

## A Study in the Book of Romans

# 12

## Romans 5:1-21

### Key Verse

“ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ”

The foundation has been laid. Paul has proved his case. He has presented man's three-fold problem:

- All have sinned
- All are sinners by nature
- The Law is powerless to help

And he has, through the example of Abraham, shown there is a key given to us to release the answer: *faith!*

Now he sets out to present the answer itself – the Gospel – and he does this by taking each of the problems he has so far revealed, one by one, and bringing the answer that is found in Christ.

- The answer to sins committed (5:6-11)
- The answer to man's sin-nature (5:12-6:23)
- The answer to the Law (7:1-8,39)

Introduction

The Gospel's Three Revelations

**The Gospel's Three Answers**

The Gospel's Answer to Israel

The Gospel in Action

Conclusion

### The Gospel Summarized

Read Romans 5:1-5

Before going into the details of how it was all accomplished, Paul shows how all that mankind ever longed for is actually experienced through the Gospel. A master craftsman will hold up a beautiful piece of finished tapestry before his students, and then proceed to teach them, stage by stage, the intricate workings that resulted in the final work of art. In the same way, Paul shows the *end result* (**Romans 5:1-5**) and then proceeds to reveal the details which made it possible (**Romans 5:6-8:39**).

## ***Justified***

The first and foremost result of Jesus Christ's work on the Cross was that it allowed God, the righteous Judge, to *justify* us, the sinner. Paul's final statement in chapter four concerning our father in faith, Abraham, was that the same faith which brought him the Promise is the faith that brings us the same Promise – faith in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (**Romans 4:23-25**). Like Abraham, we too are justified (declared righteous) by faith in Jesus Christ.

The word “justify” used by Paul does not have the same meaning as we use it so many times today. Today, if someone speaks of “being justified” they mean that they had good reasons for doing something. People “justify themselves” by trying to prove that they were right about something. But when, as Paul says, we have been justified by God, it certainly does *not* mean that God finds reasons to prove that we, the sinner, were right. On the contrary, we are so very *guilty* that the only way God could release us from judgment was to have someone take the punishment in our place. The moment you believe and receive for yourself that Jesus Christ died for you and was raised to life again in your place, God counts it to be a *fact*. He sees your sins already punished – and you are free from guilt. You stand before him as “risen from the dead” – a new person, treated as though you had never sinned. You have been justified!

This is the *legal* work of the Cross, without which it would be impossible for us to be reconciled to God and thereby enjoy all the wonderful benefits of a personal relationship with him.

## ***Reconciled***

All that is expressed in **verses 1-5**, Paul sums up in one word in **verses 10-11**: *reconciled*. Having been justified, now we can enjoy relationship with our heavenly Father. He is no longer before us as the Judge. Now we know him as a Father, sharing with us the wonders of his realm. We now have:

### **Peace with God**

This does not just mean that we are no longer at enmity with God (**Ephesians 2:11-12**), though this is wonderfully true. Far more, it means we now experience the friendship and loving-kindness of God. As the Lord Jesus told his disciples in **John 15:15**:

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

**Read James 2:23**

**Read Psalm 103:1-4**

**Read Isaiah 32:17**

### **Access into God’s grace**

In the Greek language of Paul, the word translated “access” here was used for introducing or ushering into the presence of royalty. Having justified us, the Lord Jesus takes our hand and ushers us right into the very throne-room of the King of Kings. In fact, in **Hebrews 4:16** (*Amplified Bible*) we are exhorted to come *boldly*:

“Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace – the throne of God’s unmerited favor (to us sinners); that we may receive mercy (for our failures) and find grace to help in good time for every need – appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it.”

### **Read Hebrews 10:19-22**

At God’s Throne we find, not God’s righteous anger, but his grace! – his welcoming love and mercy and help.

Not only are we “ushered in” by Christ, but that is where we remain! It is here “we now stand”. This is our place for eternity! And it is in God’s grace that we now live and approach situations of life...

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:6.

### **Read Colossians 2:10**

#### **Rejoicing in the hope of glory**

With great anticipation we now look forward to the wonders that God has prepared for us in eternity...

