

Romans 5 - While We Were Still Sinners

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Before we actually get into the text of Romans chapter 5, I want to put up for you this morning a glossary of terms. And the reason I'm going to do it here is because the apostle Paul has a lot of favorite words that he likes to use, and he uses a lot of them in this chapter. And frankly, throughout the book, I might put these up again. And if you're not completely clear on the meaning of some of these words, then the passage obviously for you isn't going to have the same impact.

I'm going to do this very quickly. Some of these we've gone through before. Hopefully, this is a little bit of review that will just help cement the meaning of these things.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS IN ROMANS 5:

Justified/Justification - declared righteous/acquitted

Grace - unmerited favor or supernatural assistance

Glory - praise and honor

Righteous/Righteousness - right-standing before God

Reconciliation - to restores peaceful relations

But the first one is Justified or Justification. It could even be the word justify. And again, it basically means declared righteous or acquitted. Remember, we came up with that cute little phrase of justified means just as if you never sinned. And it literally does mean acquitted. He's been acquitted. The charges are dropped. And that's what Jesus accomplished for you and I on the cross. All right.

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The next word that he likes to use is Grace. And this can have actually two meanings. It can mean unmerited favor—in other words, the favor of the Lord that you didn't earn—or it can mean supernatural assistance. You might have heard somebody say, well, I have a cousin or friend who went to the mission field, and they're living in some of the deepest recesses of Africa. And boy, I could never do that, but they just have the grace of God to do it. You heard people say that?

That's actually a true and accurate description of grace as it applies to supernatural sort of strength and ability to accomplish something. He has the grace. She has the grace. It's like, for example, Sue has the grace to be married to me. It takes a special dispensation of the grace of God, sort of, right?

But what Paul is going to be mostly referring to when he talks about grace in this chapter is unmerited favor. The favor that is given to you by God that you didn't earn. In fact, you can't earn it, but He gives it anyway. That's one of the most difficult things for Christians to deal with because we're just so geared toward I've got to earn it, right?

And so we come along and we come to the grace of God and we stumble over grace because we're so used to saying, I've got to be good enough. I've got to earn this. I've got to, but I have to do something that's meritorious in my life in order that God is going to give me favor and grace. Grace, by its very definition, means unearned favor.

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Glory is praise and honor. He's going to refer to glory, but he's going to refer to glory not as it relates necessarily to God's glory, but he's going to talk about that which he shares with you and I in this chapter. And that can be a little weird too. But we'll get into that.

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And then the next thing that he deals with is Righteous and Righteousness. We've talked about that—essentially, right standing before God.

And then finally, Reconciliation, which really means the same thing as when a married couple has been having issues. Maybe they're even separated and they go through a time of reconciliation. It essentially means to restore peaceful relations.

But we're not talking about marriage. We're going to be dealing with reconciliation as it relates to us and God. We'll get into that. All right, we're going to read the chapter and then we're going to open up in prayer and then we'll get into it.

Verse 1: *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Boy, there's a lot of words right there already.) ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

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

more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

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

It's like, put on your hip waders, right? Okay, here we go, let's pray.

Father, be with us, we pray. Jesus, teach us. You are the teacher. Open our hearts, open our minds, open our spirits to what You want to say to us. We ask in Jesus' precious name, amen.

Can you tell that Paul's way of making an argument is different than ours? I wouldn't talk like this. I wouldn't probably—I mean, these long run-on sentences, they're tough to follow.

Have you ever had somebody give you directions somewhere? And you, like, didn't write it down, and they gave you this long string: Okay, first of all, you go down here to the stop sign, you take a right, and then you go for two miles, and then you're going to take a left. And then you're going to look for this, these 6 trees in a row. And then you're going to take a right, but then immediately you've got to take a left after about a quarter mile. And then you're going to go down this gravel road for a little while. And then you're going to see these mailboxes. There's like this cluster of mailboxes all together, and they're like, some are different colors. And you're going to see those. And then go a little bit further and then take a right. And then just go down to the end of the road. And when it comes to a T, then you need to stop and lick your finger and see which way the wind is going. And then...And you kind a like, what in the world?

