

Romans

Romans Chapter Five

Romans 5:12-21

January 10, 2010

This is lesson number **23** in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “Representation”

Perhaps it is because I have read Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones so much that I began to think like he did. In any case, my method of lesson preparation is to read the text over and over in several reliable translations. Then I try to write down the organization of how to present the lesson from the text. After doing that I read commentaries to see if I have missed any significant points. The commentaries either affirm my understanding or challenge me to do more study of Scripture. Then I read Lloyd-Jones last; it is like eating your desert after a meal. So after setting out my organization for this passage, I found that it was much the same as Lloyd-Jones. If you missed my short introduction to Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, suffice it to say that he was perhaps the greatest preacher and expositor of the 20th Century.

Often, Lloyd-Jones says something to the effect, “This is perhaps the most important text in the Bible.” Romans 5:12-21 is one of those examples.

Read 5:12 - 21

Romans 5:12 begins a new section of Paul’s letter and it continues through 8:39. The whole of Chapter 5 is assurance **in** Christ.

Verse 12 begins with “Therefore,” or “Wherefore,” and should cause us to ask what is being summarized. “Therefore,” - what?

“Therefore,” may call up everything that has gone before, from Chapter One up to this “therefore.”

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E.g.: In this great letter to the Christians at Rome, Paul has defined the Gospel in terms of the Scripture {O.T.}. Several times in this series of studies we have made the argument that in order to understand the New Testament you must have a knowledge of the Old Testament.

But there is this caution:

You must interpret the Old Testament with the New Testament.

Failing to interpret the O.T. by the N.T. leads to such notions that God will yet establish the Jews as a nation, with a temple and animal sacrifices; that God will again raise the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles and that separation will continue forever into eternity.

Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, indeed the N.T., will not allow a return to types and adumbration when we have the fulfillment of all of the O.T. types of salvation in Jesus Christ. Worship Jesus - not a system of eschatology!

“Therefore....” “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel...” Further:

The Gospel is robbed of its content if we do not preach the **wrath of God**.

As soon as Paul stated the theme of the letter, and that he was not ashamed of the Gospel, he argued that the wrath of God **is being revealed** against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Romans proves that Gentiles and Jews, the entire human race, are all under the wrath of God. Even those who never heard the law given to Israel through Moses or the Good News of Jesus Christ are justly condemned. You will be fighting against God if you refuse to accept the condemnation of all people by a holy God.

We will see that this is exactly the point of verse 12.

There is no refuge in works [human response] for justification. Any time you hear someone say something like: You must **do** thus and so “in order to be saved,” they have crossed over into works for salvation. Works salvation can be as elaborate as Roman Catholicism with all of its sacraments, or as deceptive as a local church requiring **baptism** and being counted as one of their number “in order to be saved.”

Works salvation can be as demanding as the concept {never taught in the Bible} that God saved the Jews who obeyed the law, or as subtle as the proposition offered by far too many Baptist preachers who plead for people to make a “decision” to “allow” God to save you.

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“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight”

JUSTIFIED? We saw in our previous studies that:
Justification is the act of the Sovereign God “who justifies the ungodly.”

OR,

“Therefore,” here at verse 12 may have a more narrow reference to 5:1-11:

When we are, in fact, justified, we have peace with God.

Having been justified by faith, we are being sanctified, and learning to “glory in tribulations.” “... *because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*”

Justification is imputed {charged} when we were “without strength.”

Having been saved {**justified**}; we are being saved {**sanctified**}; and “having now been justified by His blood, we will be saved from wrath {**glorified**} through Him, even Jesus Christ.”

OR YET, and this is my conclusion, that the “Therefore” in verse 12 is an explanation of 5: 9-11, not that it cannot summarize all that has been written before, or be a wrap up of 5: 1-11.

My reason for this conclusion is that Romans 5:12-21 is an expansion of the phrase in verse 10, “we shall be saved by {**in**} His life.”

Romans 5:12-21 deals with the **Doctrine of Representation**.

Simply stated, the **Doctrine of Representation** says that Adam and Christ were representative persons. What they each did had a profound effect on those people they represented. Whatever they did for evil or for good was imputed to those people they represented.

In verse 10, the phrase should be, “... we shall be saved **in** His life.”

Not “**by**” His life.

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My point is that the Gospel is not a proposition that Jesus has died for sin in a general sense and if only a person will accept that proposition, **then** God will recognize their faith and **then** on the basis of a “decision,” God will justify them.

That is the connotation of, “... we will be saved **‘by’** His life.”

Listen carefully to what many preachers are presenting as the Gospel.
Listen to see if it is man or God that is the determinate cause of salvation.

The Bible teaches that we are justified in the same way that God justified Abraham, the father of the faithful, and David.

Go back to Chapter 4, what “part” did Abraham have as far as his being justified?

Read 4:23-25 carefully and see that what was written about the justification of Abraham was written for the understanding of the church.

That is why, I agree with Lloyd-Jones, that 5:12-21 is perhaps, the most important passage in the entire Bible.

From verse 10: “... we shall be saved **in** His life.”

