

## THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE

Romans 5:12-21

### INTRODUCTION

*A hiker was standing before a judge being charged with eating an endangered species while trekking in the woods of California. After hearing the man had eaten a condor, the judge quickly passed a harsh sentence of 10 years behind bars. The man pleaded with the judge to hear his side of the story because he felt circumstances justified his actions. The judge was interested to hear how anyone could rationalize killing a protected bird so he allowed the man to speak. The hiker explained how he had been lost in the wilderness for three days and nights without any food or water when he spotted the bird sitting on a rock. With the little strength he had left, he threw a rock and killed the bird. After eating the condor he walked another three days without food or water before being rescued. He said, "Your honor, had I not eaten that bird, I wouldn't be here today." The judge was moved by the story and suspended the hiker's sentence. As they left the courtroom the judge asked the man what a condor tastes like. The man thought for a moment and said, "It's kind of a cross between a bald eagle and a spotted owl."*

So much for grace! That man may not have deserved it!

One of the greatest words in the Bible is GRACE. God's marvelous grace. God's sufficient grace. God's amazing grace. C. S. Lewis, the well-known and intellectual Christian writer, came in late to a discussion meeting of his friends. He asked what the discussion was about. They said that they were discussing what made Christianity unique among all religions. Lewis immediately commented, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace." Christianity is the only world religion that is built on grace!

In Romans 5\_12-21 Paul is arguing for the greatness and power of God's grace. Look at:

**Verse 15: "...For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.**

**Verse 17: "For if by one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ**

**Verse 20: "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more."**

God's abundant grace! God's abounding grace! God's superabounding grace. Grace is greater than our sin. The church has expressed this theme in many of our songs. One we like here is "Wonderful Grace of Jesus":

Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,  
Deeper than the mighty rolling sea;  
Wonderful grace, all sufficient for me, for even me.  
Broader than the scope of my transgressions,  
Greater far than all my sin and shame,  
O magnify the precious Name of Jesus.  
Praise His Name!

We want to look this morning at God's grace and why it is so much greater than sin or anything else we receive from Adam.

### **THE PROBLEMS WE RECEIVE FROM BEING IN ADAM**

In this section of Scripture Paul compares and contrasts what Adam caused by his sin and what Christ gives by his obedience. The logic sometimes gets dizzy when he goes back and forth between what Adam did and the effects of it and what Christ did and the effects of it. But at bottom we learn that it is our relationship to Adam and with Christ that determines what is our spiritual condition is and what is our spiritual destiny. Oh the impact of one act of disobedience or one act of obedience..

First let's look at our relationship with Adam. We all have a natural relationship with Adam and this relationship is the source of our spiritual problems. We were all "in Adam" when Adam was first created. What did we receive in Adam? Romans 5:12

**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (where? in Adam).**

We were all in Adam when Adam sinned so we all reap the consequences of Adam's sin. This is not hard to understand. *Biologically we were all in our parents, in their gene-pool, etc, before we were born. If something would have happened to our parents before we were born, like if they had died, we would not have been born. We would have died in our parents, so to speak. The same could be said of our grandparents. If our grandparents would have died before our parents were born, then we would not be here today. We would have died in our grandparents. You can take this process all the way back to Adam. So we can say that to Adam affects us.*

What did we received from the act of Adam's disobedience? Look at Romans 5:15, 18, 19:

**(Rom 5:15) For if by the one man's offense many died,**

**(18) Therefore, as through one man's offense (Adam's sin) judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation....**

**(19) For as by one man's disobedience (Adam's) many were made sinners...**

When Adam sinned something terrible happened to the whole human race. Just consider the consequences of Adams sin. The entire human race became sinners (verse 19), the whole race stands under the holy condemnation of God (verse 18) and we all die.

In verses 13 and 14 argues that because all die proves that all reap the consequences of Adam's sin, not just our personal sins.

**(Rom 5:13-14 NKJV) (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. {14} Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.**

Death is reigning now in this world. We will all die. Death is the results of sin being in the world. Death is a powerful enemy. We will all face death and there is nothing we can do about it in ourselves. We may extend our life through medicine or healthy living for a few years, but all of us will die. But God didn't create us to die. He created us to enjoy life and life eternally. God has the answer to Adam's sin. That answer is Christ!