I feel that way sometimes when I listen to the Apostle Paul, to be honest with you. He's going one way, and then he stops and goes another way. And he uses points of debate that, frankly, I don't think we would use today to make an argument. We would just do it very differently. But we're going to try our best to make sense of it anyway because the things that Paul says are very important. We need to see them and understand.

He begins by saying in verse 1: *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* There's nothing hard to understand in this verse. He says that now, because it is like we never

sinned, now, what is the result? We have peace. We have peace with God. How? Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

By the way, this is interesting, but the Greek word that is translated as peace here literally means *to join*, or it comes actually from a root word that means *to join*. And the idea here is that something was apart, something was disconnected, and now it has been rejoined—it has come back together. That describes the relationship that you and I have now with God.

When God created man, there was fellowship with man, but sin entered into the equation, and that fellowship was broken, right? So that thing was un-joined. It was disconnected, and there wasn't peace between God and man. Well, now, through Jesus Christ, that estrangement that we had with God has been put away, and we are now connected once again with Him. And because of that, there is peace.

And do you remember what made our peace? Paul has been talking about this progressively through the book of Romans. Remember back—let me put this up on the screen. Do you remember back in Romans chapter 3 when he said,

Romans 3:24-25 (ESV)

Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood...

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And you'll remember when we went through that verse, I told you, you probably aren't going to use the word, propitiation in your daily vocabulary. But what does it mean? Essentially, the definition means, to turn away wrath. And that is what has happened. God's wrath has been turned aside so that we could be rejoined with Him. Wrath was the problem, you see. Well, sin and the wrath that comes from it.

Do you guys understand that God's wrath is His natural response to sin? He doesn't have to work up anger. It's just—because He's holy and because sin violates His holiness. It assaults His holiness. His natural response is wrath. Okay. And that wrath separated us from God. And so Jesus came as the propitiation. Interesting words.

I didn't actually bring this out when we went through Romans chapter 3, but propitiation actually has pagan roots as a word. You see, the pagans believed in a multiplicity of gods, and their gods were very peevish. If you don't recognize that word, it means they were easily upset. Whenever something bad started to happen, like a thunderstorm or a famine or something like that, they assumed

that the gods were angry. And so they had to do something to appease their anger or to turn away their wrath.

You guys probably remember the old grade-B movies, where they throw the virgin into the volcano to appease the god of whoever was upset with them at the time. And that's true. People actually did—well, I don't know if they threw people into volcanoes, but they sacrificed all kinds of things in order to take care of their gods, to appeal to them, because their gods were just easily upset. They were really high maintenance. Wouldn't that be a wonderful thought—to have a high-maintenance god?

And so they came up with this word propitiation, meaning to turn aside the wrath. Well, for that reason, do you know that a lot of Bible scholars over the years have really objected to the translation of that word propitiation? Because they've realized that's a pagan idea, and our God is not peevish. He's not easily upset, and He's not high maintenance, where He gets upset and puts His hands on His hips and goes, huh. And then we have to go, oh, we better do something to make it better now.

That's not the way our God is. The word propitiation, obviously, is applied to Jesus because He himself personally, in His body on the cross, turned away the wrath of God. But you guys remember, when we talked about it, we discussed what He really did to turn away the wrath. He didn't turn it away in the sense of deflecting it. He absorbed it. He took the full brunt—the brunt of God's wrath. He absorbed it in Himself. But because of that, we now have peace.

You see, somebody got punished. We deserved it. And that punishment was heading right for us. But Jesus stepped in the way, and He absorbed the wrath of God. He consumed it. And God was satisfied with what Jesus did on the cross. And because God was satisfied with that payment, sacrificially, now there's peace. We have peace with God and it's a wonderful thing.

In fact, the sense of this Greek sentence that Paul is giving here doesn't just mean we have peace, but it means we have ongoing peace. It speaks of something that progresses, sort of a thing.

