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And living like you know you're not going to hell because Christ died on the cross is what most believers do. I mean, you just don't get beyond that. The question, of course, is what the common interpretation and understanding of this section is.

Why, you know, even though it appears to make sense that you can apply these things to life, the fact that he keeps referring to Christ's work on the cross makes us think of salvation and the things that come to us at the point of belief in Christ rather than righteousness in life. Because righteousness in life comes through our faith and through following Christ's example and so forth. Is that a fair summary? Well, interestingly enough, the answer is right here in the passage.

And what I'd like to do is just take a look at chapter 6, verse 1. Look at where Paul goes with this argument. Now that he has made these points in verse 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, and if you count them up, there are five different times that he compares what came through Adam to what comes through Christ. And you're right, especially if you look at verse 18.

When he's talking about Christ, he's talking about what Christ did on the cross. It literally says in verse 18, Just as on account of one trespass the result to all men was judgment, so also on account of one righteous act. And there's no getting around it.

That is a reference to what Christ did on the cross. The result unto all men is righteousness of life. And all men, I mean the hoi polloi, that to the many is what it means.

It doesn't mean to all men, but to the many. And the point here is continued when he starts in chapter 6, verse 1. Now what shall we say then? He's made these five comparisons, Adam to Christ. I have argued strenuously that he is making the point that you've got to stop depending on what you do and look at where you stand.

Because these things come to us through somebody else. We're either going to be standing in what came to us through Adam, or we're going to be standing in what came to us through Christ. Keep in mind the context that we've talked about is the life of the believer.

Ever since chapter 2, we haven't gone back to trying to evangelize unbelievers or talk about the need to get saved. We've been talking about standing and not experiencing the wrath of God at the judgment seat of Christ, which is what believers will stand before. That it's patient continuance and well-doing versus ignoring the admonition of God and the truth of God and storing up wrath for ourselves on the day of judgment.

That's what he's addressing in chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, and here in chapter 5. Well, the argument that someone could present is, well, how can you argue that righteousness can come to me without me doing anything? Righteousness is defined in the Jewish mind as what you do. Sin is defined in the Jewish mind as what you do. What sin did this man commit that he was born

blind? Or what sin did his parents commit? So, when people look at this, they don't have a concept or a memory or really an application of the fact that this sin, the fact that there are diseased and crippled and lame and blind people in Israel, doesn't mean that each of them committed some personal sin and God's wrath came on them.

It's a result of the fall. It's a result of standing in Adam. And these are simply manifestations and outgrowths and results of the fall.

The operational death and the failure to produce righteousness, the selfishness and the arrogance and the disregard and disobedience of God in lives of believers, where does that come from? It's still a result of the fall. All of the results of the fall did not go away when we were saved. Many of the results were remedied, and positionally we have been placed in union with Christ, positionally we have eternal life, positionally we have Christ's righteousness, but operationally in our life we can still stand in Adam and live just the way we did before we were delivered, because we can still partake of that standing in Adam, and its effects can still run rampant in our life if we let it.

How does that change? How can operationally we reflect what happened positionally when we trusted Christ? It's going to come the same way. It's going to come through Christ, it's not going to come through what we do. The disobedience and sin in our life comes because of our standing in Adam.

The righteousness and the production in our life, if there ever is any, isn't going to be from our own effort. It's going to come through Jesus Christ. It's going to be accounted to us just the way Adam's sin was accounted to us.

So Paul is trying to rip their minds out of this idea that you are what you do and replace it with the idea you are what you think. If you think like a fallen man, you're going to produce the fruit of Adam. If you think like Christ, you're going to produce the fruit of Christ.

And when I say produce fruit, we're not even looking at the standpoint of actions, we're looking at how God measures your life. And that's why he says in chapter 6 verse 1, What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? Who is the we? What does he mean when he says we? Are we to continue in sin? Is this the entire world or is it believers? It's believers. Unbelievers don't have a choice.

They're going to continue in sin regardless, right? But he asks the question, he says, What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? He's just said that when there were many trespasses, grace abounded. So he's saying, well, should we continue in sin so that grace will abound the more? Well, what is he really saying? He's saying, shall believers continue operating in sin so that God's grace can abound? So the context here is still the life of believers, right? We haven't switched and we're not talking about salvation even now. He says, shall we believers continue in sin so that God can just keep showing his grace? And then he uses the

strongest negative you can use in Greek at the beginning of verse 2. Absolutely not.

