

Study 6 – The epistle to the Romans by Neville Clark, 2016

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Reading: Romans Ch 5

The Doctrine of the Atonement

If we turn to Romans Ch 5 this evening, I think we have before us the very heart of the doctrine of the atonement, and sadly, there has probably been no other subject in the history of the Truth that has caused more controversy and angst than this one, and yet, it is extremely profound, it's extremely inspiring, and it is really extremely simple to understand. Now I am not going to spend any time this evening investigating the various lines that people have taken in terms of false interpretations of the atonement, our goal is simply to explain Romans Ch 5, and that's going to take our full time. But I think, brothers and sisters, once you see the argument that the apostle lays out in this chapter, you will see that this doctrine, rightly understood, has the power to change the way that you live the Truth.

The Righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ

So let's put ourselves in the picture, this is where we are, we are in one of these central sections of the book of Romans that began in Ch 3:21 and runs right through to the end of Ch 5, called "The Righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ." So what was behind this section? Well it is very simple, mankind was condemned to death because of sin. It really didn't matter, in the early chapters as we found, that he was a Jew or a Gentile, both groups had equally failed to attain any sort of righteousness before God. Therefore, in man's incapacity, God would have to act to solve the problem, and he would do that through Jesus Christ. In order for God's righteousness to be upheld, he would have to meet man in somebody who would both be a perfect representative of the human race, and a perfect representative of God. The Lord Jesus Christ therefore was the meeting place between God and man, and because of the perfection of his life, and his willing submission to the cross, he demonstrated that flesh was only worthy of death. That's how Jesus Christ demonstrated the righteousness of God, and it is through that means that God can forgive us, without compromising his own righteousness. Simply put, the death of human nature is the basis of forgiveness by God.

Well, that section has a structure that looks like this. Well we've just explained briefly, the first portion of this large section of Romans, what we found from the latter verses of Ch 3. Well of course, the Jew didn't agree did he? Despite all Paul has said up until Ch 3:20, he still thought there was some commodity within Jewish nature that could save him, that could earn him merit before God. So in Ch 4, the apostle uses two examples; one of David one of Abraham, and proves that righteousness didn't come by law, didn't come by circumcision, but it came by a life-time of faith, and in fact, as we found last time, the fact that Abraham was circumcised two chapters after he was pronounced righteous, means that he was pronounced righteous or given forgiveness when he was still a Gentile, thereby opening the door for all those who would live like Abraham, to be included in his promises, whether they be Jew or whether they be Gentile.

The Jew's descent from Adam is the issue

Well, from there, the argument swings into Ch 5, and this is the point for the Jew. You see the Jews as we said were infatuated with their relationship with Abraham, by their natural descent from that forefather, as if God's acceptance of Abraham meant that God would accept them, simply because they had Abraham's blood. Well as Ch 5 is going to explain, it is not his descent from Abraham that should have concerned the Jew, it is his descent from Adam, that's the issue. If they believed Abraham's blood could confer upon them the grace of God, just because they were his descendants, think again, because Abraham himself was a descendant of Adam, and there is no question about what he inherited from Adam, the same as we all. Bro John Carter puts it in his book on Romans, "Adam has bestowed upon us a tendency to sin so inevitable in its sin-producing power that all sin and all die and so there was the real problem, simply being a natural descendant of Abraham wouldn't help you, it didn't solve anything, because Abraham himself was a descendant of Adam, and it is what we inherit from Adam that's the big problem that needs solving."

The blessings in Christ are greater than the losses in Adam

Well, Chapter 5, breaks then into two major sections. The first 11 verses deal with the personal benefits of justification by faith, when I say justification, I mean forgiveness of sins. There are personal benefits of course by having your sins forgiven. The personal benefit is when you consider what is being done for you and your repaired relationship with God, that knowledge can inspire you to a life conduct in the truth far greater than law could ever achieve. And in the second section, from v12 through to v 21, the universal benefits of justification. The point being that the blessings we gain in Christ are overwhelmingly greater than