In Ephesians 1:3-12 Paul uses the phrase “in Christ,” “In Him,” or, “in the Beloved,” in the sense of “Representation” no less than seven times.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, 4 just as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted **in the Beloved**. 7 **In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed **in Himself**, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- **in Him**. 11 **In Him** also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ, should be to the praise of His glory.

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To repeat:

“Simply stated, the **Doctrine of Representation** says that Adam and Christ were representative persons. What they each did had a profound effect on those people they represented. Whatever they did for evil or for good was imputed to those people they represented.”

Two men in history: The first man and the second Man; the first Adam and the last Adam. Every one of us, all of mankind, are represented either by Adam or by Christ:

You are either, by your natural birth, still “in Adam,” or, by grace, you are “in Christ.”

So “in His life,” has an extremely important meaning: As Christ lives, so do His people for whom He died, those who are “in Christ.”

And the passage in Ephesians could not be more clear as to when those who are “in Christ,” were so chosen!

Someone remind me; if you are a Christian when were you chosen by God? That is not asking when were you justified, but when were you chosen.

We will discuss the error of “eternal justification.” That is the teaching that an elect person is justified from eternity.

“Justification waits on faith.” E. W. Johnson

Cf. Romans 16:7 and the Publican and the Pharisee in the temple.

Now I want to suspend our discussion of the **Doctrine of Representation** for a while in order to talk about some underlying issues that this text suggests.

This morning I will introduce several issues and then expand the discussion of them at the appropriate place. You need to understand why this passage, especially, verse 12, is so important. What you understand about verse 12, is the foundation for how you understand the entire Bible; how you view the world, sin, and salvation.

You may be amazed at the issues that derive from this one verse!

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Some of the issues that flow from this passage include:

1. **Creation:** Are we living in an old universe, i.e., billions of years since the beginning? Or, is the earth and the universe relatively “young?”

That leads to the historicity of Genesis. Is Genesis history or myth?

2. **Original sin:** Were you and I in any way involved in the act of the first man? Palagianism {imitation}; Infection {a bent to sin, but not absolutely}; Inclusion {representation}.

Once correctly defined how does God deal with “original sin?”

3. **Sin;** death; imputation of guilt; the reign of death.

4. **Infants and imbeciles:**

What is the eternal destiny of mentally incompetent souls?

5. **Representation:** Covenant Theology; Adam as a type of Jesus Christ.

We will explore the manner of representation: Federalism or Realism; contract or law.

6. The **intent** of the atonement of Christ: For whom did Christ die?

The human race without exception? Or, only the elect of God?

7. The **extent** of the atonement of Christ: Universalism?

8. The **purpose of the law.** A means to be saved; or to aggravate sin?

9. The superiority of **grace over sin.** The gift of grace.

Surely you can see that this is a most important passage of Scripture and I trust you will listen **without prejudice.**

Some who hear this lesson may have never heard the Gospel.

How dare I say such a provoking thing? Because, in my own experience, what I hear being preached in far too many Baptist churches is simply not the Gospel of which the Apostle Paul, and I trust, myself, are not ashamed.

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It is also possible that even though you have been exposed to the truth, it has never penetrated your heart. So when I ask you to listen without prejudice, I mean by that that what I think and what you think have little or no value unless our beliefs are backed up by the power of God's word.

These lessons on 5:12-21 will not "tickle your ears." But if you glory in Christ they will not offend you because they will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I ask you again to listen **without prejudice**. Please do not close your mind to something because it may not be what you "have always believed." All I ask is that you be convinced by the Word of God; by the witness of the Holy Spirit of the truth of anything that I teach. If you find that you have some deeply held belief that is in conflict with the Word of God, then you should pray that you will be teachable. If you do not agree that I am teaching the truth, you should discuss it with me. I have had the experience of someone telling me, "I don't care what the Bible says, I just don't accept it!"

Be teachable. Being teachable does not mean to follow "every wind of doctrine," but it does mean to submit to the authority of God's Word; to "examine the Scripture to see if these things be so."

Peter was a man with a **teachable** spirit. After Paul "withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed . . ." {Galatians 2:11 }, Peter wrote this:

2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our **beloved brother** Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things **hard to understand**, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also **the rest of the Scriptures**. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 **but grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

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Preaching the Gospel is a serious matter; and **hearing** the Gospel is a serious matter

2 Corinthians 2: 12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to **preach Christ's gospel**, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. 14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us **diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge** in every place. 15 For we are to God the **fragrance of Christ** among those who are **being saved** and among those who are **perishing**. 16 To the one we are the **aroma of death** leading to death, and to the other the **aroma of life** leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, **peddling the word of God**; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

How does the Gospel come to “hearing” ears?

There are a fixed number of people, known only to God from before the foundation of the world, they are chosen in Christ, Christ made atonement for them, and they are called by the Holy Spirit.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God **from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth**, 14 to which He **called you by our gospel**, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Do you understand why I implore you to listen **without prejudice**?

What is being preached in this place is the very Gospel;

We who preach and teach will be held to account for what we present, and you, dear soul, will answer for how you hear it.

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