

Romans Five^{1,2}
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As I said at the end of chapter four, please remember that there are no chapters in the original writings and note that this chapter begins with the word “therefore” so we have to review a bit what we have been studying prior to this “chapter”. Chapters 1 – 4 are for everyone, in the sense that Paul tell of the status of the world, the need for an outside plan for righteousness, and that God’s plan is for Jew and Gentile. The Law shows man that he is not capable of obeying it to any extent and that man is totally sinful. Paul has shown us that the world rejected God’s general revelation and instead created their own gods and turned to sexual perversions and other means of trying to ignore God’s warnings. Paul then showed us that nobody can keep The Law and in chapter three showed that there are none righteous, not even one. Then in chapter four Paul shows that everyone throughout all time has been saved by the only method available to attain salvation: belief in God’s plan that was to be revealed through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jews and Gentiles are only saved through having received faith from God so that they can then believe in Jesus and accept Him as their Lord and Savior. Next Paul continues the discussion.

Rom 5:1 Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Rom 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Having studied the preceding chapters we understand that only those chosen by God can be justified and this justification comes equally to the Jew and to the Gentile. Justification means that we are now “just as if we had not sinned” AND that we now possess the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So now the great war between me and God is over (praise God because I was being clobbered!!) and through the work of Jesus Christ I now have peace **with** God. Therefore I will not fear death because it is just the final step toward being with my Lord and Savior, and before the Father I will be found innocent because of the double imputation done by God. Here again in verse 2 is the inescapable fact that my introduction to this justification was by the faith and grace of God! The hope of the Christian is a surety, not a hope in the worldly sense. So I now rejoice greatly in the surety of my justification and give all the glory to God (exult can also mean to leap upward with joy!) and we should all feel like taking such a leap!

We should also note that this peace **with** God also provides us with the peace **of** God. This peace is the first fruit of justification. Now we can relax since we have peace with God. We don’t have to go to a mountain valley, the seashore, or any other place to find peace. The tension that was in my soul before I had peace with God is now gone. I know that all of my many sins have been forgiven and I can now accept myself since God has accepted me. Think about this: the Almighty Righteous God now has taken away all of my sins and replaced them with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If the Holy God can

now find me acceptable to be in His presence then certainly I can accept myself! Certainly I regret much of what I have done in life, but if God can forgive me, then I also can forgive me! I can find peace in a long line inching along on I-75 toward Atlanta or lying in a hammock in my backyard. The peace that I have is inside of me so it is not dependent upon the external situations.

Rom 5:3 “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

Rom 5:4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

Rom 5:5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

“Not only this” refers to the above justification, peace, glory, grace, and peace. Those concepts are wonderful and they give us the peace with God and the peace of God. But is the peace of God that we have situation-dependent? Paul says “no” for all that God gives us is with us during all aspects of our life here on earth. Christians suffer just like non-Christians but the difference is in how the suffering affects our reactions to the world. Because we have such a peace, we can exult (remember above we said that this can mean leap with joy!) also in our tribulations. Anyone can exult during “good” times. It does not take any God-given character to be happy when all is going well. But what do we do when things are not so good? Our true character emerges when tribulations come into our lives. There are essentially two worldly reactions to dealing with tribulations:

1. Epicureanism. Epicurus (342 – 270 BC) taught that life is always going to consist of some mixture of good and bad experiences. He taught that the only way to deal with such a life is by purposely indulging ourselves in as much pleasure as possible so that we can then deal with the bad experiences with a total positive bottom line. Such an outlook is also called “qualified hedonism” and is very popular today.
2. Stoicism. This also was developed by a group of Greek philosophers named Stoics. This is the “grin and bear it” philosophy or the “whatever will be, will be” philosophy that tries to exemplify an indifference to pleasure or pain. The same mask is worn all the time regardless of the situation. Of course, this is not a persona that anyone can portray all of their lives.

However, to the Christian, there is meaning in all aspects of our lives as Paul here tells us very clearly. As most of us know, tribulation indeed does bring about perseverance. Since I know that God has given me faith to believe in Him, and since I know that Jesus forever sits at the right hand of the Father to plead my case, I have total confidence in the faithfulness of God. I know that God is sovereign over all events in my life. I have true knowledge of the character of God and so I can trust Him and analyze any situation in my life in terms of my relationship to Him. Tribulation often takes the non-Christian into depression as he/she has no trust in anything outside of this world and therefore no source of comfort. However to the Christian, tribulation brings him/her closer to God as we are taught more about our total dependence upon Him. This surety of my dependence upon God teaches me to persevere more in my trust in Him and I am then pushed more toward

an attitude of needing God more and more and therefore to persevere (stay the course – a sailing term) more and more.