the benefits that Adam lost. So that's what Romans 5 is all about. The first half, if you like, a moral section on the response we ought to have to God because of the work of Jesus Christ. The second half, a doctrinal section you might call it of the universal benefits to mankind as a consequence of Christ coming and reversing, in fact, beyond reversing the consequences of Adam. But before I begin Ch 5, I will just draw your attention to this one point, do you remember last class, we said that everything in Chapter 4 and 5 was based on those last 11 verses of Chapter 3. So the last 11 verses of Ch 3 became the platform from which Ch 4 and Ch 5 were both derived. Let me just show you that in relation to Ch 5. You come back to Ch 3 and I'm not going to explain these verses, I am just going to draw your attention to a couple of words, Ch 3:24,25. It tells you in v 24 and 25, "Being justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and then again in v 25, "Who," that is Christ, "God has set forth to be a mercy seat through faith in his blood, so the word 'through' appears in both verses. Now have a look at Ch 5:1, from Ch 3 you see, "We spring straight into Ch 5:1, "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And then again in v 11, "Not only so but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And you will remember, I have just told you that vv 1-11 are the first half of Romans Ch 5 and so this first section is book-ended by a quotation from Romans Ch 3, you see? Romans Ch 3:24,25, particularly are the basis of this first section. Ok, come back to Ch 3 again and look at vv 22 and 23, there is another key word here, and it is the word 'all.' Rom 3:22, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," because there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, "for all have sinned," so v 22 tells you that "righteousness comes upon all" and v 23 tells you that "all have sinned." Now have a look at Ch 5 again, because it tells you in v 12 of Romans Ch 5, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." That is exactly it said in Rom 3:23, "all have sinned," and here is the flip side, v 18, "therefore, as by the offense of one," or as the margin says, "by one offense in Adam," "all men were condemned even so by one act of righteousness all men are justified." Well that was what you read in Ch 3:22, "Righteousness would come upon all." Justification comes upon all, and you may notice that vv 13-17 of Rom 5 are in brackets, and the translators have put them there of course, they are not inspired, but they are accurate in that sense, the bracket ought to be there, it makes more sense. The point is then that vv 18-19 are like the sequel to v 12, and we read of the "all sinned" in v 12 and the "all justified" in v 18, these verses are companions, you see, based once again wholeheartedly on Ch 3.

The personal benefits of Justification

Romans Ch 5, v 1. The personal benefits of Justification in the first 11 verses. "Therefore," he says, "being justified by faith we've got peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now the word 'therefore,' of course, takes you straight back to the closing words of Ch 4. The chapter break ought not really to be there, it is not an inspired chapter break, so the very fact that he starts off with the word 'therefore' means he's linking the Chapter, Ch 5, that is, to what has just been said in Ch 4. Well, what happened in Ch 4 in these closing words? Well, Paul was explaining that justification or forgiveness could only come by faith, and that we can be forgiven on the same basis as Abraham if we have the same life, or lifestyle, as Abraham. The issue when you come to Ch 5 then is, all right, what's our response to that? What should that provoke in us in consequence of the fact that we can achieve forgiveness? Therefore, that is, on the basis of Abraham's example, on the basis, v 25 of Ch 4, of Christ's resurrection, being "justified by faith," he says, we have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What does this mean? Well, the word 'peace' means to be 'joined together,' or 'united' so we've got a unity with God. Well, here's the question, what was it that separated us from God in the first place? Why is it important to have "peace with God?" Well, huh! Somebody's said it, it's "Sin," how do you know? Because Isa 59:2 says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," and so can you see that the word "justified," in v 1 here, means "forgiven." Forgiveness of sin solves the problem, removes the barrier between us and God and brings us back into union with God or "peace with God." Remove the iniquities with forgiveness and we are united with God again, it is that simple. 1 Pet 3:21, Peter calls this "the answer of a good conscience toward God." So when we have unity with God, there's no impediment to our relationship. This is more than just a legal reconciliation, there is a "good conscience" spoken of here, that is, there is an inner peace, there is contentment, there is serenity in knowing there is nothing that separates us from God. "By whom," that is, 'by Christ,' "we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," he says in v 2. So, "having been reconciled with God or being "united with God" in v 1, "we now have access by faith to this grace." The word 'access' means 'to be admitted.' Well, what has Christ done? Well, 1 Pet 3:18, "Christ died that he might bring us to God," the verse says. "Bring us to God," so there's the picture, the Lord Jesus Christ, as it were, escorts us that we might stand in the presence of God, "unto this grace wherein we stand," the verse says.

What is grace? What is the spirit of holiness?

What's grace? Grace simply is, 'unmerited Divine favor,' so the thing is, that God didn't have to forgive us,

