all they know
    - And they are incapable of changing the programming on their own
  - So one man's decision created a chain reaction through the reproduction process that led to all men sharing his nature
    - And if this process can work to lead mankind into condemnation then it can be harnessed to provide a solution
    - One man can reverse the process and provide a solution to a new group of descendants
- Before we look further in Paul's argument, we need to pause here for a moment to appreciate an important implication of this truth
  - Paul's statement in v.12 stands at odds with the teaching of Evolution
    - The theory of evolution maintains that mankind evolved from lower order creatures over millions of years
    - Before the first human existed, many other living beings existed
    - These creatures lived and died over millions of years, growing in complexity and evolving into more sophisticated species
  - The engine for this change is natural selection, a set of forces that lead to the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weak

- The idea says that natural selection forces the advancement of life
- The weak die out, and the strong reproduce
- There are many problems with this idea, but one theological issue stands out
  - The Bible says death didn't exist until after human beings existed
  - Not just human death...but all death
  - Because in Genesis 3 the arrival of physical death came as a result of God's curses, which He spoke as a result of Adam's actions
- So evolution says death came before mankind evolved from apes, while the Bible says death came after mankind as a result of Adam's sin
  - If evolution is correct and the Bible is wrong, then not only is Genesis wrong but so is Romans
  - We're no longer arguing simply over which story of origins is accurate
  - We're also arguing over the cause of death
  - And if the cause of death is in doubt, then the meaning of Christ's death is equally in doubt
- And if death is natural and not the result of sin, we have no reason to trust in the death of Christ on our behalf
  - To what good purpose could Christ's death be for us, if death is not a result of sin?
  - Because the Gospel says that death can only be stopped by sinlessness
  - But evolution says that death has no relationship to sin or sinlessness
  - In which case, Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death simply don't have meaning in a search for the problem of death
- So now Paul explains how Christ can solve this problem for the world, though He is but one man

[Rom. 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.

[Rom. 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.

[Rom. 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.

- Paul compares what Christ does for mankind to what Adam did
  - He starts saying that the free gift of salvation through Christ is not like the transgression we experience through Adam
    - He means it's like the first in the sense that it works in an opposite way, though according to a similar principle
    - By Adam's life and death, many died with him
    - But by the life and death of Christ, by God's grace, many will have eternal life
  - These two men had an opposite effect on humanity
    - One produced judgment from a single transgression resulting in condemnation for all
    - But the free gift of salvation covered man transgressions resulting in our justification
  - In v.17, Paul says if we can accept that one man could bring the world into bondage and under the penalty of eternal death
    - Then we should accept that one Man could deliver eternal life to many
    - The mechanism that makes this possible is the same: inheritance
  - In Adam, we all inherit a sinful nature and a dying body
    - And in Christ, we are born again



- We are literally reformed spiritually in the likeness of our new Adam
- We now receive Christ's nature in place of Adam's
- So if one man's nature could be spread to all his descendants by physical birth, then Christ's perfect nature can be spread to all His descendants by spiritual rebirth
  - The Holy Spirit birthed Christ in Mary's womb
  - And likewise the Holy Spirit births us again spiritually when we believe
- In fact, our manner of entering into God's grace is also a direct reversal of Adam's actions
  - Adam's mistake in the Garden was to reject God's word, to fail to believe in what God promised concerning the fruit
    - There was a promise
    - The content of the promise was consequences of eating the fruit
    - The object of the promise was God's faithfulness
  - Adam heard the promise and then acted in a way that repudiated faith in God's promise
    - He acted without faith in God to keep His word
    - So a lack of faith brought about the Fall and sin and death
  - So God devised His plan of redemption to reverse that error in the experience of every born again believer
    - Every believer must place his or her trust in God's promises concerning Christ
    - We must believe a promise and place our trust in God's faithfulness to His word
    - When we do, we reverse Adam's mistake and then we are born again in the line of Christ

**Rom. 5:18** 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.

[Rom. 5:19](#) 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.

[Rom. 5:20](#) The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

[Rom. 5:21](#) so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- So now one act of sin is reversed by one act of righteousness
  - One act drove mankind away from the Father, and by one act we are brought back to the Father
    - One man's mistake made many sinners
    - One man's obedience made many into the righteous
  - The Law never corrected this problem, because it wasn't even capable of doing so
    - By the time you tell someone about the Law, they have already sinned a million times over
    - They were born that way, they can't help it
    - And the Law only serves to highlight all that sin, not to stop it, not entirely
  - So in that sense Paul says in v.20 that the Law's arrival only served to "increase" sin by making it more evident
    - But then that only serves to magnify God's grace in Christ
    - The more you realize how much you offended God in your sin, the more amazing grace is to you
    - Like Jesus said to the Pharisee

[Luke 7:47](#) "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

- Paul ends in v.21 making the ultimate comparison between these two federal representatives
  - Sin is reigning over the unsaved of the earth

- It is their master and they live under its power to condemn them
- Meanwhile, grace reigns in the life of the believer to bring righteousness and eternal life through Jesus Christ
  - We are not under a curse of death
  - Nor does death master us, since we will live again without condemnation

"Adam came from the earth, but Jesus is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). Adam was tested in a Garden, surrounded by beauty and love; Jesus was tempted in a wilderness, and He died on a cruel cross surrounded by hatred and ugliness. Adam was a thief, and was cast out of Paradise; but Jesus Christ turned to a thief and said, 'Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' (Luke 23:43). The Old Testament is 'the book of the generations of Adam' (Gen. 5:1) and it ends with 'a curse' (Mal. 4:6). The New Testament is 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ' (Matt. 1:1) and it ends with 'no more curse' (Rev. 22:3)."

- So everything Adam did, Jesus reverses