Romans 5 (Part 2) :12-21 • Death in Adam, Life in Jesus

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We're in Romans. Open your Bible, please. Well, you know what? Here, hang on. I'm going to have you actually start with me in Genesis in just a minute. But I wanted to tell you at the outset that we're going to be looking at the latter part of Romans chapter 5. That's going to be the main focus of our study. But I want you to know ahead of time, these are some of the most challenging verses in the Bible. They really are. They're hard to understand, to be completely honest with you. We're going to do our best to work through them. We're going to we're going to try to make sense of it for you. But I just want you to kind of know ahead of time, it's going to be challenging.

And one of the things, whenever I come up against passages like this, I always remember what the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12. Let me put this on the screen. This is that great reminder. He said,

1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)

For now we see in a mirror dimly…

For now we see in a mirror dimly…

And that's the reality. It's hard to take. I guess I should say it's hard to accept because we want things to be really, really clear and sometimes they're not. And sometimes it's because God has withheld revelation in certain areas.

Like for example, I get tons of questions. You hear me talking a lot about questions that I get, and the reason for that is that Sue and I have been doing a regular, fairly regular weekly Q&A for several years now. So we field questions from people and we do a broadcast on that. And so, that's where I learn a lot about where Christians' brains are at. But I get tons of questions about heaven.

People want to know what heaven's going to be like. Do you know what the Bible doesn't tell us? It's like God was just almost secretive almost. You'd almost use that word when it comes to talking about heaven. He just doesn't refer to it a great deal. Anyway, we're going to get into this. We're going to do Genesis first, but if you need a Bible to follow along with what we're doing here

tonight, just put your hand up and the guys will get you a Bible so that you can follow along with us.

While you're turning to the Book of Genesis, I want to prepare you for a little bit of the language that we're going to be encountering here in Romans, in this latter part of Romans chapter 5. There's a couple of, phrases that are going to be given to us here repeatedly, so I want to make sure that we're on the same page. Let's put these up on the screen, guys. These are the, the, the two things that we're going to talk about.

"**The transgression**" refers to Adam's sin that brought death to all mankind
"**The gift**" refers to justification by faith and the promise of eternal life

One is, actually, you know what I did that wrong. I should have—instead of "**The transgression**," the ESV actually has "**The trespass**." Now, if you have a New King James Bible, it's "**The offense**." And that is essentially going to refer over and over again in this section of Scripture to Adam's sin and all that came from it, okay? So instead of "**The transgression**," it should say "**The trespass**."

Then the other thing is Paul is going to refer a lot to "**The gift**," all right? And of course, that refers to what we have through Christ. Our justification through faith, the promise of eternal life, and all that goes along with that.

And the reason it's important to define those terms is because Paul uses them a lot, and if you're not really square on the term itself, then, it's going to become an issue.

Now, speaking of the trespass, that's why I want you to join me in Genesis. We're going to be in chapter 3. So Genesis chapter 3, please. And what we're going to do is we're going to go over the historical context of the trespass or the offense, if you will, because this is what Paul's talking about. This is the essence of what he's conveying in this section of Romans. So I think it's important to go back and make sure that we're all clear about everything that happened. So we're going to read through this chapter. I'm not going to comment a great deal.

But it says in Genesis 3-1, *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.*

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, (yeah) *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of*

the tree that is in the midst (or the center) *of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened,* (isn't that interesting? It's really just like Satan promised. He said, *"your eyes will be opened."* And they were. The eyes were opened) *and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."* Bad move.

Anyway, it says in verse 8, *"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

14 The Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

16 To the woman he said,

"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

17 And to Adam he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread, (check this out)
till you return to the ground, (very important. Paul's going to talk about this)
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.
21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

There's some significant, well, there's tons of significant things in here. But of course, what we emphasized already, the command that was given by God, the trespass or the transgression. You'll remember, a transgression is when you know you've got a boundary. You know what's wrong, and you do it anyway. That's different from a sin of ignorance. Both sins, but one more serious because you're aware, right?