we didn't deserve forgiveness in that sense, we don't earn forgiveness, it is a gift. God doesn't have to do it, he's not obliged to. So we have been invited to stand, therefore, in unity with God, we accept that invitation by believing God is right about human nature, and proving it by our life-style, and then, at the end of the verse, "we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." The RSV says, "We rejoice in the hope of sharing the glory of God." And here's the antidote to what we read a moment ago in Ch 3:23. Ch 3:23 says that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," here we are now after forgiveness which has wiped away sin, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God," you see we've completely resolved the problem of Ch 3 and v 23. Forgiveness has reversed all the effects of sin, we're now going to share the glory of God in immortality. But now, look what happens v 3, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also knowing that tribulation works patience and patience experience and experience hope and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Now what is he saying there? Here's the Revised Standard Version on those three verses, 3,4, and 5, listen to this. "More than that," he says, "we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts." And he observation you've got to make, you see, is between v 2 and 3 and the observation is this that the word "rejoice" in v 2 is the same word as the word "glory" in v 3, and it means "to boast," we found this before, actually. This word means "to boast," now what's he saying? V 2, the word "rejoice," is the same as the word "glory" in v 3. Well we "boast" in v 2 in the hope of sharing the glory of God in the future, and we boast v3 in tribulation now, because we won't be disappointed by it v 5 says. You see what he is saying, that the trials of life now, v 3, 4 and 5, are not just a necessary evil to get us into the kingdom of God, they are the commencement of glory, can you see that? We boast in the hope of the glory of God and we boast in the tribulation now because tribulation by one means or other leads to a development of character which results in the glory of v 2. So trials, as I say, we all know we've got to endure tribulation to get into the kingdom of God and we might think of that, well it's really an attitude of mind isn't it, we might think of that as being, well you know it's like you've got to pay to be in, and this is just what you've got to do to be in the kingdom of God; the apostle's got the complete opposite point of view, an apostle I might say, who knew what trial meant, he says, 'I don't think of it that way, I don't think of trial as like the entry ticket to the kingdom of God, I think of it as the commencement of glory, and the trial that begins in v 3 and develops character into v 4, and v 5 results in the glory of God in v 2,' that's how the apostle sees trial, you see? And when we understand that, his point is, it causes a reaction, and the reaction here is in the middle of v 5, "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." The word "shed abroad" means as the RSV says that I just told you, it means 'to pour forth,' that is, God's love has been poured into our hearts. But what does that mean? Well it is the response in the life of the believer to the hope of Salvation, 1 Jn 4:19, "we love God because he first loved us." So this is the response in v 5 to the love of God in giving us the forgiveness of sins and the hope of glory. That's simply what he is saying. And in the end of v 5, you need to make a note on this, "by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." So the love of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? Well the "Holy Spirit" ought to be rendered by "a spirit of holiness." Now we are going to discuss this in more detail when we come to Romans Ch 8 when you read this very sort of phrase, but the point is, the spirit of holiness is the education of the Truth. You learn to love God by an education of the truth. It is not a quality that God just bestows upon you. And the proof of that is quite simple really, v 5 is telling us that all believers are going to have the love of God poured forth into their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Not every believer received the Holy Spirit power, but every believer received the love of God, or develops the love of God. So immediately you can tell, this can't be the Holy Spirit power, this is the spirit of holiness developed by the appreciation of the Truth.

Faith, Hope, Love

And perhaps as we skimmed down quickly through those verses you will have noticed the great triad that occurs there v 1, faith, v 2 hope, v 5 love, what is the difference between faith, hope and love? Well 'faith' is easy, Heb 11:6, it is "the evidence of things not seen," isn't it? It is the basis of our confidence that God will bring to pass in the future everything that he has spoken of, so that's faith. It is a belief in the impossible. What's hope? Well hope is the thing that makes faith personal, so faith would tell you, for example, that the kingdom of God is coming, hope says that you can be there. So hope is just 'faith made personal.' And what's love? Well, love's our response. It began as God's love for us, it ends with our love for God. So there's the hope in vv 1-5, there's the hope of glory that has been laid before us, and there's the logical response, from us, to that hope. And now between vv 6-11 you've got a graphic description of God's love for us. So this is where the apostle gets very emotional now, because look what he says v 6. "For, when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly," 'without strength,' what does it mean 'without strength?' Well it means 'weak,' it means 'helpless,' it means 'powerless to do what's right,' that's 'without strength.' "In due time," so we are in a condition where we are completely helpless, and "in due time," it says that "Christ died for the ungodly," what was the due time? Well you might think of something like Gal 4:4 "in the fullness of time God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law," and you might just read that quote casually and think, that 'well perhaps that's a reference to the 70 weeks prophecy

that there was a Divine chronology that had to be obeyed and so at the appointed time the lord Jesus had to come to fulfil bible prophecy.' Well, it is not quite as simple as that, Christ came at the precise moment of time when the law would have to be fulfilled and discarded and when the Gentiles would have to come to the Truth, and that precise moment of time is described in v 2 as when "the world was ungodly," and that's actually a very strong word in Scripture. What do you do with ungodly people, I mean; this is a word that describes man in his worst capacity. Peter, in 2 Pet 2:5 said, that "God brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly," so that's what you do to the ungodly, you wash them away. Do you see the point, therefore, of what he is making? When Christ came in the 1st Century, truth was at its lowest ebb.

There was no man

The Jewish world had got to the point where they had completely overridden the commandments of the Law of Moses so it had become for them nothing more than a platform for self-justification. The Gentile world, meanwhile, as we have found from Romans 1, had sunk into debauchery to such a degree that even nature was violated. Now do you want to know the seriousness of that situation, so God from heaven looks down upon the earth, and what does he see? Well it tells us in Isa 59:16 that God saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor so "his arm brought salvation." You might say to me, 'Well, what did God expect to find, a Messiah?' No he didn't expect to find a Messiah, he couldn't find anyone, he couldn't even find "an intercessor," and it said that "God wondered at that," in Isaiah 59:16. He "wondered" at it, the word means "to devastate," or "to stupefy." He wasn't just surprised at the condition upon earth, he was stunned. Why? Well because the Truth was almost dead, that's why. It was time to change the epoch, that's why.

