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# Romans

**But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.** Romans 5:15

Paul is showing the parallel between Adam and Christ. But, although the lines are parallel in direction, they are vastly different in altitude. Where Adam's line runs in a downward motion, Christ's soars to the heavens. We see the contrast with the word "but." Death entered the world and death reigned over man... but. "But the free gift is not like the offense." The gift referred to is the work of Jesus. What He did is not at all like what Adam did.

"For if by one man's offense" is speaking of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Adam had one rule to follow and he failed to do so. By this one transgression "many died." This is the state of the world as explained by Paul. Every person born from the time of Adam died the moment Adam died. Because we were "in" Adam though not yet born, we inherited the spiritually dead state that He earned.

However, in Christ there is a difference. Adam's line plummeted to the depths of the grave, but Christ's line will take a different path. "Much more" shows us the divergence of the lines. What Adam did brought death to man, but "much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."

Adam was created sinless; Jesus was born sinless. Adam sinned; Jesus never sinned. Adam's disobedience brought about immediate spiritual death to all people and eventual physical death to all; Christ's obedience - being far superior to Adam's disobedience - brought about the possibility of immediate eternal spiritual life to any and all who will receive it and eventual eternal physical life to all of the same. Adam's failure resulted in the wages of death; Christ's triumph brought about the gift of God's grace which is eternal life.

The gift is superior in all ways, but it is a gift. A gift is not forced, just as wages are not a gift. Wages are earned, but gifts are received. The truth that must be understood is that just as Adam freely chose to disobey (it was not an act which can be ascribed to God in any way) the lost son of Adam must freely choose to receive the gift offered by God.

Note: The term "free gift" is a redundancy. The original Greek simply uses the term charisma, meaning "grace." If something has a price attached to it, it is neither "free" nor a "gift." If it is free, it is a gift and if it is a gift, it is free.

Life application: Life itself is a gift. It is unmerited, and therefore we cannot complain about how ours turns out. Some people live long, healthy lives; some people live short, pain-filled lives. Some are rich; some are poor. Some are born in Japan; some are born in Canada. These things in no way imply that God is unfair. The same is true with our salvation. God offered His Son in payment for our sins. We cannot call God unfair if we reject this offer, nor can we claim He is unfair if we never heard the good news. Time and place are His decision, but if the gift is available it is up to us to receive it. Don't refuse the grace of God found in Jesus... it is a blessing of eternal value.

**And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. Romans 5:16**

There are different views on our state as human beings before God. Some say that we don't bear Adam's guilt at all. Some say we bear it after our first committed sin. And then there is the premise that we are "in" Adam and bear his guilt. The final option is the only biblically acceptable answer. The other two options come from an emotional response to the state of those who have died - maybe based on age or on whether they have or have not been given the gospel. In other words, for many theologians, the thought of death and its consequences is something that moves them emotionally in the direction of a stand which is unbiblical.

However, proper theology cannot be based on emotions. We are to be impassionate in our evaluation, acceptance, and instruction concerning the truths the Bible contains. Passion is to be a result of our understanding of God's word, not the basis for it. When we set aside our emotions, we allow God to be God. He is the ultimate authority of our relationship with Him.

It is immensely hard to look at someone who is in emotional distress over the death of a loved one who was probably not saved and tell them that there is one way to be reconciled to God and that it is through the work of Jesus. And not only is it through Jesus' work, but that His work came as a response to the misdeed of Adam, thus implying that all human beings are "in" Adam and must move "to" Christ. But this is what the Bible teaches - both implicitly and explicitly.

Paul tells us that "the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned." The gift is Jesus; the one who sinned is Adam. He is making a contrast between the two. Adam's deeds went in one direction, but Christ's head in another. Next Paul states, "for" in order to show where the contrast leads.

He initiates the thought with "the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation." This is Adam's sin and it is universal in its scope. There are no exemptions for age, level of intelligence, living in a land where the gospel hasn't been preached, etc. All are in Adam and the judgment was pronounced on the human race because of his transgression. When he sinned, judgment resulted

in condemnation. However, in the same verse we are given the good news - "the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification."

