

ADDRESSES ON ROMANS

by

Louis T. Talbot D.D., LL.D.

Author of *Christ in the Tabernacle, Lectures on Ephesians*

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CHAPTER FOUR

RIGHTEOUSNESS RECEIVED

(Romans 5:1-21)

LET US glance at our chart again before we go into the study of the fifth chapter of the epistle. We have seen in our former studies that in the first great division of the book, 1:18-3:20, the whole world is brought before God and pronounced guilty. This is a court scene where no one is excused; all are guilty — Jews and Gentiles. We learned that God requires righteousness of all, but that **“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”**

From the second division, 3:21-4:25, we saw that the righteousness of God is **“unto all,”** but only **“upon all them that believe.”** This righteousness is apart from the law, by grace, through faith, without works. Let us remember that this righteousness provided by God is a *Person*, not a church or a code of laws. And this Person is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent to be our Substitute, the propitiation for our sins.

This means of saving sinners has been God’s method from the beginning, as illustrated from two Old Testament characters, Abraham and David.

They foresaw Christ’s day and were glad. They worshipped a risen Lord, as well as a crucified Saviour. They did not see the meaning of the atonement as clearly as we do, because they lived in the days of shadows and types. But they knew that they had to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They believed God, and their faith was counted unto them for righteousness. Consequently, Abraham and David knew the blessedness of the man **“whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”**

When I say that righteousness is apart from the law and without works, I hope I am not consoling some religious “do-nothing.”

I imagine the sight of a Christian who idly sits; around with no thought of service is a grievous one to angels and a pleasing one to demons. We are saved without works certainly; but we are saved without works, in order to do works. When one becomes God’s child, he is saved in order to serve.

We shall see in our study, a little later on, the place of works in the Christian's life. Thus far we have seen that works have nothing to do with salvation. Christ finished the work of redemption on Calvary. If a man is ever to know this righteousness, he must be able to say:

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

I suppose you wonder why I go over this again and again. I do so because of the many mongrel doctrines taught, doctrines that teach salvation partly of faith and partly of works. There are thousands of Christians who do not enjoy their salvation for this reason.

Recently I heard a man comparing salvation to being in a rowboat, one oar representing faith, and the other works. When the person in the boat pulls one oar, the oar of faith, he goes in a circle, according to this man. If he pulls the oar of good works, he goes in a circle. But if he pulls both oars at the same time, he will eventually reach heaven. My friend, never give such an illustration as this when trying to win a poor lost sinner to Christ.

Then there are those who teach salvation by works with the following illustration: A man lost in the snow was plodding wearily along, gradually freezing to death. But as he stumbled along, he felt something at his feet, and immediately set to work to see what it was. Digging in the snow, he found a man who was almost frozen, sleeping the sleep that meant certain death. As he began to rub the sleeping man with every ounce of energy he had left, the blood began to circulate in his own veins. And as a result of his effort, he saved another from death, at the same time saving his own life.

Thus some exhort people to serve others in order to obtain salvation. There is no truth in this.

It is Satan's lie. A man is saved for time and for eternity by grace alone. Only through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ will the sinner find peace of heart. Paul has surely made this plain in the opening chapters of Romans.

I. OUR HERITAGE IN CHRIST, (5:1-11)

And now we come to chapter five, which constitutes the third great division of the book.

It might well be entitled "Righteousness Received."

A glance at our chart shows us what even a casual reading of the chapter makes clear, that the first eleven verses tell us of our heritage in Christ; the last ten, of this glorious heritage as contrasted with our heritage in Adam. And what a contrast! On the one hand; justification, peace, access, grace, hope, glory, love, joy; on the other, sin, death, and judgment. In Adam we inherited sin and death; in Christ, righteousness and life everlasting. The heritage we received in Adam has been laid on Christ. He carried it away. And we are made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

In verses 1-11 God is speaking to those who have accepted His provision in Christ. To every child of God these treasures belong.

It is as though God puts a bag of spiritual riches in our hands when we go to Christ, the contents of which belong to us before we know what they are. It is only when we empty the bag and see the pieces that we realize what is there. The bag we get from Christ is filled with blessings, our heritage.

Here Paul begins to let us know how rich we are. He opens the bag!

