

Through One Man
Romans 5:12-21

Ephesians 2
Isaiah 53
Responsive Psalm 84

A few weeks ago we started out in chapter 5 of the book of Romans. I want to take a few moments this morning in a bit of a review before diving into the last half of this chapter. Paul's focus has been upon the justification of Abraham by faith. Pointing out that it was not through morality, or law keeping that he was considered justified before God but it was purely by faith that God would indeed keep the promises that he was given. In chapter 4, Paul tell us that this is no small thing for it was written not only has an account of Abraham but also for our own knowledge and edification as we see starting in verse 17 of chapter 4. ("As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations. In the presence of Him whom he believed-God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did, who contrary to hope, in hope believed so that he became the father of many nations according to what was spoken, so shall your descendants be. And not being weak in the faith, he did not consider his own body already dead and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what he had promised he was also able to perform. And therefore it was accounting to him for righteousness.) And this is the part I want to focus on right now, verse 23, (Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us, it shall be imputed to us who believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.)

This is why Paul has spent so much time talking about Abraham and his justification by faith alone, for it was not written as just a mere record of Abraham's life, but for our benefit, teaching and admonishing us in the faith as well. For we like Abraham are recipients of these promises, it was through the promise to Abraham that the Messiah came into this world and brought peace and reconciliation between God and man, and faith in him who was the fulfillment of these promises is the vehicle in which we find justification before God. There are parallels that can be drawn through God's work in keeping his promises to Abraham and the life of the believer. Verse 17 of chapter 4, "God, who gives life to the dead, and calls those things which do not exist as through they do." We know that this is in reference to Sarah's own natural ability to bear a child, for she was beyond the child bearing age, yet God did not consider the deadness of her womb, for he is a God who makes the dead to be alive, and calls the things which aren't as though they are. Likewise it is the same with each and everyone one of us today who believe. The scripture uses the term, dead in trespasses and sin, and calls the justification by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith a new birth. What God accomplished with Abraham and Sarah, is the same he has accomplished with each and every one of us, not considering the deadness of our heart, and our own inability to come before God, but instead he makes us able, just as he made Sarah able, and enacts in us a new birth likewise causing what was dead to be alive.

This account of Abraham was written for us, verse 24, because likewise justification shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses and was raised because of our justification. The promised seed of Abraham, has brought about justification before God, making all those who are of the faith, like Abraham, to be heirs of the promised reconciliation, and the spiritual offspring which number greater then the stars of the sky.

But there was more accomplished than just merely a qualifying aspect, that is we have not been merely qualified to receive justification. The focus isn't merely on whether or not we have gained access into heaven, but it truly is a new birth changing every aspect of our lives while yet in this body. What that looks like, how that is played out, is exactly what Jim has been digging into the past few weeks. There is more to faith, than a mere belief in the existence of God, and there is more to justification before God than determining our eternal destination, the more and more that we can grasp of the height and depth of the glory of God in this salvation it drives us deeper and deeper into living out our lives as those who have been justified, and to cry out in praise and worship to the one who has justified us. Look at verse 1, of chapter 5. Since all of these things are true, since we who believe in him have been raised up with Jesus our Lord from the dead, therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Again it is God declaring something that does not exist as though it does, drawing another line of comparison between Abraham and ourselves. Peace with God does not, can not, and will not exist within ourselves, there is nothing that we can do, nor say which will bring about peace before God for at our very core we are sinful creatures driven to our own lusts and desires. Even after salvation, we still struggle in the flesh with the same lusts and desires, selfish tendencies, but when God looks at us, he sees us through his Son, he sees us as those who have been washed by the blood of the promised one, who though we are not perfect, and though we are not holy, we are seen as such through the imputation of Christ's perfect holiness toward us, we who are not, are called as those who are.