And so we read about this. We read about the consequences of that transgression, which of course is death. And then we have this interesting conversation, I believe between the persons of the Trinity, where the Lord God said, *"Behold, the man has become like one of us ...knowing good and evil."*

And there's this interesting statement saying, *"Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"* We don't want him

to obviously live in this constant state because if he never dies, there's nothing we can do about this issue of sin. He must die. Because once he dies, he can be raised again. Of course, that paves the way for the work of Jesus to be made manifest.

And again, Paul will talk about that but this is the trespass. This is the curse that we are now going to deal with here in Romans chapter 5. So now join me over there. Romans chapter 5 and then skip down to verse 12. That's where we're picking up the text from last time We're going to read through the verses that we're going to be covering and then we're going to pray

It says, *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*

***15** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*

***18** Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many* (Did I read that right? Verse 19 again. *"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many*) *will be made righteous. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Let's pray.

Father, we thank You so much for the opportunity to dig into Your Word tonight. And we just really pray for Your Holy Spirit to speak because, Lord we require clarity here. We long to know, Lord, what the apostle was saying and his meaning, and Lord how relevant these things are for us. And we just really pray that you would increase our understanding, and that our hearts and our

minds would be tuned in to the work of Your Spirit among us this evening. We look to You, Father, as we dig into the Scriptures. We thank You and praise You in Jesus' precious Name, amen. Amen.

You might notice as we read through these verses here, in the latter part of chapter 5, that Paul is using a form of communication that is well known to us. It's literally referred to as, the communication of contrasts. And it essentially is to make a point about something by putting something else alongside it and looking at those two things together so as to highlight the differences. We've talked about this before, even here in our study of Romans. We talked about how, this is done in commercials all the time.

But clearly, the contrast that Paul is highlighting is between Adam and Jesus, but not just between these two men as men. I mean, there's certainly contrasts there. But he's talking about what they have done and how what they did affected mankind. And that's the biggest contrast that he's referring to because you see, Adam and Jesus are our representatives. We literally refer to them as our federal heads, and frankly, that's more of a political term based on the fact that in a federal government system, we have representatives of the people. Well, in the same sense, Jesus and Adam represented us, and we are the recipients of what they have come essentially to bring.

And you'll notice in verse 12 that Paul begins by saying, *"Therefore."* And of course, we've mentioned before that the word, therefore means that Paul's about to make a statement based on what he had said previously. And obviously, we know what he'd been saying previously. It's about justification by faith through Jesus.

So he says, *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—"* Now, in the ESV, there's no period at the end of this verse. There's no comma. At least the ESV translators put an em dash. That's that long line. They call it an em dash because it's the length of a capital M. Yeah, I just learned that somewhere along the line.

Anyway, the reason that dash is there at the end of that verse, at least in the ESV, is because it's a hanging sentence. Paul does this all the time. He's the master of the run-on sentence and he's also a master of self-interruption. He'll make a statement, and then he'll stop mid-phrase, interrupt himself, and carry on with some other thought. Sometimes it'll take him two chapters to come back to what he was saying. It's really incredible. Have you ever had somebody, talked to somebody that communicated like that? They're talk—and then they interrupt

themselves and start going on a different route, and you're wondering where this first comment was going to go, but they're also, they're on another little tributary of that, and it's all kind of very crazy.

But this is a very important statement because the essence of what Paul is saying here is, first of all, that everybody is identified with Adam when they are born. And of course, we know that. And he tells us this is what Adam did for us.

He says, *"sin came into the world through one man and death through sin,…"* So that's what we have to thank Adam for. Yeah. That's what I was thinking. Did you ever kind of wonder if you're going to meet Adam or what you're going to say to him in heaven? Thanks, pal. As if you could have done better.

I mean, Adam was in perfect circumstances. Did you ever think about that? Adam had fellowship with God. He was literally created with no sinful nature. He was created as perfect as a man can be and he blew it. And as we saw in Genesis chapter 3, God was very clear about what He wanted him not to do. What they could do and what they were not to do. And what they were not to do, of course, was eat from that tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Paul tells us here that it all happened through Adam, and what is the result? Death.