The end of the Commonwealth of Israel

It was time to finish the Commonwealth of Israel, mankind was ungodly, it says in this verse; the word ungodly means "destitute of reverence." There was almost nothing left to save in the world, that's the point, that's why Christ came "in due time." And there's the contrast, you see, this is the time in v 6 when God chose to act, when there was all but nothing left of the Truth in the world. So now contrast the love of God in v 6, with the love of man, in vv 7-8. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man would some even dare to die." So here are two examples of people that you might consider dying for or not consider dying for, you've got a righteous man here, now what's a righteous man? Well the word means "a man of virtue," somebody who keeps the commandments of God, a man of great personal integrity. Well, there are those sort of people around us, people admire them, you revere them, nobody would die for them. Well, what about a good man? Well, this is a different sort of character. The word "good" means, 'pleasant,' or 'agreeable,' or 'honourable.' So this is an equally upright man but this man has the added bonus that he is of a kindly disposition, there's compassion about him, warmth about him, you are endeared to him, you love him, would you die for him? Well, you might find somebody who would, that's what the verse says. You wouldn't for a righteous man, but for a good man you might find somebody who would, but it would require daring. You see the end of the verse says? Well for this good man some would even dare to die. The word "dare" means 'to be courageous.' You might find, on a good day, that there's somebody who would lay down their life for this good man, but it would have to be an act of wild courage; it would have to be a daring act of the moment, if you thought twice about it you wouldn't do it. So you are going to debate whether you would die for the righteous man and you wouldn't do it. But a man of a similar character who endears himself to you, you might consider it, and if you count to ten and you hold your breath, you might just go through... would you die for a sinner, v 8? "God commended his love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. There's no debate about that, is there? You might debate the righteous man's cause, you might the good man's cause, you would not debate the cause of the sinner in v 8, but that's who Christ died for. You see the point? There's no contest, there's no contest, none of us would die for the kind of person in v 8.

Compare the love of God with the love of man

So you compare the love of God with the love of man and even man would look at human society in v 8 and say 'I am not going to die for that.' Yet God waited for centuries and waited and waited and waited until the light of the Truth was almost going out in the world and into that, he sent his son. You see it? Remarkable, isn't it? Remarkable! And do you know the problem with that brothers and sisters, as clear as that contrast is between v 6,7 and 8, the remarkable thing is that we take that for granted. We take it completely for granted... O yes, Christ died for us, O yes, it is a doctrinal point, and we take it for granted. Let's imagine, let's imagine we had a problem, a serious problem facing TTG ecclesia, and if that problem could only be solved if somebody offered their son, now let's ignore the doctrinal implications of what I am saying, let's imagine that this was a real prospect, perhaps there's a plague coming across from this side of the hall to that side of the hall, something like that, and it is going to require somebody to step into the breach to stay the plague and let's imagine the son in question is a consenting adult, he's a baptised young brother, and

one of the fathers in the ecclesia is going to have to volunteer their boy, who would be putting their hand up for the ecclesia? I mean there wouldn't be a long line of people would there? Happily, it would only require that from people who had sons, but you see the point. There wouldn't be a long line of people volunteering their firstborn would there. Well let's say now we have a business meeting and we say, 'well something must be done, we can't solve the plague, it is ebola or something, I mean there is no solution to this and any proximity you had with the victim means that the contagion hits you as well. And let's imagine at that business meeting somebody puts up their hand and there is a father who has agreed with his son that the son would die to save the ecclesia, and if one of the fathers doesn't offer his son then the whole ecclesia will die, and one family stands up and says they will do it. How would you feel about that father for the rest of your life? How would you think about it for the rest of your life? And what would you do if in a year or two's time that father had a need himself. Let's say he fell upon hardship, well you might say, 'Well, that's easy, we'd crawl across broken glass to help him,' wouldn't we? We'd do whatever needed to be done because if it wasn't for him we wouldn't be here, we owe him our lives. Would we? Would we? Let's stand back and think about human nature a little more. Some would say, 'Well, it's not as if the son was a perfect specimen, was he? I mean, he wasn't that healthy, probably would have been dead by now, anyway. He might have been killed in a car accident, I mean, all of these things happen.' And flesh would find all kinds of justification wouldn't it because flesh does. But there would be others who would never ever forget the act of that father as long as they live, they would suffer privation, personal privation for the sake of that father. What would make the difference? What would make the difference between those two approaches. Only one thing, whether or not you had a relationship with that father, wouldn't it? Wouldn't that be the only thing that would make a difference? Would somebody in any other ecclesia even think twice about what had happened in this ecclesia, no they wouldn't because they've got no relationship with the father in this ecclesia and that family. And if we didn't in this ecclesia have a relationship with that father we'd forget the price he paid very quickly as well. Well, I know I would, and I think you would as well.

A relationship with the Father

The only thing that would make the difference is whether or not you had a relationship with that father. And if you didn't, you'd just carry on your daily life. But can you see why the apostle Paul is so emotional about this, think of it. Christ died for the ungodly, Gal 1:13, "You've heard of my conversation," or way of life "in time past, in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the ecclesia of God and wasted it." 1 Cor 15:9, "I am the least of the apostles that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the ecclesia of God," and look at this, 1 Tim 1:13, "I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious. This is a faithful saying Timothy, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief," and so when he talks about the ungodly in v 6, he is talking about himself. Now he's speaking here about an emotional response to the sacrifice by God of His son, he's speaking here of a personal confession, isn't he.

