

96-05-17a

In our study of the Word of God this evening, let's begin by taking a moment to clear our minds and prepare our hearts and seek the ministry of God the Holy Spirit as we look into the truth of God's Word. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the many ways that you bless us every day, for the provision that you make for us in ways that we never see or ways that we're not aware of.

You protect us, you anticipate needs, you answer prayers even before we ask, and in so many ways you cradle us in your arms and take care of us so that we can live the life that you have set before us. We thank you for the age in which we live. We thank you for the calling to which we are called and the grace that we have in Jesus Christ.

And we pray that tonight as we study the letter to the Romans that God the Holy Spirit will help us to understand and retain the things that we see. We pray that we will be able to divide the Word of God aright and that in so doing we will be strengthened and nourished up and equipped for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Well we have spent some time on Romans chapter five and we're beginning to look at Romans chapter six. And this is a critical place in Paul's argument. We are now at the heart of this letter, the heart of this book.

And it's so important to be sure that we know where we are because the ground that we have gained as we have looked at the first five chapters of this book, that is the foundation for everything else that Paul is going to say for the next ten or eleven chapters. And at the risk of going over this ground too much, there are a couple of things in chapter five that I want to be sure we have in mind as we go into chapter six. So we're going to take just a moment to remind ourselves of a couple of key verses out of chapter five.

Let's say for example that six months or a year from now you thought, you know, I went through the book of Romans and it's starting to get kind of fuzzy in my mind. It seems to me like we emphasize the fact that it was talking about the Christian life and not so much about salvation and that a lot of the passages that talk about justification that we tend to associate with the point of salvation are really talking about righteousness and life. But it's kind of, it's dimming in my mind how I'd like to quickly go back and reinforce my memory of that.

What would be some key verses to look at? So I want to point out just three or four key verses in chapter five. And you may want to put a star by these if you come back in your Bible later and you want to track through the argument that Paul is making in this book, the case that he's presenting. These would be the key points.

They sum up the ground that we've gained in chapters one through four and it is the turning point that launches us into chapter six and following. Perhaps the most important, if I had to pick the

central verses in Romans, at this point I would probably pick chapter five verses one and two. This is the heart of the argument because Paul says here in the New King James, it says, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Now we have seen that there are a couple of key grammatical features in these two verses that we really need to make a note of and be aware of because this translation and most of the English translations do not do justice to what Paul is saying here. First of all, in chapter five verse one, when he says, Therefore, having been justified by faith, that is our attempt to translate an aorist participle and the rule, the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. We have two main verbs in these two verses, but this comes first and a good translation of this is since we have been justified by faith or when we are justified by faith.

Paul is not claiming that this is an absolute for everyone that he's talking to. He's presenting a case. You could say, seeing that your brake shoes are in good condition, you can make an emergency stop in the required distance.

We have a condition for making an emergency stop in the required distance and that is that your brakes are in good shape, but in the course of talking about automotive physics or whatever, somebody might make that statement and say, well, we've already been through the brake system. We've checked the fluid. We've checked the shoes.

We've checked the drums. We've checked the rotors and everything else, and since we have good brakes, we can make an emergency stop, and that statement that he makes is based on everything that he said before. That's what Paul is doing here.

He has just spent three and a half chapters making the case that believers stand accounted righteous before God by what they believe, not what they do, and we've covered that. We've reviewed it extensively, but that's what he's summing up here. So now he's saying, therefore, since we are justified by faith, at the point that we are justified by faith, this is a condition for these two main verbs, and these main verbs are in the subjunctive mood, and the subjunctive is the mood of potential, and this was such a hard thing to figure out that a lot of the early scribes and the early copyists of the manuscripts couldn't figure out the link.

Already we were having trouble understanding the letter to Romans, and so some of the later manuscripts changed these subjunctive moods to indicatives, to a declarative mood that just states a fact, because people had in their minds salvation. Well, since we have been justified by faith at the point of salvation, we have peace with God, and we rejoice in the hope of glory, and they just made them declarative statements, but the earliest and best manuscripts of this have these two verbs in the subjunctive, and that's important because Paul is making a statement. He's drawing a conclusion, and he says, look, since we're at the point that we are justified by faith, we

can have, we may have, it's a potential based on whether or not we fulfill that condition.

Since we have the opportunity to be justified by faith, there are two ways of presenting a potential thing in Greek, at least two ways, probably more, but two primary ways. One is to put something in the subjunctive mood. The other would be to use a form of the verb *dunamai*, which means to be able to do something.