This is the interesting thing about this, though. You and I are not responsible for creating peace between us and God. But let me tell you something—we can be responsible for eliminating it, for destroying it.

I've talked to a lot of Christians over the years who will just admit, I just don't have peace with God. And I know that Jesus died for me on the cross. I accept that wholeheartedly. But right now, there's just something going on in my life. And I think one of the surest ways of knowing that something is wrong in your

relationship with God is if you lack peace with Him. And that's usually a good reason to come before the Lord and find out why.

Now, before you assume that—and I have no doubt there are people in this room right now who would, if you asked them, say, yeah, I'm not really sure I have peace with God. But before you assume that your issue necessarily is one of sin, let me just say here that I have also learned over the years that some people don't have the peace of God because Satan is very busy chirping in their ear, accusing them of past sins—even though those sins are under the blood of the Lamb. Okay?

And who in this room doesn't have past sins? If you do, raise your hand—no, I'm just kidding. We all have past sins. The question is, are you at peace with God even in the midst of your past sins? Well, if you've brought them to the cross, and if you know that you're forgiven for them, then there ought to be peace in your life.

If there isn't peace in your life, and yet you believe that Jesus died on the cross to remove the eternal punishment penalty of your sin, then the chances are very good that the enemy is doing an effective job by speaking into your ear about those past sins and keeping them alive in your heart and mind in such a way that you have no peace.

But see, those kinds—and that may be you. And if that is you, it's not because of ongoing sin necessarily; it's because you're listening to the wrong voice. My Bible says that if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Sometimes I have to go back and make sure all is still in the text. I'm always comforted by the fact that it is.

But that's what it says, and you and I have to choose to believe it. Yet, sometimes we have to choose to believe it in the face of the enemy who comes to challenge it. The enemy loves to remind you of just exactly how big of a scumbag you really can be. And he will point back to the things you did B.C.—before Christ—to prove his point. And eventually, you and I will begin to weaken and listen to his voice. And all of a sudden, our peace is gone.

Sometimes we have to deal with people in different ways. When they say, I have no peace with God, some people we have to say, well, have you repented? Is there some ongoing issue of sin for which you need to repent? And sometimes that's the case. Other times it's, well, I've repented, but I just still don't have peace with God. Well, you're listening to the wrong voice. The enemy is accusing. You're not, by faith, accepting what Jesus said and what God's Word says related to the forgiveness that He offers you, and so forth.

But let me tell you something. For those believers who do lack peace because there's been compromise and they are ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit in their lives, that is a miserable way to live. And I know it firsthand. David wrote about it. He talked about, after he confessed his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and all the things that went along with that, he talks about how he went through a period of time where he said, the hand of the Lord was heavy upon me, and my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. (Psalm 32:3-4)

He literally likened it to heatstroke. And you've noticed heatstroke—one of the things it does is it makes you weak in the knees, and you lack energy. And he said that God's hand of conviction literally stole my energy, my vitality. And then he goes on to say, and then I confess. And suddenly, it's like a house got lifted off your chest.

I was talking to a guy just this last week who prayed to receive Christ as his Savior. And he was explaining to me how incredible it was to have that weight lifted off his life. He said, I just cried. I haven't cried in a long time, but he cried just with that peace being restored. It's a wonderful thing. But let me say something—it's a miserable thing to live under that burden of a lack of peace. It's miserable.

And frankly, that's one of the things I pray about when somebody is caught in sin, and they refuse to repent. I say, God, make them miserable. I do. I pray that they would be miserable with a capital M. I mean, God, just make it so that it's like—yuck. Every day is just yuck. The last thing you want is somebody waltzing through a life of sin, happy-go-lucky. I mean, it's going to come to an end eventually. But it's like, God, bring them to the end so that they recognize their peace with You is missing.

And it's such a wonderful thing to know that when we've sinned and we recognize that lack of peace, it can be restored. All I've got to do is come to God, confess my sin, ask for forgiveness, and believe His Word again. And that peace can be restored between God and you. Wonderful thing.

