

Romans Chapter 5 : Grace Which Much More Abounds

Romans 5.1-10 “Saved by His Life”

The Signs of the Times : March 5, 1896

We have now passed through the first four chapters of Romans. The third chapter sums up the argument that all men are guilty and are to be judged by the same law. The law is universal in its jurisdiction, and as it condemns all, none can get righteousness by it, although it is the statement of the righteousness of God. But God has promised righteousness to men, therefore they must get it aside from the works of the law, namely, in Christ. In his blood there is redemption for Jew and gentile alike. A man is made a doer of the law by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. This is the mystery of the Gospel. It is Christ in men, the hope of glory, and God in Christ working His own righteousness.

The fourth chapter has taken up the case of Abraham as an illustration of righteousness by faith. The faith, which was imputed to him, faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, will bring us the same righteousness, and make us heirs with him of the same promise. But the fourth chapter is really a parenthetical illustration, **so** that the fifth begins where the third closes. We therefore proceed with the subject of

Righteousness by Faith: Romans 5:1-10

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Questioning the Text:

- What have the preceding chapters set before us?
 - Justification by faith.
- Being justified by faith, what do we have?
 - “We have peace.”
- What peace do we have?
 - “We have peace with God.”

- Through whom do we have peace?
 - “Through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- What else do we have through him?
 - “We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.”
- What do we therefore do?
 - “Rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
- What else?
 - “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.”
- Why do we glory in tribulations?
 - “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience.”
- What does patience work?
 - “And patience, experience.”
- What comes with experience?
 - “And experience, hope.”
- And what does hope not do?
 - “Hope maketh not ashamed.”
- What therefore must hope do?
 - It must give boldness.
- How does it give this boldness?
 - “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.”
- How is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts?
 - “By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”
- What evidence have we that God will give us all these blessings?
 - “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”
- For whom did Christ die?
 - “Christ died for the ungodly.”
- In what condition were those for whom Christ died?
 - “Without strength.”
- What is the greatest love known to man?
 - “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:15. Compare with Romans 5:7.
- But what is the love of God for us?
 - “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

- When did Christ die for us?
 - “While we were yet sinners.”
- Since we were sinners, in what relation did we stand to God?
 - “Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works.” Colossians 1:21. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Romans 8:7.
- What did Christ do for us when we were enemies?
 - “Died for us.”
- What does the death of Christ do for us?
 - “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.”
- If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, of what may we be much more sure?
 - “Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Faith Works Real Righteousness: The first verse of the fifth chapter begins with “therefore.” The word indicates that what follows is a natural conclusion of what goes before. What has gone before? The story of what Abraham gained by faith. He gained righteousness by faith, but it was by faith in the promise that he should have a son. That son was the child of faith. But the same faith that resulted in the birth of Isaac, also brought righteousness to Abraham. And the same will also be imputed to us, if we have the same faith. Therefore, we are taught that the righteousness of faith is as real as was the son that was born to Abraham through faith. Righteousness by faith is not a myth.

Peace: What is peace? Most people have the idea that it is a sort of ecstatic feeling. They think that peace with God means an indescribable heavenly feeling; and so they always look for that imaginary feeling as evidence that they are accepted with God. But peace with God means the same thing that it means with men: it means simply the absence of war. As sinners we are enemies of God. He is not our enemy, but we are his enemies. He is not fighting against us, but we are fighting against him. How then may we have peace with him? Simply by ceasing to fight, and laying down our arms. We may have peace whenever we are ready to stop fighting.

“Peace with God” Note that when we have peace with God we are not simply at peace with him, but we have his peace. This peace has been left on the earth for men; for the Lord has said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” John 14:27. He has given it to us. It is ours, therefore, already. It has always been ours. The only trouble has been that we have not believed it. As soon as we believe the words of Christ, then we have in very deed the peace, which he has given. And it is peace with God, because we find the peace in Christ, and Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18

Peace and Righteousness: “Great peace have they which love thy law.” Psalm 119:165. “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Isaiah 48:18. Righteousness is peace, because our warfare against God was our sins that we cherished. God’s life is righteousness, and he is the God of peace. Since the enmity is the carnal mind and its wicked works, peace must be the opposite, namely, righteousness. So it is simply the statement of an obvious fact, that being justified by

faith we have peace with God. The righteousness that we have by faith carries peace with it. The two things cannot be separated.