Paul's personal confession

This is Paul's personal confession. This is what made him get out of bed in the morning, this is what made him run round the world and risk his life for the things of the Truth because of what God had done for him. Now this is worth turning up. Come back with me to Acts 9. You know the conversion of Paul on the Damascus road. I am just going to show you a couple of quotations side by side here, which really put colour on exactly what happened, now this is a Sunday School story, I don't expect to have to read too many verses, but look what happened, v 1 of Ch 9 of Acts. Saul, Saul/Paul, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest and desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any of this way whether they were men or women that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." So this is what Saul was up to charging what, a couple of hundred kilometres up to Jerusalem to Damascus with letters in his hand to arrest people and bring them back to trial and if necessary, execution. "And as he journeyed," v 3, "he came near to Damascus and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, he fell to the earth, he heard a voice saying 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'" It tells us in Acts 22:6 that it was noon. He sees a bright light, a blinding light, you might say, and it is noon. V 9 of this chapter, he was three days without sight. So this was a light that even blotted out the sun, it was so blinding. Go to Damascus, go to Damascus, he is told in v 6, and you will be told what you are going to do. Now what was Saul thinking? So he's taken by the hand, he's led up to Damascus, and he sits there, staring into the darkness for three days and three nights, what do you think he thought was going to happen? Well, I think we've got a clue, it says in v 6, you see, that "he trembling and astonished said, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' 'Go to Damascus, I'll tell you what's going to happen when you get there.' Come back with me to Deut 28. Look at this, amazing! Now you know what Deut 28's all about, it is the blessings and cursings on the nation of Israel. Verse 1 of Ch 28 of Deuteronomy, commence the blessings for obedience, and v 15 of this chapter commence the curses for disobedience. V 15, "It will come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, this is what's going to

befall you.” And this is what’s going to befall you, V 28, “Yahweh will smite thee with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness, thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, thou shalt only be spoiled and oppressed evermore and no man shall save thee.” So what do you think Paul was thinking for three days and three nights as he stared into darkness? He had all the time in the world to start rolling scripture through his mind. He’s been caught, hasn’t he, he’s been caught planning murder. Again, and now the Lord has confronted him and he knows he was “kicking against the pricks,” he knows he was fighting against the providence of God and now he is caught, and he is waiting for his sentence in some little room in a house in Damascus. What do you think he thought was going to happen to him? I don’t think there was any doubt. No man shall save thee. I think he thought he was going to get executed for it. And what happened? Well, back in Acts 9:10 it says that as soon as that had happened to Paul a vision comes to a man named Ananias and in that vision he is told to go to a street named “Straight” and ask for Saul of Tarsus. “No man shall save thee.” He goes to that street, and he finds Saul of Tarsus, Ananias comes to him and he puts his hands on his eyes and what does he say? Brother Saul, Brother Saul? He says, and what does Ananias mean? “The grace of God,” he was saved by the grace of God and he should have been killed for what he had done. He personally understands therefore the forgiveness, for example, of David, in Romans Ch 4. And so can you see? Come back to Romans Ch 5 now, and can you see the apostle Paul in the opening words therefore of Romans Ch 5. This is not just an emotional appeal, this is a confession from his own life. Have you ever wondered brothers and sisters why he begins all his epistles “Grace and peace,” “Grace and Peace be unto you,” look Romans 5:2, “Grace,” Romans 5:1, “peace,” why? Because he had received grace and peace himself and he’d never deserved it, never deserved it. He’d been a Pharisee all his life, if Phil 3:6 can be believed, which of course it can, he was “blameless concerning the righteousness which is in the law,” and when his ungodliness had reached its pinnacle, as he was going to Damascus, once again to arrest people, he was saved by a man called “the grace of God,” and I’ve got no doubt that he knew well personally that there wouldn’t have been a man alive who would have ever died for him. Not a man alive would have died for him, and I think he knew that. So can you see the intensity therefore of this apostle’s appeal. He ought not to be alive, for what he had done, but he is because of the grace of God. And now he’s got peace with God, he’s got a unity with God, a serenity in his life before God in the truth; as I say, that’s what makes him get out of bed every morning and continue the crusade. As happened to that sinful woman, in Luke Ch 7, in the house of Simon the Pharisee he will love much, who has been forgiven much. Anyone, you see, who lives the truth out of a sense of legal duty, will never be satisfied, they will never have this relationship with God, and they will never love God, because law, law, doesn’t produce love. So here’s the apostle’s response, you see, and he concludes this section in v 9, “much more,” he says, “then, being now justified by Christ’s blood, we shall be saved from wrath, through him,” “much more,” that is, if God has already done that for us, if Christ has died for the ungodly, then it is a relatively easy thing to save us from wrath; the hard work’s already been done. V 10, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciles we shall be saved by his life, and you might observe the parallels between vv 9 and 10, “Justified by his blood,” v 9, is the same as “reconciled to God by the death of his son,” v 10. “Saved from wrath,” v 9, is the same as “saved by his life,” v 10.

