

The Roman Pilgrimage (Part 6)



Part 6/20

The Roman Pilgrimage
By Derek Prince

In our previous two sessions we've been looking at Romans 4 and we've been focusing mainly on the example and the pattern of Abraham and his faith. We've seen the conditions that Abraham had to fulfill in order to become the father of a great multitude of nations. Then we've seen also the conditions that we have to fulfill in order to qualify to be reckoned as the descendants of Abraham.

Now we're moving on to stage 6 in this pilgrimage which is found at the beginning of chapter 5 which I have headed in our outline as "Five Experiential Results of Being Justified by Faith." I pointed out earlier that the gospel is anchored in history and in human experience. It's not just some abstract set of theories but it's tied to history and human experience. It's tied to history because it's based and centers in historical facts that Jesus died, that he was buried, that he rose again the third day. If those facts are not true, the gospel is not true.

It's also anchored to human experience because when we believe it and act on it, it produces results in our experience which could not be produced in any other way.

So now we're going to look at the results in experience of being justified by faith. What happens in us when we meet these conditions to have righteousness reckoned to us by faith? Or, when we are justified. Let's just give the alternative renderings of justified. When we're acquitted, we're not guilty, we're reckoned righteous, we're made righteous, we're just as if we'd never sinned. What does it feel like? What happens in us? Paul now deals with this question in the beginning of chapter 5. Here's another of his "therefore's." I don't think I'll ever do it but it could be interesting to go through Romans and count the number of "therefore's" in Romans. But here's another one.

> "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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."

There are the first three experiential results of being justified by faith. First of all, we have peace with God. For the first time in our lives we're in harmony with our Creator.

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And in a certain sense, because we're in harmony with the Creator, we're in harmony with the creation. I'm sure many of us have had an experience after we've met the Lord and received righteousness by faith, everything looked different. Can you think of something like that? I met the Lord in a little seaside town in Yorkshire in England and the next day when I went out and sat on the front and looked at the waves, they were just different. Everything was different. The waves were surging towards me and saying, "This is just a little power of God that you've seen. The power that's in these waves is the power that's working in you and greater than that."

I remember my first wife, who's with the Lord now, when she met the Lord in a dramatic personal encounter she records how she went and walked on the seashore the next day. Everything looked different. She couldn't believe she was in the same place she'd been the day before. Now, not everybody has that dramatic experience but it's part of having peace with God. You've got peace with the environment, peace with creation. It's written in the book of Job that God will make a covenant with the beasts of the field for you. Everything suddenly becomes different. Forces that were against you are now on your side. Forces that you couldn't control and that frightened you now no longer frighten you. You have peace.

Do you know the Hebrew word for peace? I'm sure, shalom. It's directly connected with the word for completeness. It's also connected with the word for "to pay." To pay a bill in Hebrew is ?le shalem?. So you have peace because your bill has been paid. Your peace is a completeness. For the first time you're a complete person. Every part of you is in harmony with every other part of you and with the great God who created you. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second experiential result is in verse 2.

> "Through whom [that's Jesus] also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand..."

I think the Old King James said "access by faith into this grace." I think, in a way, I prefer the word access. So being justified by faith gives us access into grace which upholds us. We can stand in this grace, we are no longer carried to and fro, we're no longer the plaything of forces but we are standing firm in the grace of God. God's grace is upon us.

Whenever you hear the word grace, it's probably good to think in terms of favor. The two words are really different ways of translating the same word. The Greek word for grace, ?charis? from which we get charisma and all those words we're so fond of, means basically beauty, elegance, charm. We don't think about it like that but you see, somebody said beauty is in the eye of the beholder. When God looks at us with favor we become beautiful. So here we are in this marvelous condition of having God's favor upon us. What a difference that makes! I feel so strengthened when I recognize that in any situation if I'm walking in the will of God, God's favor is on me.