Peace and Feeling: The question is asked, “Can one have peace with God and not have a feeling of peace?” What says the Scripture? “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” What brings the peace? The faith. But faith is not feeling. If it were necessarily the case that there must be a certain feeling with peace, then if we did not have that feeling we should know that we were not justified; and then justification would be a matter of feeling, and not of faith. The verses which follow show us that we may have peace in tribulation as well as when everything goes smoothly.

Glory in Tribulations: This does not mean that we are to seek for martyrdom, as some in the early centuries did. But it means, as it says, that in the midst of tribulations our peace and joy continue the same. This must necessarily be the case with peace that comes by faith. Peace that depends on feeling will depart as soon as we begin to feel tribulation. But nothing can make any difference with the peace that comes by faith. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Tribulation Worketh Patience: What is patience? It is endurance of suffering. The root of the word “patience” means suffering. We see this in the fact that one who is ill is called “a patient.” That is, he is a sufferer. People often excuse their petulance by saying that they have so much to endure. They think that they would be patient if they did not have to suffer so much. No, they would not be. There can be no patience where there is no suffering. Trouble does not destroy patience, but develops it. When trouble seems to destroy one's patience, it is simply showing the fact that the person had no patience.

When Does It Work? The statement is that tribulation worketh patience. Yet there are many who become more and more irritable the more trouble they have. It does not work patience with them. Why not? Simply because they are not in the condition that the apostle is describing. It is only those who are justified by faith that tribulation works patience. Nothing but faith in God can keep one perfectly patient under all circumstances.

Will It Always Work? Yes, invariably. “Well,” says one, “I am sure that anybody would be impatient if he had as much to trouble him as I have.” Question: Would Christ become impatient if he had the things to endure that you have? Did he not have as much to endure, and more? You must admit that he did. Was he impatient? “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.” Isaiah 53:7. Then if he were in your place, he would be patient. Why, then, do you not let him be in your place? Faith brings Christ into the heart, so that he is identified with us, and therefore he bears the burdens. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22

“All Patience” There is no limit to the patience that comes by faith in Christ. This is the inspired prayer: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:10, 11. That is, we may be so strengthened by the glorious power by which Christ endured suffering, that we may have all patience even though suffering long, and may rejoice in the midst of it.

Patience Works Experience: In what does it work experience? It works experience in the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Many people confuse Christian experience with Christian profession. They speak of having had so many years of “Christian experience,” when it may be that they have never really experienced the blessedness of the life of Christ. They have made a profession of religion; but real experience means the actual proving of the power of the life of Christ. When one has that experience, it is not a difficult matter for him to tell something of his experience when occasion calls for it.

“Not Ashamed” Hope makes not ashamed. Why? Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” 1 John 2:28. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.” 1 John 4:17. There cannot possibly be a more trying day than the Day of Judgment. Therefore it is certain that those who will then not be ashamed or afraid will have boldness now. And he who has boldness with God ought certainly not to be afraid of man.

“The Love of God” The reason why hope makes not ashamed is that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Note that it does not say love for God, but the love of God. What is the love of God? “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5:3. The Holy Spirit, then, puts into our hearts obedience to the law of God; and it is that which gives us boldness in the Day of Judgment, and at all other times. It is sin that makes men afraid. When sin is taken away, then fear is gone. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.” Proverbs 28:1

“Christ Died for the Ungodly” “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Timothy 1:15. “This man receiveth sinners.” Luke 15:2. Strange that people will allow a sense of their sinfulness to keep them away from the Lord, when Christ came for the one purpose of receiving and saving them. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him (Hebrews 6:25); and he says that those who come to him he will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

“Without Strength” It was when we were yet without strength that Christ died for the ungodly. Of course; because he died for the purpose that we might be strengthened with might by the Spirit. If he waited for us to gain some strength before giving himself for us, then we should be lost. When were we without strength? Just now; and even now Jesus Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us. Galatians 3:1. “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Isaiah 45:24

Righteous and Good: “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” Our English translation does not indicate the difference between the two words used here. The righteous man is the just man, the man who is careful to give every one his due. The good man is the benevolent man, the one who has done us many favors, and who does for us more than we could justly claim. Now, no matter how just a man may be, his integrity of character would scarcely lead one to die for him. Yet it is possible that for a man of great kindness some would even dare to die.