Reconciled by Christ’s death; saved by his life

Now what does all of that mean? What does it mean to be “reconciled by Christ’s death,” but “saved by his life” in v 10? Well, it is quite simple, really, “reconciliation,” just means ‘to remove any variation,’ ‘to be at agreement,’ or ‘to return to harmony,’ that’s what “reconciliation” means. So how are we reconciled to God? We are reconciled to God when the flesh is destroyed. When we are baptised the minute we go under the water flesh is dead, at least in the symbol, flesh is dead, whereas a zero balance, we are completely reconciled to God, and if we never ever come out of that water, we are completely reconciled because flesh or sin has got the wages of sin; there’s nothing left, that is complete reconciliation, well, the problem is, the man is dead, the man is dead, and God is vindicated, that’s reconciliation, you see. But unless we come out of the water, at least for us, the process is incomplete, we are reconciled, but we are not saved by his life, we’ve got to get out of that water and we’ve got to walk in newness of life. So, therefore, to paraphrase v 10, we might read it like this, ‘When we were sinners, we were reconciled by dying the death of Christ in baptism, much more being reconciled, we are saved by living the life of Christ,’ you see? And then v 11, here is the climax, “but not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement.” And the word “atonement” in v 11, is the same as the word “reconciled” in v 10. But here’s the interesting point, you see it says we have “joy” in v 11, and not only so, but we also “joy in God.” That word “joy” is the same as the word “rejoice” in v 2. The same as the word “glory” in 3 that we have already observed. You see, you see the point, we “glory in hope,” v 2, we “glory in tribulations” v 3, we “glory in God” v 11. There’s the climax of the story, you see it again, way back in v 1. Well then, having considered all the personal benefits of justification, the apostle now considers those same benefits in the context of the entire human race, and this is the story now, from vv 12 through to 21. In short, the entire human race is related to two men, Adam and Christ, like this. These two men are presented as federal heads in this

chapter, that is as representative men as central figures. Adam represents death, the Lord Jesus Christ represents life. 1 Cor 15:45, Christ is described as the 2nd Adam, so there are two men here, both literal sons of God, and two groups of descendants in that sense, each, that is descendants of Adam and descendants of Christ, each with very different prospects, one ending in death, and the other ending in life, that's the two categories of humanity; and that's spelled out in this chapter, you see, by the use of two phrases. All the way through this chapter you will read the phrase "one man," you'll read it in v 12, "wherefore as by one man sin entered the world. V 15 "by the offense of one," end of v 15, "grace which is by one man," end of v 17, "we shall reign in life by one," you read it again in v 18 and v 19, this word "one." Well, the word "one" v 19, "for as by one man's disobedience," so you've got two "one men," one man is Adam and one is Christ, and then in contrast to that, you've got "many," or "all," and we've looked at a couple of those examples already this evening. So you've got "one man," either Adam or Christ, and you've got "all" which is the rest of humanity. And you see, all of humanity is divided between this "one man," and that "one man," that's how it works. Everybody at the instant of their birth is born into the family of Adam, some choose to change their allegiance by baptism, and are reborn, or born from above, into the family of Jesus Christ. So you can see, you transfer from the family of Adam to the family of Christ by baptism, then depending on how we live, humanity finds itself divided into four categories, those in Adam, are either ignorant of the things of the truth or enlightened, by the things of the truth, they are all unbaptised, but they are either ignorant or they are enlightened. Those in Christ either live faithfully, or live unfaithfully. They are either ungodly or they are righteous, but here's the point to observe, the right-hand three categories on that slide will all be judged. They will all appear at the judgment seat. The left-hand most three categories on that slide will all be rejected from life, you see? Only the righteous shall receive life. Well, the argument begins in v 12. "Wherefore," he says, "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all had sinned. One man brought sin, sin brought death, all men sin, so all men die, that's really a very simple verse, well it is simple if I read it like that, but in fact it is a very controversial verse because oftentimes, and especially in the brotherhood, where this is important, this verse is handled carelessly, so the debate begins about what this verse is or isn't saying. So let's take it one clause at a time, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world." In its simplest form, that simply means that Adam sinned by breaking a law, he broke the law and he ate of the tree of knowledge. The result of that was that the world saw its first sin, but it didn't stop there, because v 18 and 19 go on to tell us, well verse 18, the opening clause, "Therefore, by one offense all men came under condemnation; v 19, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," so what began as Adam's single sin, in Gen 3, rippled through the rest of his descendants and subsequent time and so that by the end of it the whole world was under the dominion of sin. When we talk about by 'one man's sin' entering into the world in the immediate sense, it was one sin; it didn't take long before Sin (capital S Sin) now reigned in humanity. Mankind was under the control of sin, because of what Adam let loose in the garden of Eden, you see? "And then came death by sin," and the question arises then, 'what does that mean?' You might say, 'well it is obvious, Adam sinned, Adam died,' yes, yes, but does it mean 'death' or does it mean 'mortality,' because there is no question, Adam was not mortal before the fall, but he was afterward. The question is not what happened the question is what is Paul actually saying in the verse, and what he is saying in the verse is "well, you know, Rom 6:23, the wages of sin is death." The wages of sin in fact is eternal death, and the gift of God is eternal life. This is death, the punishment for sin, that's what happened. It so happens that mortality was a consequence of Adam, that's true, but it is not what the apostle is trying to prove here. He is talking about the consequences of sin. "And then death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." You know this is a marginal reference "for that all have sinned," and it says "for in whom all have sinned," this appears to be a Catholic preference in this verse, the Catholics you see, believe in the doctrine of "original sin," that because Adam sinned, and we are Adam's descendants, we are guilty of Adam's sin and we need forgiveness for it. Well, that's nonsense, the margin is actually wrong, it ought to read as the text has it, but what does it mean? As a consequence of Adam's sin in the beginning, death passed upon all the rest of us for all have sinned. The answer is, well I am short of time, so I'm not going to spend too much time on it, but the answer is in this verse either we are sinners directly from Adam or we are sinners indirectly from Adam, "that is to say, either Adam caused us to sin directly, or Adam gave us a bias towards sin which we fall prey to and we sin ourselves. And the second one is the correct answer. This is how Bro Carter explains this verse in his book on Romans. Adam sinned and was punished with death, simple. His children, however, inherit mortality, and also a tendency to sin, so inevitable in its sin-producing power, that Paul can say that through Adam's sin all sin and therefore all die through him." So how does Adam cause you to sin? He gave you sin-proneness, it is an irresistible disease and therefore you will fall prey to it and you will sin yourself and you die for your own sins. That is to say, you receive death, the wages of sin, for your sins, and were it not for the resurrection and judgment to come, you would stay there as the consequence of sin. Mortality might take you to the grave, your sins keep you there, that's the point, you see? And here's the legacy of that v 13, "For until the law," that is the Law of Moses, "sin was in the world but sin is not imputed, or people aren't held accountable for it, when there is no law. Well, what does that mean? Well the first point to observe is that sin clearly existed before the Law of Moses; the point is, however, that nobody was held accountable to the Law of Moses before the Law of Moses was given. When it says