The book of Proverbs says that God's favor is like a cloud of the latter rain. The book of Psalms says that God encompasses the righteous about with favor like a shield. So we're protected on every side by the grace or the favor of God upon us. As we walk along we're under this beautiful cloud of the latter rain and every now and then the cloud bursts and precipitates some of the latter rain upon us.

If you could think of grace in terms of beauty. You see, one of the things that's lacking in so much religious life is real beauty. We're content to be rather somber and drab. I don't think that's God's will. I think God wants us to be beautiful. He says he will beautify the meek with his salvation. The beauty that comes upon us is his favor.

Then the third result which is stated at the end of verse 2 is we exult in hope of the glory of God. We now have hope. At the end of the tunnel there's light. It may be a long, dark tunnel but there's light at the end. We know that ultimately we are going to share God's glory in eternity for ever and ever.

In Colossians 1:27 Paul says:

> "To me it was granted that I should make known among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Once Christ comes in, you have the hope of glory. Hope is a very important part of salvation. Romans 8:24, which we'll come to later, says "we are saved by hope." Hope is called in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 a helmet. It's the protection of the mind. When I was saved, although God did a wonderful change in me, I still had a tremendous mental struggle for a good many years with what? Depression. None of you have ever struggled with depression but be indulgent with me. And eventually I had a mighty deliverance from a spirit of heaviness. Then God showed me I had to learn to protect my mind and when I went to the scriptures for the protection he showed me the helmet was hope. A quiet,

serene, confident expectation of good. We exult in that hope.

The word exult is a very strong word. It means we get so happy we're excited and we have to tell people about it. That's an ad lib definition of exulting. I think I'm going to give it again in case I forget it. It means we get so happy we have to tell other people about it and we get excited.

So those are the first three experiential results of being justified by faith. First of all, we have peace with God. Second, we have access into grace which upholds us, protects us, preserves us, encircles us, overshadows us. And third, we exult in hope of the glory of God. We get very excited.

Excitement is an important part of life. I'm sorry for people who go through life without excitement. I don't believe that's the will of God.

Now, we come on to the next one which is very different. The fourth experiential result of being justified by faith is another kind of exulting. Here is where some people just don't want to go any further. We'll read now verses 3–5.

> "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulations brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 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."

What's the fourth result? Exulting in what? Tribulations, pressures, tests, trials, problems. How many of you are going to go that far? You'll not merely exult in hope of the glory of God but you'll exult in trials and testings. And Paul gives us reasons why we should be happy when we're tested. I see some of you looking a little surprised. That doesn't take me aback.

Keep your finger there in Romans 5 and turn for a moment to James. Some people think that there's a kind of opposition between James and Romans. I don't. I think they're just two opposite sides of the same truth. I must say I've come to love the epistle of James. So James says in chapter 2, verses 2–4:

> "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials..."

James says joy, Paul says exult. They both give essentially the same reason.

> "...knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

Shall I tell you the only way you can learn endurance? It's by enduring! There's no other way. My wife Ruth—where is she? Right in front of me—would say a loud amen at that point. She is in the middle of learning endurance.

Going on.

> "But let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

That's exciting, isn't it? Would you not wish to be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing? But there's only one way to it. That's the tribulation route. It's the testing. It's enduring testing that will bring you through to the place where you're perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If you want to achieve that goal, then you have to take the route. You don't have to arrange the tests, let me tell you that. God will take care of that.

Now let's get back to Romans 5 and see what Paul says there. He says:

> "We exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance..."

I think that's the same word that in James is translated endurance. Let me say endurance is an essential part of Christian experience. If you don't acquire endurance there are a whole lot of things in the Christian life you'll never attain to.

Verse 4:

> "...perseverance [or endurance] produces proven character..."

We don't know what a person is like until we've seen him go through trials. There is no way of knowing in advance what kind of a person you're dealing with till you've seen the person go through trials. But that produces proven character.

> "...and proven character produces hope..."