The Greatest Love: That is the highest measure of love among men. One may lay down his life for his friends, “but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,” and therefore enemies, “Christ died for us.”

**“For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”**

“Reconciled by His Death” God is not our enemy, but we are or have been enemies to him. Therefore he does not need to be reconciled to us, but we need reconciliation to him. And he himself, in the kindness of his heart, makes the reconciliation. We “are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13. How so? Because it was sin that separated us from him, and made us enemies; and “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7. Being cleansed from sin, we must necessarily be reconciled to God.

The Gift of Life: “The life of the flesh is in the blood.” “For it is the life of all flesh.” Leviticus 17:11, 14. In that Christ shed his blood for us, he gave his life for us. But inasmuch as the blood is applied to us, to cleanse us from all sin, he gives his life to us. In the death of Christ therefore, if we are crucified with him, we receive his life as a substitute for our sinful life, which he takes upon himself. Our sins are remitted through faith in his blood, not as an arbitrary act, but because by faith we exchange lives with him, and the life, which we get in exchange, has no sin. Our sinful life is swallowed up in his boundless life, because he has life so abundantly that he can die because of our transgressions, and still live again to give life to us.

“Saved by His Life” Christ did not go through the pangs of death for nothing, nor did he give his life to us for the purpose of taking it away again. When he gives us his life, he designs that we shall keep it forever. How do we get it? By faith. How do we keep it? By the same faith. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” Colossians 2:6. His life can never end, but we may lose it by unbelief. For let it be remembered that we have not this life in ourselves, but “this life is in his Son.” “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:11, 12. We keep the everlasting life by keeping Christ. Now it is a very simple proposition that if we have been reconciled to God by the death of Christ, —if his life has been given to us for the remission of our sins, then we shall much more be saved by that life since he has risen from the dead. People sometimes say that they can believe that God forgives their sins, but they find it difficult to believe that he can keep them from sin. Well, if there is any difference, the latter is the easier of the two; for the forgiveness of sins requires the death of Christ, while the saving from sins requires only his continued life.

By What Life? By the life of Christ, and he has but one. He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Hebrews 13:8. It is by his present life that we are saved, that is, by his life in us from day to day. But the life, which he now lives, is the very same life that he lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago. He took again the same life that he laid down. Think what was in the life of Christ, as we have the record in the New Testament, and we shall know what ought to be in our lives now. If we allow him to dwell in us, he will live just as he did then. If there is something in our lives that was not then in his, we may be sure that he is not living it in us now.

Romans 5.12-19 “The Free Gift”

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In the portion of the fifth chapter that we have already studied, we learned of the wonderful love of God, so great that He gave Himself for His enemies, in order that they might be reconciled to Him; and that, as in the death of Christ we receive the life of God, and are thereby one with Him, so by the continuation of that life in us we are saved from sin. Without any further review, we may proceed with the following verses, which present

A Series of Contrasts: Romans 5:12-19

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (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 them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 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 offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Questioning the Text:

- How did sin enter into the world?
 - “By one man sin entered into the world.”
- What did sin bring with it?
 - “And death by sin.”
- Upon how many did sentence of death pass?
 - “And so death passed upon all men.”
- Why?
 - “For that all have sinned.”
- What then was the fruit of that first offense?
 - “By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.”
- But what else comes just as extensively?
 - “The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

- By what means did it come?
 - “By the righteousness of one.”
- How only does righteousness come?
 - “By the obedience of one.”

Joy in God: The eleventh verse should have been included in last week’s lesson, as the thought is the same as in the preceding verses. By the same life by which we receive the reconciliation and salvation, “we also joy in God.” Christ’s life is a joyous life. When David had fallen, he prayed, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.” Psalm 61:12. The brightness of the heavens, the beauty of the infinite variety of flowers with which God clothes the earth, and the glad songs of the birds, all indicate that God delights in joy and beauty. Brightness and song are but the natural expressions of his life. “Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.” Psalm 5:11.