The gift as noted is Jesus. His work stands in opposition to Adam's offense and provides the release needed from Adam's authority to that of Christ. It also results in our justification in opposition to Adam's condemnation. This is the greatness of the work of Christ. Where man failed, Jesus prevailed. Where God was rejected, through Christ we are accepted. Where man stood condemned because of our earthly father, he can now stand justified because of the gift of our heavenly Father.

Is it fair that man who hasn't heard the gospel stands condemned? The answer is yes. Adam was given both the gift of sinless life and the gift of free will. Adam willingly rejected the authority of his Creator when he exercised his free will. Along with this came his free will to procreate in his fallen state. Because he did, every person's life after him has been a decision of man to continue in the state we are in. But from the beginning there was the promise that this state wouldn't last forever. For those who have put their faith in this promise, there is a better hope.

When Christ came, He was the fulfillment of that hope and now a new direction is possible for the human race. But it must come by the same free will. This is why Jesus gave the great commission. If a person who had never heard the gospel could be saved, then it would be better to never tell anyone what Jesus did. But this would be completely contrary to the biblical message.

Life application: When evaluating the Bible's message, be sure to keep your emotions from dictating your theology. Rather, let your theology dictate your emotions. When you see the glory of what God has done for you, rejoice in the message with all of your heart. And then let your heart be broken for those who haven't yet heard it and determine in yourself to get the word out so that they too can know the glory of God in the Person of Jesus!

**For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Romans 5:17**

This verse is taking what was previously explained and re-explaining it in a condensed way - "For if..."

"For if by the one man's offense death reigned..." This one man is Adam. Only one offense occurred because there was only one command given. This is to show us the magnitude of sin. One man, the only man on earth, was given one command, "You shall not...", and he violated that command. Because he disobeyed, the Bible teaches that "death reigned through the one."

This one offense by the one man caused death to enter the world and it spread to all people from him. Remember, this is a "spiritual death." When he sinned, he continued to live physically for 930 years even though he was told he would "die" on the day he ate of the fruit. The death was spiritual and it resulted in a chasm between the man and his Creator. Physical death was merely a consequence of the spiritual death. This death reigns in all humans and it came about by an act of the volitional will.

However, next comes the introduction of the Good News; the fulfillment of the promise which was given moments after the fall. Christ came to undo Adam's misdeed. We are told that if this one offense committed by this one man caused death to reign, "much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." This is stated to show the contrast between the magnitude of even one sin and the overwhelming majesty of the work of Christ.

It is almost beyond comprehension to consider! Those who will simply "receive" what Christ has done will "reign in life." The contrast is absolute - where death reigned through offense, we can now reign in life through the gift. The "much more" comes in a variety of ways. Adam was created, but Christ is the Creator.

Adam sinned in innocence, but Christ prevailed with knowledge. Adam had only one command to obey, but Christ was born under the law. Adam was never exposed to other sin; Jesus walked throughout His life in a world of sin. Adam died for his own sin, but Christ died for our sins.

As has happened on numerous times so far in the New Testament, and which will continue to occur throughout its pages, a word which requires action on the part of the lost soul is used. One must "receive" what is offered. Just as Adam's fall was because of sin which was willful, our restoration must come about by faith which is willful. The concept of God, "regenerating" a person to believe is unbiblical. We are dead spiritually, but we are not dead beings. We have a free-will and we must exercise it.

The importance of this cannot be understated because if man is "regenerated" in order to believe as Calvinism teaches, then there is truly no point in evangelizing anyone. If God chooses those who will believe apart from the free will of the individual, then the work is already done; the Great Commission isn't really so great. But when we understand the magnitude of our sitting by idly and not telling others about the Lord, we will be impelled to act and to tell of the greatness of the work of Christ as is revealed in today's verse.