therefore that “sin was not imputed,” it means that people weren’t held accountable, that is to say, they will not be called to judgment for things they didn’t know, particularly things that weren’t even given yet. However, they still died, v 14, they still died, so people before the Law of Moses, people, perhaps, who knew nothing of any Divine law, still died even though they weren’t subject to that law, why? Well because they still sinned.

Law gave the knowledge of sin

You don’t need the existence of a law for people to still sin, what did the Law do? It gave you the knowledge of sin. Sin was already there, what was sin? Sin is anything, Rom 3:23, that comes short of the character of God. All the Law would do is; define sin for you so that you knew what the gulf was between you and God. So the fact that there was no law in v 13, did not mean that there was no sin. Sin still existed; it was still keeping people in the grave. And in fact, Sin was King v 14, “nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression who is the figure of him which is to come.” “Death,” or sin, and therefore, “death was King” prior to the Law of Moses being given, “even on those,” he says here, “who didn’t break an explicit commandment like Adam did.” So there were people, thousands, millions of people, perhaps living between Adam and Moses, they weren’t given any particular law, they didn’t break any particular law, perhaps they were ignorant of all law, they sinned irrespective, and they died, and remain to this day, dead. Men of Sodom, it says, in Gen 13, were sinners exceedingly. They were completely ignorant of the law, certainly ignorant of the Law of Moses, and probably ignorant of any other law as well. Sin, of course, is anything that comes short of the glory of God, and all the law did was to define it. The absence of law does not remove sin. Well, there’s the legacy of Adam, you see? This is what Adam has created in the world. I’m going to show you now how the argument, this is my last slide, this is the argument of the rest of Rom Ch 5, but let’s refer you for the moment to the top portion of the slide. It says at the bottom of v 14, that “Adam is the figure of him which is to come,” the word ‘figure’ is the Greek word ‘tupos’ from which we get ‘type.’ Adam therefore is a type of Christ. Well, no surprise, we just mentioned in 1 Cor 15, Christ was the “second Adam.” The point to observe, however, is that Adam is a type of Christ by contrast, he is not a type of Christ by parallel. He’s parallel inasmuch as they are both direct descendants of God, but after that, pretty much the parallels cease, so Adam is a figure of him that was to come and look at the difference between them. “By one man,” there was “one offence,” “sin enters the world,” “death comes by sin,” “many are made sinners,” and “there’s condemnation for all.’ That’s the legacy of Adam. On the other side of the slide, “by one (different) man,” and one “act of righteousness” the “free gift of righteousness” comes to all, there is “justification to life,” “many are made righteous,” and there is “justification for all.” So between vv 12, 18, 19 you’ve got the contrast between the work of Adam and the work of Christ. But now v 15, look at this, “But not as the offence so also is the free gift,” now that needs help. What it actually says, here’s the RSV on the opening sentence of v 15, “But the free gift is not like the trespass,” now what does that mean? It means this. What Christ achieved didn’t simply reverse what Adam did.