Paul could equally well have said, since justification comes by faith, we are able now to have peace with God, we are able now to have rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, but the idea to keep in mind is you have a condition and you have a potential. If you meet the condition, the potential becomes possible. The condition is for believers that we pursue and achieve justification by faith, sanctification by faith, the declaration of righteousness in the eyes of God, that's the condition.

Everything that Paul has argued in the last half of chapter one, when he talked about pushing away the truth, when he talked about chapter two and he said that's not just something that unbelievers can do. Believers can suppress the truth and unrighteousness and come under the discipline of God. There will be tribulation and anguish, wrath for those who do not patiently continue in faith.

And in chapter three, he contrasted the old and the new and in chapter four, he gave Abraham as an example. So here in chapter five, he's saying, okay, we've made this case and since we know that we can be justified by faith and at the point that we are justified by faith, when we start living this life and we get our mind off of what we're doing and what other people are thinking and concentrate on what God is pleased with, which is what we're thinking and what we're believing in our soul, at that point we can have, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom this grace came to us in the first place, through whom we have access to the grace that sustains us. And we may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The textual evidence is so strong for these potential moods, these subjunctive moods, that people have said, well, it must be a subjunctive. The textual evidence is so strong. How can we translate this subjunctive? And some translations go so far as to make this a cohortitive subjunctive.

And you know what the word cohort means. You've got your cohorts and you're all going to do something together. Well, a cohortitive subjunctive means you get everybody together and say, let's do this.

I'm exhorting you. I'm encouraging you. And so a lot of times in Greek they would use a subjunctive mood to encourage someone.

And the translation of that is, let us have peace. Let us rejoice in the hope of glory. And you'll occasionally see an English translation where that's what this verse says in English because they

see the subjunctive and they know that it's there.

But this is a potential subjunctive. This is conditioned on what happens at the first part of verse one. So this is the big challenge.

This is the key to succeeding in our life as believers before God. This is the key to the worthy walk of Colossians one. This is the key to this dispensation.

This is a different age than the age that existed from Adam to Christ. It's a different opportunity. We're going to see that tonight as we review a little bit of Paul's argument here in chapter five.

But another key verse is in 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 delivered by his life. And this is a key thing to keep in mind because Paul does reference our salvation and he does talk about what Christ did on the cross.

That, of course, is the basis for every grace that we are given and every resource that God grants to us in this life. Of course, it's based on the cross and we're not diminishing or neglecting any of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. What we have to do is get away from what I would term a myopic view of salvation.

Myopia is when you can only see something that's way up in front of your face and it looms so large that it blots out your perspective. It blots out the horizon, blots out everything else you can see. Myopia is when you have something right up in front of your face and it consumes and fills your view and your attention.

And we naturally recognize the condemnation that we're under in Adam and the fact that God in his grace sent Jesus Christ to the cross to die for us. And because of what he did, we have everything that we have. We've been delivered from the eternal judgment of God in the lake of fire.

And naturally, being concerned about ourselves first and foremost, that's one of the most important facts in the universe. I'm not going to the lake of fire. I have been saved.

And we tend to look at everybody on the planet in those terms. Well, have you been delivered or are you still headed for the lake of fire? And to us, that's the issue in life. What is your eternal destination? However, amazing as it may seem to us, that is not God's perspective.

Do you not find it interesting that in the Bible, we very seldom see heaven and hell presented as a contrast? How often in the New Testament do we see an apostle or a teacher or a preacher stand up and make the case to hell-bound sinners that if they don't repent, they're going to hell instead of going to heaven? How much of the New Testament is taken up with that message? How much of the Bible is taken up with that message? It's there and it's true, but it's not the message that you come away. If you go through the five-year program with McGee, if you go

through a one-year Bible reading program, when you finish, that's not the theme of the book that you come away with, is it? Because God has got, if you'll pardon the expression, He's got larger fish to fry. He's got a bigger agenda going on than just my personal salvation.

Now, it looms large in my mind, and it is certainly a glorious part of God's plan. And God loves me and cares about me, and my salvation was important to Him, important enough to send Christ. But that's not the goal.

That's not His grand design. That is just one piece of a much larger plan and a much larger strategy. But because it looms large in my mind, when I go to Scripture, I tend to see my salvation everywhere.

And this is what God did for me on the cross, and this is what God did for me at the point of my salvation, because I've got myopia. I've got, initially, I'm operating in a self-centered universe, and that's what I see. What we're going to see tonight as we review these arguments that Paul made in chapter 5, and we're just going to review them briefly, but if you want, I'm going to write these on the board, and you can follow along and write them down.