You come out of it all. I remember my first wife used to say —and I mean, if ever anybody went through tests, she did raising a family of children in Palestine without any financial support and under tremendous opposition from some of the local people. When she got into her test she would say, "It will be exciting to see how God gets me out of this." That was hope, you see. She'd learned by experience that God would always ultimately get you out. It might seem he was a little slow in doing it but he would do it.

So when you've been through a whole series of tests and the next test comes, you don't get depressed, you don't wring your hands and say what's happening now. You say it'll be interesting to see how God gets me out of this. That's hope. But you don't get that kind of hope without the testing.

Now we come to one of the most glorious verses in Romans, verse 5.

> "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."

What is the final basis of our hope? It's the love of God poured out in our hearts. That's a tremendous phrase. It doesn't say some of God's love has been poured out in our hearts, it says the love of God, the entire love of God through the outpoured Spirit is poured out into our hearts.

After you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit, I don't think you need to pray for love. I think you need to draw on the love which you have inside you. It's all available. It's like somebody living on the banks of the Mississippi or the Amazon and pray for a supply of water. The truth of the matter is you've got much more water than you'll ever be able to use. I believe it's true with love. Once the Holy Spirit has been poured out and released within us, we have within us a potential source of inexhaustible love.

Let me ask you to keep your finger in Romans 5 and look for a moment in the famous love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. I just want to point out to you something about love that you may have never noticed. What is the strongest thing in the universe? I believe it's God's love. I believe it's stronger than anything else. In the Song of Solomon it says love is as strong as death, and death is irresistible. No one can resist death. But when Jesus died and rose from the dead, he proved that love is stronger than death. So it's the strongest force in the universe. Never underestimate it's strength.

And here in 1 Corinthians 13:4 and following, Paul describes what love is like.

> "Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does seek its own, is not provoked, doesn't not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; [and here's the key verse] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

What is the ultimate source of both endurance and hope? It's God's love in our hearts. Nothing can wear out the love of God. Nothing can crush the love of God, it's uncrushable. It bears all things, believes all things, and hopes all things. That's the love which is shed abroad in our hearts which gives us hope.

Now, let's turn back for a moment to Romans 5 and look at the description of the love of God which is found there in verses 6–10. The love of God expressed in Christ and in Christ's death on our behalf. Bear in mind that's the expression of the total love of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Beginning at verse 6:

> "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates his own love [his special kind of love] toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, [notice that beautiful phrase, justified by his blood] we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. 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."

Now in that passage Paul uses four different descriptive words to describe what we were like at the time Jesus died

for us. This gives us a measure of the love of God. If you look in verse 6, "we were helpless." We could do nothing to help ourselves. There was no response that we could make that would change the situation. At the end of verse 6 "we were ungodly." In verse 8 it says, "God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And in verse 10, "for if, while we were enemies." That's the full measure of the love of God, that Christ died for us while we were still helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies of God. That is what the much, I think, misused word agape. That's divine love. It's unconditional, it makes no demands. Christ didn't say to his disciples, "If you'll do this or if you'll do that, then I'll pay the penalty for your sins." He did it all simply out of his own spontaneous will. He was under no pressure, he was under no obligation, he owed us nothing and that's the love that Paul is talking about here. It demands no response. It makes no conditions. It's simply love.

And in the last resort, shall I tell you what it is? It's irresistible. It's the strongest force in the universe. When we've finished with all our displays of power and cleverness and expertise, the strongest thing that we ever have is the measure of God's love within us. Love is never defeated, love never gives up, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Sometimes we tend to think of love as something rather weak and sentimental. We think people who talk about love are weak people. That's a total misconception. Let me say again the strongest thing in the universe is the love of God. God doesn't say, "I'll give you a little measure of my love today and if you do better, I'll give you some more tomorrow." When he baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, as I understand the baptism, he just pours out the whole thing. There is it. It says in John 3 that God does not give the Spirit by measure. He doesn't measure out a ration and say, "This is how much you've earned and this is how much I'll give you." He just dumps the whole thing out upon us.

