



Standing in God's Grace Romans 5

Introduction

In the first four chapters of Romans, Paul has made it clear that every person is a sinner with no natural inclination to understand or seek God. There is no one who is righteous. All are guilty, condemned, and will be judged. Left on our own, the situation is hopeless because our own efforts to pick ourselves up by the bootstraps and make ourselves right before God are futile. But the wonderful news is that God does not require our feeble works. By His grace and mercy, He has planned a way to make sinners righteous in His sight. In fact, He has implemented that plan at tremendous cost to Himself. He has done all that needs to be done to procure and ensure our salvation. God's plan of justification has been explained and illustrated in detail by Paul. This explanation is for everyone. If you are a believer, Paul's explanation has been an instructive summary of the nature of your salvation. If you are not a believer, it is a call and a command to recognize your sin and depravity, repent, and turn to God for justification through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Beginning in Chapter 5, Paul addresses those who have believed, those *...having been justified by faith...* (Romans 5:1). "If you have not believed in Jesus, what Paul reveals in this chapter is not true of you. It is for those who, by the grace of God, have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ and have moved into a position of grace, who now have access to God and stand before Him in an entirely new manner" (Martyn Lloyd Jones as quoted in Romans Volume 2, James Montgomery Boice). Paul describes what it means to stand in God's grace. He expounds upon the benefits which are for those who believe and he takes a particular look at God's abounding grace through Christ in contrast to the curse which came through Adam.

Outline of Romans 5

- I. Implications of Justification - Romans 5:1-11
- II. Illustration of Adam - Romans 5:12-17
- III. God's Grace Abounds - Romans 5:18-21

I. Implications of Justification - Romans 5:1-11

Those who have been justified by faith have a long list of benefits which result from their new position in relation to God: peace with God, present grace, hope of glory, rejoicing in tribulations, the love of God poured out in our hearts, assurance of eternal salvation, and rejoicing in God.

A. Peace with God - Romans 5:1

"We have been at war with God, and He with us, because of our sin" (Romans Volume 2, James Montgomery Boice). But justification brings real peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ who has reconciled us to God through His death (Romans 5:10-11). Even though we are still sinners (Romans 5:8), we are no longer enemies of God (Romans 5:10). The war has ended.

B. Present grace - Romans 5:2

Through Jesus Christ, we also *have access by faith into this grace in which we stand*. In the Old Testament it was impossible for men and women to approach God. See Exodus 19:9-22 and 20:18-19 for an illustration of this. In fact, no one could even look upon God for fear of death (Exodus 33:18-23, Judges 13:22, 1 Samuel 6:19). But through faith in Christ, *we have access*.

1. *We have access* - 5:2

The Greek word translated *access* literally means "a bringing to". For this reason, many Bible translations interpret it with the word *introduction*, picturing an introduction into the presence of a king, thus giving access. *Christ came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father* (Ephesians 2:17-18). Our access is through Christ.

2. *Into this grace* - 5:2

"The grace into which we have access, or into which we have been introduced, is the state of justification" (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Charles Hodge). To be justified is to stand in the grace of God through the righteousness of Christ, just as if we had never sinned.

3. *In which we stand* - 5:2

We *stand* justified in God's grace. It is a position in which we will firmly continue.

C. Hope of the glory of God - Romans 5:2

We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. In Christian hope, there is no doubt. Our hope is certain: *Hope does not disappoint* (Romans 5:5). Our hope is in the glory of God. Even though sinners *fall short of the glory of God*

(Romans 3:23), Scripture says that believers will behold His glory (John 17:24) through Christ (Colossians 1:27) when it is revealed (Romans 8:18).

D. *Glory in tribulations* - Romans 5:3-5

The word translated *glory* in verse 3 is the same word translated *rejoice* in verse 2. It is much stronger than the usual New Testament word for rejoice and carries the idea of boasting or exulting. The reason believers can *glory in tribulations* is because they know *tribulation produces perseverance*, an ability to endure trials without losing heart. Perseverance in turn produces *character*. Leon Morris (*The Epistle to the Romans*), defines *character* as "testedness," a quality of being approved on the basis of a trial. Character produces *hope*. The Christian who has been tested has surely experienced God's faithfulness and has all the more reason to hope. This *hope does not disappoint*. It is not an illusion. It is a sure hope in which no one will ever have reason for regret. *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil* (Hebrews 6:19).