Notice the word “*therefore*” in verse 1. In view of all that has been so clearly established — “**being justified by faith**,” we receive all these blessings. The word definitely connects this chapter with what has gone before.

(1) Justification

We have already seen that the man who goes to God by the way of the cross is justified. We have spoken so fully upon this truth in the preceding study that we need not dwell long on it here. We need only recall that teaching already set forth in Romans 3:21-4:25, that “**justification**” means far more than “**forgiveness**.”

Forgiveness touches the penalty of sin, but justification touches the character, making one as though he had never sinned.

We are justified before God. When God, the Supreme Judge, justifies us, He declares us not only guiltless, but positively righteous also. That is a verdict that can never be appealed. It can never be changed. We are eternally justified before God.

In the eighth chapter of Romans, where Paul speaks of the eternal security of the believer, he asks this question, “**Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?**”

No one can appeal this verdict. Anything that a person may lay to my charge God knows. And He has eternally justified me. No one can reverse the verdict of the Supreme Court of Heaven.

Some time ago, I led a wicked man to Christ. He told me all that he had done. He asked me to read the Ten Commandments; and as I began to read, he interrupted to say, “I broke that one; I broke that one.” But he came to Christ, and I talked to him about justification.

The other day, when I met him on the street, he asked me, “Does the blood of Jesus cleanse me from unrighteousness? Are you sure His blood is sufficient?”

I referred him to the eighth chapter of Romans, where we read that the righteousness of God is imputed to the sinner saved by grace. The Supreme Court of this universe has absolutely justified him who kneels before Calvary’s cross.

(2) Peace

“Being justified by faith,” what do we have? **“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

The peace referred to here is not a state of mind or heart, but a prevailing condition between two who were once alienated. All the former things that spoke of war and enmity have passed away. Sin destroyed the wonderful relationship that from the beginning existed between God and man. It separated the Creator from His creatures. Sin always spells separation.

- Sin in the home separates husband and wife.
- Sin in the business world separates employer and employee.
- Sin entered into the fair creation of God and took up abode in the human heart, making a breach.

But God has **“made peace through the blood of his cross”** (Colossians 1:20). There is no longer a barrier. The sin question is settled. If two nations are at war, there is no peace; but when peace is made, there is no war. When Christ hung on Calvary, all hostilities between God and the repentant sinner ceased.

What a wonderful word is **“peace”**!

I remember in 1918, when peace was declared after World War I, I was a pastor in a small town in Texas. That day I was walking along the street when a man came out of a newspaper office and nailed up the notice of peace. The people who had gathered around leaped and shouted with joy. They celebrated peace that day without restraint.

Then again when World War II ended, I witnessed another glorious celebration.

But I want to tell you of the peace that came into my soul in 1911. I was sitting in the Moody Church of Chicago, listening to a man tell of Christ and Him crucified. I was an alien from God, even though I was studying for the ministry. While this man preached, I came to see how Christ took all my sins away. That night I walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar, where I found Christ. All hostilities ceased, and I had peace with God.

Talk about the celebrations in 1918 and 1945! When I made peace with God, I did not go to sleep that night; not until early in the morning did I shut my eyes in sleep. I was rejoicing in my newfound peace with God.

And every believer has *peace with God*. There is another peace mentioned in Philippians 4:6, 7. Paul does not refer to it here in Romans 5:1, but in his letter to the Philippians he wrote of the peace of God. **“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:7).

This is another thing altogether; it is experimental.

- The *peace with God* comes when we accept Christ as Saviour.
- The *peace of God* comes from casting our cares upon Him.

It is our privilege to have our hearts filled with the *Peace of God*. When we receive Christ as Lord and allow Him to govern our lives, casting our burdens upon Him, then we receive the *peace of God*, but no man can make his *peace with God*. He must accept the peace that Christ has made for him.

Let me tell you a story on this point:

There was once a man in my homeland who belonged to a ritualistic church. He visited the poor and sick, seeking merit by his good works. One day he called on a poor laboring man who was near death, and asked him, "Have you made your peace with God, my good; man?"

To his surprise, the sick man replied, "No; I have no peace to make with God."

"But," the visitor asked again, "you are a poor lost sinner, are you not? Will you not make your peace with God?" And the same answer came again.

Finally the visiting man raised the question, "You need peace, do you not?"