“However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those love him’ – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

### **Read Ephesians 1:18**

### **Read 1 John 3:1-3**

#### **Rejoicing in life’s pressures**

Only when we have peace with God, access into the throne of grace, and understand the glorious hope that is before us, can we rejoice in life’s present trials and

persecutions. And, says Paul, when we face them with this attitude, then the pressures of life, instead of destroying us, will produce a strength and endurance in us – not just a passively bearing trouble, but a spirit actively victorious over all the trials of life it may face.

**Read 1 Peter 1:3-7**

**Read James 1:2-4**

### **Assured of hope by God's love**

And the assurance that we will not be disappointed in this hope is the wonder of God's love poured out upon us by the Holy Spirit given freely to us.

Having summarized the Gospel, Paul now goes on to give the details of how God brought it all about. The Gospel demolishes all the barriers that would act to thwart God's purpose in our lives.

## **The Answer to Sins Committed**

**Read Romans 5:6-11**

Everyone of us is personally responsible before God for our own sins. Because of his righteous character, it is impossible for God to overlook sin and allow us to come into his presence. Two facts are undeniable:

- Sin separates us from a holy God (see **Isaiah 59:2**)
- Sin earns the judgment of death (see **Romans 6:23**)

And yet God's great love yearns to have fellowship with us. How could God abide by his righteous Law and still reconcile us to himself? There was only one possible answer. Someone had to act as our substitute.

But to be able to represent man, the substitute had to be a man. And this presented a great problem: No *man* could be used, for *all* were guilty – all needed a substitute for themselves. It had to be someone who was righteous in himself, who would then receive the punishment for the sins of *others*. Only one person was truly righteous – God himself. That meant there was only one way. God had to become a man.

During the Second World War, prisoners of war in Thailand were forced by the Japanese to build a bridge over the Kwai River. One of the prisoners offended the guards in some way without the Japanese knowing who the offender was. All the men were lined up in the compound. The Japanese officer declared that if the guilty man didn't own up several men would be shot. There was no response. He gave them a final warning. There was a long pause, and as the guards were about to pick out some men, a young British soldier stepped out. Everyone knew he was not really the guilty one. He was taken away and executed. That young soldier gave his life as a substitute for the other men. This pictures what Jesus Christ did for each of us.

## The Substitute for Us

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Jesus Christ became man in order to take the penalty for our sins upon himself. The prophet Isaiah described perfectly the work Jesus accomplished in his death for us:

### Read Isaiah 53:4-5

This passage identifies the points of Christ's substitution on the Cross.

- He took *our* infirmities
- He carried *our* sorrows
- He was pierced for *our* law-breaking
- He was crushed for *our* iniquities
- He was punished to give *us* peace
- He was wounded to give *us* healing

### Read Isaiah 53:6-7

This passage reveals the parallel relationship between our Savior and us:

- We were the sheep astray
- He was the sheep slain

As our substitute, Jesus identified totally with us in order that we might identify totally with him.

## The Appointed Time

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### Read Romans 5:6

From the moment the first man sinned, God put into motion his plan to restore the sinner. Jesus' arrival on the scene of history was at God's appointed time. All that had gone on before was in preparation for his arrival. **Galatians 4:4** tells us:

“But when the time had full come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

### Read Mark 1:15

### Read John 7:6-8

### Read Ephesians 1:10

## God's Love Demonstrated

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Paul declares that God's love has been demonstrated toward us...

### ***In the object of his love***

Paul contrasts two kinds of love. Human love is a two-way love. In other words, we love only if we feel there is something worthy in the other. Just maybe, says Paul (though even this wouldn't happen very often), a man might give his life to

save the life of a *good* man. But the great wonder of God's love is that it is one-way. Christ died for us when we were sinners!

### ***In the expression of his love***

Not only was God's love demonstrated in the fact that the object was so unworthy, but also in the *extent* he was willing to go in order to save us. **John 3:16** describes it perfectly:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...”

#### **Read John 17:1-5,24-26**

The human family is a picture of the relationship of the Godhead. Parental love for a child is so great that they would rather suffer themselves than see suffering come to their child. Nothing greater could demonstrate God's love for us than that he gave his dearly beloved Son to suffer and die for us.