Verse 2: He says now Paul's talking about benefits here of the cross. *"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* He's talking about a couple of things here, though. But he starts this next benefit by listing it as access by faith into the grace.

Do you know the word, access? Check this out. Very interesting. Access means, privilege of approach. Isn't that an interesting word? And it literally is used to describe the privilege of talking to a high-ranking individual or some person that very few people can get in to talk to. Like, I have the president's ear, or I

can get in and talk to this guy whenever I want to, even though for other people, he's like untouchable.

You try to make an appointment with this guy. You might be waiting a year for that appointment to actually happen. But I can go in anytime I want. I have the privilege of access. That's what Paul's referring to when he says you and I have the privilege—or we have access—into the grace. We have complete access into the favor of God.

I'm pausing for effect. I want you to think about that. We have access—complete, free access—into the grace of God. You and I, right now. There's nothing standing in the way. The only thing that could be standing in the way is you because everything else has been removed.

And I want to remind you of something. Not only do you have complete and total free access into the grace and favor of God right now, but I want to remind you of guys like Saeed Abedini, our brother and pastor originally from Iran, who's now languishing in an Iranian prison. He's locked up in a prison right now in Iran. Most of you know. But you know what? This very moment, even as I speak it, he has complete free access to the grace of God. Right now. He is no less subject to limitations to that grace than you or I or anyone else.

And do not think for a minute, because he is behind bars, that he is lacking any access to God. You and I, we tend to look at the exterior, and we think that access is seen by what's happening out here. No, not at all. No matter what you are going through right now—and some of you are going through difficult times, you're going through difficult seasons in your life—you have, at this moment, the same access to God's favor as anyone else. Even those who are going through good times right now. You do not lack anything as it relates to access to God. Just know that in your heart and use it. Take advantage of it.

The second part of verse 2, you'll notice as you look at it with me again, he says, we have access into this grace, but he says, "...we (also) *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*" This is a future benefit that Paul is telling us about, related to the power of the cross. He says, "...we *rejoice in the hope of the glory.*" Even though right now we fall short of the glory of God, we have hope, and in fact, we rejoice in the hope that one day we will actually share in the glory of God. This is a crazy thought.

Some of you might be saying, pastor Paul, you're talking gibberish. No, I'm not. Some people might, though, take offense at this statement. What do you mean share in the glory of God? My Bible says that God declares He will share His glory with no man. That's true, but that's for now. But there is a time after Christ returns that it's all going to change.

Let me show you a passage on the screen. This one's from Colossians chapter 3. Look at this:

Colossians 3:4 (ESV)

When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

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You know what? The only thing keeping you from jumping off your seat right now and jumping up and down and cheering like you would at a football game is that we don't get really what this means.

I mean, we really don't. We read it and we go, oh, cool. But if we did, we would truly rejoice like Paul's talking about. But when is this going to happen? Right now, God says, I will share my glory with no man (Isaiah 42:8). But then there's going to be a change. When is it? It's "*When Christ, who is your life appears...*"

When Christ returns for His church, He is going to return in what? Glory. Guess what? You're coming back with Him. In what? In glory. You're going to share the glory. You are literally going to reflect His glory at that time. The fact of the matter is, there's even a reflection going on right now, but we won't get into that—but there's going to be this just full-out, just—boom—the glory of God in your life. And Paul says we rejoice in the hope that this is, in fact, the case.

Do you ever stop and think about that much? I've got to be honest with you. I don't. I mean, I don't wake up in the morning and usually go, wow, I can't wait for the glory of God. I don't. And you know what? I think it's my loss that I don't. I think it's your loss, perhaps, if you don't either, because when I read my Bible and I read how Paul talked, it seems so foreign sometimes.

Some of the other biblical writers, same thing. They talked a lot about the glory of God and the hope. In fact, Christ is referred to as the hope of glory for believers. And we don't think about that very much. We usually think about our next vacation or something else that's just very temporal and close by. But the early believers were constantly talking about what was to come. They were talking about their hopes.