Then the sick man said, "How *can I* make peace with God? My *Lord* made my peace nineteen hundred years ago, and I accepted it. I have had peace ever since."

That laboring, man knew the meaning of Romans 5:1.

(3) *Access*

Even as we are *justified* on the ground of the finished work of Christ, even as "**we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**" so also by Him "**we have access**" into the presence of God.

The opening words of verse 2, "**by whom,**" tell us so. Because Christ died for our sins, we may look right up into the face of a holy God, for none of the hindrances that once obliterated our view are there. By our crucified and risen Lord "**we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.**" Everything God has for us is through Christ.

Now let us look at the word "**stand.**" Just what does the first part of this verse mean? Having been made righteous, as justified believers, we are brought into a *new standing* before God. We are now welcomed into a personal intimacy with Him, never to know Him as a Judge pronouncing the verdict on a guilty sinner. And this new position into which we have been brought is a permanent one. We have been standing before God on this basis ten, twenty, thirty years, if we have been Christians that long, God, through the Lord Jesus, has brought us into a place of permanent favor. All of this was brought about through the virtue of Him whose death and resurrection mean salvation to us.

When you are in trouble or bowed with grief, my Christian friend, remember that you have access into the presence of God. You may have an audience with the King at any time. Nor shall we have to go through purgatory or any intermediary state between death and heaven. We have immediate access into His presence now by faith; and the moment we “**depart to be with Christ,**” we shall have immediate access into His glorious presence forever.

On one occasion I saw a small boy get off his bicycle in front of the First National Bank of New York City. He took his bicycle inside and leaned it against the wall, not even noticing that, as he did, he knocked off some of the calcimine. He walked through the rows of customers, past the tellers and cashiers and policemen, right on to the president’s office, and stood before the door marked “Private.”

Without knocking, he walked into the room where a white-haired man was seated. Without hesitation or fear, the child asked, “Daddy, do you have anything for me today?” And the man took the child into his arms, saying: “My son, I am always glad to see you. I do have something for you, but I want you to be careful with it. Please do not break these things.”

When he had said this, he walked to a cabinet and took out some things that he knew would please the child. The little boy had access into his father’s presence, my friend. And in like manner you and I have access into the presence of the great Creator of the universe, if we love the Lord Jesus. He is our Father. We do not need a “go-between;” for in the Person of His Son, our Saviour, we have “**one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**” (I Timothy 2:5).

(4) *Grace*

In our former study of this epistle we have seen that our salvation is all of grace — without the works of the law.

We need not dwell upon this wonderful theme here, except to note that grace is bestowed upon us because of our heritage in Christ. We are sinners saved by grace, justified by no merit of our own. By His grace we have peace with God and access into His presence now and forever.

Grace, ‘tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to mine ear;
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

(5) “*Hope of the Glory of God*”

We learned in the first part of this epistle that “**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**” That is the verdict against a guilty world. But now that we are justified, we are not afraid of the glory of God on the contrary, we “**rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**”

Remember, my friends, that looking backward, we are justified; looking up, we have peace; looking forward, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

The word “**hope**” in Old English means “*expectation*.” There is no hope in the hearts of some people. Sinners will flee from this glory of God, crying for the rocks and hills to fall upon them (See Revelation 6:15, 16). There should be no fear in our hearts, however, if we love the Lord.

You remember that in the seventeenth chapter of John, Christ said, “**Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.**”

When we behold the Creator, we shall not be afraid, we shall rejoice. “**We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is**” (I John 3:2).

This is the hope that “maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5). This is the hope that tribulation cannot take away from us; and having mentioned it in verse two, the apostle speaks of tribulation — patience — experience— then comes back, in verse five, to the Christian’s hope in the glory of God.

(6) Tribulation — Patience — Experience — Hope

Note the words: “**We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.**” But do we “**glory in tribulations**”? We shall never glory in tribulations unless we know what tribulations do for us. The believer should not only boast in the coming glory that is awaiting him on the ground of his justification, but he should glory in tribulation also. This rejoicing comes because he intelligently understands the purpose of trials.

Many of you readers are bedridden; many are what I like to call God’s “rest-a-whiles.” Why does God allow tears and sorrow? Is it not significant that this reference to sorrow follows the statement concerning glory? Tribulations do certain things for us; that is why God allows them. When you understand this, you will not only glory in the coming of Christ, but you will glory in those things that prepare you for service. In the millennium you will reign with Him, and in eternity you will have duties. He is giving you “child-training” now.