I wouldn't have done it if I had been God, I'll tell you that. I would have made some conditions, I would have made some demands. I would have said, "Now, if you straighten out a little bit and I see some signs of improvement..." I tell you what. If I'd been God I would never have saved me. I would never have believed that I could really get saved. When I went back to Cambridge University after being in the Army and being away for a good many years, I talked to a few of the people whom I'd known were Christians. I never had anything to do with them. I said to them, "Why didn't you ever talk to me about the Lord?" They said, "We thought you were too bad." I'm glad that God didn't think I was too bad.

Let's just conclude with the final experiential outworking of being justified by faith. We're getting to verse 11. This is the climax.

> "And not only this, but we also exult..."

Notice the word exult again. How much exulting do you do? Do you do as much exulting as Paul talks about in this verse?

> "...we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have no received the reconciliation."

What's the climax? It's rejoicing and exulting in what? Not in an experience, not in a gift, not in a blessing but in God himself.

That's what David had in mind, I do believe, in Psalm 43. Let's turn to Psalm 43 for a moment and read what David said. David was in a situation where he was really depressed. He just didn't feel things were going right. He says in Psalm 43:2, at the end:

> "Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

And he answered his own question. He said, "Why am I mourning, why am I depressed? Because the enemy is oppressing me." That's the reason. It's the reason most times when we go mourning. What was the remedy? He cried out to God:

> "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling places, then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and upon the lyre I shall praise thee, Oh God, my God."

What was David's joy? It was God himself. That was the supreme joy of David's life. When he was depressed and cast down and didn't know where to turn, he said, "I'll go to the altar, the place of sacrifice." And he said, "I'll lay my life upon the altar of God, I'll give myself, I'll abandon myself to him without reservation and I will know him as my exceeding joy."

That's the goal of the Christian life. As we go on in this study of Romans we'll find that at the end of chapter 8, which is where we're headed, that's the destination. It's nothing less than God himself. Here we get just a little—it's like being on a mountain top and knowing you haven't arrived but you can see your destination briefly for a few moments. We've got a lot more valleys to go through before we get there but here in Romans 5:11 we see just in the distance our destination: a glistening mountain peak which is God himself, our joy.

(end session one)

Session 2

In our previous session we worked through the first half of Romans 5 which was stage 6 of our pilgrimage and was headed "Five Experiential Results of Being Justified by Faith." Those five results that we studied together were as follows:

One, peace with God.

Two, access to grace that upholds us.

Three, exulting in hope of God's glory.

Four, exulting in tribulation because of what tribulation does for us. How many of you can say amen to that one?

And five, the climax, exulting in God himself.

Today we're going to move on to the second half of Romans 5, a stage of the pilgrimage which I've called stage 7 and entitled "Comparison Between Adam and Jesus." I have to admit to you in advance that here we find Paul at his most Talmudic. It's not like the Talmud but it's getting near to it. It's about the most intense and concentrated piece of reasoning you'll find anywhere in the Bible. I confess in advance it's not altogether easy. But, we've got to be strong, courageous, go in and possess the land.

So here we are, we're going to start in verse 12 of Romans 5 which begins with another of those characteristic "therefore's."

> "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—for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's offense, who is a type [or pattern, or a foreshowing] of him who was to come. [that is, Jesus]."

First of all, let's notice that Paul points out two time periods there which succeed one another. The first is from Adam to Moses when there was no God given law for the human race. God had given Adam just one commandment, a negative commandment, but he did not give him a law. From the time of Adam's transgression onwards there was no God given law until Moses. So from Adam to Moses is the period when there was no God given law. From Moses onwards is the period of the law of Moses.

Then we come to the time of the coming of Jesus and in John 1:17 it says:

> "The law was given through Moses..."

It's a very important statement. The whole law, the entire law, the complete system came at one time through one man, Moses.