You know what's interesting? There's a particular Psalm where the psalmist refers... Actually, David does this too. One of the unnamed Psalms, and then David himself, writes about life on earth here as the land of the living. Do you ever seen that in the Psalms? Do you know what's interesting about that? It's fundamentally not true. I don't mean to get morose on you here, but life on earth is the land of the dying.

And from the day that you were born, the dying process started. From the moment that Adam sinned, the dying process started. Because prior to them eating of the forbidden fruit, if you will, and I don't think there was anything in the fruit, frankly. I think it was an obedience issue and a disobedience issue. But the point is, prior to that there, there was no sin. It was a different sort of an issue.

And yet, well, once, once they sinned, once they did it, they began to die. What God said to them when He told them, listen, don't eat this fruit from this tree, the tree of the knowledge of good… Don't even touch it, because when you do, you will die. Well, did you notice they didn't drop dead when they ate? But they did start dying at that moment. The dying process began, and that's what happens to you and me from the day of our birth.

Anyway, Paul is going to go on here and make the point that as certain as death is on Earth, there's something even more certain, and that is life through Jesus Christ. That's, by the way, the contrast. All right?

The last part of verse 12 says, *"...so death spread to all men because all sinned—"* Now, this is where it gets kind of hard. Paul tells us here that Adam's sin affected us all, but it also tells us that we all sinned as well. And what he's kind of saying here is that even though Adam committed the first sin, we are complicit in that action by our own sin.

And even though we were born with a natural bent towards sin, God still holds us responsible for our sin, not Adam's sin. I mean, we're held responsible in a sense for Adam's sin in that we have to submit ultimately to the expiration of our physical bodies. But He still holds us responsible for what we've done, even though we inherited the sin nature that Adam passed down to us.

And frankly, I've had a lot of people ask me some really hard questions surrounding that sort of a concept. They'll say like, well, how is it fair? How is it fair that I was thrust into a life of sin from no choice of my own? And all that goes along with sin, and the garbage and the rot and the corruption and ultimate death when it was because of the transgression of this man that I never met?

I read about him in the Bible, but because this guy messed up, it has just, by domino effect, touched us all. How is that fair? Well, I get it. Those are tough questions, and this is where we come to some of that we seeing through a mirror darkly or dimly. We don't understand the full scope of everything that is going on here but the Bible, I'll just tell you this.

The Bible makes it clear that each and every person is responsible for their own sin. So forget about what Adam did for right now. The Bible wants you to know that you're responsible for your own, your own issues, your own, sins and that sort of thing. And again, people object to that. They say, that's not fair. It's not fair that God should hold me responsible for things that I had a natural bent to do anyway.

Whenever people say to me, that's not fair, I have to call their attention to something. And that is, that God is fair. Now, the Bible doesn't usually use the word fair. That's more of a common word for you and me today. The Bible uses the word just. Okay? And I want to remind you of something. God cannot be otherwise. God is fair and just, and He cannot, cannot be otherwise.

In fact, do you guys remember there's a passage in the Book of Revelation where John is seeing a vision of the tribulation saints. There's this huge, enormous group of people, and the angel says, do you know who these are? And John goes, I don't. And he says, these are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They've washed their robes in the blood of the lamb. (Revelation 7:14) These are people who are going to give their lives for Christ during the Great Tribulation. They are people who were not taken in the rapture. But I think that the sudden disappearance of many Christians has finally brought people to faith.

And the Bible tells us there will be people that will come to faith in Jesus during the Great Tribulation. We call them the tribulation saints, and they're going to be martyred for their faith because they're going to refuse to take the mark of the beast because they love Jesus. They wish they would've loved Him earlier.

But anyway, John sees this, beholds this vision of these people, and he hears them singing. And they're singing this beautiful praise to God, and we're told that it's the Song of Moses. And it's beautiful, but there's a statement in it. And I want to put it up on the screen for you, and I'm going to quote it here out of the NIV cause I like the wording. It says,

Revelation 15:3 (NIV84)

Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages."

"Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. (this is what the tribulation saints are singing. And it says,) *Just and true are your ways, King of the ages."*

Isn't that great? It's a lovely, it's a lovely sentiment, but you need to know something, there's that word just in there. And the word just refers to making a correct decision. I looked it up. In the Greek, it literally means making a good decision. So the Bible says that God is perfectly just.

Now, I bring that back to this issue of the fact that you and I were born with a sinful nature that we inherited through Adam, and yet God holds us responsible for our sin. That may not seem fair to us from our perspective, but I have to be reminded of one simple fact: God is just. God is fair. He always makes good decisions, and He never makes bad or unfair decisions. And you have to deal with that. You have to grapple with that as a Christian.

You have to look at the Bible and say, well, this is what it says about God, and I'm either going to believe it or not. It says He's fair, it says He's just. So am I going to believe it? Am I even going to believe it when things don't seem fair to me, or when things don't make sense to me? Because, there's a lot of times we Christians will put our understanding or our ability to rationalize and understand a situation above the Word of God. We'll literally put it above the Word of God.

Anyway, so we know that sin got started with Adam. It was imputed to us. We received a heart of sin. We also know He holds us responsible for our choices and so forth. And again, that's going to make your brain tilt, but just—we'll have to just get over it and accept God for who He is.

Then Paul says in verse 13, *"...for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law."* Now, what Paul is saying here is that sin was around long before God introduced the law. But before the law was given, mankind really didn't have any clearly defined guidelines of what was considered to be a sin. And it doesn't mean people weren't sinning back then. They were. But they didn't have yet a real legal code beyond just their conscience.

And so it says that sin was not counted at that time as a transgression. Because once again—and by the way, this is an important thing for parents to keep in mind. Those of you with small children, if your child does something that you don't want them to do, but you never told them not to do that, that should be treated differently from the standpoint of parenting. And I wish I would've remembered this frankly when I was raising my 4 kids, because I didn't always remember it like I should've.

But if something isn't explained as, don't do that, and they do it, that's on me, and now that's an opportunity for me to sit down and say, okay. Now, that was wrong, but you didn't know that was wrong. Now you do. Now, that creates a whole new relationship now between parent and child, doesn't it? Because now we've got an understanding. That's wrong. Don't do that ever again. And if they do it again, now that becomes a transgression. A willful act of disobedience, and that's a different thing altogether. But Paul is saying that where there was no law defining the boundaries of right and wrong, essentially, sin wasn't counted as a transgression.

And then he goes on in verse 14 to say, *"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses,..."* And what that means is even though up to the time of Moses, the Law had not yet been given, death still reigned. People were still dying. Why?

Because of sin. So even though they didn't have that concept of right and wrong that the Law gives us, they still dealt with the consequences of their sin.

And he said... I'm going to read verse 14 again. *"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam,..."* Why? Because Adam knew what he wasn't supposed to do, and he did it anyway, right? People prior to the giving of the law, they didn't know. They really didn't know.

But he says, it was not like that, who was Adam here, the type of the one who was to come. How is Adam a type of the one who was to come? He's our representative, and that's the essence of the typology between Adam and Jesus. Both represented us.

Now, Paul goes on to make an interesting statement in verse 15. Look with me here. He says, *"But the free gift is not like the trespass."* Now, I know I didn't read the whole thing, but this is important. It's a very important statement to keep in mind.

You can't just say, Adam brought death. Jesus brought life. And that's it. Because that would make it sound like, well, even though the things are opposite, they were like— they each brought something to the table. Adam brought death, Jesus brought life. No. Paul is stopping us right here, and he's saying, no it's not that simple. And he's going to use terms like more and better to refer to what Jesus came to do.

He says the gift, the free gift that we have through Jesus is not like the trespass. It's not apples and apples, okay? And so that's something to keep in mind. So now I'm going to show you the rest of the verse. Let's read it all again.

Verse 15: *"But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass,* (and here's the words he uses) *much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."*

Now, if that wording in the ESV is a little challenging for you, let me put this verse up on the screen out of the NIV. I like it. Check this out on the screen.