I have a dear Hebrew friend who came to know Christ many years ago. All his loved ones left him when he accepted Jesus as his Messiah and Saviour. They disowned him, and even held his burial service. His own wife left him, and all his children. He was in school at the Moody Bible Institute at the same time I was, and occupied a room next to mine.

One night after we had retired, I heard him sobbing in his room. I went in to see if there was anything that I could do, and this is what he was saying, “Press it harder, Lord; press it harder.” I asked what he meant by that, and he told me that he had just received a letter from his family, telling him never to write to them again. While he was wondering why he had to suffer so, he got on his knees to pray.

Then it seemed that the Lord said to him, "I am shaping your head for the crown, my child. I want you to rule with me."

No; tribulations do not destroy the Christian's hope.

The fire that sweeps through the forest does not destroy the trees; it only makes them put their roots into the earth more firmly. You have probably seen the giant redwoods in Northern California. Do you know why these trees are living, and can survive wind and storm? Because when they were small trees, they went through wind and storm, and grew accustomed to them. That is what tribulation does for the Christian. It teaches him that he is firmly fixed on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

"Tribulation worketh patience."

You must have patience if you would serve God. My! what patience God has! Have you ever thought about it? Have you ever thought about what patience God had with you before you became a Christian? Once I led a man to Christ who was past sixty-eight years of age. He told me about his sin, and I marvelled at the patience of God with him.

When I was a young pastor in Chicago, I had a group of young people who gave me a great deal of trouble. One Lord's Day evening someone came to tell me that they were up in the back of the church having a hilarious time. At first, I thought I would go up there and tell them to get out. But on the way God spoke to me, saying, "Don't you remember how your Sunday school teacher used to plead with you and beg you to be what you should be?"

As I thought of the life I had lived, I grew ashamed and realized that these young people were better than I had been. Then I went up there and tried to show them that I had a deep interest in them. The result was that, after a period of time, many of them came to Christ, and some of them are missionaries on the foreign field today. What if I had followed my first impetuous motive? We cannot be of service to God without patience.

"Tribulation worketh . . . experience."

No matter what may be the test, the Christian can stand in Christ.

Dr. Stifler gives this illustration:

A young sailor goes into a boat the first time feeling very strange and knowing very little about the great vessel. But he puts out to sea. When the first storm comes along, it frightens him. Then as he goes through several such storms, he grows accustomed to them and is not so frightened at the prospect of one. He realizes the strength of the ship and the worst the sea can do. He has faith in the ship because the storms have failed to sink it. He has become experienced through tribulation.

That is what Paul is talking about. God is One in whom you can put your trust. You can trust your soul, your spirit, your life to Him; and He will care for you.

We **“have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast”** (Hebrews 6:18, 19).

Again, Christ said, **“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”** (Matthew 16:18). The winds will always blow, but this need not disturb us. Experience tells us that the Ark, which is Christ Jesus, will carry us safely through.

“Tribulation worketh . . . hope.”

We discover through trials that God sustains us in the hour of conflict. **“Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.”**

This hope is a wonderful thing. It is that to which the apostle refers in verse two and again in verse five. It is a bold thing to say to the world, “I am going to stand in the presence of the King of Kings! I am going to rule with Him. I am not afraid.”

That is a bold hope; and tribulation strengthens our faith in that hope.

“Hope maketh not ashamed.”

“Ashamed” here means *“disappointed.”* **“That blessed hope”** will not end in disappointment. The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We have the proof by His indwelling presence that we are not going to be disappointed. Without this proof the believer’s hope would be madness. We are sure that one day we shall stand in the midst of the glory of God. We have the assurance that we have not followed **“cunningly devised fables.”**

We know that we shall not be disappointed, that we shall not be ashamed. Why? Because He has given us the “engagement ring,” as it were. The bridegroom has given us the token of his faithfulness.

I am reminded of another illustration which Dr. Stifler gives:

Suppose some African woman should claim that she is the chosen bride of the King of England? Suppose she had upon her finger, as a token of her troth, the Cullinan Diamond that belongs to England? Without this proof, her claim would be ridiculous. But if she had this ring on her finger, we should have to believe that the king had given it to her, because she could not have bought it or stolen it.