This increase in perseverance brings me closer to God and therefore seeking to have more and more of His character as an integral part of my life. Therefore my character is proven to others that indeed God is real for how else could he/she have such a positive attitude during such tribulation? My further development of a God-like character proves my character both to others and to myself. Of course this trail leads directly to more development of my hope so that it becomes more and more a surety in my life. This true hope will never be disappointed because it is based upon the teachings of God through the Holy Spirit in my life. In the Christian's life there should never be a "why me?" attitude of despair because we know that God is sovereign in all events of our life. Each tribulation event should bring about an attitude of exultation for we know that God is working in our lives to bring us closer to His character.

There indeed can be several reasons for our tribulations and we should always take advantage of the opportunity of our tribulation to determine just exactly what God is doing in our life.

1. Corrective Suffering. We have the following Scripture upon which to base this possibility:

Heb 12:4 "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

Heb 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him;

Heb 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. "

Heb 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Heb 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Heb 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

Heb 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

This type of suffering has the purpose to bring us back to the straight path of following God when we stray away. When we find ourselves in a tribulation event, we should first ask God to search our heart and to let us clearly see if we have strayed away from Him and that the tribulation is meant as discipline for us.

2. Suffering for the Glory of God. A person's suffering may be showing that God has a special favor for that person.

John 9:1 "And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

John 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him."

This man had suffered blindness all the days of his life so that one day he could be used by God to glorify Jesus Christ. This attitude is impossible for the non-Christian to understand. Only by a correct understanding of the ratio of the time we spend here compared to eternity can we begin to get an understanding of the relative unimportance of our "happiness" here and the importance of the glory of God being demonstrated here. Our only importance here is to glorify God.

3. Suffering as Part of the Cosmic Warfare. We see this event in the story of Job and we see the reason for Job's suffering in the beginning of the story as we are told of the conflict between God and Satan. For every Christian with cancer, there is a non-Christian with cancer. For every Christian who has lost a son, there is a non-Christian who has lost a son. For every Christian without a job, there is a non-Christian without a job. The difference between the people in these circumstances is that the Christian has meaning in his life through his suffering while the non-Christian can only curse God and be even more miserable because of his suffering. As Christians we are very aware of the spiritual warfare in the world and we know that in every war there is collateral damage, but not without God's permission regarding His chosen children. We must be aware of this warfare and study Ephesians 6: 10- 20 to be prepared for the war.

4. Constructive Suffering. Certainly this type of suffering is that to which Paul is referring in Rom 5: 3-5. God is shaping us for entrance into heaven!

So we have seen that suffering is good. Then the question might be "why am I not suffering more?" rather than "why am I suffering?"

We quit here on August 15.

Rom 5:6" For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

These verses are similar to the ones in Ephesians that we have studied before:

Eph 2:1 "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

Eph 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Eph 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Eph 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

Eph 2:7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

A person cannot be more helpless than when he is dead! We were spiritually dead (half-dead), when we were saved from the wrath of God by the works of Jesus Christ. This event in history came at exactly the correct time also. Jesus was not born a second too early or a second too late. He came to live a righteous life and to receive the full wrath of God for our sins at the point when we were totally helpless before Holy God. Such a great love for us cannot be fully stated in earthly terms. As we live and learn more about the holiness of God, we simultaneously learn more about the sinfulness of ourselves. Every day I wonder more about how God could possibly have loved me in the manner that He demonstrated on Calvary. Allow yourself to think about the most horrible thing that someone could do to you and your family and then think if you could then tell the sentencing judge that you will take the death penalty for that person yourself. Even if you can do this, you still have not taken even a “baby step” toward the situation that existed between sinful man and Holy God. To God be the Glory!

Rom 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Rom 5:11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

All that we have been studying so far brings us such assurance of our salvation as we realize more and more that our salvation is totally of God. Our salvation is also in all three tenses as revealed by the above verses and other Scripture. We have seen that God saved us from His wrath by the works of Jesus Christ as we are told in verse 5:11 and that we are “seated” in the heavenly places (present tense):

Eph 2:4 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Eph 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,”

Of course we cannot be already seated in Heaven unless we have already been saved. We are also taught that God is still saving us from the presence of sin in the world:

1Cor 1:18 “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

We who are “being saved” are the Christians still living in the presence of Satan, the World, and ourselves as God is in the process of saving us from the presence of such sin that tempts us from all three sides. We can’t imagine what sins we are still capable of with the presence of the Adam nature still at work now and here.