There is probably no passage in Romans more difficult to understand than verses 12-19. The reason is that there is so long a parenthesis in the midst of the main statement, and there is so much repetition of the same form of expression. There is really no greatly involved argument. In this study we shall not attempt to deal with every particular, but will note the main thought running through the whole, so that the reader can read and study it more satisfactorily for himself.

First Principles: It will be seen from verse 12 that the apostle goes back to the very beginning. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” There can never be any presentation of the Gospel, if these facts are ignored. The story of the fall of man must be as literally true as the story of the cross; for the latter depends entirely upon the former.

Death by Sin: Death came by sin, because sin is death. Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. See James 1:15. “To be carnally minded is death.” Romans 8:6. “The sting of death is sin.” 1 Corinthians 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin. It could not possibly be otherwise.

Righteousness and Life: “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6. “There is none good but one, that is, God.” Matthew 19:17. He is goodness itself. Goodness is his life. Righteousness is simply God’s way. Therefore righteousness is life. It is not merely a conception of what is right, but it is the right thing itself. Righteousness is active. As sin and death are inseparable, so are righteousness and life. “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Deuteronomy 30:15

Death Passed upon All Men: Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, “for that all have sinned.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezekiel 18:20. And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death cannot come in any other way than by sin.

The Conclusion: It will be noticed that the twelfth verse begins a proposition that is not completed. Verses 13-17 are parenthetical; we must pass on to the eighteenth verse to find the conclusion. But as the mind would naturally lose the first part of the statement on account of the long parenthesis, the apostle repeats the substance of it, so that we may perceive the force of the conclusion. So the first part of verse 18 is parallel to verse 12. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men to condemnation." The conclusion is, "Even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

The Reign of Death: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." That does not imply that death did not reign just as much afterwards. But the point is that Moses stands for the giving of the law; "for the law was given by Moses." John 1:17. Now since death reigns through sin, and sin is not imputed when there is no law, it is evident from the statement that "death reigned from Adam to Moses," that the law was in the world just as much before Sinai as it was afterwards. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." 1 Corinthians 15:56. There can be no sin imputed when there is no law; but wherever there is sin, there death reigns.

Adam a Figure: "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 that was to come." How is Adam a figure of Him that was to come, namely, Christ? Just as the following verses indicate, that is, Adam was a figure of Christ in that his action involved many besides himself. It is evident that Adam could not give his descendants any higher nature than he had himself, so Adam's sin made it inevitable that all his descendants should be born with sinful natures. Sentence of death, however, does not pass on them for that, but because they have sinned.

A Figure by Contrast: Adam is a figure of Christ, but only by contrast. "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift." Through the offence of one many are dead; but through the righteousness of One, many receive life. "The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." There is contrast all the way through. Everything that came through Adam's fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.

"Much More" This might be taken as the keynote of this chapter. Not only is everything that is lost in Adam restored in Christ, but "much more." "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And there is no chance of finding fault with the inevitable fact that we are inheritors of a sinful nature through Adam. We cannot complain that we are unjustly dealt with. It is true that we are not to blame for having a sinful nature, and the Lord recognizes the fact. So he provides that just as in Adam we were made partakers of a sinful nature, even so in Christ we shall be made partakers of the divine nature. But "much more." "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." That is, the life of which we are made partakers in Christ is much stronger for righteousness than the life, which we received from Adam, is for unrighteousness. God does not do things by halves. He gives "abundance of grace."

The Condemnation: "Death passed upon all men;" or, as stated later, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. All have sinned, and, therefore, all are in condemnation. There has not a man lived on earth over whom death has not

reigned, nor will there be until the end of the world. Enoch and Elijah, as well as those who shall be translated when the Lord comes, are no exceptions. There are no exceptions, for the Scripture says that “death passed upon all men.” For the reign of death is simply the reign of sin. “Elias was a man of like passions with us.” Enoch was righteous only by faith; his nature was as sinful as that of any other man. So that death reigned over them as well as over any others. For be it remembered that this present going into the grave, which we so often see, is not the punishment of sin. It is simply the evidence of our mortality. Good and bad alike die. This is not the condemnation, because men die rejoicing in the Lord, and even singing songs of triumph.