The hope of glory does not make us ashamed, my Christian friend, because the priceless gem of God’s love toward sinners is in our possession. It maketh not ashamed, because **“the love of God”** has been **“shed abroad in our hearts.”** It is not the love of man toward God, but the love of God toward man — the Holy Ghost in us.

Except for the reference to the Holy Spirit in Romans 1:4, this is the first time the Third Person of the Trinity is mentioned in the epistle. He will come into our study later on in detail.

Here He is spoken of as an earnest, a seal, an engagement ring, so to speak. We know through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us that we are going to stand in the presence of God and not be afraid.

(7) *Love*

Now let us look at verses 6-11. Paul has just, mentioned the *love* of God, and now he stops to talk about it.

He goes on to tell us something about that love. And how he delights to dwell on God's great love! This love of God is not *from* us or *in* us; it is *toward* us. We cannot find tokens of it within our hearts, except as it is "**shed abroad . . . by the Holy Ghost.**" Many people seeking Christ look within themselves. God does not tell us to look in; He tells us to look out, at the cross of Christ.

We must bear in mind the fact that the love of God has been fully manifested in Christ's suffering and death for us. This is clearly set forth in verse six, where we read, "**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**"

When we were yet weak and impotent and could not help ourselves, Christ died for us. He suffered the death sentence for the ungodly.

This term "**ungodly**" includes everybody, Jews and Gentiles.

The love of God came into that courtroom. There it was manifested before men and angels and demons, when the holy God, in the Person of His Son, died for a guilty world. He obeyed the law; He lived a righteous life on earth; but this did not show forth His love. He died for the ungodly! Herein is love! "**Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God**" (I John 3:1). "**What manner of love,**" that we, guilty sinners, should be redeemed by the precious blood of the eternal Son of God!

Considering verse 7, we are reminded that it is an unheard of, an unparalleled, thing for one human being to die for "**a righteous man.**"

Here the word "**righteous**" suggests a person who does not steal, who pays his debts, and who sees to it that others pay theirs. Scarcely would one die for a man like this. But for "**a good man,**" a benevolent, kind, generous man, someone might "**even dare to die.**" "**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**" (vs. 8).

We were not good; we were not even righteous while we were yet sinners; and Christ died for us — just as we were. The Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us. "**In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (I John 4:9, 10).

This vicarious death of Christ is not only the cause of our justification before God; it is also the cause of all the great and wondrous mercies that come to man as a result of that love.

In verse 9 we read one of the results of God's love toward us: "**We shall be saved from wrath through him.**"

We shall be saved from the wrath that hangs over this world, and will break like thunder upon a godless people. This wrath will not break on you and me, if we have accepted the gift of God's love, because all the consequences of our sins were rolled on Him. He knew what it was to suffer the pangs of death. The wrath was all borne by Christ when He suffered on Calvary. We need not fear the coming wrath that is associated with the return of Christ in glory. Nothing can touch us; for before "**the day of wrath,**" the church will be with Him in glory, translated and transformed into His likeness. Do you not see, my friend that Paul is showing us here just how complete our salvation is in Christ Jesus?

We need have no fear for the future; and verse 10 teaches us that we are kept even now by His life.

In other words, our salvation is threefold:

- *we have been saved;*
- *we are being saved;*
- *we are going to be saved.*

We have been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin; we are being saved from the power of sin; some day we shall be saved from the presence of sin. The life referred to here is His risen life, not the life He lived here on earth. It is the life He is now living at the right hand of God for you and me. It is a wonderful thing that He stood for us in death; but it is also wonderful that He is now standing at the right hand of God, keeping us safe. In our risen Lord we have an Intercessor who "**ever liveth**" to plead our cause (See Hebrews 7:25).

You will remember that in I John 2:1 we read: "**These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**"

Satan tries to get you and me to sin, and all too often he succeeds. When he does, he wings his way into the presence of God as "**the accuser of our brethren**" (Revelation 12:10). He puts before the attention of the Supreme Ruler of the universe the fact that we have sinned; he demands that the holy law of God be executed on you and me. But John says, "**We have an advocate with the Father.**"

When I do wrong, I have a Lawyer at God's right hand. Satan accuses me to the Father; then my Lord rises, so to speak, and makes His plea for me. He says, in substance: "**What the accuser says of that man is true; but I was wounded for his transgressions; I was bruised for his iniquities. See these wounds in My hands and feet and the wounded side? Father, put all of that man's sins to my account. I have paid the price.**"

“Behold, what manner of love!”