E. *The love of God has been poured out in our hearts* - Romans 5:5-8

God's love poured out in the heart of a believer confirms and secures our hope. "His love has been brought home to our hearts (so that we have recognized it and rejoice in it) by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (*Romans, A Shorter Commentary*, C.E.B. Cranfield). Paul describes God's generous love in verses 6—8.

1. *When we were still without strength... Christ died for the ungodly* - 5:6-7

Christ reached out to help us when we were powerless to help ourselves. We were *ungodly*, we were *sinners*, (Romans 5:8) and we were enemies of God (Romans 5:10). But in *due time*, which means at just the right time and in God's perfect timing when we needed it most, Christ died for us.

There is no example among humankind which could ever illustrate what Christ has done for us. In all probability, there is no one who would lay down their life for even a *righteous man*, one who does what the law requires. Perhaps, however, one might give his life for a really *good man*, who does above and beyond the demands of the law. But what God did through Christ demonstrates what real love is. It is far greater than any human love we could imagine. Christ died for sinners -- for totally depraved people who had no good in them at all!

2. *While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* - 5:8

Christ's death on the cross was the ultimate expression of God's love for us. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16).

F. *We shall be saved by His life* - Romans 5:9-10

Paul presents two parallel arguments which confirm that our salvation is sure.

1. Those who have been justified by Christ's blood *shall be saved from wrath through Him* - 5:9

We are justified by the blood of Christ; and once justified we are secure. We need not fear judgment because Christ has obtained salvation for us and He will keep us saved. He has rescued us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

2. If God sacrificed His Son for His enemies, He will surely save His friends - 5:10

If Christ's death on the cross reconciled us to God while *we were enemies*, we can be confident that having been reconciled, our salvation is sure. Christ has not only died, He has been raised from the dead and lives to make intercession for us. *Therefore, He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them* (Hebrews 7:25).

G. *We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconcillation* - Romans 5:11

Because we have been reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice in God. We were previously ungodly sinners and enemies of God. We opposed God's truth and God's will and provoked God's wrath (Romans 1:18). But through Christ we have been reconciled. The Greek word for *reconciled* denotes "an exchange". Through Christ, we have exchanged hostility with God for peace with God (Romans 5:1). This exchange was accomplished by God who lavished His grace upon us, exhibited in the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son on the cross to remove the wrath and judgment we deserve due to sin. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them* (2 Corinthians 5:19). *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He*

has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (Colossians 1:21-22). These verses present the ramifications of the reconciliation we have received and should cause us to rejoice in God!

II. Illustration of Adam - Romans 5:12-17

Paul has shown Christ to be the mediator between God and man. God's love is made evident through Christ's dying for us (5:8). We are *saved from wrath through Him* (5:9). We are reconciled to God through Christ's death and are *saved by His life* (5:10). We have *received reconciliation* through Him (5:11). All of these passages have revealed that Christ is God become man to be our representative before God and win access to God for us sinners. Through Christ's sacrifice, believers are reconciled to God and given life.

Paul will now show that this is in stark contrast to the first man, Adam, from whom we derive sin and death. "If the purpose of Christ's coming was to redeem us from the calamity into which Adam had fallen, and taken all his posterity headlong with him, a clearer realization of what we possess in Christ can come only when we have been shown what we have lost in Adam" (Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, Romans and Thessalonians, John Calvin).

In this passage, Paul reveals what we lost through Adam, but also how much more we have gained through Christ. He begins his comparison of Adam and Christ in verse 12, presents the pattern of sin and death in verses 13-14, and contrasts Adam and Christ in verses 15-17.