God forbid. There aren't words to express how strong this is in English without getting into mild profanity. This is stronger than heck no.

It's stronger than a lot of expressions you might think of. He says, absolutely not. We don't continue in sin so that grace may abound.

And what is he talking about here? He says, we shouldn't continue in sin. Continuing in sin is what a believer can do. And that's what he's been arguing against up above.

He says, God's grace can abound as we live the life of faith. So the whole point here is, no, we are not to continue in sin as believers. Now, if this discussion was talking about salvation, he couldn't make this statement in chapter 6, verse 1. Because if he was saying, in the same way that in Adam all die and Christ shall all be made alive and this is the salvation issue, God's grace is expressed at a point in time when we trust Christ, right? And we're going along in sin, we're unbelievers, we trust Christ, the grace of God abounds, and we're saved.

Well, you can't go back and get unsaved and continue in sin, can you? Once you trust Christ, if this discussion was talking about salvation, there is a one-time change that's irreversible. When you trust Christ, you're saved. You can't continue in unsaved sin after you've trusted Christ, can you? You can't do it.

Once you trust Christ, that sin's gone. That positional standing in Adam has been wiped away forever. And we don't have to review eternal security in this class.

And so what's the point? He's talking about the life of a believer. If we're believers, we should not continue in sin. And we shouldn't say, well, I'm just not going to worry about trusting because it's a way for God's grace to abound.

It's an absurd argument that he's making. He says, are we believers to continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. By no means.

Absolutely not. Forget it. How can we who died to sin still live in it? We who died to sin.

This is believers. He's been consistent all the way in chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, and chapter 5. He's talking about the life of a believer. Now, what's the point? He's saying you can't establish your own righteousness.

You can't earn your own righteousness. You didn't establish your own sinfulness and you didn't earn your own condemnation. You were already condemned in Adam.

And when we accept Christ as our Savior, the lake of fire issue is resolved. But our standing in life and the possibility of experiencing tribulation and anguish, wrath, and so forth at the judgment

seat of Christ, that didn't go away at the point of being saved. That is still a great possibility.

So there's no point in continuing in sin. It's our obligation. It's our calling to not continue in sin.

Grace is not going to abound if we continue in sin. Grace is going to abound when we trust Christ, when we do the things that are the first part of chapter 5. Since we are declared righteous by faith, what is the basis of that declaration? The question that has been raised here in the minds of people is, how can this be that I can be declared righteous because of somebody else? So Paul has said you were declared sinful because of the actions of somebody else. What makes you think it's any different? If you were declared sinful because of what Adam did, you can be declared righteous because of what Christ did.

What did Christ do? Christ died on the cross. Christ satisfied the judicial penalty. Christ not only satisfied the penalty so that we will not go to the lake of fire, but Christ died, was buried, and was raised again the third day.

The death he died, he died to sin. The life he lives, he lives to God. And that act of death and burial and resurrection makes it possible.

That's how it can be done. Because Christ died, because he was the perfect sacrifice, because it was not only his blood but also his flesh, that was involved, his life before God, his resurrection in a human body. Because he lives, we can live.

Because he is productive in God's eyes, we can be productive in God's eyes. Because he has satisfied the justice of God, we can be satisfactory as we stand before the judgment seat of God. And it is Christ's work on the cross that is in view.

That's the basis upon which it isn't... This is where Paul is going to say that being saved by grace through faith is not of us. It's a gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast. We can't even boast about our faith.

We can't say, well, I earned the righteous acclaim of God. I earned God's approval because of my faith. No.

Even being faithful isn't a righteous work that God is going to say, well, you really strove hard and you generated this faith, you came up with it, and I'm going to approve you based on your faith. The approval of God is not based on our faith. It's based on the work of Christ on the cross.

Whereas by one man's sin entered the world, and death through sin and death passed on all men, in the same way, by the righteous act of one, righteousness can come to all. We're not approved because of our faith. We're approved because of the work of Jesus Christ.