“Justification of Life” “By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given himself for all. Nay, he has given himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift. It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely.

“The Obedience of One” By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Men are not saved through their own obedience, but through the obedience of Christ. Here is where the skeptic cavils, and says that it is not just that one man's obedience should be counted as another's. But the man who rejects the counsel of the Lord does not know anything about justice, and is not qualified to speak in the case. The Bible does not teach us that God calls us righteous simply because Jesus of Nazareth was righteous eighteen hundred years ago. It says that by his obedience we are made righteous. Notice that it is present, actual righteousness. The trouble with those who object to the righteousness of Christ being imputed to believers is that they do not take into consideration the fact that Jesus lives. He is alive today, as much as when he was in Judea. “He ever liveth,” and he is “the same yesterday and to-day, and forever.” His life is as perfectly in harmony with the law now as it was then. And he lives in the hearts of those who believe on him. Therefore it is Christ's present obedience in believers that makes them righteous. They can of themselves do nothing, and so God in His love does it in them. Here is the whole story: “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Why Not All? The text says, “By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Some one may ask, “Why are not all made righteous by the obedience of One?” The reason is that they do not wish to be. If men were counted righteous simply because One was righteous eighteen hundred years ago, then all would have to be righteous by the same obedience. There would be no justice in counting righteousness to one and not to all, if it were in that way. But we have seen that it is not so. People are not simply counted righteous, but actually made righteous, by the obedience of Christ, who is as righteous as he ever was, and who lives today in those who yield to him. His ability to live in any human being is shown in the fact that he took human flesh eighteen hundred years ago. What God did in the person of the Carpenter of Nazareth, he is willing and anxious to do for every man that believes. The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it. Nevertheless, “many” will be made righteous by his obedience - who will be one of the many?

Romans 5.20, 21 “Grace and Truth”

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In studying the two remaining verses of the fifth chapter of Romans, it will be sufficient for our present purpose if we remember that the main thought running through the chapter is life and righteousness. Sin is death, and righteousness is life. Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned, and the gift of righteousness has come to all men in the life of Christ. Sin is not imputed when there is no law, yet sin was imputed to Adam and to all who lived after him, even till the time of the giving of the law, in the days of Moses.

Romans 5:20, 21

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Questioning the Text.

- Why did the law enter?
 - “The law entered, that the offense might abound.”
- What took place when sin abounded?
 - “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
- Where did sin abound?
 - Wherever the law was; because the law entered that sin might abound, and sin is not imputed where there is no law.
- Then when did sin abound?
 - When “the law entered.”
- Then when must grace have super abounded?
 - At the entering the law.
- Why did God provide that where sin abounded, grace might much more abound?
 - “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- How has sin reigned?
 - “Unto death.”
- How does grace reign?
 - “Through righteousness.”
- Unto what?
 - “Unto eternal life.”
- Through whom?

- Through “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“The Law Entered” This statement indicates that there was offence before the particular time spoken of as the “entering” of the law. Taking into consideration verses 13, 14, we have no difficulty in seeing that the giving of the law upon Sinai is the time referred to. “Until the law,” the time of Moses, and the entering of the law, evidently refers to the one event.

Sin Abounding: The law entered that the offence already existing might abound. “But sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Therefore we must know that the law was in the world before the time spoken of as the “entering” of the law, that is, before it was spoken from Sinai. This is what we learned from verses 13, 14. It was not possible that the law should actually make any more sin than already existed. It could only emphasize it, that is, more plainly show its true nature. It was, as stated in chapter 7:13, it was “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” There was not one whit more of the law of God in the world after it was spoken from Sinai than there was before; neither was anything that was right before, made sinful by the giving of the law; nor was any act that was sinful before, made more sinful by the giving of the law. But the circumstances under which the law was spoken, tended to show the awfulness of sin, and to impress the hearers with a greater sense of their sinfulness than ever before.

