

The Basis of Justification (Representation) Romans 5:12-21

At this very moment every person on this planet is represented before God by one of two men - Adam or Jesus Christ. Adam's one sin in the Garden brought death, both physical and spiritual, to himself and to all of humanity. Because he sinned, we die. That may not seem fair, but because we were represented by one man, Adam, in death, we can also be represented by one man, Jesus, in life. And the one great hope for all of humanity is that the gracious act of Jesus completely overcomes the deadly act of Adam...and this gift is available to all who believe.

Jesus was faithful, but we are not. So **how exactly do we get the benefits of His faithfulness?**

The answer in one word is: representation

- = "to act on behalf of someone else"
- Representation is an extremely important theological concept – but also common in our everyday life...
 - o How our government works – representative democracy
 - Whether we voted for them or not, have to live with their decisions
 - o what my brother does – he's a lawyer
 - Lawyer who had a nutty
 - "You should have chosen a better lawyer."
 - The actions of our representatives affect us in serious ways.
 - o Football is representation – Kansas game
 - Aggies score, we score – even though we didn't run the ball, block the defender...
- That's representation – someone acts on our behalf
- **And that is the basis for both condemnation and justification...**

Entire human race divided into 2 groups: the **condemned; the **justified****

Which group you're in depends entirely on who represents you..

- entire human race represented by 1 of 2 men...

1) Adam by default (read v12-14)

- Really complex flow of thought – starts analogy – gets sidetracked till v18
- First part all about Adam & the **moment he introduced the human race to sin**
- **Adam introduced sin: (turn to Gen 2)**
 - o Rehearse Gen 1 – "very good" – all is perfectly right
 - o Read Gen 2:16-17
 - o Situation: innumerable blessings, one command
 - o Satan tempts Eve while Adam stands there watching
 - o READ Gen 3:4-5
 - Attacks God's goodness – He's holding out on you
 - Inflames human pride – you can be like God
 - o Adam and Eve give in
- What were the consequences?
 - o 2:17 – "you shall **die, die**" – Hebrew – repetition for emphasis
- **Result: Sin Introduced Death for Adam and Eve**
 - o what do we mean by "death"?
 - read 3:16-19

- includes physical death (v19b)... not immediate death, but decay sets in immediately
 - cursed "labor" for Adam (in work) and Eve (in childbirth)
 - cursed relationships between A&E, between creation and A&E
 - separation from God
 - kicked out of garden
 - why? Ps 5:4 – by necessity – God can not dwell with evil
- So Adam & Eve's 1 act of sin brought death upon them...
- **...and that death spread to all their descendants**
 - Re-read v12 – his disobedience ushers in sin which ushers in death for all
 - **What does Paul mean by death here?**
 - **includes physical death**
 - If you look at the statistics on death, it's quite impressive: 100%!
 - We will all die!
 - Never God's intention
 - cancer, heart disease, genetic ailments – not part of Gen 1
 - all due to Adam's sin
 - **Even more serious than physical death Paul tells us...**
 - **in v18a... [read] – "condemnation" to all men**
 - = the guilty verdict + punishment (sentence)
 - = wrath now and forever
 - **9a... [read] – "all were made sinners"**
 - because of Adam's sin, the nature of humanity changed
 - before Adam ate the apple, what was he like...
 - innocent – never had sinned
 - free – able to freely choose b/w good & evil
 - capable – able to please God
 - after the fall...
 - READ Eph 2:1,3 – exactly the opposite – 180 deg
 - guilty
 - enslaved – bent towards sin
 - incapable – unable to genuinely please God
 - That's what Paul means by "made sinners"
 - Our nature is now: "sinner" – that's who we are.
 - That's why we sin – because we're sinners
 - So, our fundamental problem – not what we do but who we are
 - we do bad things because we are bad to the core
 - not popular... but true
 - Theological phrase to describe this: **total depravity**
 - "every aspect of human nature is corrupted by the fall."
- **All of this came upon us because Adam was our representative**
 - Again, that's the key idea in this passage: representation
 - "Adam" means "Man"
 - Paul gets into the mechanics of it in v12d – "all sinned"
 - not about our acts of sin during our lifetimes
 - about our participation in Adam's sin – **we sinned with him in the garden.**
 - proof: v13-14
 - v13
 - between Adam & Moses – no Law
 - sins not "imputed" – not held responsible
 - ill: "No Trespassing" sign – if no sign, it still may be trespassing, but it's harder to pin them with the crime
 - yet v14
 - they still died
 - actually 1 command that carried death penalty: murder