His atonement, his propitiation, his reconciliation, his redemption, everything that he did on the cross is why God can declare us righteous, not because of our faith, but it's by faith that we gain

access to that grace in which we stand. And that's why this is an ongoing process. That's why he says that in chapter 5, verse 2. Through him we obtain access to this grace in which we stand.

This is an ongoing thing, that we day by day are approved by God when we trust what he says, when we claim his promises, when we don't give in to the desire to please ourselves, we don't give in to the desire to please other people or to be approved by other people. We seek the approval of God. Chapter 2, those who by patient continuance and well-doing seek for glory, for honor, and for the imperishable things.

And that's the issue, and that's where he's going to go now in chapter 6. Look at verse 3. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him by baptism into death, not water baptism. This is the... Baptism is talking about the process of identification. We have been identified so closely with Christ that when he died, we died.

When he was raised, we were raised. And baptism means to identify something. It was used of a sword that was plunged into a bucket of water when they were forging it, and they would heat it.

And to temper the blade, after it had been heated and shaped and so forth, they would baptize it, they would immerse it in water. And we think, well, okay, baptism, immersion, all of us good Baptists like to think of baptism by immersion. But that's not really the point of baptize, even though it does mean to immerse.

But what do you do when you immerse something? You say, oh, I've been working on this particular task for so long, I'm immersed in it. I'm so closely identified with it that I can't separate myself from it. That's what baptize means.

We were baptized into death, into the death that Christ died, the death that he died, he died to sin. We shouldn't walk in that anymore. So that, it says in verse 4, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

That's the issue. And that's the choice that we face. And we think, well, there's a lot of theology here, there's a lot of arguments about being declared righteous and so forth.

The great question that we want to answer when we look at the Word of God is, so what? We've covered all of this. We've gone through some very complex arguments. We've looked at Greek prepositions and endings of nouns and so forth.

So what? What is the point? This letter that Paul writes is addressed to believers to tell us how to stand before God, to be pleasing in God's sight, to make our life count. What is our life? What do we do? We go to work. We have a place where we live.

We have laundry. We have food we eat. We have people we interact with.

We have social situations. We have family. We have friends.

We have coworkers and so forth. That's our life. As we go through the day, we are constantly reacting to things that come up.

Someone says something. Someone does something. An opportunity comes up.

A task has to be accomplished. That's living our life, right? We make decisions. We set priorities.

We decide I'm going to do this task first. So-and-so said this, and now I'm feeling bad. So-and-so said that, now I'm feeling good.

We're constantly in a state of reaction to inputs to our soul. What people say, what they do, what they charge us with, what they ask us to do, and so forth. God is measuring the way we react to all of these things, and that's kind of a scary thought.

Someone can make an offhand remark, and my feelings get hurt. God is measuring that. A task has to be performed, and I have some attitude and some sense of priority about that task.

God is measuring that reaction. I have a conversation with someone, or someone tells me what they think of me and what they wish I was doing or what they think of what I have been doing, and I have a reaction to that. God is measuring that.

And those measurements are going to be brought out, and there's going to be either discipline or reward for every single day, every single decision, every single reaction. And each one of us sitting in this room, each person listening to this tape, every single believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is going to give an account for every word, every thought, every deed. That's what Scripture says.

We need to know that and be thinking about it as we go through our day. Which is more important, to just get the tasks done by any means necessary, to get them done, to keep people off our back, to keep ourselves reasonably happy, to keep life kind of rolling forward? Is that the goal? Or is the goal to do those things and be approved? Which is bigger, the circumstances in our life or God? It's an easy question to answer. God and what He thinks is more important than any task we might accomplish, any goal we might achieve, any day that we might get through here.

What do we have to show for it? Think about all the days that we've spent, all the meals that have been cooked, all the loads of laundry that have been washed, all the miles that have been driven, all the work tasks that have been accomplished. What does it all count for? What do we have in our hands right now to show for it? What will we have in the eternal future to show for it? I think of the, you know, it's easy to think back when you were in school and your classmates, you get so concerned about what people think. I remember once I saw a catalog and I was very taken by

these lineman boots.

I thought they looked neat. They were made out of orange leather, they had the white stitching, they had the white sole. I thought they're sturdy, they're practical, they look neat, I must have them.