A. Sin and death entered the world through Adam - Romans 5:12-14

Sin entered the world through one man, and that man was Adam (5:14). From Adam, sin spread to all his posterity. Thus, all suffer *the wages of sin* which is *death* (Romans 6:23). "Death is not natural to humanity, but is the direct result of sin" (New Geneva Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers). Paul states that *death spread to all men, because all sinned* (5:12). Some take this to mean that all have followed Adam's example in sinning. However, in the context of the passage, Paul is probably referring to original sin; that all have sinned in Adam. In other words, as a result of Adam's sin, we all are sinners by nature. Psalm 51:5 shows that the sin nature is present from conception, *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me*. Leon Morris (The Epistle to the Romans) concludes "Adam's sin involved us all in a situation of sin and death from which there is no escape other than in Christ."

1. Sin was not imputed before the law - 5:13

Sin was in the world from the time of Adam onward. However, before the law of Moses there was no written law to break, so a person could not be considered a lawbreaker. God did not take an individual's personal sin into account.

2. Death reigned from Adam to Moses - 5:14

Although sin was not imputed when there was no law, people were still sinners and people still died. Death reigned. People sinned during this period, but it was not by breaking a specific command of God, as Adam did, since there was no specific command to break. Adam sinned by breaking a command: he disobeyed God's explicit warning not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6) The fact that death reigned even before the law and before imputation of sin is Paul's proof that all have sinned in Adam.

3. Adam is a type of Him who was to come - 5:14

In Scripture, a *type* is a person or event in the Old Testament which foreshadows or symbolizes another in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 gives the explanation of Adam as a type of Christ. It is important to note that as a type of Christ, Adam's effect on humanity actually followed a reverse pattern of Christ's effect on us. Adam's sin brought death and forfeited righteousness for all those he represented. Christ's obedience overcame death and gained that righteousness back for those who believe in Him.

B. Gift of righteousness came through Christ - Romans 5:15-17

These verses show that Adam's fall was powerful for harm, but the grace of God through Christ was much more powerful for good. While all are sinners and all die because of Adam's offense, all who believe are made righteous in Christ and receive eternal life.

1. Many died by Adam's offense - 5:15

It has already been stated that sin entered the world through Adam, that death entered through sin, and sin spread to all men.

2. Many gifted freely by grace - 5:15

C.E.B. Cranfield in Romans, A Shorter Commentary, points out "God is infinitely stronger than man and His grace infinitely more effective than man's sin." Although Adam's sin had an adverse effect on *many*, God's grace and Christ's free gift of grace, the gift of righteousness (5:17), was far greater in abounding to *many*.

3. Judgment and condemnation came through Adam - 5:16

Sin is so terrible and so powerful that Adam's one sin led to judgment, resulting in the condemnation of all men.

4. The free gift through Christ resulted in justification - 5:16

God's pardoning grace is much more powerful than sin. God's free gift through Christ was the answer to the judgment and condemnation which resulted from sin, and the free gift is righteousness (5:17).

5. Death reigned through Adam - 5:17

Adam's sin resulted in death for every person.

6. Believers reign through Christ - 5:17

God's grace abounds over Adam's failure and loss. Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ. *But God... even when we were dead in trespasses made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:4-6).

III. God's Grace Abounds - Romans 5:18-21

Paul recaps his comparison of Adam and Christ with an emphasis on God's abounding grace. Adam's fall was powerful for harm, but the grace of God through Christ was much more powerful for good.

- A. Righteousness from Christ repairs the ruin of Adam's fall - Romans 5:18-19

Adam sinned and brought condemnation to all men, but Christ has brought justification to all who receive His free gift of righteousness. Leon Morris states it very clearly: "All people insofar as they relate to Adam are sinners and insofar as they relate to Christ are righteous" (The Epistle to the Romans).

- B. The role of the law - Romans 5:20

Paul says, *the law entered*. The meaning expressed is that it "came in alongside." The law was included as part of God's plan for exposing sin and the superiority of grace. The law was added *that the offense might abound*. It came to change man's unconscious sin into definite conscious transgression. The law shows men and women how far off the mark they are from the will of God. It reveals sin for what it is and it shows the extent of the sin. But God's grace abounded more than sin abounded. God's grace has overcome the reign of sin and brought righteousness and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Our dependence on Jesus Christ is entire, and our obligations to Him are infinite. It is through His righteousness, without the shadow of merit on our own part, that we are justified. He alone was adequate to restore the ruins of the fall" (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Charles Hodge).