> "The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

It's always important to bear in mind when you study about the law that it was only given to one very small section of the human race, maybe three million people, at a certain point in history and furthermore, it really could only be fully carried out in one place geographically. That was the land of Israel because much of the law entailed doing things that could only be done in Israel. I venture to say—you might question this statement—the law was never given to Gentiles. So we're dealing with one specific period and a specific section of the human race.

But the most important section of the human race because the whole purpose of redemption depended on that little nation called Israel.

Now, Paul says that Jesus was the outworking of a pattern that was given initially in Adam. Adam received one commandment and in a garden with everything his heart could desire, he disobeyed it. Jesus received the commandment from the Father to lay down his life for the world and in a garden, Gethsemane, he accepted that commandment and obeyed it. So there's a close parallel between Adam and Jesus.

And in order to understand this parallel more fully I would like you to turn with me for a moment to 1 Corinthians 15:45

and 47. This is the chapter that deals with the resurrection but we will not go into that in detail.

> "So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."

There are two contrasts there between first and last Adam and between living soul and life-giving spirit. And then in verse 47:

> "The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven."

Now as I understand it, Paul gives two titles to Jesus there. He calls him first of all, "the last Adam" and then "the second man." I've often heard Jesus referred to as the second Adam but I don't believe that's what Paul is saying. He's saying he's first of all, the last Adam and then the second man. When Jesus died on the cross he died as the last Adam. In him the whole evil inheritance of the entire Adamic race was exhausted and when he was buried, it was buried. It comprehended even the evil of the generations to come because it says in Hebrews 9:14:

> "It was through the eternal Spirit that he offered himself without spot to God."

So through the eternal Holy Spirit which goes beyond time, he comprehended in himself the awful inheritance that came upon the entire Adamic race, including you and me here, and he dealt with it, he finished it. When he died, it died. When he was buried, it was buried. It was put away finally and completely. And then when he rose from the dead he was the second man, the head of a totally new race. The Emmanuel race, the God/man race. And Peter says in his first epistle, "We have been begotten again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." He was begotten from the dead and through faith in him we are begotten from the dead, we arise out of the depth of sin and the curse of Adam to become members of a new race of which the head is Jesus.

This is stated in Colossians 1. Speaking about Jesus Paul makes five statements about his eternal nature in Colossians 1:15 and following. Then he makes two statements in verse 18 about his redemptive work. Colossians 1:18:

> "He [Jesus] is also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that he himself might come to have first place in everything."

So Jesus is the head of the body which is the church, his body, and he's the first-born from the dead, he's the first one to rise in resurrection into a totally new kind of life. That kind of life had never existed or been manifested in the universe before Jesus rose from the dead with resurrection life. But he rose as the head of the body. And he was begotten out of death and here's a beautiful picture. In a natural birth, normally the first part of the body that emerges is the head. And when the head emerges we know the body will follow. And in this birth, Jesus the head emerged first and his resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection.

So he is, first of all, the last Adam. He had to be that, he had to seal off the whole evil inheritance. Then he had to rise again from the dead, the second man, the head of an entirely new race which had never existed before. So that's the essence of the comparison between Adam and Jesus.

Now we come to the details and here is where you need to wrap a towel around your head and brace yourself because —I mean, I'm used to this kind of reasoning and I don't find it easy. If you have a few problems the first time, don't be discouraged. Just go over it again and again and again.

Now what Paul is saying is there's a comparison between Adam and Jesus. This comparison has two aspects. There are some points in which Jesus was like Adam and there are some points in which Jesus was unlike Adam. Now actually, Paul puts the points in which Jesus was unlike first, then he gives us the points in which Jesus was like Adam. I have chosen to reverse the order because I think for our humble minds it would be easier to get the likenesses first before we look at the differences.

So if you're following in your outline you'll see under the heading "Similarities Between Adam and Jesus." There are two verses. Verse 18 and 19. I hope you're with me. We're going to look now in Romans 5:18–19.

> "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..."

So the comparison is this. Adam, by one act of disobedience brought condemnation on the whole race descended from him. He received the command, disobeyed it, sin entered, death followed sin and sin and death have passed over upon all of Adam's descendants, including every one of us here today.