### **How much more!**

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#### **Read Romans 5:9-10**

Oh, but what this means *now*! If God was willing to go to that extent for us when we were sinners and his enemies, how much more, now that we are justified and reconciled to him, will we be:

### ***Saved from his wrath***

All fear is now gone in our relationship with God. He no longer looks on us as sinners worthy of his anger, but as sons! In **1 Thessalonians 1:10**, Paul writes:

“...and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”

#### **Read Romans 8:14-15**

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:9**

### ***Saved by his life***

As our substitute, Christ not only *died for us*, but was *raised for us*, so that we could live a whole new life with God. In **Colossians 3:1-5**, Paul declares:

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

### **Rejoice in God**

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The blessings and joy and privileges that are now ours we have because we've been reconciled to God our Father. **Psalms 16:11** proclaims:

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

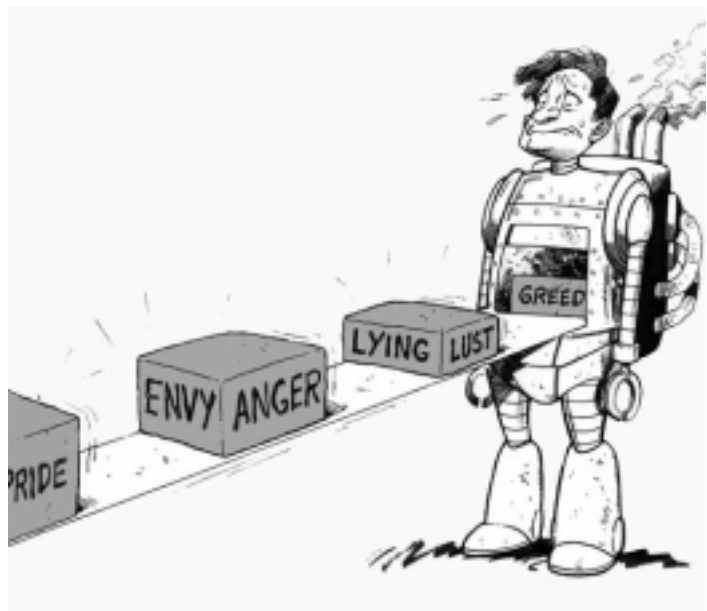
## **The Answer to Man’s Nature of Sin**

Paul now moves on to answer the second great problem of man that he has revealed earlier. Up to this point, the subject he has been dealing with has been the *sins* that we, as individuals, have committed. The answer that has come is through Christ bearing the penalty for them in our place.

Now, in **verse 12**, his subject changes. He now begins to deal with *sin* as the very essence of man’s nature.

An illustration of this great problem of man is found in one particular period in the history of America. Between 1920 and 1933, the United States passed a law prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol. But rather than solve the problem of alcoholism, the racket of “bootlegging” (producing and selling illegal liquor) became rife. There are records of indignant women breaking into bars and places where liquor was known to be sold and smashing every bottle they could find; and of police raids during which kegs of alcohol were axed and the liquor poured down the streets. But the more they destroyed, the more seemed to become available. They could not find the underground *factories* that were producing the liquor – they could only deal with the *product* as it came to the surface.

In the same way, it was not sufficient that just our *sins* be dealt with. These are the product of a far deeper problem within us. It isn’t long after a person becomes a Christian that he soon realizes that, although he knows his sins have been forgiven, sin still seems to have power over him. He finds himself still sinning and having constantly to return to the Lord for forgiveness. The “product” – the acts of sin – is being continually dealt with, but the “factory” deep within is still in business!



But Paul now begins to show how complete was the work of Christ on the Cross.

## **Two Representative Men**

**Read Romans 5:12-21**



In these ten verses, Paul repeats the phrase “*by one man*” ten times, and refers to “*one*” act three times. Over and over again he emphasizes that “*by one man*” – Adam – all the problems came, and “*by one man*” – Jesus Christ – all the answers have come. In other words, what he is saying is that the actions of two men have affected the whole of mankind. Each one represented the human race before God.

The account of David facing Goliath in **1 Samuel 17** serves as a perfect picture of the principle of representative men. Israel was at war with the Philistines, but instead of using the normal tactics of combat, the Philistines had sent their champion to represent their whole army. Their plan was that Israel, in turn, would send out a representative of their army.