And I think—I'll be honest with you—one of the reasons they talked more about the hope that was to come was because anything that was going on in a temporal sort of a setting wasn't all that hopeful. I think life was pretty hard for the early believers. I think we're heading there. As it relates to the lives that you

and I live, I think that—I think things are going to get more challenging in the coming decades, should the Lord tarry here in the United States of America.

And you and I, if we're still around at that time, we're probably going to be talking more about our hope of glory than we are about any hope that we have in the present, temporary existence that's right before us. Life's challenges have a way of getting our focus beyond the present.

And he actually talks about that in the next verse. Look with me at verse three. This is interesting. It almost sounds weird, but he says, "*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings...*" Your Bible may say, "*tribulations,*" which is the same thing.

But this is, frankly, one of the most amazing things about what Christ has done for us—one of the most amazing benefits. Not only does Jesus change the way we see our future—we know that there's a hope of glory in our future—but Paul says here, He actually changes the way we view our present. Did you see that? To the point where Paul says—now this is weird; it sounds like he's almost detached from reality—but he says, "...*we (can actually) rejoice in our sufferings (in the things that we suffer)...*"

How? Why? He keeps going. I'm in the middle of verse 3: "...*knowing that suffering produces endurance.*" Verse 4: "*and endurance produces character, (And I love that word, don't you?) and character produces hope. ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame (your Bible may say, it doesn't disappoint us), because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*"

Notice the progression here. Suffering brings endurance—or perseverance, your Bible may say—and that produces character. Oh, and by the way, the Greek word for character literally means proof. If you have a New American Standard Bible, I think your Bible may even say proven character, which is a decent translation of that word because it literally means those things which have been proved.

Do you know that hardship has a way of doing that? It proves your character in Christ. Now, let me just stop here for a moment and say that hardship doesn't necessarily guarantee good character. But it will prove your character one way or the other. It'll prove either the nasties inside of you, or it will begin to prove or shape the godliness inside of you, depending on what you do with those sufferings and those hard times.

If you bring them to the Lord and you say, God, use these in me to make me more like You, then it will produce godly character. If you don't, guess what hardship does? You guys all know this. It produces bitterness, right? It produces

hardness. And pretty soon we're just—you've heard of people, you've met people who are old and hard.

They didn't start off life hard; they grew hard because they went through all these difficult things and didn't give them to God. They didn't trust them unto the Lord. And each time something came along, it just—boom—hit them, and it created just this increased bitterness and anger.

Have you ever noticed how angry people are today in our culture? People are mad, and they don't even know what they're mad at. And we have all this violence in the home, and all this violence in the workplace, and violence in public places. And people are angry. And some of these religions that advocate violence come along, and they have easy access to some of these people—whether it's the skinheads who just want to be angry. Let's just hate people, okay, and let's hurt them. Or whether it's this or whether it's that—there's a ready audience for that because people are angry.

But you and I, you see, it's a different sort of arrangement. We have a whole different way of living. Guys, we have a different way of viewing hardship and difficulty and tribulation. We recognize that when we give it to God—you ready for this—it benefits us. Rather than causing us to become bitter, we become better. And God, we realize, is doing a work in us to shape us more into the image of His Son through our hardship.

That's why James says, brothers, when you go through many trials, rejoice! Rejoice! (James 1:2-3) And we're reading that going, you're cracked, buddy. What are you talking about? Because he understands you are being formed into the image of Jesus as you bring those things before Him and say, God, I need You. I give these things to You. I entrust these things to You, and so forth—character.

Job understood the process of the proving ground of hardship. Some people will say, I'm going through a Job experience. I haven't met a Job yet from the standpoint of the hardship he went through. Job understood hardship. He understood how it proved a man. Can I show you something from the book of Job? I love this verse. Job said,

Job 23:10 (ESV)

...he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

...he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

And that's a statement of faith. Are you being refined right now in the furnace of affliction? Do you believe that furnace of affliction is going to eventuate in

you coming forth as gold unto the glory of God and in the image of Jesus?
That's a statement of faith.