The benefits in being in Christ are greater than the cost of Adam’s sin

The benefits by being in Christ are greater than the cost given us by Adam. Now let me illustrate that to you, there is a key word. In fact, does anybody know the key word I am looking for, the key phrase, I am looking for in this chapter which illustrates the difference between what we have in Christ and what we lost in Adam? “Much more,” you’ll read it in v 9, 10, 15, 17, 20. What the apostle is going to do now is illustrate that Christ has given us “much more” than what Adam lost. So this is now elaborating on the contrast between Adam and Christ. Now look carefully, you can see very simply what’s happening here, v 15, “But the free gift,” that is, immortality, is not like the offense, or the trespass, “for if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.” What does that mean? Very simply, it is this, In Adam, many are dead, in Christ, many receive eternal life, what’s the contrast? Well, you are dead in Adam, Adam lost life, Christ gained life. What was the quality of life that Adam lost? A very good life. What’s the quality of life that Christ gives? Immortality. You see, Christ hasn’t just reversed the consequences of Adam, being in Christ doesn’t just give you back a very good state, you get immortality, so what you are getting in Christ is much more, you see, than what Adam lost. He lost a “very good life,” we get back in Christ and eternal life, there’s a better quality of life, you see. V 16 “and not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift, for the judgment was by one to condemnation but the free gift is of many of fences unto justification.” Let me give you that from the RSV, “And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man’s sin, for the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses, brings justification.” Adam sinned one sin and brought condemnation to the world, ultimately. Christ forgives many sins. If Christ only forgave one sin we wouldn’t be any better off than if he forgave no sins, you see? Much more is gained, therefore, in Christ than was ever lost in Adam. V 17, “For if by one offence,” as your margin says “If by one offense death reigned by one, much more they that receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life, by one, Jesus Christ.” Now

what does that mean? By one sin death reigned because of one man, but by the gift of righteousness we reign because of one man.” But now look carefully at that verse. If Christ, in v 17, merely reversed what Adam caused, this verse should read differently, you see? Look carefully, if Christ was merely reversing what Adam did, v 17 at the end would say, “that life would reign instead of death.” Compare the verse, “by one offense, death reigned by one,” so that’s what Adam achieved. “Much more,” however, “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness they shall reign in life,” but if we were simply reversing what Adam did, Adam says that death reigned, the end of the verse should say that “life reigns,” but it doesn’t say that life reigns, it says that “we reign,” you see? Much more is gained in Christ than was lost in Adam once again. V 18 “therefore by one offence all men came under condemnation, even so by one act of righteousness, the free gift,” and I am reading the italics, because v 17, v 15 speaks about the free gift, it’s a reference to immortality, came upon all men unto justification of life. By one offense, condemnation comes to all, by one righteous act, justification and life comes to all. V19, “by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, by the obedience of one, many are made righteous. You may be aware that the word “made” in v 19 is the word ‘constitute.’” The point of that is that we are not actually “made righteous” now, in the outright sense. We are not righteous, we are constituted righteous, we are called righteous. God regards us as a class of righteous people. Inherently, however, we are not righteous; we do sin, so it is a constitution of righteousness, that’s what he is simply saying. We are walking in newness of life, we are trying to. Now let’s pause and ask any questions.

Is it fair?

Is it fair? Is it fair? We are walking in newness of life; we are trying to, and let’s pause and ask a question. Is it fair? Is it fair, do you suppose that we have inherited a condition from Adam that is so powerful so irresistible that we sin? And that God judges us for those sins even when he knows that we could never possibly lead a sinless life. Is that fair? Ever thought about that? I’ve thought about that. Do you think it is fair? Let’s put it simply. Is it fair that we are made sinners in Adam through no fault of our own? It is a bit like a child being born addicted to heroin, is it fair that that child is a heroin addict? You see the point? Is it fair? Well, let’s answer the question with a question, the question is, Is it fair that we are made sinners in Adam through no fault of our own? Here’s the question, Is it fair, that we are made saints in Christ through no virtue of our own? Is that fair? More than fair, isn’t it, it is too fair, actually, far too fair, because the blessings in Christ are much more than all the benefits that Adam lost, aren’t they. God is more than fair. There is no point then in complaining, it doesn’t even make sense to complain about what we have inherited from Adam through no fault of our own, because look what we inherit in Christ, through no virtue of our own, you see? And so he concludes in v 20, “Moreover,” he says, “the law entered that the offence might abound.” That is the very reason the Law of Moses was given, he says, that you might understand the sinfulness of sin. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound and everything that law uncovered could be forgiven, God says. Everything it uncovered in your life, could be forgiven. V 21, “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Sin reigns unto death, because of what we are, we can put our feet up in life, and sin will take over and deliver us into the grave and lock it tight, but Christ doesn’t just reverse that, look carefully at v 21. Once again, If Christ was simply reversing what Adam caused, the verse would read differently. Look, “that as sin hath reigned unto death,” that’s what happened in Adam, “even so might grace reign unto life.” If Christ is merely reversing what Adam created, do you see that, look carefully, the verse would say, “that as sin reigned unto death even so might grace reign unto life,” but he doesn’t say that. He says that “grace might reign through righteousness unto life.” Why does he say that “grace will reigns through righteousness unto life?” Why doesn’t he just say, that “grace will reign unto life?” Ah! Because we earn death, but we don’t earn life. Life is a gift, you see?

Transcription by Fay Berry 2016