But Jesus, through one act of righteousness, obtained the possibility of justification of life to all men. The one act of righteousness was the sacrifice of himself upon the cross. That word "act of righteousness" is important because we'll meet it again. We'll meet it in Romans 8:4 where it says:

> "The righteous requirements of the law can be fulfilled in us."

I don't want to jump ahead to Romans 8, I just want you to make a note of that word. It's also used in Revelation 19:8 where it says:

> "The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

So the word means a righteous act that fulfills a requirement of God. By his sacrifice on the cross, by that one righteous act, Jesus fulfilled the requirement of God and made possible what Paul calls "justification of life." We've met the word justification before, it no longer scares us. Some of us used to think it was a boring theological term. We've now discovered it's one of the most exciting words in the Bible. To be justified means acquitted, not guilty, reckoned righteous, made righteous, just as if I'd never sinned. Jesus, by his sacrifice, made that possible. And because he made it possible for us to be reckoned righteous, he made it possible for us to receive life.

It's very important to see all through Romans God never bestows life or any blessings on the unrighteous. The first requirement in redemption is that we have to be made righteous. After that, God can pour his blessings upon us. But a righteous God will never pour his blessings on the unrighteous. So righteousness is the first issue and that's why it's the essential theme of Romans.

So that's one point of likeness between Jesus and Adam. Adam, by one act of disobedience, brought condemnation. Jesus, by one act of obedience, opened the possibility of justification. Condemnation and justification are exact opposites.

Then in verse 19:

> "For as through the one man's disobedience the man were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

There's the next point of similarity. By Adam's one act of disobedience many, all his descendants, were made sinners. But by Jesus' one act of obedience all who believe in him are made righteous. And the comparison is important because the people who became sinners as a result of Adam's sin, including you and me, were not just sinner by label, they were sinners by nature and by act. So correspondingly, when we are made righteous through faith in Jesus it's not that just God puts a new label on us, takes away the label sinner and puts on the label righteous. But we are made righteous by nature and by act. Just as surely as Adam's disobedience made us all sinners, in exactly the same way Christ's obedience can make us all righteous. Not just in theory, not just in theology but in the way we live, in the very nature that's in us.

Those are the two points of similarity between Adam and Jesus.

Now, keep that towel wrapped around your head, we're going to go to the three points of difference. We're going backwards now. I hope this works. To me it seemed easier if we don't have all that much time to do it, to deal with the points of similarity first and then go to the points of difference. So now we're going back to verses 15–17. Each of them contains a difference. Verse 15:

> "But the free gift [of righteousness] is not like the transgression. For is 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."

So Paul is saying there's a great difference here because Adam's one act of disobedience brought its consequences upon all of us but all of us added our own acts of disobedience. On the contrary, when it comes to Jesus, Jesus' one act of obedience brought justification to us and we have nothing to add of our own. It was totally Jesus. So whereas Adam's guilt was compounded by our guilt, Jesus' righteousness is unique and we can add nothing to it. That's the first point of comparison.

Then secondly, in verse 16:

> "And 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."

You see the point of difference there? That Adam's one act of disobedience brought condemnation on the whole race but Jesus' sacrifice and his act of righteousness made it possible for us to be justified from countless acts of disobedience. So in the case of Adam, it was just one act of disobedience that brought disaster on us all. But in the case of Jesus' act of righteousness, that one act made it possible for us to be forgiven countless acts of disobedience. Do you see the difference? If you don't see it right now, ponder on it, pray about it, go back through the outline. If necessary, get the tape and I believe it will become clear to you. It's taken me years to sift through these verses. So if you don't get it all at once, if this is the first time you've run up to this jump, if you don't get over the first time just run back and take another jump. As they say in French, ?Ray cue lay pour may so tay?, "Recoil in order to jump better."

Now we come to verse 17, this is the third point of difference.

> "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."