- most didn't, yet all still died.
 - How can that be? Only explanation – they died as participants in Adam's sin
 - Even though they didn't violate any explicit commands
 - yet death still reigned because they were "in Adam"
 - True in genetic sense – literally "in him" - shared in his action so share in guilt
- Now that always brings up an objection...
- **How can that be fair?**
 - I didn't choose to be represented by him!
 - congressmen, lawyers, sports teams – you choose who represents you
 - We didn't get to choose Adam – so how can we be responsible for his choice?
 - **Four responses:**
 - **Not God's fault**
 - In Gen 1-2 – God gives only grace
 - **Sin is always communal**
 - Individualism is so ingrained into us – but not biblical
 - Josh 7 – Achan – stones him, his sons, & his daughters
 - Our sin affects others in catastrophic ways
 - **We prove that it's fair every time we sin!**
 - Every day, we prove that we would have done no better!
 - We prove that we agree with Adam's choice
 - **If Adam couldn't represent us in death, then Christ couldn't represent us in life...**

Bad News: all humans born under Adam's representation – our rep by default

Good News: doesn't have to stay that way!

2) Jesus by faith (v15-21)

- **Faced the same test: will He obey the Father's command or will He not?**
 - Command: go to the cross – die for us
 - Required unimaginable self-sacrifice
 - Garden of Gethsemane – sweats drops of blood – prays for deliverance
 - "Yet not my will but your will be done"
- **He passed the test! Obeyed**
 - Result: God raised Him and gave Him all glory, honor, and authority
- **But here's the great part:**
 - Just as Adam's great act of disobedience brought death
 - so Christ's great act of obedience brings life
- **We receive life as a free gift**
- **And that gift we receive from Jesus trumps the debt we received from Adam**
 - v20b: where sin increased, grace increased all the more = "**super-abounded**"
 - grace and life infinitely excels sin and death
 - no amount of sin that could surpass the grace Jesus offers us
 - Ill: like a thirsty man stumbling upon Niagara Falls
 - no matter how thirsty... no matter how often... never exhaust supply
 - Where there was death... resurrection life
 - Where there was wrath and condemnation... decisive justification
 - Where there was sin and futility... grace and power to obey
- **All that we lost in Adam we can have in Christ...**
- **...if we receive it in faith**
 - While representation by Adam is involuntary – ours from birth
 - Representation by Christ is a choice
 - God does not foist this gift of grace upon you
 - You must choose to receive it in faith

Application / Significance

- Believe
- Compassion towards the lost - They sin because they are enslaved to sin
- Gratitude towards God

Questions for Romans Sermon #12 – 5:12-21

Note: these questions have been written for small groups studying Romans together. You can also adapt these questions for your family or for personal study.

1. BIG IDEA: Read Rom 5:12-21. What is the big idea of this passage? How does it fit into the flow of Paul's thought in chapters 3-5?

2. When Paul says "all sinned" (5:12) he means that we are all held jointly responsible for Adam's sin (cp. 1 Cor 15:22). How would you answer someone who says, "It is not fair that we should be held responsible for Adam's sin"?

3. What does Paul mean by "death" in 5:12-21 (Hint: look carefully at the other consequences of Adam's sin that Paul lists in this passage; cf. Ephesians 2:1-5; Isaiah 59:2; Psalm 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)?

4. What were the results of Adam's fall upon mankind according to the following passages?
 - a. Acts 28:27
 - b. 2 Cor. 4:16
 - c. Eph. 2:1-3
 - d. Eph. 4:18

5. APPLICATION: How does Paul's description of humanity's condition/status "in Adam" affect your view of...
 - a. yourself
 - b. your Christian family and friends
 - c. your non-believing family and friends?

Additional Interpretive Questions from Romans 5:12-21

6. In what ways did Adam and Eve experience "death" (Gen 3:7-24; Gen 5:1-5)?
7. What does Paul mean when he says, "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (5:13; note: in 5:14 "offense" means "to cross a known, well-defined boundary")?
8. What is proven by the fact that death reigned from Adam until Moses (5:14)?
9. For which of Adam's sin(s) are we held accountable (5:14-15; 5:18)?
10. In what sense is Adam a "type" of Jesus Christ? How are they similar? How are they dissimilar?
11. How is the "free gift" like or unlike the "transgression"? You may want to make out a chart comparing the two throughout 5:15-21.
12. What does it mean to "reign in life" (5:17)? Is this related to justification, sanctification or glorification? How is it accomplished in the believer's life?

Additional Application Questions from Romans 5:12-21

13. Read Gen 3:1-7. What strategies did Satan use to tempt Eve? What strategies does he use against you?

Review Questions

14. The big idea of Romans is the righteousness of God. What does the word "righteous" mean?
15. What does the Bible mean when it says that God is righteous? See Psalm 11:7; Dt. 32:4.
16. What does it mean that God has "justified" us through faith in Christ (3:24)?