And I think you'll see the weight of the argument that Paul is making lies in a different direction. You get a pen here. You'll recall that we had a series of comparisons in chapter 5, in the latter part of chapter 5. We started in verse 15, and we're contrasting the two Adams.

There was one man, and what I'm doing is writing this on the left side, and it's kind of a title. I've got one man up here, which is Adam, and on the right side, which is going to be my second column, I have one man, Christ. Now, in verse 15 of Romans 5, Paul made a contrast, didn't he? And he said, through one man's trespass, this is in my left-hand column for verse 15, what was the result? I draw an arrow here.

Many died, but through one man's grace, the result is the gift of grace to many. We'll complete this chart, and then we'll discuss it a little bit. In verse 16, what was the contrast that we had? Through the one Adam, or Adam's transgression, whichever way you see that, came judgment and condemnation.

But what happened on the Christ side of that equation? Through many trespasses, the result was the gift of righteousness or justification. In verse 17, we had our third contrast. Through one man's trespass, what was the result? Condemnation for all.

But on the right-hand side here, on the Christ side, through one act of righteousness, the result was justification for the many. Actually, I skipped a verse there. Oh, that's terrible.

Now, everybody's notes are going to be messed up. Let me back up a little bit. I just gave you verse 18.

In verse 17, we had through one man's trespass, the result was that death reigned. And through one man, Jesus Christ, believers reign in life. Then in verse 18, one trespass leads to condemnation for all men.

And on Christ's side, one act of righteousness leads to justification. This is the place in Romans, and you can see why, where we often bog down, but there's something in here that is important for us to see. In verse 19, through the disobedience of one, many became sinners or were declared sinners.

Through the obedience of one, on the side, on Christ's column over here, many will be declared righteous. And then finally, if you look at verse 21, in verse 21, sin reigned in death, but now grace reigns unto eternal life. Now, it's kind of tedious constructing our chart here, but there's something I'd like to point out.

One of the things that Greeks are famous for and that they love to do in their writing, and you find this in secular Greek, and you find it all through the Bible. You even find it in Hebrew thinking in the Old Testament. And that's the idea of a chiasm.

If you think about the letter chi in Greek, it's a big X. And a chiasm is a sort of an X-type correspondence. In other terms, you can think of it as A, B, B, A. And what this means is that we sometimes have things that are put in an order other than a straight list. And that's what we have here in this table that we've constructed.

If you think about this now, we start out with a correspondence. One man's trespass, the many die. Through one man's grace, we have the gift of grace, which is righteousness to many.

Now, notice, first of all, the subject under discussion here. When he starts this sequence of comparisons, is he talking about life and death? Or is he talking about condemnation and righteousness? He's talking about where we stand in terms of evaluation. Now, immediately when we think about Adam sinning and the trespass and condemnation and death reigning, we think in salvation terms.

We think, well, the consequence of that is that we're all headed to the lake of fire. But if we back up and think about God's plan, what was the consequence of Adam's sin? What was the result in the human race? God has got the salvation thing figured out. He's got Christ coming.

Christ is going to die. Through faith, we can claim Christ's work, and that's going to be taken care of. But in the meantime, why do we have this gap? Between Adam and Moses, you've got at least 4,000 years.

Why the delay? Why all of these people? And what is God's attitude about all of those people? If it's just a matter of life and death, why didn't Christ come the day after Adam and Eve partook of the fruit? If it's just a matter of demonstrating that God can find a way to save sinful men, we don't

need 4,000 years of sinful men to make that point, do we? God has got a grander plan. God is demonstrating something to all of creation, to the angels and to us as human beings. And this period of time was required to do that.

And it goes beyond condemnation and death. It goes beyond salvation and life. It has to do with creatureliness versus deity.

It has to do with what we are unable to do and what God is able to do. It has to do with the distinction between the creator and the creature. And it takes time to demonstrate that difference.

And that is what has been occurring throughout human history. God has turned that relationship from one angle to another and let us view it in different ways and see it in different contexts because it's by seeing the contrast between ourselves and God that we come to understand who God is. The only frame of reference that we have for God as an unknown, invisible God is the visible, known creature.

And we see that come out in this table. When you look at the first comparison, through the trespass, many died. Now, we think of this in terms of condemnation and going to the lake of fire.

But look at it from God's point of view. What sort of usefulness, what sort of fruit can we produce when we're dead? What did Adam and Eve do in the garden? Adam had been tending the garden. He'd been taking care of his mate.

