

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Death through Adam, Life through Christ

• Romans 5 : 12 - 21 •

Week 9

DEVOTION

Romans 5:12-21 teaches that there were two great acts in history: the act of Adam, which brought condemnation and death, and the act of Jesus, which brought justification and life. The results are imputed to us because of our union with Adam, on the one hand, and with Jesus Christ, on the other.

Have you ever noticed that when one person in your household is angry, sad or excited, it affects everyone in the family? Have you noticed that one negative comment from a person in a group can change the tone of the group from upbeat to depressing, or from grateful to critical?

Have you ever worked for someone who made a decision that affected every employee? Your boss was responsible for his decision, but it impacted on everyone working for him. In a similar way, God credits Adam's decision (to sin) to everyone!! The great news? God credits Christ's righteousness to everyone who believes in Him!!

These simple observations may make it a little easier to understand how one man, whether Adam or Christ, could affect the whole of humanity. We are not isolated creatures. What we do and say from moment to moment can have a profound effect on others, negatively or positively, temporarily or permanently, emotionally, physically or spiritually.

In the first 11 verses of Romans 5 Paul attributed our reconciliation and salvation to the death of God's Son. Now, in verses 12-21 he will attempt to explain how this works. There's no competition between Adam and Christ as to which one brings death, and which one brings untold blessings and life.

About this passage, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones says: 'God has always dealt with mankind through a head and representative. The whole story of the human race can be summed up in terms of what has happened because of Adam, and what has happened and will yet happen because of Christ.' [Romans: Assurance, p.178]

'Adam and Christ stand there', writes Anders Nygren, 'as the respective heads of the two eons. Adam is the head of the old eon, the age of death; Christ is the head of the new eon, the age of life.'

This week we embark on a journey that begins with the death and ruin of mankind (verses 12 - 14) ascending to the rescue of mankind by grace (verses 15-19) and the reign of mankind with Christ (verse 17 and 20-21).

Monday

Read Romans 5:10-11; Romans 5:12-21

Transition between Romans 5:1-11 and Romans 5:12-21: In the first half of Romans 5, Paul attributes our reconciliation and salvation on the death of God's Son (Romans 5:9-10). He then transitions, in the second half of the chapter, where he attempts to answer how one person's sacrifice could possibly bring blessings to so many. Paul presents Adam and Christ, the respective heads of the old and new humanities, in such a way as to demonstrate the overwhelming superiority of the work of Christ, and how one brought death and ruin, and One brought life.

1. Paul uses the term "one man" nine times in this passage - six times to describe Adam and three times to describe Christ. What is Paul emphasizing through the repeated use of this term?

Tuesday

Read Romans 5:12-14 (this is the first paragraph); Romans 4:15; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Genesis 2:17

The Introduction/the Death of Mankind: The text divides itself naturally into three short paragraphs, and in each, Adam and Christ are related to each other, although with significant differences. First (verses 12-14), Adam and Christ are introduced, Adam as responsible for sin and death, and as 'a pattern of the one to come' (v.14), who is Christ.

1. In what way is Adam a 'type' or 'pattern of one to come'?
2. How can we explain the death of those from Adam until Moses since they didn't break any commands, and God doesn't consider us guilty of sin when there is no law (Romans 4:15)?

Wednesday

Read Romans 5:15-17 (the second paragraph)

The Contrast/The Rescue by Grace: In verses 15-17, Adam and Christ are contrasted. In each of these three verses the work of Christ is said to be either 'not like' Adam's or 'much more' successful than his.

1. List the ways in which these verses contrast Adam and Christ.
2. In what ways does the passage reveal that Christ is 'much more' than Adam?

Thursday

Read Romans 5:18-21 (the third paragraph); Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:17; Hebrews 5:8

The Comparison/The Reign of Mankind: In verses 18-21, Adam and Christ are compared. The structure now (in 18, 19 and 21) is 'just as ... so also'. For through the one man's one deed (Adam's disobedience or Christ's obedience) the many have been either cursed or blessed. Death entered the world through sin. As Adam was the door through which sin entered, so sin was the door through which death entered.

1. In what way did Adam's disobedience bring a curse to humanity?
2. How do Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:19 add integrity and understanding to what Paul is teaching about sin and its consequence?
3. What is the meaning of the statement that 'by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners?' In what sense have the many been made sinners, remembering that the consequence of sin is death?
4. And the great news... In what way did Christ's obedience bring a blessing to humanity? (verse 17)

Friday

Review Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:6

Summary and Practical Application: So far Paul has written about both the universal extent of human sin and guilt and the glorious adequacy of God's justifying grace in and through Christ. In so doing he has led us both down into the depths of human depravity and up to the heights of divine mercy. He has also indicated our involvement (whether Jews or Gentiles) in both the guilt and the grace.

1. If one man's actions can affect so many, how should we act around our children, neighbours, family and friends?
2. Since the universal problem of the human race is sin, what is the universal solution?
3. What does it mean for believers to "reign in life" through Jesus Christ? Does this apply to our life now?
4. Through Adam's sin all were c_____ as sinners, but through Christ's righteousness all in Him are j_____. (Romans 5:18-19)