For reasons such as were noted concerning His act, "much more!" Because of Jesus' work, those who receive Him are granted not just grace, but an abundance of it. Those who receive him move from death to life. Those who receive Him move from abasement to supremacy. The thought of today's verse is one of superabundance in that what was wrecked is now restored, plus. It is the grandeur of a plan conceived in the halls of eternity and instituted in the stream of time. It is the surest guarantee of eternal life and absolute security. It is the gift of God. It is Jesus.

Life application: Much more is much more. We are completely fallen in Adam; we are completely rescued in Christ. Adam failed and you came from him; Christ prevailed and you moved to Him. Stand fast in the truth that Christ is completely capable of saving.

**Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:18**

"Therefore" - because of what has been presented we can now make the following conclusions. "As through one man's offense" is speaking of Adam and his disobeying the Lord. Because of this offense, "judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation. This is universal in scope. No human being born of a man is exempt from this statement. It's important to keep reminding ourselves that the death which occurred because of Adam's offense was initially spiritual in nature. Physical death was a result of the spiritual death.

If this point is overlooked or ignored, then the fallen state of man is suddenly presented as something not inherited by conception, but is inherited by circumstance. What is proposed then is that we aren't truly "in Adam" in the fullest sense; physical death is inherited, but spiritual death isn't. This is contrary to the entire premise of Scripture, but it is a tenet which theologians cling to because of emotional responses to the world as they perceive it.

Paul says it is otherwise. All men are condemned through Adam, without exception. However, the good news is given in this same verse. "Even so" indicates "in the same manner." Just as happened through Adam will now happen through Christ. "Through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men." This Man is Jesus. His righteous act, His death on our behalf, is now available to all men, "resulting in justification of life." This is also universal in scope, however, it is universal potentially, not actually. In other words, Jesus' work is available to all, but it will not be realized in all. One must choose Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, Paul says -

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

One must move from Adam to Christ (be "in" Christ) for the change to be realized. All are in Adam and all die; all are offered Christ and shall be made alive if they

are in Christ. This understanding of 1 Corinthians 15:22 is accurate because elsewhere the Bible makes it clear that condemnation remains for those who are apart from Christ.

Understanding this, we can see that there are three types of imputation being spoken of in this one verse -

- 1) The imputation of Adam's sin to all humanity (with the caveat that sin transfers through the male, thus Christ did not inherit Adam's sin).
- 2) The imputation of man's sin to Christ, which occurs by faith in Him. This includes all sin, both that imputed from Adam and that which is committed by the individual.
- 3) The imputation of Christ's righteousness to man who has demonstrated faith in God's provision through Christ.

Life application: One sin resulted in condemnation for man. If this could be repeated after coming to Christ, it would be repeated continuously until our death. The good news is that receiving Christ is a one-time event. The efficacy of Christ's work is absolute, complete, and eternal. Stand fast in this. You are saved despite yourself.

**For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.** Romans 5:19

Building on what he said in 5:18, Paul shows the result of Adam's offense and Jesus' righteous act - the contrast is clear. Adam's disobedience is contrasted with Jesus' obedience. The outcome is that through Adam humanity became sinners; through Jesus humanity will be made righteous.

As the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), humanity died, but through Jesus, eternal life can be restored (John 3:16).



For those who remain in Adam, there will be "outer darkness" (Matthew 25:30), but for those who move to Christ there will be eternal light (Revelation 21:23).

The words here are meant to inspire us to reach out for the cross and to receive the work of Jesus. It is hard to imagine the decision to reject Him, but He indicated that it is in our nature to desire our spiritually blinded state - "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:19

Everything around Jesus' words in John 3:19 indicates that if we are willing to open our eyes, we can see the light and step into it. When that choice is made, its effects are glorious. Adam's misdeed is overturned by the work of Christ.

Life application: How long did you walk in darkness before you came to the light? Don't give up on those who have turned down Jesus, but keep praying for them and being a witness to them of the path which will restore them to God. Keep sharing Jesus with them.