Applications

1. Do you have peace with God because you have believed in His Son Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death on your behalf? In what ways has this peace brought peace to your heart and life?
2. Have you gained assurance of God's love for you through Paul's explanation of the merciful and gracious work He has done through Christ on your behalf? Will you humbly thank God for His generous gift? How will you thank Him?
3. Do you sometimes give in to sin because you think it is small and inconsequential like Adam eating a forbidden fruit? Will you consider the consequences of that one sin before you give in to sin in the future?

QUESTIONS

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

Day One: Read all notes and references.

1. a. List some of the benefits believers enjoy as a result of being justified.
- b. Can you share something you learned about being justified which you didn't know or fully understand before?
2. a. What have all men and women inherited from Adam?
- b. How did the free gift of God through Christ change that?

Day Two: Read Romans 6:1-4.

3. a. What question does Paul ask in verse 1?
- b. Use Romans 5:20-21 to explain why Paul would bring up such a question?
4. a. What is Paul's answer in verse 2?
- b. Who are the *we* of verse 2? (This would also include the *us* and *we* of verses 3 and 4.) Describe who these are in as much detail as possible.
- c. How does Paul explain our death to sin? Try to put this in your own words.
5. How do the following Scripture passages help explain what Paul means by *baptized into Christ Jesus*?
1 Corinthians 6:17

1 Corinthians 10:2-4

Galatians 3:26-28
6. a. If we have died with Christ and been buried with Him, what else should also be true of us, according to verse 4? Explain why.

- b. From the following Scripture passages, what does *newness of life* include?

Ezekiel 36:26

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 4:22-24

Day Three: Read Romans 6:5-10.

7. a. How does verse 5 support what Paul has just said in verse 4?

b. If verse 5 is true, then what do we know? Give verse.

8. a. Use words or phrases from Romans 5 to describe our old man (6:6).

b. Use words or phrases from Romans 5 to describe those who are no longer slaves to sin (6:6).

c. What is absolutely true of those who have died with Christ and are no longer slaves of sin? Give verse(s).

9. If you have *died with Christ*, why would you have reason to believe that you will also *live with Him*? Give verses.

10. From Hebrews 7:26-27 and 9:12, what are the implications of Christ having *died to sin once for all*?

Day Four: Read Romans 6:11-14.

11. a. What does Paul exhort his readers to do in verses 11 and 12, which is the very first exhortation in this letter?

b. How does Philippians 3:13-14 help explain what it means to be *alive to God*.

12. Use Colossians 3:1-10 to describe what it means to:

a. *Present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin.*

b. *Present yourself to God....and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

13. Why does sin *not have dominion over you*?

Day Five: Read Romans 6:15-18.

14. a. What new question arises as a result of Paul's teaching up to this point?

b. What is the answer?
15. a. How can you determine whose slave you are? Give verse.

b. What is the consequence of being a slave of sin?
c. What is the result of being a slave of obedience?
d. In verse 17, Paul describes what the obedient have obeyed. What is it?

e. What words or phrases in Romans 1:1, 2 Timothy 4:3, and Titus 1:9 further describe what the obedient obey?
16. a. Why does Paul give thanks to God?

b. ? (Thought Question) Explain why thanks are due to God and not to ourselves for being obedient.

Day Six: Read Romans 6:19-23.

17. a. Why does Paul say he is using the human example of slavery (speaking in human terms)?

b. What do you think this means?
18. a. What does Paul exhort his readers to do now?

b. What are the great benefits of following Paul's advice? Give both the things you will avoid and things you will enjoy.
19. What distinct contrasts stand out to you in Romans 6:23?
20. a. What do you learn about eternal life from this passage?

b. What more do you learn about eternal life from John 17:1-4?