Romans 5:15 (NIV)

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

"But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!"

All right? So Paul is making the point, and he's not explaining why yet, but he's making the point that what Jesus did is greater. It's more. It's better. All right?

Now, in the next 2 verses, Paul's going to repeat the idea of this, this whole point that he's making, that it's more. He says, verse 16: *"And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin."* And we know what the result of that one man's sin was, it was death. *"...the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification."* And remember, justification is a word that means being declared not guilty. All right? Being declared not guilty.

And again, in verse 17, *"For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man,* (here are these words again) *much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."*

And so the bottom line of what Paul is saying here is that you simply cannot compare death with the gift of life. That's the essence of it. You can't compare it. You can't just say one's one and one's the other.

What Adam brought was horrible, but what Jesus brings in response to that is infinitely better. Much more abundantly, and that means exceedingly, overflowing, better than what Adam brought to you and me and to our lives.

Verse 18, *"Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men."* In other words, what he's saying here is Jesus reversed the consequences of what Adam brought. Jesus has reversed it. All right?

Now, be careful here, because if you were to take this verse out of its context, and what I mean by that is out of the context of the Bible, you could come away with the idea that what Jesus did on the cross has brought life to all men, regardless of what they believe. Because if you look at it there, the latter part of that verse says, *"so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men."*

Paul is not saying that because Jesus died on the cross, all men are saved. I believe all men are able to be saved. We see that in the Word of God. We see

that Jesus didn't die just for the sins of those who would accept Him. He died for the sins of the whole world. He bore the punishment, the penalty of the sins of the whole world. And so salvation is open to all, but there is still the need for faith and trust.

Now, the belief that everybody's saved, regardless of what they accept, believe or whatever, is called Universalism, and perhaps you've heard of it. It's the idea, essentially, that it doesn't... You could believe that God is in a rock, and that's as far as your belief goes, but you're still saved because Jesus died on the cross and bore the sins of the whole world. Doesn't matter what you believe or who you accept. You could believe in Buddha, and still be saved by Jesus. That's Universalism.

I know that because I was taught universalism as a child. My mother believed in Universalism. I don't think she held on to that belief. My mother's still alive. She's 96, I think. But you start losing track at some point. But before she lost her hearing, she used to listen a lot to my teachings online, and I think she changed her thoughts on that particular issue.

But as a child, I was taught Universalism. And, Universalism is at the essence or at the root of Mormon belief. Mormons believe that essentially everybody's saved, everybody's going to go to heaven, but then they've got the upper levels, they've got the upper tier of heaven because, they're Mormons and they're doing the Mormon thing. So there's an essence there of Universalism that's even factored into that. And, I get it. I know where Universalism comes from.

How many people in your life that you love and care about can pass away without accepting Jesus before you change your mind about salvation? I mean, it's hard. It's very difficult.

I have no trouble putting things in God's hands, and especially people I love. And it's like, you know what? God's going to do what's right. I'm not going to one day stand before Him and go, boy, you messed up on that one, Lord. That's never going to happen. He does what's—His ways are perfect.

And again, we looked at that passage from Revelation, “just and true are your ways, O Lord, King of the ages.” (Revelation 15:3) You're going to either accept that or you're not. And if you're not going to accept it, then you're going to have to tweak your theology and come up with ideas like Universalism so that you can be comforted about the fact that, the people that you would've considered unsaved they're going to be in heaven.

And again, I get it. I get it from the standpoint of the people you love. I totally get it. But I can't let my feelings alter the Word of God. I'm just not willing to do that. Instead, I am going to trust the Lord that He is good and His mercy endures forever. And so, yeah.

Here's another protest concerning this whole thing that we're talking about here in Romans chapter 5. They'll say, if all were made, and again, this goes along with the whole universalism thing. Maybe you've heard this. If we were all made sinners by the act of Adam, this one man, why weren't we all simply just made righteous by the act of the one man? Why does it still require faith? I didn't choose to become a sinner. Why do I have to choose to become a believer?