So my mom took me down and we bought these boots and I got them home and I thought they were great. They were comfortable, they were practical, they were great. The next day I wore them to school.

Some girl in my class made some offhand remark, I can't remember exactly what she said, but I got the idea that these were geeky looking boots. All of my pleasure in those boots evaporated. I thought, oh, nobody, I looked around, nobody else was wearing these boots.

Something about, well, are you planning to climb telephone poles or what are you planning to do in these boots? My whole attitude was completely changed by what this girl said. It was a long time before those boots wore out. I outgrew them before they wore out because I no longer was enamored of them.

Well, it's kind of a silly example, but I think about it now and how dumb, how silly to have not enjoyed a perfectly good pair of shoes, worn them and been happy with them and gotten the money's worth out of them and so forth. It was silly. I was completely taken over and motivated by what somebody thought and I look back on it now and I think, how dumb.

That's what we all run the risk of doing with our entire life. When we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, we're going to look back and say, I was so driven by what people thought, I was so driven by the desire to be approved or well thought of, I thought if I did these things, that was the standard of the society that I lived in, that was the kind of family I grew up in, that was the sort of friends that I had, that was the way I was brought up. I just thought that that's success in life.

And we're going to think, how dumb. It's going to be worse than the boots because it's not just the approval of people and it's not just whether or not we get satisfaction from something, it's holy God, the creator of the universe, who saved us, who sent his son, who died on the cross to rescue us and deliver us out of this present evil age and we completely blew it. We wasted the grace of God.

We wasted the blood of Christ because we didn't look at his work on the cross and see its purpose. It wasn't just to keep us from going to hell. It's to give us a productive life, a life that counts and pleases God.

And it's on the line. Every second that ticks by on the clock, every hour that goes by, every decision that we make where we're not thinking about who we are and why we're here, we're wasting the grace of God. We're wasting the work of Christ on our behalf because that's why he

did it.

It tells us in Colossians chapter 1. He died to deliver us out of this present evil age, to deliver us out of the death that we inherited from Adam. And in a way, you can see the fairness of God because God says, look, I put you in a situation where you inherited corruption, you inherited sinfulness, and you inherited condemnation in one sense through no fault of your own. You didn't do anything to get it.

You just woke up one day and there you were. And you got that because of what Adam did. Well, I can give you the solution in the very same manner.

And this is what happens at salvation. Through no works of righteousness that we produce, we're delivered out of that condemnation. Okay, it makes sense to us in salvation, right? And that's what Paul is arguing.

He says, look at salvation. You see the way salvation worked. What you did wasn't an issue in condemnation or justification.

What makes you think life is any different? What were the results of being condemned in Adam? All those M.A. words that we saw, what were the results? You couldn't please God. You were miserable. You were unhappy.

You had no staying power under pressure. Your life didn't count for anything. Everything led to corruption and debilitation and death.

Those were the results. And this is what Paul is arguing in chapter 5. And what we have to get past is canning everything in terms of salvation and deliverance from the lake of fire. There are a lot of results of being unsaved.

There are a lot of results of being in Adam that go beyond going to the lake of fire. But it's our typical self-centered view that, well, all I'm concerned about is my eternal destination. If I get that squared away, great.

But there is a whole realm of results. And that's why Paul uses these five analogies in the last half of chapter 5. And he says, look at what resulted from this condemnation in Adam. Look at the deadness, the non-production, the displeasure of God, the wrath, and so forth.

In the same way that our lake of fire sentence that came to us through Adam was remedied through Christ, all of the other results of being dead, all of the other results that come to us from being in Adam are remedied in Christ. And after salvation, after we get our ticket out of the hot place, all of the results come through Jesus Christ. It's still not works of righteousness that we do.

And that's what Paul is hammering on because that is the standard by which everybody measures. That's the way they did it then, and it's the way they do it now. Think about it.

In church, in churches, in Christian circles, how do we measure people? Why do we think that Billy Graham is so great? Is it what he thinks or what he does? Better yet, why does the unbelieving world think Billy Graham is so great? They have no idea what he's thinking because they can't figure out what he's thinking. But they judge him righteous because of what he does. He has led a self-sacrificial life and has preached the gospel all over the place.

And people look at those actions and say, well, he's a holy man. If anybody's going to heaven, Billy Graham's going. That's not the basis God is going to judge Billy Graham on.