That's not something you and I—we don't go, gee, look at that, I'm starting to glow. This is not an observation. This is a statement of hope in the future: I will come out as gold. That's tested value.

And isn't it interesting, as you look at this progress that he gives us here in Romans 5, that suffering produces perseverance, which produces character, which ends up producing hope? Here's the thing: the world suffers, and they're hopeless. You and I suffer, and we gain hope. Isn't that weird?

Well, we really shouldn't think it's weird because we live in an upside-down kingdom, don't we? The kingdom of God is upside-down from the kingdom of the world. Whereas the world becomes hopeless in suffering, we actually grow in hope through suffering when we commit those things to the Lord.

To be honest with you, in my almost 58 years of living on planet Earth, I can tell you right now that this can be a pretty hopeless place. Suffering often leaves people feeling hopeless. But as believers, it can actually generate hope in our lives. Let me explain or show you one more verse related to this, and we'll move on. This is the hope that Paul expressed. He said,

2 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

You might say, well, I don't understand—what does that have to do with hope? He's talking about something that the world considers hopelessness. What's that? The tent of our bodies being destroyed. That's the pinnacle of what creates hopelessness in people's hearts and minds apart from Christ.

But Paul says, you know what? That's not going to stop me, man, because I know that I know, that I know, that I know that if this earthly home is destroyed—and, by the way, Paul was beheaded for his faith, at least that's what we believe—"...we have a building from God..." Just going to move into the new one. Move out of one that was only made to be temporary in the first place, move into another one. Not a big deal. This is my hope. I have hope. It generates hope, that sort of thing.

Alright. Let's move on.

Verse 6. I like this too: “*For while we were still weak, (your Bible may say helpless, something along those lines. In other words, we were unable to fix our problem of sin), at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*” Paul's trying to get you and I to see the incredible love of God. He wants us to know when Christ died—look at it again— “... *while we were still weak...*” While we were still powerless, while we were even enemies.

He's going to go on to say, verse 7—and then he uses the contrast. Have you ever, do you ever do that when you're arguing with something? I don't, when I'm saying argue, I don't mean argue as in, you're always saying that the word argument, literally it means to debate, to argue something.

When Paul creates an argument for the grace of God, the glory of God, the work of the cross, he often uses contrasting things to highlight stuff. And contrasts are good. We like it. That's why we're drawn to commercials of contrast. Here's Joe before he went on the mega diet, he was 365 pounds. Here's Joe after 6 months on the mega diet. He's now down to a trim 175. We love that stuff, right?

Do I sound like a former radio guy? Actually, I didn't talk that way on the radio. That's called puking. Seriously, in the industry, hey, everybody! We didn't do that. That was considered phony in my day. I do it for fun, but the point is when we see ads like that, right? When we see commercials of contrast, we go, whoa! Look at the way this guy used to look, and then he went on this diet and look at him now! Paul does that to generate interest in your heart and in mine related to the points that he's trying to make here.

And he says in verse 7, and this is again, he's setting up contrast. He says, “*For one will scarcely die for a righteous person...*” But God died for you when you were lost. People won't die—they won't agree to die for anybody else. Even if somebody's righteous, but he says, God shows his love for you. This is the contrast by dying for you when you were lost.

Have you ever heard somebody say, maybe you've even said it? Well, I guess sauce, I guess God saw something of worth in me. That is so wrong. He saw nothing in you. He saw something in Himself. He saw His own goodness, and God was moved by His own goodness, not by any worth that He saw in you.

He did not look at you and go, well, they're worth it. I'm going to die for these people. They've got a lot of potential. We had zero potential. We had nothing. What Paul is trying to describe here is that when we were at our worst condition, we were totally helpless and without any worth of our own, Christ came and died for us. Do you see the contrast?

Men, we have to find worth in something, even to give our money to. Well, it's a worthy cause, people will say. Okay, this is a worthy cause. Okay, here, I'll reach for my wallet and give you a few bucks. It's worthy. Oh, it's got to be worthy to us. Aren't you glad God didn't stick around and wait for you to be worthy before He loved you and gave Himself for you? He did it when you were at your absolute peak of worst-ness. Is that even a word? Who cares? You know what I mean, right? That's the point.

