

Christ's Obedience And Adam's Sin

Clearing the Debt

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I'm very glad to be here once more to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and we turn in the book of Romans to chapter 5, the book of Romans and chapter 5. Romans 5 and reading from the beginning of the chapter.

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned

by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. May the Lord bless the reading of his word to our hearts.

Our theme this evening is "Christ's Obedience And Adam's Sin." Christ's obedience and Adam's sin. The Apostle Peter in the second epistle of Peter in chapter 3 and verse 16 refers to Paul's letters, Paul's epistles, as scripture, that is, as part of the word of God. He also says that in them are some things hard to be understood, and so there are. Perhaps this passage is one of those hard things to be understood and yet, you know, if we are going to use our mental energy for anything, what better to employ it on than the study of the word of God. Having said that, whether our mental powers are great or not, we always need to ask God to give us the Holy Spirit's help or else we never understand anything directly and much less do we receive it into our hearts so as to follow it. Having said all of that, though many of the individual phrases in this passage are difficult to pin down, the overall train of thought, the overall line of argument is not so difficult.

In the earlier chapters of Romans, we've seen that God saves through the gospel of Christ and only through the gospel of Christ. We've seen that God reveals in the gospel his provided righteousness for sinners in the Lord Jesus Christ, a righteousness wrought out by Christ, keeping God's law when he came into this world, when he was manifest in the flesh, when he was God become man without ceasing to be God but became truly a man. He kept the whole of God's law all the days that he lived in this world and yet he bore the punishment of sin, the punishment of transgression of that law, he was acting as the substitute of sinners. And this righteousness that Christ wrought out on behalf of sinners is made known to us in the gospel; that's why it is the gospel, the good news because it tells us that God has provided a righteousness which is imputed, reckoned to the account of every sinner who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. We also learned last night in chapter 4 that not only does God only forgive sinners through Christ now but even in the Old Testament, even right back to the fall of man, the fall of Adam, from then onwards the only way there ever was to God was through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior promised in the Old Testament and now manifest in the New. But here we address a different question: can we be sure that if we trust in Christ all will be well in the end? Can we be sure, that's what this passage is about, can we be sure that Christ really can take away all the sins of those who trust in him? Is it sure? Is it certain? And the answer is that it is and this passage gives some of the reasons.

First of all, complete safety is in Christ. Complete safety is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are justified, verse 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We remember that we explained that justification is the opposite of condemnation. In a court of law, if the judge pronounces someone guilty, then that's condemnation; if he pronounces them not guilty, then that is justification. So when the apostle talks about being justified, he means being free from the guilt of sin. And those who are justified and therefore not condemned, they have many blessings: peace with God, they rejoice in hope of the glory of God, that is, they rejoice in seeing God's glory in Christ in the world to come and are being glorified together with Christ. And even tribulations, verses 3 to 5 tell us, even tribulations are so ordered by God to work for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose because "tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."

So for the people of God, they can rejoice in hope of the glory of God but they glory also in tribulations as God-sent means by which their hope in Christ is strengthened, but the complete safety of those who trust in Christ is emphasized in verse 6 to verse 11. Let's read them again. Verse 6,

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

We learn here the argument is simply this: if we are Christians, then the love of God to us before we were justified guarantees our safety forever now that we are justified. What did Christ do for his people before they were justified, verse 6, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Look at the state that we are in, we who are believers before we were born again and brought to faith in Christ. This was our natural state, like all men we were without strength, utterly unable to save ourselves, and yet when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, for those who were enemies of God, those with a bad heart and a bad record and unable, utterly unable to change either. That is man in his natural condition and it is the state of those who are now Christians, what they are by nature. This was their condition, without strength. We have a bad heart. We don't love God. We're not inclined to move towards God. And not only a bad heart but a guilty record, and we can't change our nature and we can't change our record, our guilt before God, without strength, ungodly.

And what did Christ do for his people in that state? Well, we're told in verse 7, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is what Christ has done, he died bearing the guilt of sin,

the just punishment of sin in the place of those who in every generation trust in him. God shows the greatness of his grace, his undeserved favor, in that Christ died for undeserving sinners. Scarcely for a righteous man some would even dare to die, but God commendeth his love, he reassures his people of his love in that Christ died for them when they were sinners.

And that explains the use of the term "much more" in verse 9 and in verse 10, but verse 9, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Much more the believer is justified by his blood. Now the blood of Christ was shed at Calvary but here we must understand that in referring to the blood of Christ, it's summing up all the sufferings of Christ in body and in soul on behalf of sinners, that suffering that culminated in the shedding of his blood and his dying for them, and the believer is justified, declared not guilty on the basis that Christ has borne the punishment in his place.