This was a method sometimes adopted by warring nations of that day (see **2 Samuel 2:13-16**). The two men would represent their armies in the battle. They would fight on behalf of their nations. Whoever won won the war for the whole nation; whoever lost brought his nation into defeat and slavery to the conquerors. David, the young shepherd boy, stood alone to face Goliath. But he wasn't facing the Philistine for himself. He was facing him for all Israel.

In the same way, two men, at two different times in history, have represented all mankind, and their actions have affected every man and woman. This humanity-wide impact is described in **1 Corinthians 15:22**:

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

### ***By one man, Adam***

Through the actions of our forefather, Adam, several things happened:

- Sin entered the world (**verse 12**)
- Death came to all men (**verses 12-15**)
- Judgment resulted in condemnation (**verses 16-18**)
- His disobedience resulted in many sinners (**verse 19**)

At the moment of creation, God put into motion a special law. Every plant and animal (and also man) was to “produce after its own kind” (**Genesis 1:24-25**). Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, but when they rebelled and chose to go their own way, God's image was marred and replaced by a nature of sin and rebellion (**Genesis 1:27; chapter 3**). And they reproduced after their own kind. The generations that have followed since have all inherited the same nature. Their character traits of sin and rebellion can be traced back to a common ancestor, Adam.

Paul sums up the effect of Adam's action in **verse 21**:

“Sin reigned in death!”

Since the time of Adam's disobedience, sin has been king on earth. Its power has been all-consuming. Kings and emperors in the world have been known for different characteristics – some have been known as tyrants who have spread fear



everywhere. Well, sin is a tyrant-king whose reign has produced death.

In **verses 13-14**, Paul's writes a "by-thought," where he emphasizes the fact that sin and death reigned even before the Mosaic Law existed. Even if their individual sins could not yet be taken into account because the Law was non-existent (though, as Paul has already pointed out, the unwritten law of conscience still held the Gentiles accountable before God), yet *sin* within their nature was there – and so they died.

### ***By one man, Christ***

Through the actions of our Savior, Jesus Christ, several things happened:

- ☞ God's grace and the gift (of righteousness) overflows to man (**verse 15**)
- ☞ The gift brought justification (**verse 16**)
- ☞ His one act brought eternal life (**verse 17**)
- ☞ His obedience made many righteous (**verse 19**)

## **The Two Titles of Christ**

In **1 Corinthians 15**, we find Paul applying two titles to Christ as our great Representative.

### **Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49**

These two titles are:

- ☞ The Last Adam (**verse 45**)
- ☞ The Second Man (**verse 47**)

### ***The Last Adam***

**1 Corinthians 15:45** tells us:

“So it is written: ‘The *first man Adam* became a living being’; *the last Adam*, a life-giving spirit.”

Notice that Paul calls the Lord Jesus “the *last Adam*.” Some people have misquoted this passage, calling Jesus “the *second Adam*.” But Paul is specific. So why does he call Christ “the *last Adam*”?

There is a big difference between being second and last. If you are running in a race, coming second means there is just one person in front of you, but there are usually many others coming behind you – those who came third, fourth and fifth, etc. But if you are last across the finishing line, this means *there are none coming after you!*

In other words, Jesus was the *last* of Adam's line. God put an end to the Adamic race in Christ upon the Cross. When Jesus hung there at Calvary, he was the Last Adam – no more would be coming after him!

## ***The Second Man***

**1 Corinthians 15:47** tells us:

“The *first man* was of the dust of the earth, the *second man* from heaven.”

On the Cross, Jesus became the Last Adam, putting an end to the fallen Adamic race. But he was not raised from the dead as the Last Adam. He rose again as “the second man”! In the Resurrection, he became the “firstborn from among the dead” (**Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20**) – the first of a whole new race of people – a new humanity in relationship with God!

## **The Great Result**

Because of the Cross, everything has changed. Whereas before, the human condition was defined by the sorry phrase, “Sin reigned in death!”, now mankind’s condition is summed up by the glorious phrase:

“Grace [reigns] through righteousness to bring eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord!”

Because of the Cross, the tyrant-king sin has been overthrown and a new king has ascended the throne. Grace now reigns! And this grace produces righteousness in us, resulting in eternal life.