And it's interesting. Everyone forms or formats that question in such a way as to make it sound like that's not fair. That's not fair. It's not fair that if I didn't choose to be a sinner, why should I have to choose to be a believer and be saved? Why? And what's interesting about that is that they forget that salvation's free. It's like, what's the big deal? Guys, it's free. He made it free. All you got—well, all you got to do.

So you repent of your sin. You come to Him by faith. You say, Jesus, I believe that, I know I'm a sinner, number one. Secondly, I believe You died for the sins of the world. I accept You and what you did for me on the cross. Boom! I am a born again Christian. Condemnation gone, right? Promise of eternal life here. What's the big deal?

Well, here's the deal We don't want to be bothered to have to ask. I didn't have to ask to be a sinner. Shouldn't have to ask to be a Christian. I guess we don't want to be bothered. Well, that comes down to pride, my friends. That's all that's all that's about is just pride. It's just human pride.

Now, in verse 19, Paul begins to give his summary, all right, of this contrast that he's been formatting for us. He says, *"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."* Beautiful. That's a summary of what we've already been saying.

And then Paul reminds us why the law was given. He says, *"Now the law came in to increase the trespass,..."* And what that means is the law came in to reveal sin. Sin was in the world before the law was around, but when the law came, we became much more aware of our sin, right? In other words, God exposed just how offensive sin is, was, and is when the law came into our understanding, okay?

But then he says something incredible. We're in the middle of verse 20. I love this. This should be stamped on our hearts. *"...but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,..."* Isn't that beautiful? In other words… And, again, he's been talking contrasts, and really the word abounded could be used twice in this. He could say, where sin abounded, grace more abounded. And some people, some Bible teachers like to use the word, it super abounded. Sin abounded, but grace super abounded. Because it's all the more, and there's that concept again.

That's why Paul said earlier the, the trespass is not like the gift. The free gift is not like the trespass. Why? Because what we have in Jesus abounded even more, right? And by the way, those words, abounded all the more, abounded all the... Four words. That's all one Greek word, and it literally means to abound exceedingly, all right?

And honestly, I think we need to pause long enough to really ponder the statement that the apostle is making here, because Paul is telling you and me that God's grace is more powerful than your sin. Can I say that again? God's grace and the forgiveness, the justification, the abundance of His goodness is greater than your sin.

And the reason I emphasize that is because as I've told you before, I've spoken to a good many believers who do not believe this They believe their sin is greater than God's ability to forgive.

And we'll talk to them about salvation one-on-one or whatever. And would you like to accept Jesus as your Savior? Well, I don't think I can. Well, why not? Well, you don't know what I've done. And they'll say that. Pastor, you have no idea what I've done. And that's true. And that's what I usually say, you're right. I don't know what you've done. But I know what He did. And what you're doing is you are taking your sin, and you're elevating it above the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and you're saying, my sin's bigger, badder, more powerful, and there's nothing He can do about it. I'm outside of the realm of God's ability to forgive.

And you might think I'm exaggerating, but I am not. There are a good many people who believe that very much. And I love to take them to 1 John 1:9, probably my famous, or my famous, my favorite Bible verse in the entire Scripture. Up on the screen for you, just as a reminder, John writes,

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And I tell them, do you know what the word all means? I mean, you probably use it every day, several times a day, but do you know what that word means? Do I need to remind you what the word all means? It means everything. Everything. It doesn't matter. And so I'll take them to that verse and say, do you believe this?

And that, that's where these people have to come to terms with what they're going to believe. Am I going to believe my feelings over the Word of God, and that's a decision that every believer has to grapple with at some point. Some to a larger and greater degree than others. But do you believe the Word of God? He promises all unrighteousness will be forgiven if we confess our sin and come to Him by faith, all of it. So anyway.

Now, here's the interesting thing, and this is what Paul was up against sometimes. Paul would get people telling him, dude, you just can't go around telling people that God's going to forgive every sin, because they'll never stop sinning. They'll just go, oh, great. Well, let's just have a sin party then, because I guess he's in the business, of forgiving sin. So whoopee, eat, drink, and be merry because God forgives sin.

