

p 35 WEEK 5: HOPE AS A RESULT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

Romans 5:1–21

The Place of the Passage

The Bible reveals the secret to inconceivable and unconquerable joy. It is this, according to Romans 5:20: if we are in Christ, our sin cannot outpace God's grace. In Romans 5, Paul continues to develop his grand gospel narrative, the epic story of the redemption that is available for sinners in Christ Jesus. Previously he has shown us the sinfulness of all mankind, Jew and non-Jew alike. Then he showed us that God demonstrates his righteousness even in the forgiving of sins because he has placed the punishment for those sins on his sinless Son. This is how God's righteousness comes not to condemn us but to save us! As the plot thickens in Romans 5, Paul begins to explore the implications and applications of the gospel announcement that God saves sinners. From here, through Romans 6 and beyond, Paul will go on to discuss why p 36 the gospel of grace outlined in Romans 1–5 promotes holiness rather than a license to sin.

The Big Picture

Romans 5 preaches a comfort and peace surpassing each and every earthly circumstance, placing the Christian who is justified by faith in a place of utter security and hope.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, Romans 5:1–21. Then review the shorter passages below and write your own notes on the following questions. (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, pages 2165–2167; also available online at www.esvbible.org.)

1. Assurance of Hope (5:1–11)

Paul's hope is not a speculative thing. It is a joyful expectation. Why?

How is Christian hope (5:2) different from the way most people think of hope?

p 37 Why does Paul say that hope does not put us to shame (5:5)?

How is good character related to good hope (5:4)?

What is the significance of noting that Christ died for us “while we were still sinners” (5:8)?

2. Hope in Christ’s Triumph over Adam’s Sin (5:12–21)

According to 5:12–14, how would people know sin was in the world before the law revealed it? What does this tell us about sin?

p 38 Paul vividly contrasts the grace in Christ with the sin in Adam. How is the free gift of grace not like the trespass (5:15)? What does it mean to be under the realm of Christ rather than under the realm of Adam?

What does Paul mean when he says “the law came in to increase the trespass” (5:20)?

Read through the following three sections on *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings*. Then take time to reflect on the *Personal Implications* these sections have for your walk with the Lord.

Gospel Glimpses

CONDEMNATION FOR EVERYONE, LIFE FOR ANYONE. In Romans 5:18, Paul explains how sin has come to “all” because of Adam’s sin and how, similarly, the grace of God in Christ comes to all. The Bible clearly teaches that God’s wrath remains on those who do not receive God’s gift of grace by faith, and that they will therefore receive eternal condemnation for their sins. Therefore, this verse should not be seen as teaching universalism (the belief that every individual person will be saved). Rather, in light of Paul’s discussions throughout Romans of the roles of Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) in God’s **p 39** saving purposes, this verse should be seen in terms of “transculturalism,” that is, it teaches that people of all kinds will be saved. Paul’s use of the expression “the many” in verse 19 helps to clarify this. The gospel is for “the many,” Jews and Gentiles alike.

“ABOUNDING GRACE.” The promise of Romans 5:20–21 is thrilling. Because those saved by grace through faith are freely and fully justified, having been forgiven, counted righteous, and reconciled to God the Father, no sin can overcome God’s abundant grace. He is more ready to forgive than we are to sin. And oh, how prone to sin we are! We are chomping at the bit, aren’t we? Wretches as we are, who will rescue us? Praise be to God for his glorious grace (Rom. 7:24–25). There is more grace in him than sin in us.

Whole-Bible Connections

THE LAST ADAM. Romans 5:14 offers us a glimpse of a truth that Paul more directly reveals in 1 Corinthians 15:22, where he writes, “as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” As sin and death entered the world through Adam, grace and life entered the world through Jesus. In this way, Jesus is the second (or “last”) Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). This template, what is sometimes called “typology,” is seen throughout the Old Testament. All of the heroes of the faith were stained by Adam’s sin. Jesus, the sinless redeemer of what Adam corrupted, is the truer and better Adam, the prophet, priest, and king that we all so desperately need.

Theological Soundings

CHRISTUS VICTOR. On the cross, Jesus Christ absorbs the wrath of God, the due punishment for our sins, and thereby satisfies the justice of God and purchases our pardon. This is often called “penal substitution,” because it describes the fulfillment of the Old Testament’s blood sacrifices as a punishment (penal) in the place of the sinner (substitution). But though penal substitution is the center of Christ’s atoning work, the Scriptures explain it in other important ways as well. One of these views of the atonement is traditionally called *Christus Victor*, a Latin phrase that essentially means what it looks like—Christ the Victor. Jesus on the cross became not just the propitiating sacrifice for sin but the conqueror triumphing over sin and the powers of evil. His crucifixion was in reality a coronation! Colossians 2:15 and Hebrews 2:14–15 speak to Christ’s triumph clearly, but there are also shades of it throughout Romans 5 in Paul’s use of “reign.” Sin reigned in us before Christ died. At the cross, Christ reigned over sin, triumphed over the evil rule, and thereby showed himself, even on the cross, Lord over us.

p 40 **“TO INCREASE THE TRESPASS.”** We can always count on the Bible to “shoot straight” with us. No one is as honest with us *about us* as God is. So when Paul writes in Romans 5:20, “Now the law came in to increase the trespass,” we have no choice but to admit what is true of us. When someone tells us not to do something, we instinctively want to do it. Ever heard the phrase “Rules are meant to be broken”? Here is a convicting truth about the law: it doesn’t just reveal our sin; in many ways it provokes us to sin even more. Not because the law is bad, but because we are. What amazing grace that God would forgive our perverse tendency to turn even his holy law into an opportunity for sinning.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Romans 5 for your own life today. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of (1) the *Gospel Glimpses*, (2) the *Whole-Bible Connections*, (3) the *Theological Soundings*, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses

2. Whole-Bible Connections

3. Theological Soundings

p 41 4. Romans 5

As You Finish This Unit ...

Take a moment to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Romans. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you.