Now if God showed such love when they were condemned and now having bestowed such an immense blessing on his believing people, the blessing of justification, of being declared not guilty in the sight of God, shall he not keep them, shall he not acknowledge them as his in the day of wrath? If he has declared them not guilty now, he will not hold them guilty in the day of God when the Lord Jesus shall judge the world in righteousness. If our sins are forgiven now, then they will not be brought out against us then, and that's the argument in verse 9, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." If our sins are forgiven now through the merits of Christ, the atonement, the death of the Redeemer, then it is absolutely certain that all will be well in the day of God's wrath when the unsaved are cast into outer darkness, those who are in Christ now will be in Christ then and they will be told, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you." If he has justified us now, he will not condemn us then but will glorify us together with Christ.

And look at verse 10, this phrase "much more" is given again, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." It's a similar line of thought, when we were enemies, if we're Christians now, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death, now then we will be kept by his grace to eternal glory by his life and intercession at the right hand of God. This is the Savior, he saves to the uttermost those who come unto God by him. He saves them not momentarily but to the end. He ever liveth to make intercession for them. He abides a priest continually and having begun a good work in them, he performs it till the day of Jesus Christ. He is the complete Savior.

In Isaiah 32:2 we have a prophecy concerning Christ, "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And that's telling us that there is safety and all-blessedness in him. You see, our great crime is this, that we sin because we think it's either safe or will make us happy to do so. That lies behind every sin, every sin is based on this lie, this falsehood that safety and blessedness lie in sinning. They don't. Safety and blessedness is to be found in Christ and only in Christ.

So in verse 11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." He's saying, yes, we have a great prospect and we have the joy of it now in anticipation of the glory to come. Safety is in Christ, nowhere else. Only in Christ. Safety from the wrath of God and blessedness, life, peace with God is through Jesus Christ, the great substitute of guilty sinners who gave his life a ransom for many.

Safety is certainly in Christ. Secondly, justification in Christ is as sure as condemnation in Adam. Justification in Christ is as sure as condemnation in Adam. We said this was a difficult passage and so it is but there are some things that stand out. Notice the constant contrast, the constant parallel and the term "even so" in verse 12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Then in verse 15, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift." Or in verse 17, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." And then in verse 21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." There is an argument here, there is a contrast, there is a parallel that what is true about Adam shows something that is equally true about Christ. That's why you have this "and so also," or "and much more," or "even so," that something that's definitely true of Adam means that there is something also that is definitely true of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, let's see what it is. What does it teach? What is it that is true of Adam and that therefore must tell us something that is true of Christ? What is true of Adam and those whom Adam represented that means we can be quite sure that something is true of Christ and those who are his? Well, first of all, one man's sin brought universal guilt and death. One man's guilt, one man's sin brought universal guilt and death. Verse 12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Physical death is part of God's judgment upon sin. Those of you who are familiar with the Shorter Catechism, you know that the sin of Adam left us, man's sin left us liable to the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever. Why, then, does everyone die? Why does everyone die? You say, "Well, that's just the way it is." No, it isn't just the way it is. There is a reason. Why does death with all that it entails, the grief, the sorrow, why does it come to everyone? Why are we all dying? Why are there no exceptions? Well, the answer is given in verse 12, "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The reason death is universal is because sin is universal. In chapter 3 we read earlier in the week, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If you want testimony to that, well, everybody dies and everybody dies because everybody has sinned. You say, "Ah, but Christians don't die." Yes, that's true. God has been pleased to postpone the application of redemption to the body till the last day when the bodies of the believer will be raised to glory and whereas the bodies of the damned will be raised to damnation, body and soul will be cast into hell. But the presence of physical death and its universality tells us that when Adam sinned, all sinned. And yet what this is saying is not

that we all end up sinning, it's actually teaching that God dealt with man in the garden of Eden in such a way that he counted the first transgression of Adam as reckoned to the account of all who are in him.

