

The Triumph of Sovereign Grace

Pete Greasley – Romans 5:12-21 – June 12, 2011

Background

Paul has spent the first four chapters of Romans laying out the groundwork of his treatise on justification by faith. God has placed humanity on trial and is questioning us for our rebellion and cosmic treason. We have exchanged the glory of God for idolatrous pursuits. And we are left without excuse before a holy God. But in Romans 3.21-26 a righteousness from God, apart from the law, is revealed. In Romans 5, Paul is comparing and contrasting the persons of Adam and Christ and the two cosmic events we have experienced through their lives and actions.

1. When Adam fell, so did we!

Adam is what theologians call our representative head. He represents all humanity. And it's as if when Adam sinned said "No" to God's ways that we all said "No" to God's ways. There were implications of his disobedience on us all. We are not simply guilty because of our active disobedience, but we are more fundamentally guilty because we are born "into Adam." Therefore, the Fall of Adam is a cosmic event that plunged us all into rebellion and changed our standing before God. We are dead in our sins and under the just judgment of God.

2. Christ is like Adam.

Like Adam, Christ is a representative head. And like Adam, the cosmic event for which Christ came has profound implications for our lives.

God has always dealt with mankind through a head and representative. The whole story of the human race can be summed up in terms of what has happened because of Adam, and what has happened and will yet happen because of Christ.

—**M. Lloyd Jones**

3. Christ is NOT like Adam.

Christ's actions have not brought death and judgment but grace and life and justification.

That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment: this is perfectly understandable. That the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift: this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension. —**Charles Cranfield**

Sermon Outline

Nothing could sum up better the blessings of being in Christ than the expression 'the reign of grace'. For grace forgives sins through the cross, and bestows on the sinner both righteousness and eternal life. Grace satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry with good things. Grace sanctifies sinners, shaping them into the image of Christ. Grace perseveres even with the recalcitrant, determining to complete what it has begun. And one day grace will destroy death and consummate the Kingdom. So when we are convinced that 'grace reigns', we will remember that God's throne is a 'throne of grace', and will come to it boldly to receive mercy and to find grace for every need; and all this is through Jesus Christ our Lord. —**John Stott**

Fellowship Starters

1. Read Romans 5.12-21. Take time as a group to highlight and discuss the verses which speak of Adam as our representative. What happened through Adam's actions (see verses 12)? What were the consequences of Adam's disobedience on all of humanity (see verses 15-19)?
2. Looking at the passage, find Scriptures which show the effects of Christ's death. How is Christ's headship contrasted with Adam?
3. In v. 20, Paul tells us that through Christ's obedience the many will be made righteous. What does this mean? What is the significance of the doctrine of justification for the Christian's daily life?
4. John Stott wrote:

"Nothing could sum up better the blessings of being in Christ than the expression 'the reign of grace.' For grace forgives sins through the cross, and bestows on the sinner both righteousness and eternal life. Grace satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry with good things. Grace sanctifies sinners, shaping them into the image of Christ. Grace perseveres even with the recalcitrant, determining to complete what it has begun. And one day grace will destroy death and consummate the Kingdom. So when we are convinced that 'grace reigns,' we will remember that God's throne is a 'throne of grace,' and will come to it boldly to receive mercy and to find grace for every need; and all this is through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How can you allow the reign of grace to shape your life in greater measure ... in your sense of assurance, as your basis for joy and peace?