Grace Superabounding : It would be well if every person knew this fact. We should hear less talk about being discouraged because we are so sinful. Is the heart full of sin? Know that where sin abounds, there does grace much more abound. This is shown in the fact that Christ, who is full of grace, stands at the door of the heart that is sinfulness itself, and knocks for admission. See Revelation 3:15-20. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15. When Wesley sang,

**“Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin,”**

he had the authority of Romans 5:20 for it!

Grace at Sinai: Since the law entered that the offence might abound, it is evident that at the very time of the entering of the law the offence must have greatly abounded. There never was a time when the awfulness of sin was made to stand out more prominently. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Therefore it is as plain as the Scripture can make it, that grace was superabounding at the giving of the law from Sinai. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that God designed that any should think that righteousness was to be obtained by their own works of obedience. On the contrary, the law was spoken to emphasize the boundless grace of God, in pardoning sin, and in working righteousness in men.

The Law and God’s Throne: We read that “righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” Psalm 97:2. Righteousness dwells in his throne. It is the foundation of it. That the law of God is righteousness, even his own righteousness is shown by Isaiah 51:6, 7, where God speaks of his righteousness, and says, “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.” That is, only they in whose heart is God’s law, know his righteousness. Therefore his law is his righteousness. And the statement that righteousness is the habitation or establishment of his throne indicates that the law of God is in his throne. He sits upon the throne of righteousness.

Evidence from the Tabernacle: The tabernacle built by Moses was for a dwelling place for God. “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8. In that sanctuary, in the most holy place, was the ark of the testament. This ark is described in Exodus 25:10-22. The cover of the ark was called the mercy-seat. Upon this mercy-seat were the two cherubim of gold. Within the ark, under the mercy-seat, were the tables of the law. See Exodus 25:16-21; Deuteronomy 10:1-5. Between the cherubim, upon the mercy-seat, and above the tables of the law, was where the glory of God was seen, and where God spoke to the people. Exodus 25:22. In 2 Kings 19:15 and Psalm 80:1 God is addressed as sitting between the cherubim. Therefore we learn that the ark of the testament, with the mercy-seat, or the cover, was a representation of the throne of God. As the Ten Commandments were in the ark in the earthly tabernacle, so the Ten Commandments are the very foundation of the throne of God in heaven. We may note, in passing, that since the earthly tabernacle was a figure of the true tabernacle in heaven, therefore we are taught that the law as it stands in heaven, in the throne of God, is identical with the law as spoken from Sinai, and written on the tables of stone that were placed in the ark.

God’s Throne and Sinai: We have learned that the law of God is the very basis of his throne. This is no more than might reasonably be expected, since the basis of any government is its law, and the throne simply stands for the law. Mount Sinai, when the law was spoken from it, was the seat of God’s law. It represented the awfulness of the law, since no one could touch it without dying. The Lord was there with all his angels. See Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53. Therefore Mount Sinai, at the time of the giving of the law, was designed to represent the throne of God. Indeed, it was for the time the throne of God, the place whence the law goes forth, out of which proceed “lightnings and thunders and voices” (Revelation 4:5), and around which stand “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” of angels. Here again we learn that the righteousness which is the habitation of the throne of God is the righteousness described by the Ten Commandments, just as they were spoken from the top of Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20:3-17.

The Throne of Grace: But although the throne of God is the habitation of his law, that law which is death to sinners, yet it is a throne of grace. We are exhorted to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16. Note that we are to come to obtain mercy. Note also that the top of the ark of the testimony, in which were the tables of the law, was called the mercy-seat. It was the place where God appeared to speak to his people, so that the ark of the earthly tabernacle not only represented the throne where God’s law is enshrined, but it represented that throne as the throne of grace.

The Law and the Mediator: We are told that the law was ordained “in the hand of a Mediator.” Galatians 3:19. Who was the Mediator in whose hand the law was ordained? “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.” 1 Timothy 2:5, 6. The law, therefore, was given from Sinai by Christ, who is and always was the manifestation of God to men. He is the Mediator, that is, the One through whom the things of God are brought to men. The righteousness of God is conveyed to men through Jesus Christ. The statement that the law was given in the hand of a Mediator, reminds us that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The fact that the law was in the hand of a Mediator at Sinai shows us this: (1) That God did not mean that any one should suppose that he must get the righteousness of the law by his own power, but only through Christ. (2) That the Gospel of Christ was displayed at Sinai as well as at Calvary. (3) That the righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel of Christ, is the identical righteousness that is described in the law as

given from Sinai, without the alteration of a letter. The righteousness, which we are to obtain in Christ, is none other than that.