Verse 13, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." There was no written law. For many of the nations, God hadn't given his written word, and yet still they were sinners because they had the light of nature. But then verse 14 says more than that, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Even those who didn't eat of the forbidden fruit as Adam did, those who sinned in other ways, and even those who never lived long enough to express their sinful nature in open rebellion against God, they were still counted guilty because Adam's first transgression, the guilt of it God reckons to the account of all who descend from Adam by ordinary generation. The Lord Jesus Christ in his human nature was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. He did not descend by ordinary generation. He had no original guilt and was perfectly qualified to be the substitute of those who did. God in forbidding Adam to eat, telling him not to eat of the forbidden fruit, chose to deal with man representatively, and as far as Adam's first sin is concerned, the guilt of Adam's first transgression is imputed, reckoned to the account of all descending from him by ordinary generation, in the normal way.

Death is universal because guilt is universal and we are mortal from the moment of our conception, the moment we exist, we are liable to death because we are guilty in Adam, and part of God's judgment upon that guilt in Adam is that we are given over to corruption so that if we live to come to years, our sinful nature expresses itself in personal sin against God. But the guilt of Adam's first transgression is imputed to all who descend from him and one man's disobedience brought death upon all. But then we also learn that one man's obedience brought righteousness and life to all who are in him. Verse 15, this complicated verse, these complicated verses, but notice the main thread, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

You say, "This is complicated." Well, yes and no. This much is straightforward: as surely as all who were represented by Adam became guilty and condemned by his disobedience, just as surely shall God's gracious gift of righteousness be imputed to all who trust in Christ. Now that's not too complicated. As surely as Adam's disobedience resulted in the guilt and condemnation of all who were represented by him, the whole of mankind, just as sure Christ's obedience, Christ's perfect righteousness and bearing of the guilt of sin will result in righteousness being imputed, reckoned to the account of all who are his, all who trust in him alone. So the guilt in Adam and righteousness in Christ are equally certain. Just as surely as all men are condemned in Adam, just as surely all who are in

Christ are justified. Just as surely as all in Adam are declared guilty, just as surely all who are in Christ will be declared not guilty.

Now that is understandable even if we can't understand all the different terms the apostle uses. This is the wonderful certainty of it all, that the believer's justification in Christ, his being declared not guilty is as sure as was his condemnation in Adam, so that those who are in Christ just as it was definitely true that in Adam they were condemned, just as surely is it true that in Christ they are justified. That's how sure it is that Christ can save sinners. His righteousness will be imputed to him that believeth in Jesus as surely as all men were held guilty in Adam.

Thirdly, the one Christ we need. The one Christ we need. Verse 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The one Christ we need. Have you noticed how many times the word "one" appears in this passage? In verse 15, "For if through the offence of **one** many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by **one** man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Verse 16, "for the judgment was by **one** to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by **one** man's offence death reigned by **one**; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by **one**, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of **one** judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of **one** the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by **one** man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of **one** shall many be made righteous." So this much is straightforward: man became guilty and condemned through one man, Adam, and those who are in Christ, they are declared righteous by the obedience of one, that is, Jesus Christ.

Now this presupposes one Adam. The creation account is viewed and assumed to be literal history, that there was a literal one Adam as surely as there is one Christ. The younger ones especially will be very aware that non-Christian scientists reckon they can work out how everything started and they don't need God to reveal it. They think that they can tell us how something came of nothing, and that they don't need God and they don't need God to reveal how it was done. Let me tell you something: Professor Dawkins is bluffing. He's bluffing. Only God was there at the beginning. Isn't that what the Lord reminds Job of in Job 38:4, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" And so on. God is saying to Job, "Were you there? Were you there?" Was Professor Dawkins there? Was anyone but God there in the beginning? Well, no, but God was there and only God can tell us what took place and any honest man will acknowledge that. Scientist or not.

The attempt to work out the beginnings, the beginnings of things from the normal, what are called the laws of nature which are just God's normal ways of operating, is futile. The child who knows the Shorter Catechism can tell this. God executed his decrees in the works of creation and providence. Creation is one, providence is another. Creation is God's making all things of nothing, providence is all that God does with that creation, his

most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures and all their actions. Two distinct works. The first took place in six days. The rest of history is God's providence, his acting upon and governing and directing all the complex events that take place in his creation. The normal laws by which God operates in history cannot be applied backwards to his work of creation because something out of nothing is not normal. It's unique and God alone could do it. And he did it and he's told us the manner of his doing it in Genesis 1 to 3.

So one literal Adam, very important because the argument here is one Adam, one Christ. Condemnation in Adam, justification in Christ. And it does matter. It matters what we believe on these things because as surely as we are guilty in Adam, equally surely we can only ever be declared not guilty in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we're having this mission, to tell you about this one Savior. We became guilty initially by the offense of one. We can only be declared righteous by trusting in Christ, the obedience of the one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's why we have these meetings, to tell you of the one Savior, the only one that there is, and the only one that you need.