And to Jim's point, this is the root of worship, the realization of what God has truly done for us. Making the unworthy, worthy, and declaring the vile, clean because of the work of his Son on the cross whom he sent to accomplish just that very thing. It is more than an access to heaven when we die, it is a living and ever present peace with God. It is a living reality within this life, you not only will have peace with God upon your death, but you are living in peace with God right now. You have been transformed from a vessel of wrath, worthy of destruction, into a vessel of honor, by the grace and mercy of God. We have been given a great hope, the same hope that Abraham had in believing God despite all the realities of earthly limitations knowing and believing in hope that God is able to do that which is promised. This hope that we have through Christ, is not like the hope that we experience in this life. For the hope of this life often disappoints. How many times have you hoped that something would happen, or for a specific outcome and the opposite of what you were hoping comes true? Our hope in Christ is not like this hope, just as our justification is more than just an access to heaven, so to our hope is more than just a blind hope for something good, but is a hope that rests upon the almighty promises of the sovereign God of the universe. The God who brings the dead to life, the God who sent his Son to accomplish his redemptive plan bringing about salvation to all who believe. The God who knew you before the world was.

As Paul writes in verse 5, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." We are not left on our own, we have the indwelling of the spirit Holy Spirit who ministers these truths to us daily. There is a sort of supernatural fulfillment, a supernatural peace and rest in knowing and trusting in Christ. The ministry of the spirit upon the believer produces in us this assurance, and peace which goes beyond human understanding. That is how Paul can write in verse 3, that we, who are Christ's glory in tribulation, because we know that all things in this life are temporary and there is a greater deliverance from this world of sin, and temptation awaiting us, so we persevere, and we hope, looking forward to that day. We can endure all these things because we know that Christ is with us.

And he has demonstrated his love for us by his Son. Whom he has sent as a sacrificial lamb to pay the price for our sins and rebellion. Look what Paul writes in verse 6, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” Showing his great love for us, he didn't die because we are good, and worthy, but he died because we are not so that we may be, verse 7. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” that is why the hope that we have in Christ does not disappoint, because it is God's work, and God can not fail in what he sets out to do. Our salvation and reconciliation to God does not rest upon our own ability, it rests upon God's ability, that in his love toward us, he accomplished all that was needed so that we may be called his children. And this is our security, verse 10, “If when 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.” If God sent his son to die, in our place while we were yet sinners, while we yet were enemies and full of sin and rebellion, then how much more having now been reconciled shall we experience and know the love of God? Having the knowledge of his work, knowing that it was for us he died, because he first loved us and sacrificed himself so we may also love him. Produces in us a hope, and joy, causing us to rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we have received the reconciliations.

Recognizing the necessity and the need for Christs work on the cross in our own lives, is a cause and driving force for worship, and works in us to be a reflection of the love we have received. For when we recognize what God has done for us, how can we be anything other then thankful, and if we have been given such a mercy, how can we also not be merciful. As Paul points out in the last half of this chapter, the curse that is upon mankind brought about by Adam has been lifted by one man, Jesus Christ. Let us go ahead and read now, the last half of chapter 5. (Read 12-21) The first thing that we need to understand here, is the reality of mankind's fallen nature in Adam. We are born into this world as sinful creatures, consumed by self. Paul paints this picture here in verse 12 that all men are under a curse because of the sin of Adam, for through Adam sin entered the world and death was the resulting punishment in the flesh, this part of the curse became a reality to all of humanity, it is appointed to man to die once, and afterward the judgment. Through Adam's sin, death spread to all mankind, but look then what Paul does at the end of verse 12, he says death spread to all men, because all sin. So, we ourselves are just as guilty as Adam by our own sin, worthy of death, but not only in this life but our sin makes us worthy of separation from God.

Not only is there the physical element of death, but the spiritual as well.. Scripture states over and over again, that natural man is dead in their trespasses and sins, and that no one, not one seeks after God. For even the seeking after God in the natural sense is tainted by arrogance and pride. We see that example given in the religious leaders of Israel. One could say, that they were seeking after God, but it was not a seeking to salvation, but rather in pride and arrogance seeking to make themselves worthy through their actions, which only caused even a further separation from the very God they sought to please, for in their pride and arrogance they rejected the promised Messiah, the one promised to their father Abraham who would come and take away the sin of the world. So we can see the absolute dire state of mankind lost in sin, and in many ways hopelessly so for even our best attempt at pleasing God in the flesh to gain merit before him puffs up sinful pride and arrogance within our hearts, making justification before God in the flesh impossible. The curse of Adam, our natural state is enmity against God, even at our best we can never strive to be good enough to earn a place around God's table.