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Corinthians 5:19).

“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10)—by His risen, interceding life at the right hand of the Majesty on high!

(8) *Joy*

No wonder the apostle, in verse 11, reaches the climax of this passage, which sets forth our heritage in Christ, saying, **“We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”**

The words **“and not only so”** connect this verse with all that has gone before, from verses 1-10.

Not only do we have justification, peace, access, grace, hope, glory, love; not only are we able to rejoice in tribulation, since sufferings prepare us for the glory to come; **“but we also joy in God.”** No longer are we afraid of Him. Our thoughts of Him are so changed that we rejoice in Him.

When I was a child, I was afraid of God. If someone had told me of a desert island, miles away, where God was not, I would have hastened there. But since He has made known His love to me, what a different feeling I have!

Forgetting about His great salvation, forgetting what God has done *for us*, forgetting about the **“things which God hath prepared for them that love him,”** we now find satisfaction in what God is. We delight to **“joy in God.”**

You remember how the disciples rejoiced when they had healed the sick, and how they said, **“Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name.”**

Then He answered and said unto them, **“In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”**

That was cause for joy indeed! But you will note that **“in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit”**—in His own Holy Spirit! (See Luke 10:17, 20, 21). This is the highest joy of all—**“joy in God”**—not in His gifts, but in His matchless Person.

I remember how, long before I was married, I loved to visit in a certain home in St. Louis. Every Christmas I went there, no matter how far away I was. One certain Christmas I arrived by train, and took a cab out to the house. It was about seven-thirty in the evening when I got there. The children were hanging up their stockings, and they had hung one up for me, filled with fruit and nuts and candies.

The youngest child had played until he was tired. Looking over at his mother, who sat darning, he dropped his toys, and climbed up into her lap. Putting his arms around her neck, he said, “Mother, I love you.”

Then she asked: “How much, my dear? More than your toys?” to which he quickly replied: “Yes, I love you more. I get tired of my toys, but I never get tired of you.”

That little child rejoiced in his mother.

It is a wonderful thing to be justified, to have peace with God, to have access into His presence, to rejoice in the expectancy of His glory, to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, to know that we are kept safe and secure, to be reconciled, safe from wrath through Him.

It is wonderful to know these things. But it is even more wonderful to forget God’s gifts, and to *joy in Him*. Do you ever get alone and put your arms of faith around God the Father, and tell Him you love Him, my friend? That is the highest place you can occupy in the Christian experience. And “**the Father seeketh such to worship him**” (John 4:23). He delights in our love, unworthy though we are, because we are “**accepted in the beloved**”—His well-beloved Son.

II. OUR HERITAGE IN ADAM *versus* IN CHRIST, (5:12-21).

From verse 12 to the end of chapter five our heritage in Christ is contrasted with our heritage in Adam.

We come to appreciate things more deeply by the way of contrast. That is one way to teach; and that is what God is doing here. He gives us in verses 12-21 the dark picture of our heritage in Adam, as contrasted with our glorious heritage in Christ, already set forth in verses 1-11.

In the Word of God the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as “**the last Adam.**” In I Corinthians 15:45 we read: “**The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**”

The first Adam fell after being tempted to sin and his children inherited his sinful nature. We are his great-great-grandchildren, so to speak. We inherited certain things from him: sin, death, and judgment. Every man who has not been washed in the blood of Christ is “**in Adam,**” no matter who he is. And “**in Adam all die**” (I Corinthians 15:22).

No matter whether he be high or low, Chinese or American, cultured or uncouth, rich or poor, educated or ignorant; if a man is not washed in the blood of Christ, he is “**in Adam.**” He may be kind and ethical, but that does not save him. In Adam we all have received sin and death and judgment.

What a heritage!

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (v. 12).

“In Adam,” the federal head of the race, we inherited sin, death, and judgment. But in Christ, the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22, 23), we received righteousness, life, and glory. Could any contrast be more striking? And every believer, the moment he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, is heir to these three treasures: righteousness, life, glory. He is taken out of **“the first Adam,”** and is placed **“in Christ.”**

“For since by man came death, by man [the Man, Christ Jesus] came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:21, 22).