There is only one. This passage is telling us that. It's only by what the one has done. It's by the obedience of the one that sinners have their guilt taken away. Christ was altogether holy and without sin. Christ never sinned. He was wholly harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners. If it were otherwise, he couldn't save anyone. A sinful savior couldn't save but Christ never sinned. Christ was altogether free of the slightest taint of sin. We sin easily in our thoughts, in our words. We sin casually. We sin a lot of the time and don't even know we've sinned, that's how corrupt we are by nature. And if you're not converted to Christ, your sin even makes you deny that you are a sinner. The pride causes sinners to say they're not sinners. Do you know that when you hear that you're a sinner and you resent it, that that resentment itself is a sin before God? That's how rotten we are, how enmired by sin. We cannot improve ourselves. We're so filthy, our hands are filthy. If we try to clean ourselves, we just make a bigger mess of it. But Christ never sinned and yet Christ was obedient unto death because his particular role, his work assigned by the Father was not only that he should be obedient but obedient unto death, not only that he should keep God's law perfectly but that in so doing he should suffer by wicked hands, that he should be crucified and slain, that he should bear the wrath of God as he hung upon the cross of Calvary, that he should be despised and rejected of men, that they should mock him, and yet that he should be deprived of the comforts of fellowship with the Father.

Obedience for Christ as the Redeemer of sinners was an obedience that meant bearing the damnation of God. Do you know that when Christ was bearing damnation, he still loved God? Imagine that. As God was damning him on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He loved the God of his damnation as he bore the vengeance of God. Yet still he didn't sin. He was obedient unto death. There was no resentment in his heart against this God who was pouring out his wrath against him as the substitute of sinners. The obedience of Christ unto death.

This is the Savior in whom you must trust, this Savior who says to sinners, "Come unto me," this Savior who kept the law of God which Adam and all the rest of us have broken, this Savior who bore the wrath of God in this world and on this side of the grave, this Savior is the one who sends his gospel to you and says to you, "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

See how Christ receives sinners. In Matthew 20 we have blind Bartimaeus and in verse 30 we read, Matthew 20:30, "And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him." See then the Lord Jesus, these blind men crying out, "Son of David," that was a title of the Messiah because he was to be of the line of David, "O Lord, Son of David, have mercy upon me." They knew that he passed by and others were saying, "Be quiet!" But they took no notice, they didn't care what others thought and they cried out the more, "O Son of David, have mercy upon us."

And the Lord Jesus stood still. He stood still and they came and he asked them, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The Lord Jesus knew fine well what they had need of but, you see, there are some things that you will never get from God unless you ask for them and forgiveness of sins is like that. You must seek what you really need. Never mind trying to make a convenience of God, asking him for what pleases you. What you need is forgiveness. Have you asked God for what you really need? Perhaps you think you need other things and maybe you do, but this you need more than anything else, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the wrath of God which your guilt deserves. Whatever else you get, if you don't get this, then you will be condemned forever. Ask of God what you really need, forgiveness of sins, and ask it on the basis, the only basis on which God gives it, by trusting in Jesus Christ and what he has done, his righteousness, his obedience, his sin-bearing. And ask God to have mercy upon you for his sake because you come relying on what he has done, not anything you have done or could do, all you've done is sin, the only thing that belongs to you by right is your sin, your guilt. But come to God seeking what you need, forgiveness, righteousness reckoned to your account, and seek it from God by trusting in Jesus Christ who has done all things well and of whom it is written that none perish who trust in him.

Don't hang onto your own foolish ideas that it will be all right in the end because without Christ it will not be all right in the end. Don't hang onto some idea that, "Well, my sins aren't serious." Well, they might not be to you but they are to God. Give up the idea that God doesn't really punish sin because he does. Christ came to save sinners. Christ's death on the cross shows us, as we saw a couple of nights ago, it declares God's righteousness, it tells us God punishes sin and here is Christ, the substitute, bearing the punishment of sin. Give up all the wrong ideas and come to the holy God of heaven seeking what you need, forgiveness of sins, seeking it the way God says you must, relying entirely upon

what Christ has done, and go to God and say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and take away all iniquity for the sake of Jesus Christ." Come to God. Come to God through Jesus Christ and you can be sure, absolutely sure that you will not be cast out, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And the many who are made righteous in Christ are those who trust in him, in his righteousness, his bearing of guilt, and go to God by him. Amen.