

## The Reign of Grace

Romans 5:17-21

6/ 12/ 05

### Intro

In this section of Romans 5, Paul is demonstrating the difference between what we received in Adam and what we receive in Jesus Christ.

He said that where once we were in Adam, we are now in Jesus. That changes everything. In Adam, sin and death reigned, but in Jesus grace reigns.

That is what we will discover in these verses – how grace reigns in us now that we are in Jesus Christ.

### **These are insights into the grace that we have received in Christ Jesus.**

#### **I. Sin Reigns in Death**

##### A. We were all in Adam

- Adam is the father of all humanity. We were all in him -- in his loins – when he lived.
- But we were also in him when he sinned.
- Adam's sin is imputed to us as those who were in him.
  - though we did not do Adam's sin, it is as if we had done, though we did not;
  - now, we are born with a propensity to sin in the likeness of our father, Adam.

- You don't have to teach a child to be bad, they are born that way.

### **Illus – A report from the Minnesota Crime Commission has captured the universal tendency toward evil:**

Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants, when he wants it – his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toy, his uncle's watch. Deny him these wants, and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous, were he not so helpless. He is dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist.

- We were born after the likeness of Adam's sin.

### **I Corinthians 15:21-22, "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."**

##### B. Death entered through sin

- God had warned Adam that the consequences of rebelliousness would be death...

### **Genesis 2:16-17, The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."**

- There are essentially two types of death:
  - Physical death – God said that as a consequence of sin, man would return to the dust from which he was made.
  - Spiritual death – this is the separation that has come between us and God.

**Illus – Adam and God walked together in the cool of the evening, but after Adam sinned, he hid from God.**

C. Sin reigns in all who are in Adam

- Sin then, becomes the operative force in those who are in Adam.
- Our nature is that as soon as there is a law, we want to break it.

**verse 20 – the Law came in that the transgression might increase.**

**Illus – Our boys didn’t like our food when they first came to live with us. It didn’t work to make rules that they had to eat it, so we did the opposite.**

- It means that sin had dominion.

**Psalm 119:133, “Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.”**

- The nature of sin is best seen in our strong-willed independence. “No one is going to tell is what to do!”

<b>II. Grace Reigns in Life</b>
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A. Now we are in Christ Jesus

- Where once we were in Adam and his sin was imputed to us as condemnation, now we are in Christ Jesus and His righteousness is imputed to us as life eternal.
- Where Adam gave us a propensity toward sin, Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit which produces fruit of righteousness.
- We were in Jesus when He died.

**Galatians 2:20-21, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”**

B. Grace reigns in righteousness

- In Adam, we received his sin; in Jesus, we received His righteousness by grace.
- We have been justified and made righteous by grace. Many think this means that it is “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned.
- That much is true and yet much more, we have been given the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

**II Corinthians 5:21, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

- Therefore, all the requirements of holiness, of the Law have been fulfilled in us by the gift of grace God has given us in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 8:3-4, “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us,”**

C. We now have life

**Illus – Now we can walk together with God again in the cool of the evening and enjoy sweet fellowship with God.**

- There is no longer any separation from God. This was symbolized at Christ’s death when the veil in the Temple was torn in two.

**Hebrews 10:19-22, “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,”**

- We now come from death to life.

**John 5:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”**

- We will also receive imperishable bodies.

**I Corinthians 15:42-49 – Imperishable heavenly bodies.**

**Illus – There was a wrong teaching, called the “Manifest Children of God,” that taught that we receive these imperishable bodies now and that the church will then be able to rule and reign now on this earth.**

### **III. Grace Has No Limits**

A. Grace is greater than all our sin

- Verse 20 says that the Law came in that the transgression might increase.
- But that when sin increased, grace increased all the more.
- The Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ...

**Galatians 3:23-29 – The Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ**

- Sin is finite, and therefore limited, but Christ’s payment for sin is unlimited because of God’s infinite nature.
- There is also a great debate in the church as to whether Christ’s atoning work on the cross was limited in that He died only for those who are saved, or unlimited -- He died for the sins of the whole world. I believe that it is unlimited in the infinite nature of Jesus Christ.

**II Peter 2:1, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among**

**you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”**

B. Should we sin that grace might increase?

- Some look at the infinite nature of grace and conclude that it doesn't matter whether we sin.
- In fact, some even went so far as to say that since grace is increased with sin, we should continue in sin that grace might then increase. **“God forbid!”** Paul responds.
- If we have died to sin in Christ Jesus, we will not live in it. In other words, “Do not be mistaken, there is no life in sin and there never will be.:

**Romans 6:2, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”**

**Galatians 6:7-8, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”**

Conclusion
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**When we see the abundance of God's grace, and all that God has done for us in Christ Jesus, it should cause us to respond by giving God all of our hearts. If we have found life in Him, then we should live in Him.**