So here's Paul's first conclusion, verse 9: *“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”* The wrath of God is still coming upon the earth, but now we're already saved from it.

Notice he says, if we were justified or acquitted back when we were worthless, how's He going to treat us now that we're children, beloved children and joint heirs with Christ? Now, how is He going to treat you?

It's amazing to me that some people can accept the fact that Jesus died for them on the cross, but they're waiting for the sword to cut off their head at the slightest wrong move. They're like, well, I just thank God that He saved me, but I know I just... I'm just afraid if I do something wrong, He's just going to just... He's going to get me.

And Paul's like, are you kidding? He saved you when you were nothing. Now you are the apple of His eye. You are precious in His sight. He has given you a joint position—you're a joint heir with Christ. He sees Jesus in you, for heaven's sake. You think He's going to hold back now? You think He's going to... you think He's going to go, well, I don't know. He's like, oh, I just want to put this on. I just want to love these guys. Oh, we're so messed up in our thinking, aren't we sometimes? So messed up.

This is what Paul's saying, verse 10. And he says again, *“For if while we were enemies (there, he uses that word again) we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”* He says who saves their enemies? Who does that? People kill their enemies when they get an opportunity. You're my enemy. Boom.

Who goes and does good things to their enemy? God did. He saw you and I, and we were enemies. We were like, get out of my face. God, I hate your guts. And He saves us. And changes our hearts. And now we're children. He says, good grief, now that you've been reconciled, won't He much more now save you and give you all the things related to that salvation?

Verse 11: *“More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”* And now, while Paul is using contrast to give us an example, he's going to go on and use the contrast of the result of Adam's life versus the result of Jesus's ministry on earth and death on the cross. This is what he's going to do.

I'm going to read through these verses again. This is where—this is like those road directions that just meander and are hard to follow. So let's just do this: *“Therefore (he says), just as sin came into the world through one man (that's Adam), and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...”*

Paul doesn't finish his sentence. He goes on to something else. He does that. He would literally interrupt himself in—right in mid-thought.

But what he's saying here is that Adam—this is important, you guys—Adam acted as a representative of mankind. And he's saying, just as Adam represented you in the garden and badly, and all mankind was plunged into sin because of Adam, so also—and then he's going to bring the contrast.

By the way, if there's any of you who have ever said in the quiet of your own heart, that Adam...I mean, have you ever been a little bit peeved at Adam? It's like, Adam, dude, you messed up for all of us.

Here's the point. And this is—it would frankly be unjust of God to punish you and I for Adam's sin. The fact of the matter is, the Bible says that we all sinned in Adam. Listen, Adam had the perfect circumstances. God set up the perfect situation to succeed, and he still failed miserably. And you and I failed in him. And his failure is our failure because he is our representative, and we wouldn't have done any better.

Don't think for us—it's flat-out human arrogance to think that you would have done better. You and I would have failed probably worse, right? That is why sin came into the human race from Adam, the representative, right?

And he says, *“..death spread to all men because all sinned.”* Verse 13: *“for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given...”* In other words, from the time of Adam up to Moses, sin was in the world, but it wasn't really counted in the way that it was after the law came, because the law helps us to understand how rotten sin really is. But it was still there, and people still died, right, because of sin.

That's what he means when he says in verse 14, *“Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses...”* He's not saying that when the law came into play, then people started

to die, because earlier he said the law brings death. Do you guys remember that? Cause it does—the law kills.

But he says, but that's not—I'm not saying that people didn't die before the law came. Because even, he says, as we go on in verse 14, "*...even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam...*" In other words, even those who didn't commit the same sin as Adam, they still died like Adam.

So Adam was—and did you notice he ends that verse by saying "*... Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*" Isn't that interesting? Adam was a type of the one who was to come. Who? Jesus.