I mean, God is not going to count Billy Graham's crusades, not going to count the number of people that came down the aisle, not going to count the number of books that he published or anything else. God is going to look into the soul of Billy Graham and every single one of the rest of us and say, who were you trusting? Why did you do what you did? Did you get a thrill out of being in the center of the stadium and having the TV cameras and all these people, or were you doing it because you understood the honor and the glory and the imperishable things that belong to the plan of God? Two men could stand and do the exact same thing. One of them is motivated by that and will be patient in pursuing that by faith, and another one does it because his hairdo gets on TV.

And lots of money comes in the offering plate, and he can live and have gold bathtub faucets and all that. God is going to judge what's going on in our hearts, and that's the issue for us. When we break up here tonight and we go our separate ways, every decision, every thought, every action, God is measuring it.

Is it faith or is it sin? He talks about, Paul says this in another book when he's talking about people eating meat offered to idols, and there was this big argument, well, you're righteous if you don't eat meat offered to idols because it's pagan, it's unholy, it's unclean. Other people said, no, it's a piece of meat. They laid it in front of a rock for an hour.

God made it. It's good. Why should we, you know, you're giving credit to these pieces of rock by calling them idols and false gods and saying that by sitting in front of this, you're actually giving credit to the pagans by saying that that could alter this piece of meat and making it inedible.

Well, the logical arguments could go both ways, and Paul said, you know what? You're not right if you eat meat or if you don't eat meat. You're right if you're doing what you do because you desire to please the Lord. And you're sinning if you're disregarding other people, if you're doing it out of selfishness, if you're doing it with disregard for what God thinks.

It doesn't matter if you're eating or not eating. And he concludes that section by saying, whatever is not of faith is sin. If you're doing it because you understand the principles that God teaches in His Word and you're acting accordingly, you're righteous.

It doesn't matter what you're doing, within reason, of course. If you know God's Word, you know

where those boundaries are, where no matter how good your intentions, you're still sinning. But you see the point.

Whatever is not of faith is sin, and that's the same point that he's making here in Romans. And he says you can continue to live as a result of what Adam did or you can live as a result of what Christ did. And you'll have righteousness in life.

You will reign in life if you pursue righteousness by faith. And you will inherit death. And you will lose reward and lose blessing.

You won't have peace. You won't have joy. Peace and joy are the heritage of every believer.

And if we don't have them, that is the biggest indicator that there's something wrong. I mentioned before I used to wish that my ring would glow a certain color when I was out of God's favor. And I would know that I had messed up and I should confess my sins or I should read my Bible or pray or do something.

There would be a light that would glow that would tell me. And I was really concerned about fellowship with God and am I in or am I out and that kind of thing. And as I've studied the Word of God, it has occurred to me we have an indicator and it's peace.

It's joy in our soul. The quickest way to know that you're not in God's favor and not living the life of faith is you lose your peace and you lose your joy. That is the promise and the inheritance of every believer in Jesus Christ.

And if we don't have it, it's our own fault. We have given it away. We have failed to claim it by faith and it's nobody's fault but our own.

And that's the challenge that Paul puts before us here. He says, you've got the Adam's side, you've got the Christ's side. Which way do you want to live? If we have died with Christ to sin, why should we any longer partake of all of the stuff that's a part of Adam's transgression? Let's partake of the great things that come to us through Christ.

It's a great motivation. It's the hope of glory. It's the hope of having a life that is not only very wonderful for us, but it fulfills God's purpose and pleases Him and it makes worthwhile what Christ did for us on the cross.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for the truth that You have preserved for us in Your Word, that You've communicated to us. We thank You for the ministry of the Holy Spirit that as we meditate on it gives us insight and understanding and helps us to remember and apply these things.

We pray that that process will take place. We do want to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We do want to live in a way that pleases You, to have the worthy walk that we might stand

on that day before Jesus Christ and hear the words, Well done, Thou good and faithful servant.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will use these things to expose our weak areas, to chasten us and rebuke us and correct us and that by this very simple principle of claiming Your promises and trusting in what You tell us, we can have a life that is declared righteous by You and we can enjoy all of the benefits that come from fulfilling Your purpose in our lives. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.