That verse is so packed with meaning I just don't know how to express it all. Through Adam's one act of disobedience death reigned over the whole race and we were all subject to death. It speaks about when Jesus came, he came to those who sat in the region and shadow of death. That's one of the most tragic phrases anywhere. But that's where the whole human race was, sitting in the regions and shadow of death. Sitting, not moving, with no way of escape. Then it says in the gospel, "on them life has arisen." Totally a sovereign act of God. We who were sitting in the region and shadow of death could do absolutely nothing to bring the light. We had no claims upon the light, it was the sovereign mercy and grace of God that would cause the light to shine.

So death reigned as a king—I would say as a tyrant—over the whole race. But for those of us who receive—and this is such beautiful language—the abundance of grace. That word abundance is one of Paul's favorite words, and it's one of my favorite words. Abundance means more than enough. I've explained to people there are three levels. Insufficiency, sufficiency and abundance. If you're a housewife and you go shopping for groceries and you need—who knows how much you need these days. Let's say $100. I don't think that buys much nowadays. Anyhow, you need $100 and you've only got $80, you're shopping out of insufficiency. If you need $100 and you've got $100, you're shopping out of sufficiency. But if you need $100 and you've got $120, you're shopping out of abundance, that's right. More than enough.

So we don't just receive grace, we receive abundance of grace. More grace than we could ever need, it covers everything and leaves a whole lot over.

Not only do we receive this abundance of grace but we receive the gift of righteousness. Again, I want to emphasize that. This kind of righteousness is a gift. You can only receive it by faith. You can't work for it, you'll never qualify for it. There's just one way to receive it. Believe by faith, that's the way you receive this.

Now, when we receive this abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, we are delivered from the kingdom of Satan and we are carried over into the kingdom of God. But Jesus is very different from the devil. The devil is a tyrant, he rules over everybody, he doesn't share his reign with anybody. But Jesus the King invites us to reign with him. Isn't that something! Bear in mind it's not in the next world that we're talking about now, it's reigning here in life right now in this world, in this life. We are called to share the throne with Jesus.

What a wonderful truth. Let me show you Ephesians 2 for a moment. We may have been there before and we may get there again but it's worth it. Ephesians 2:4–6:

> "But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

Notice every one of those verbs is in the past tense, they're not future. Because of our identification with Jesus, God made us alive with him, he resurrected us with him. And don't stay just in resurrection. That's wonderful but that's not your stopping point. Your stopping point is the throne. The New English Bible says "God has enthroned us with him." What's the key word, do you remember what I said? Identification. First Jesus identified himself with us. Then by faith we are identified with him in everything that followed his death. We're buried with him by baptism, don't forget that. And when we've been buried, and we'll come to this very much further in Romans 6, when we've been buried then we are made alive, we're resurrected and we're enthroned. And Jesus says, "Come and sit with me and share the throne with me." That's what I call abundance of grace.

The book of Job says that God takes the poor from the dung hill and sets them on high with the princes of his people. You know I know where I was when God picked me up. I was on the dung hill, the ash heap. But God took me, delivered me, redeemed me, and asked me to sit with him on the throne. Isn't that grace? There's no way to describe that but grace.

Let's go back to Romans, the last two verses of chapter 5, verses 20 and 21.

> "The Law came in that transgression might increase..."

That's going to surprise you but we'll come back to that in Romans 7. We'll deal with that issue. Law was brought in to make us more conscious of our sinfulness.

> "...but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more..."

Notice that verb "abound"? That's the same verb which gives us the noun "abundance."

> "...that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I've never counted how many times Paul uses the word grace there but it must be a great many times. We just have time to turn to Colossians 1 and read verses 13 and 14.

> "He [God the Father] delivered us from the domain of darkness [that's where we were], and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

That's what redemption does. It takes us out of the domain of darkness, from out of the kingdom of Satan, and transfers us into the kingdom of God and sets us on the throne with our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to reign with him in life. And that surely is abundance of grace.

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Sermon

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