This was the point of the law right? God gave the law to Israel to make sin, exceedingly sinful. The reality of the law is not that there is salvation through it, but rather it serves as a magnifying glass showing the darkness and sin within our own hearts. Sin and death rules and reigns within mankind, and it has so since the fall of Adam, as Paul states in verse 14, death reigns in all, from Adam to Moses, even to those whose sins were not like Adams. Notice Paul's point here, though the law was given to Moses exposing the sinful nature of mankind, the realities of sin and death were still at play since the fall of Adam. The law condemns, and makes sin exceedingly sinful, but sin and death ruled and reigned before the law because it is a part of the very nature of man. The entire point here is to show that mankind, is hopelessly lost in sin and death given no chance of escaping the wrath of God except by the son. In whom we are born again, in this new Adam, to become a new creature in him. as Paul states in verse 14, that Adam was a type of the one was to come. In Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive, verse 15. "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by one mans offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ abounded to many." This all ties in to being of the faith of Abraham, a part of the promise which was given that the Messiah would come to reconcile his people back to God, and his people, are those who are the ones born of the second Adam, that is, Jesus Christ, in whom is found salvation and justification before God, not of our works, but of him who died and was raised from the dead for our transgressions.

Paul calls this work of God, the free gift that is given, indeed it is the greatest gift ever given for it is the only hope given to hopeless mankind. To us, who are dead in our sins, God demonstrated his own love toward us, that while we were still sinners, while we were still in abject rebellion and hatred toward God Christ died for us. Our state of separation from God can not be overstated, and is actually often understated. There is a mighty gulf of separation, with no hope of reaching across, but God who is rich in mercy and grace has provided a way through his Son for us to span that gulf of separation to be in his very presence. This is the reality of the new birth, it is a work of God and God alone to reconcile us to him for we can not span that gulf of separation, it took an act of God, by his loving mercy and grace to make us who are dead in the curse of Adam to be alive in the new Adam Jesus Christ, in whom we are born again to be creatures of righteousness, who turn away from our old ways and embrace and pursue the new for it is the same God who chose to give us the gift of his mercy and grace that works in us and through us to will and to do that which is pleasing to him. We have become new creatures, and our desire which was once fallen and dead in sin, has now been quickened to see and feel, experience, and express the love of God.

Looking at Paul's writing here he is trying to drive home a point, for in verse 15-19 is repeats the reality of our justification through the righteous act of Jesus Christ. As we read this again, notice how many times he compares, the condemnation brought about by one man, Adam, and the righteousness brought about by the one Jesus Christ. "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. 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. For if by the ones man's offense dead 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. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting on condemnation, even so through one mans righteous act of the free gift came to all men resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one mans obedience many will be made righteous.

Paul repeats this reality, 5 times worded slightly different each time, but the message is the same. Through Adam, all are condemned, but by Christ we are made righteous. If you remember the first few chapters of this letter to the Roman's the driving point was that justification before God is found through faith, not of works, not of genealogy, but only through faith in Christ alone. Again he is pushing this point, looking to Christ as the center and all other things really don't matter. Man is under a curse, and it is only Christ who can bring him out of it, and it is only through faith and belief in him that one may be brought back from the curse of sin and death, to a life of faith and righteousness. This is a central point to the gospel, and Paul repeats himself 5 times showing that it is Christ, and Christ alone in whom righteousness is found, for we are born of Adam, and need the righteousness of the perfect spotless lamb imputed to our accounts. But look what Paul says, verse 20 and 21, "The law entered so that the offense might abound, the law was given to expose our sin, and instruct us in the hopelessness of mankind's own ability...yet where sin through the law abounded, so much more has the grace of God toward all those who believe. Having the curse of the law wiped from our accounts, likewise as death reigned in sin, even more so life through Christ reigns, for Christ conquered death so that we may live not only as the children of God in this life, but that we may be found righteous before God and enter into his very presence to dwell with him for eternity. This is our hope, it is a hope that is grounded in the sovereign grace and mercy of the almighty God, the creator of all. The same who has created the heavens and the earth, and holds the stars in his hand, is the same God who promised that he will never leave you nor forsake you.