We are also going to a future salvation that will be revealed in our glorification:

Rom 8:17 “and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

What a wonderful promise in which we live! We are in full assurance that we have been saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved in a total sense involving our total nature of body (three-dimensional) and spirit (time dimension). Now this is really something upon which we should meditate!

Paul also reminds us that we have already received our reconciliation, meaning that all sin charges against us have been wiped clean from the accounting sheet. We should then spend all of our time rejoicing in God’s wisdom, grace, power, love, and immutability. However I am sure that none of us can say that we always rejoice. Lloyd-Jones³ states three reasons why we don’t always rejoice:

1. Failure to grasp the truth of justification by faith.
2. Failure to meditate on the Truth that we do have.
3. Failure to let the Holy Spirit reveal more of the truth of the Scripture.

I think that I would have to also add that we fail to take advantage of the tribulations that come to us. As we discussed above, we should also be jumping for joy at our tribulations.

Rom 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—“

These last ten verses of chapter 5 deal with the difficult topic of man being simultaneously in union with Adam and with Jesus. The one man referred to in this verse is, of course, Adam. Adam was our representative and he sinned. Do we dare think that we would have done better? If we do, then we certainly don’t know ourselves very well! God promised death if there was disobedience:

Gen 2:16 “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

Gen 2:17 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 shall surely die.”

Then spiritual death entered immediately and physical death followed. Through this substitutionary sin, death was present in the world and so continues until the time set by God when death itself will end. We Christians still have the “Adam nature” and we also all sin on our own volition. But there is some good news coming quickly!

Let’s look for a moment at Genesis 5:

Gen 5:1 “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

Gen 5:2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

Gen 5:3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth..”

In verse 3 we have the exact words as used by God in verse 1. God created Adam in the likeness of Himself and then after Adam sinned he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image (Adam’s image). Then from Seth we see all the generations down through Noah and then, of course, we are descended from Noah. So from Adam to us we all begin in the image of Adam and this is what we mean by our sin nature or our Adam nature. So, as Rom 5:12 tells us, death spread to all men because all men sinned.

Rom 5:13 “for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

We see then that sin has been in the world since the time of the sin of Adam and Eve. Paul is using these two verses to explain what he meant at the end of verse 12 in that all men sinned. Paul also says at the end of verse 14 that Adam is a type of Jesus. So there are two great events in the history of mankind: the act of Adam who sinned and the acts of Jesus who lived a holy life and died for the sins of all of God’s chosen people.

Federalism is the Christian view of the representative nature of Adam and of Jesus. It is our union with Adam that puts us in trouble and it is our union with Jesus that takes us out of trouble – big trouble! Federalism actually is a demonstration of the mercy of God. Adam lived in a perfect environment, had a perfect companion, had perfect reasoning abilities, and had only one temptation to avoid. Look at all the problems we have in comparison with Adam! So letting Adam be our representative was a lot “fairer” than

letting each of us be judged by our many sins. Also this method was the perfect way to handle how God was going to redeem His children with the substitution of the perfect life of One to be put into our account.

Our interpretation of our being born in the image of Adam and therefore all being guilty and thus having to face a physical death is further clarified by Jesus and Peter:

John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

1Peter 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

What does Jesus mean by being "born again". Nicodemus also asked this question:

John 3:4 "Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?""

Only by understanding that we are all physically born in the image of Adam can we correctly understand what Jesus meant by saying that we must be born again. All of us were born physically, of course, but we were born "half-dead" in that we were born physically alive and spiritually dead. To see the Kingdom of God we must be spiritually alive and that, just like our physical birth, is only something that God can do. Indeed that is what God does when He breathes into us the gift of faith. We are then born spiritually and can understand spiritual matters. It is only then that we can really understand what Jesus did for us and accept this wonderful mercy for ourselves.

Now what does Paul mean in verse 13 about sin not being imputed until the Law? We see that we are all guilty because of being born in the image of Adam. Paul only means that until the Law came, we were not guilty of the particular sins addressed by the Law, but we were still guilty because of our association with Adam. There is Sin and there is sin. The Sin of which we are all guilty is a result of the transgression of Adam, even though each individual did not sin as did Adam. Remember he was our federal head and so we are guilty because of his sin. So from Adam to Moses all were guilty of Sin and thus death reigned in the lives of all those people. Then when the Law was given, people also became guilty of particular transgressions such as stealing.