But what these people forget when they come up with that argument, they forget that God has done more than just forgive our sins. He's also deposited His Holy Spirit in our hearts, and that's the part that people forget. And what they forget is that when the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you, He begins to change you from the inside out. And that's the beautiful thing about what it means to become a follower of Jesus.

I want to remind you of something Paul wrote in Philippians. This is great. Again, I'm quoting this out of the NIV. I was raised on the NIV, sorry about that. But up on the screen, Philippians 2:13, it says,

Philippians 2:13 (NIV84)

...it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

...it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Do you see that going on in your life? Do you see God working in you? Do you see Him giving you not just the ability, but the will, the desire? That's what that word will means. He's giving you the desire to live in a way that is in keeping

with His purposes, His will, His desire. In other words, He's merging your will with His will. And that's a work of the Holy Spirit that's going on inside of all of us.

Now, yeah, it's something we can resist, but you'll be miserable if you do. But it is a work that's going on nonetheless, and it is an important thing that we keep in mind. Amen. So these are hard verses. These are challenging verses to go through, to understand, to really lay hold of.

But just know this, where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more, and we are so thankful, aren't we? That Jesus forgives our sin, that He has not just taken away the sentence, the conviction that stood against us as in a court of law. We were convicted. We were found guilty. He took it away by bearing our guilt, and he has replaced condemnation with grace and acceptance and justification. That's the part that blows my mind.

He declared me not guilty, and you as well. He made that declaration. He said, this one right here has put their faith in My Son. Not guilty. Not guilty. And so that is why the Bible says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1)

You feel condemned sometimes? Do you ever wake up in the morning or get-- or do something really raw and you end up feeling condemned? I got news for you. That isn't God. That isn't God doing that. It's the enemy and he knows that he can couple that with your conscience, and there's usually a fair amount of fertile soil there for him to work with. But that's the enemy who comes to condemn. It's not God.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because Jesus was condemned for you. And what a wonderful God we have who stood in our place and took our punishment and bore the condemnation that we deserved.

When I first heard the Gospel, I mean really heard the Gospel, and I've told you guys I was raised in church and I never heard the Gospel. But when I first heard the Gospel at a Christian concert, the guy was talking about how Jesus cried out on the cross, *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34) And I think I've shared this with you before, but that, that impacted me so powerfully when I understood that Jesus was separated from the Father on my behalf.

And here's the Father and the Son who have known intimate fellowship from all eternity. And as Jesus hung there and bore my penalty, it was so raw and so horrid that the Father looked away And it and that separation was so profound that Jesus cried out, *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"* But I came to realize He was forsaken, so I never would be. And that's the reality for you as well. Jesus was forsaken, so you never would be.

I know there are times you will feel like God has forsaken you, but your feelings lie to you. God made that abundantly clear in the Bible in Jeremiah when he said, *"The heart is deceitful."* (Jeremiah 17:9) That means it lies. It lies to you, and it's not a faithful friend. So don't listen to your heart. That's what they say on the Disney Channel, follow your heart. The Bible says, follow the Lord. Follow His Word." Amen? Amen. Let's pray.

Father, we are so grateful. We are so grateful for the power of Your Word. We're so grateful for the revelation of truth that we gain from studying Your Word, and we're so grateful for the confidence that we have in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. And that we know we have been taken from condemnation to acceptance and to love. And we've been made children, not just forgiven, but we've been made children of God.

And I thank You, Father I thank you for sending your Son to die for the ungodly, cause that's me. And I thank You, Lord, for saving me and filling my life with good things. And I thank You for all those here.

And Lord, if there's anyone among us who has not yet just surrendered their heart to Jesus, I pray they would do it tonight. Just in the quiet of their own thoughts, just say, Lord, I receive. I receive the free gift of life through Jesus. Turn from my sin and turn to the Lord.

Thank You, Father. Be with us, we pray. Strengthen us each and every day to walk with You, for we ask it in the authority granted us through the name of Jesus our Savior. And all God's people said together, amen