The Fountain of Life: In Psalm 36:7-9 we read: “How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life.” It is because with God is the fountain of life that he makes those who trust in him to drink of the river of his pleasure. What is that river? — “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Revelation 22:1. Think of it! A river flowing out of the throne of God. He is the fountain of life. The invitation is to every one that is athirst to drink of the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17, John 4:10-14, and 7:37-39, will help to an understanding of the matter. We take the living water by receiving the Holy Spirit.

Drinking in Righteousness: The Saviour says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6. If one is thirsty, how only can he be filled? By drinking. Therefore the Saviour means that we can drink righteousness, if we thirst for it. Remember that God’s throne is the seat of righteousness, and that from it flows the river of life, and we shall see the fitness of the assurance that we may drink in righteousness. Since the throne is the seat of righteousness, the river that proceeds from the throne must, so to speak, be charged with the righteousness of the law. Whosoever therefore believes on Christ, and drinks in of his Spirit, must drink in of the righteousness of the law as it is in the throne, or as it was spoken from Sinai.

Drinking at Sinai: Whoever will read Exodus 17:1-6 together with Deuteronomy 4:10-12 (which show that Horeb and Sinai are the same), will learn that at the very time when the law was spoken from Sinai, there was a river of water flowing from its base. That river flowed from Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4. Christ, the living Rock, stood upon that rock in the desert, from which the water flowed for the thirst of the people, and he it was from whom it came. With him is the fountain of life. And so we have the complete likeness of the throne of God in Sinai. It was the embodiment of the law of God, so that no one could approach it without death, and yet they could drink the living water that flowed from it. And in this figure we again see that the righteousness, which those who accept Christ’s invitation are to drink in, is the righteousness that is described in the Ten Commandments.

The Heart of Christ: Through David Christ spoke thus of his coming to this earth: “Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:7, 8. He said that he had kept his Father’s commandments. John 15:10. So closely did he keep the commandments that he observed the seventh-day Sabbath, which is sometimes stigmatized as “the Jewish Sabbath.” Canon Knox-Little says, “It is certain that our Lord when on earth did observe Saturday, and did not observe Sunday.”—Sacerdotalism, p. 75. This is not true because Canon Knox-Little said it, but it is true because the Bible teaches it. It is so clear a fact that there is no chance for discussion about it. We have never yet heard of any one who had the hardihood to assert that Jesus ever kept any other day than the seventh, the day enjoined in the fourth commandment. The keeping of “the Sabbath day according to the commandment” was part of the righteousness, which was in the heart of Christ. And since Christ is the same today that he ever was, it is in his heart still.

Eternal Life through Christ: “Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Christ's life was given for us and to us on the cross. It is by being crucified with him that we live with him. Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:8. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. In his heart was the law, so that the heart of Christ was really the throne of God. Thus we sing of “Christ enthroned within.” When Christ hung upon the cross, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” John 19:34. This was the fountain of life that freely flows for all. It flowed from the heart of Christ, in which the law of God was enshrined. So we find that Sinai, Calvary, and Mount Sion all present the same thing. Sinai and Calvary are not in opposition, but are united. Both present the same Gospel and the same law. The life, which flows for us from Calvary, bears to us the righteousness of the law that was proclaimed from Sinai.

Grace Through Righteousness: Thus we see how grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Eternal life is in Christ, because his life is the life of the self-existent God, who is “from everlasting to everlasting.” But the life of God is the law. The grace of God flows to us through the life of Christ, and bears to us the righteousness of it. Thus in Christ we receive the law as it was ordained, namely, to life. To accept the unspeakable gift of God’s grace, therefore, is simply to yield ourselves to him, that Christ may dwell in us, and live in us the righteousness of the law as spoken from Sinai, and treasured in the throne of God. From Christ that living stream still flows, so that, receiving him, we shall have in us that well of water spring up unto everlasting life.