In verses 13 and 14 Paul mentions briefly what he has already made clear in the opening chapters of the epistle that before the law was given by Moses, men were judged by the law of conscience which was written in their hearts.

Sin was in the world all the while, from the fall of Adam; in other words, **“death,”** like a tyrant, **“reigned from Adam to Moses.”** Whatever the form in which sin manifested itself, the guilty world stood condemned before a holy God. And only by faith in **“him that was to come,”** the second Adam, even the Lord Jesus, was sinners saved, from Adam to Christ. Likewise, only by faith in Him, who has now come and suffered and died and risen again, has anyone been saved since Calvary.

The striking contrast between our heritage in Christ and our heritage in Adam will grip us more forcefully perhaps if we note how Sin and Death, Righteousness and Life are personified here; that is, they are said to **“reign.”**

Look at the following quotations:

1. **“Death reigned”** (vv. 14, 17).
2. **“They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus”** (v. 17).
3. **“Sin hath reigned unto death”** (v. 21).
4. **“That . . . even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”** (v. 21).

Do you see the contrast? Sin and Death, Righteousness and Life are personified, that we may understand more clearly what a marvelous change God wrought in our hearts when He created in us new life in Christ. Sin and death reigned first of all. Then grace and life, in Christ Jesus, our Lord, were enthroned in our regenerated hearts.

Now let us read verses 12-21 once more, comparing them with the arrangement of selected portions outlined below. This grouping of contrasted passages may help us to see yet more clearly what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us here:

OUR HERITAGE IN ADAM

1. “By one man sin entered into the world,” (v. 12).
2. “By one man . . . death,” (v. 12).
3. “Offence,” (v. 12).
4. “If through the offence of one many be dead,” (v. 15).
5. “The judgment was by one to condemnation,” (v.16).
6. “By one man’s offence death reigned by one” (Adam), (v. 17).
7. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” (v. 18).
8. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” (v. 19).
9. “Where sin abounded,” (v. 20).
10. “That as sin hath reigned unto death,” (v. 21).

OUR HERITAGE IN CHRIST

1. “The grace of God, and the gift of grace . . . is by one man, Jesus Christ,” (v. 15).
2. “Life by one, Jesus Christ,” (v. 17).
3. “Free gift,” (v. 12).
4. “Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace . . . hath abounded unto many,” (v. 15).
5. “The free gift is of many offences unto justification,” (v. 16).
6. “Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ,” (v. 17).
7. “Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,” (v. 18).
8. “So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,” (v. 19).
9. “Grace did much more abound,” (v. 20).
10. “Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,” (v. 21).

And now, my friend, are you included in the word “**they**” in verse 17? Are you among those who have received this grace and life “**by one, Jesus Christ**”? Then you have received His gift of righteousness. You shall reign with Him forever.

But there is also a real, a practical sense in which we are reigning now.

Paul says, in substance, “***I reign in life. Christ makes me a king.***” So also, we should reign. We should reign over sin, sensitiveness, self-indulgence, worry — all the lusts of the flesh. Woe to the man whose body reigns over him! Surely also we should reign over circumstances. There are many ways in which we should reign now. But when Christ returns to this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, we shall reign with Him then in a literal and a triumphant sense.

Someone said to me one evening recently, at one of my Bible classes:

“Do you really believe that Christ will return to this earth and reign here? My pastor says that Christ’s kingdom is spiritual, not literal.”

Yes, my friend, when Christ comes to reign, He will be King in just as real a sense as any king here on earth — only with a more universal sway. “**He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth**” (Psalm 72:8).

But we come back to Paul's primary meaning here in Romans 5:12-21, "**where sin abounded, grace did much more abound**" (v. 20). Whereas "**in Adam**" our heritage is one of sin, death, and judgment, "**in Christ**" it is righteousness and life.

Sin was a mighty tyrant, but grace is even more powerful!

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.

My unsaved brother, would you not like to share in this priceless heritage in Christ?

God requires righteousness; you have none of your own; but He has revealed His righteousness in Christ Jesus; and you may receive it by faith in Him. Then whereas "**sin abounded,**" and death and judgment awaited you, you will be able to say with all the redeemed:

"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."

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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