## **GOD'S GRACE TRIUMPHS OVER ADAM'S SIN**

God's grace is MUCH greater than Adam's sin. God's grace is more powerful than Adam's sin. Let's see how this is. What are the consequences of Jesus Christ's one righteous act? Verses 15-17

**(Rom 5:15-17 NKJV) But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. {16} And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. {17} For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and**

**of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)**

In Adam we are sinners, are condemned, and death reigns. In Christ we are made righteous, are justified, and eternal life reigns.

Can you see how much greater Christ's one righteous act of obedience is than Adam's one act of disobedience? The greater the benefits, the greater the act. What amazing grace! It was the one act of Christ that overcame all of my offenses against God and all offenses of Adam's race. When we see this we will exclaim with John Newton, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound..."

*The famous physician Dr. James Simpson of Scotland once gave this stirring testimony: "When I was a boy, I saw a sight I shall never forget--a man tied to a cart and dragged through the streets of my hometown. His back was torn and bleeding from the whip. It was a shameful punishment! For many offenses? No, for just one. Did anyone offer to bear some of his lashes? No! He endured them alone. His penalty was determined by a changing human law and was the last instance of its enforcement.*

*When I was a student at the university, I saw another sight that lingers in my memory--a man being led to the gallows. His hands were tied, and his face was pale as death. Thousands of eager eyes were on him as he walked slowly to the place of execution. Did anyone ask to die in his place? No! He underwent the full sentence of the law alone. For many offenses? No! For only one! He had stolen some money, and he paid with his life. It was the penalty of a changing law, for it was the last time capital punishment was inflicted for that crime.*

*I saw another sight I shall never forget--myself a sinner, standing on the brink of an eternal Hell. For one sin? No! For many grievous wrongs committed against the unchanging laws of God. I looked again and behold, Jesus Christ became my substitute! He bore in His own body on the tree all the punishment for my sins. He suffered, 'the just for the unjust,' that He might bring me to God."*

This is the grace of God. God's grace is greater than my sin, because in Christ's one righteous act He overcame all sin and all the consequences of sin.

Where Adam's sin brought condemnation - Christ brings justification

Where Adam's act of disobedience made many sinners - Christ's act of obedience makes many righteous

Where Adam's sin made sin to reign in death - Christ's act enables grace to reign in life.

Oh, the preciousness and the power of God's grace. Grace triumphs over sin, condemnation, death. Amazing Grace!

## **THIS RELATIONSHIP IS BY GRACE AND IS A GIFT**

Finally, how do we change from our relationship with Adam to having a relationship with Christ? It is God's doing. We cannot change the relationship ourselves. It is a gift from God. Verses 18:21

**(Rom 5:18-21 NKJV) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. {19} For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. {20} Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, {21} so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

“The free gift came to all men.” The gift is free, but it must be received!

If you see your relationship with Adam is the root of your sins, then renounce that relationship. If you see that the source of life, righteousness, and grace is a relationship with Christ, receive Christ's righteousness as a gift from God! It is the gift that keeps on giving. It keeps on giving eternal life!

*Bath England is noted for its medicinal waters. In the center of the town stands a stone marker in honor of the city's special waters that have blessed so many people. Grateful citizens had the monument inscribed with the following words: "These healing waters have flowed on from time immemorial. Their virtue is unimpaired, their heat undiminished, their volume unabated. They explain the origin, account for the progress, and demand the gratitude of the City of Bath."*

How like the grace of God! It too is an endless stream of freely flowing, health-giving water that never cools and never fails.

Freely receive the grace of God. It flows for you and for me.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Yes the grace of God in Christ has overcome Adam's sin and its hideous consequences on the human race. All that is left is to believe it, live it and tell the world that God's Grace reigns in our life and is available as a healing stream to all.

There is an ancient legend that the cross of Christ stood on the same spot where the forbidden tree stood in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise. It is just a legend, but John Donne used this idea for a moving poem, written upon his deathbed:

We think that Paradise and Calvary,  
Christ's cross and Adam's tree stood in one place;  
Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;  
As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,  
May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.  
Praise God for His superabounding grace.