

TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

What We Lost in Adam, We Regain in Christ Romans 5:12-21

In this second half of Romans 5, we learn that we are not only sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are sinners by nature -- and that sinful nature goes all the way back to Adam. We also learn that what we lost in Adam, we regain in Christ. In fact, in Christ we gain much more than we lost!

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ (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. ¹⁵ 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.)

¹⁸ 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."

Background Notes

In the first three chapters of Romans we learned that all the world is guilty before God. Everyone is a sinner and falls short of God's standards -- but the good news is that God has provided a way of salvation! At the end of Romans 3, we saw that God's way of salvation is through faith, not through works, but through faith alone. God's plan of salvation is possible because God paid for the plan Himself. When Jesus died on the cross, the penalty of our sins was "Paid In Full" so that we could receive the gift of salvation.

In Romans 4 we saw that God's way of salvation is by grace through faith alone. That has been God's way of salvation throughout human history. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness -- and the same is true for us. If we really believe God, if we believe and act on what God has said, then God reckons it to us as righteousness. This kind of faith is saving faith, and we are justified -- that is, we are declared righteous. Saving faith is simply taking God at His Word and believing what God has said -- with your

head and with your heart! Today, of course, that means to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, because God has spoken now in the person of His Son.

In the first half of Romans 5 we have some of the great blessings and benefits of salvation. Notice how chapter 5 begins? *"Therefore, having been justified by faith..."* And that verse is followed by some of the great blessings and benefits in God's package of salvation for us. When we get to Romans 6-8 we will see that these chapters mention our sanctification -- that is, the process by which we become more holy in this life. So the second half of Romans 5 is like a bridge between justification and sanctification. Here in Romans 5:12-21 we have a transitional passage from the subject of justification (that is, being declared righteous as to our spiritual position) to our sanctification (that is, becoming more righteous in our daily practice).

Doctrinal/ Teaching Points

1. In Adam, we lost everything

In Adam, we lost everything! The Bible not only teaches that we are sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are sinners by nature. When did we become sinners by nature? When Adam sinned! Look at verse 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."* And verse 19: *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..."* Adam and Eve didn't have sinful natures before they disobeyed God, but after that original sin they possessed sinful natures. As a result, everyone born since that time (with the exception of our Lord Himself) has been born with a sinful nature – that is, an innate or inborn tendency to sin.

Recently there were two newborn babies, with their proud parents, at our home Bible study. Those babies were both less than a month old, and they looked so innocent -- how could they have a sinful nature? Well, it's just a matter of time, folks, before the sinful nature of those babies begins to work itself out. I heard a preacher once say that little babies are only little "vipers in diapers"! I don't think that I would put it that strongly, but the Bible certainly teaches that we are born with a sinful nature, and that sinful nature manifests itself very early. You never have to tell a child, "Won't you please go out and be bad for a change" – we usually have to ask them to be good for a change! That's because of the sinful nature!

As a result of Adam's sin, we lost everything, and Death, the penalty of sin, spread to all mankind. Look at the end of verse 12: *"and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned..."*

It gets a little heavy right here in these verses 13-14, but see if you can follow this: Even though God's laws defining sin had not been given yet, and there can't be transgression of a law if there is no law, yet we know that sin was in the world. Why? Because everyone died, and death is the penalty of sin. That's the point of Romans 5:13-14, *"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 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."* So death was present even though there was no formal Law, and people were not breaking direct commandments of God as Adam did (v14). How is this to be explained, that death reigned even though sin was not yet defined by the law? Answer: Because Adam was our representative! When Adam sinned, we all were made sinners.

Here's an illustration: Suppose the leader of a country leads that nation into war with an innocent neighboring country. All the citizens are represented in that leader, even if his actions are wrong. Therefore all the citizens are associated with that wrong decision -- whether they like it or not -- and they all participate in the bad fallout of a country at war. Another illustration could be of those old-time extended family feuds, like the Hatfields vs the McCoys. It didn't matter who fired the first shot -- all family members were represented, even those born in later generations. All illustrations fall short in some way, but that may be helpful. So whether we like it or not, Adam, as head of the human race, is our representative, and his sin has affected all of us. In Adam we all were made sinners. In Adam we lost everything. But now comes the good news!

2. In Christ, we gain everything!

At the end of verse 14 we see that Adam is a "type" (picture) of "Him who was to come," namely, Jesus Christ. That same truth is brought out in 1 Corinthians 15:45. As Adam is the head and representative of the human race, so Christ is the head and representative of a new race. All believers are brought into that new race with Christ as our head.

Look at all that we gain in Christ, in contrast to what we lost in Adam! Verse 15: *"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 [Adam]. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but [because of Christ] the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. 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. Therefore, as through one man's offense [Adam's original sin] judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act [because of Christ's one act of righteousness] the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*

By the way, there is no idea of "universal salvation" in these verses! There is universal condemnation, yes, but not universal salvation. Salvation is offered to all and it is available to all, but it's only effective for those who believe. Verse 19: *"For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's [Christ's] obedience many will be made righteous.*

Verses 20, 21: *"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."* When the law was given to show how sinful man really was, grace abounded in Christ even more! So now sin doesn't reign in death, but rather, grace reigns through righteousness. How does grace reign through righteousness? It brings eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So in Adam we lost everything, but in Christ we regained everything we lost -- and much, much more! In Christ we gain everything.

Practical Application

Remember, there are no appellate courts in the hereafter.

An appellate court is where legal decisions are appealed. Well, there are no appellate courts in the hereafter. Remember -- there are no appellate courts in the hereafter! What God has decided and declared is final.

At that final judgment, no unbeliever will be able to say, "But wait a minute, God. I think that it's unfair that I inherited a sinful nature because of Adam's sin. I don't like this idea that Adam is my representative. I appeal this decision!" I'm so sorry! There are no appellate courts in the hereafter. It's in this lifetime that you have your chances to trust in Jesus and receive forgiveness of sins. In the final judgment, God "calls the shots," whether people like it or not.

Moreover, Revelation 20 clearly shows that unbelievers will not be judged for the sinful nature that they inherited from Adam, and for which they were not directly responsible. No, unbelievers will be judged for their works, for which they are directly responsible.

What more could a person want than what we see here in Romans 5 -- what God has provided in Christ for all people who believe? What overwhelming grace! If you are still an unbeliever, why delay? Remember, there are no appellate courts in the hereafter.