Now we're talking about similarity by contrast—similarity in one sense, that they're both representatives of humankind, but contrasting situations because of what they brought. Adam brought death; Jesus brought life, right?

Okay, Paul says verse 15: "*But the free gift (he's talking about forgiveness through Jesus), is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.*" And this is the first contrast that Paul brings out. He reminds us here that salvation is not like the result of Adam's sin. In other words, the result of the cross is not like the result of the garden of Eden.

If all that—I got to say this in an understandable way. If Jesus simply reversed what Adam did, then it's like just thing for thing. In Adam, we all die. In Christ, we were made alive again. But do you hear that's not what Paul's saying?

What he says actually here in verse 15 is that, yeah, what Adam did was horrible, terrible—it resulted in death—but what Jesus did was better. Not just because it produced a better result; it was actually better—it abounded more.

This is a theological sort of a thing that we're dealing with here, but understand this: the work of Christ on the cross is better than the work of Adam in the garden, or the failure, if you will, of Adam in the garden. All right.

And so this gift of life that you and I have been given—it's greater than the penalty of death that we all received through Adam. And really, the book of Romans is Paul's explanation of that.

And when we get into the 11th chapter of this Book of Romans, Paul is going to be—he will have been talking and talking to us for a long time by that time about this salvation that you and I have.

And then, what he's going to do right before he goes on to other things to the end of the letter—in chapter 12 and following—he's going to say something. And it's going to be his summary of this salvation that has come to us through Jesus.

Let me put this on the screen. Let me show you. Preview of coming attractions. Here's what he's going to say.

Romans 11:33 (ESV)

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

The word, inscrutable means impossible to understand. Do you get that? Kind of what he's saying here. Sometimes we tend to look at Jesus as just coming and reversing the mistake of Adam. Paul says, oh no. It goes so, so much higher than that. What Jesus did is so much greater than what Adam did in the reverse.

He's actually going to go on and talk about it. Look at verse 16. He says, “*And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation (that's what Adam brought), but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification (or acquittal).¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*”

Do you see? Similarity by contrast.

“¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”

Verse 20: “*Now the law came in to increase the trespass...*” That means the law came to make sin appear really sinful. We learned how sinful our sin was when the law came. Look what he says. What's the second part of that verse? Verse 20 “*...but (I love that) where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,*”

Guys, this is where the more comes into play. Jesus did not simply balance what Adam did. Jesus didn't come and die on the cross and simply do away with

what Adam did. He came and grace abounded more. What He did is greater—far greater—than what Adam did.

Verse 21: *“so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

I’ve had a lot of people ask me over the years—this is a fairly common recurring question. They’ll say, if God knew that we were going to fall in... Well, first of all, some people just come out and ask the question, did God know we were going to fall in the garden? Of course He did. Did God know that Adam and Eve were going to fall into sin in the garden? Yes, of course He did.

Then they’ll say, okay, here’s the question. If God knew what was going to happen, if He knew that the sin of Adam and Eve was going to result in all that pain and all that tragedy and all that death and all that stuff, why did He let it happen? I’ve had that asked several times and maybe you’ve even asked it.

Well, in these verses, I think we find at least a partial answer to that. The answer is that God has received more glory and man has received more blessing through Christ’s sacrifice than if sin had never happened at all. We are actually better off in Christ than if we had only followed an unfallen Adam. How’s that for a mind-blower? Doesn’t it? It’s just like, boom.

If Adam had never sinned, sure, he would have continued to live on the earth, but he wouldn’t have had the blessings that you and I have—the promise of heaven. He wouldn’t have known what it was to be a redeemed child of God in that true sense that you and I are—a joint heir with Christ. Those things came as a result of the cross.

It’s one of the reasons I love that song we sang this morning: *Mighty is the Power of the Cross*. Wow! We sing that, and we don’t even know sometimes what we’re singing. Let me just end by telling you how—showing you how Paul put it. He did it from 2 Corinthians, and here’s what he said.

2 Corinthians (ESV)

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. (He says) For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...