At the end of verse 14, Paul says that Adam was a type of Him who was to come (Jesus) and this is really wonderful news!

Rom 5:15 "But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Rom 5:16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in

condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Rom 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Now we have one of those wonderful “buts” in Scripture. Paul is going to compare the sin of Adam with the life of Jesus. We have to continually keep in mind that nothing surprises God. He is still in plan A, which existed before the foundation of the world. Before He created anything in our time domain He knew exactly what Adam and Eve would do and He knew the exact time that He would send Jesus into the world for His redemptive action. He also knew that we were part of His plan. What security knowing some about the Sovereignty of God brings into our lives!

We can draw a bit of a cartoon concerning the above knowing that it was the one sin of Adam that brought all of the condemnation of God into the world. One sin brought death to all people. It will one day be proven to the world that I indeed have the sin nature of Adam, for one day I will die. However, through the work of another Man, sin has been totally forgiven for all of God’s children.

● → all die, † → many live

Remember that this condemnation also always existed, but it became an action item into the world when Adam did what God knew he was going to do. But think about how many transgressions before Holy God were actualized between the time of Adam’s sin and the time when Jesus came into the world. There is a parallel between Adam and Jesus, but there is not an exact corollary. Adam was our representative and because of his sin death entered the world for all people. Jesus was our representative before the tribunal of Holy God in that all of my sin was imputed to Jesus, but the action goes much further because the holiness of Jesus was imputed to me.

The judgment of death was earned but the free gift of life was indeed a gift based upon the payment of Jesus and not based upon anything that I have done or will do. As I said above, one day I will die. But I will simultaneously live spiritually forever and one day my glorified body will be joined with my spirit in the Heavenly places. Praise the Lord!

Rom 5:18 “So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Rom 5:19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

This hardly needs any more comment from me! This is a conclusion to what has been said. As a reformed lay theologian, I know that there is no mass balance involved here. What? Well, just to put this in a hypothetical quantitative sense, let’s say that the total number of people who will have ever lived before God calls a halt to this present world is

and will be 100 trillion people. So the sin of Adam resulted in the physical death of 100 trillion people. Now let's say that the number of people that God has chosen for His children throughout all of time is 10 billion people. So,

- → death of 100 trillion people, † → life for 10 billion people

So there I hope you see what I mean about there is no mass balance. It is only for the religious sect that believes that all people will be saved is there a mass balance. Hell is going to be weightier than heaven. I don't know if that has any deep meaning or not, but I know that it is true and therefore good. Oh well, let us now continue.

**Rom 5:20 “And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
Rom 5:21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

What does he mean that when the Law came that the transgressions will increase? We have briefly discussed this before. The Sin of Adam that we all inherit is not a list of violations but rather it is the innate tendency to just satisfy all of our worldly desires whatever they may be. In that state we have no desire to please God or even recognize His existence much less His authority. When the Law came, it came with ten specific items that put us under a load of trouble. Now the sins are specific such as “do not steal” so rather than just a pile of sin now we have ten columns each of which are being filled with violations that are specific to that portion of the Law. So after the Law was given there were many more possibilities for us to violate God in very specific ways. Therefore the transgressions increased considerably.

Now here there is mass balance if we consider that the “mass” of sin is equal to the “mass” of grace. For every “mass” of sin that God's people have committed or will commit there is an equal “mass” of grace that God pours forth. Wait! This is not true! God says that grace abounded all the more! So the “mass” of grace that God pours forth for His child is much greater than the “mass” of sin committed by the child. What blessings we receive from God! Our horrible column of sin is gone and we are covered over with grace!

Verse 21 then tells us of two separate kingdoms: the kingdom of death ruled by sin and the kingdom of righteousness ruled by grace. Adam's sin resulted in everyone having to physically die and to live in sin. The work of Jesus resulted in God's children still having to physically die, but spiritually we are in the heavenly places already, our life is filled with the grace of God, and we look forward to eternal life. Yes, there certainly were two major events in the history of the world: the Sin of Adam and the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. These two people's actions resulted in two very different consequences for mankind: one yielded physical death and an innate desire to sin and the other's actions resulted in eternal life, peace with God, and the peace of God. Both of these events were world shaking events. Both were planned by God before the foundation of the world. My life has been touched by both events. How many of the events have affected you?

References

1. All Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Moody Press, 1975.
2. James Montgomery Boice, “Romans, Volume II, The Reign of Grace, Romans 5-8, Baker Book House, 1992.
3. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, “Romans, Assurance, Exposition of Chapter 5”, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.