There'd been a lot of learning and productive fellowship going on with God. After they partook of the fruit and disobeyed God, there was separation. There was loss of function, loss of fruitfulness, loss of reflection of the glory of God.

Everything that Adam and Eve had been able to do at that point was ceased. And everyone that came after them ceased in the same way. The many died.

And that's why the contrast is made to Christ. Through grace and the gift of righteousness comes to many. Not the gift of life.

It's not just bringing us, resuscitating us back to life. It's righteousness. Righteousness is what's on the line because righteousness is something that only God can produce.

It doesn't say through grace, many produced righteousness. It says through grace, many received righteousness as a gift. And we're still tempted to think in forensic terms and that this is part of our salvation.

But this is talking about experiential righteousness. Think of the context. And you'll see this as we go through.

Look at the second comparison in verse 16. Through one transgression or one man, Adam, what

came? Judgment and condemnation. It doesn't say loss of life.

It doesn't say eternity in the lake of fire. It's judgment and condemnation. This is the relationship between man and God.

It's adversarial. It's contrary. It's opposites meeting.

God is holy and righteous. Man is condemned and sinful. That's what happened in Adam.

But in Christ, after many trespasses, we have the gift of the declaration of righteousness. Justification. We can be the same as God.

The opposite adversarial relationship has been resolved. Now, this goes beyond our point of view. We're certainly happy about it.

And we're grateful we're not going to the lake of fire. But God is looking at us in terms of usefulness. Think of all the scriptures.

We're going to see some tonight where God talks about us sometimes in terms of servants and sometimes in terms of sons. Does a man look at his business and say, well, you know, all my employees are alive. I haven't lost a one.

It's wonderful. And we rejoice that you haven't had any deaths in the company. But that's not the reason you have employees.

And when you look at people, we don't just think in terms of, well, you're alive. That's a great fact. But there's a purpose to life.

And there's a purpose to being a servant of God. There's a purpose to being a child of God. And God is looking at this in terms as the gift comes not of life.

It's the gift of righteousness. Because righteousness enables us to do something. Righteousness enables us to reflect something.

Righteousness enables us to understand something about God. And that's a part of God's greater design. Look at the third comparison in verse 17.

Through the one man's trespass, death reigned. Now, he's not just saying through the one man's trespass, everybody died or everybody headed to the lake of fire. He's saying death reigned.

What is death? Lack of production. Lack of suitability. Lack of fulfilling a purpose.

Death is much more than the cessation of existence or transferring out of this body and going to the next stage, whether it be life with God or condemnation in the lake of fire. Death reigned. This is an ongoing thing.

It means that there was a lack of production. There was a lack of function. There was a lack of righteousness.

We don't see believers in terms of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance from Adam to Christ. It wasn't possible. Because you didn't have the life of God coming even to those who were saved.

Death reigned. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even though there wasn't a law pointing out why that death was reigning. When the law of Moses came, the trespass increased.

We'll go through that when we get to it. But the point here is look at the contrast. It would be so easy if Paul was caught up thinking about salvation and making a gospel pitch here to contrast life and death, condemnation and acceptance.

And that's a part of it. But he's looking at a larger context. God doesn't look at unbelievers just in terms of their eternal destination.

He looks at them in terms of the waste of their life, the waste of the gifts and the grace that he's bestowed on them. The rain falls on the unjust. And God says that's like a field where the rain falls, and it just brings up thorns and briars, and it's useless.

And God can sort the cards by saved and unsaved any time he wants to. But when you look at what the Bible presents in terms of the human race, it's productive and unproductive. And that's why sometimes we have so much trouble discerning passages and deciding, well, is he talking about reprobate believers or is he talking about unbelievers? In God's mind, from one perspective, there's no difference.

They're equally unproductive. They're equally out of accomplishing the purpose of God. And we're sitting sweating, well, but is he saved or not? Or has he lost his salvation? God says, what difference does it make from the standpoint of my overall purpose? Now, from his point of view, it makes a big difference because his eternal destination is everything.

But from God's point of view, you're practically just as useless as a reprobate believer as an unbeliever. You're not fulfilling the purpose. Christ died on the cross to deliver us out of this present evil age.

And if we haven't been delivered out of this present evil age, you have fallen from grace. You are cut off from Christ. Those are strong terms.

And they're used to believers because you're just like an unbeliever. We're not thinking in terms of eternal destination. We're thinking in terms of God's wider, grander purpose.

It's not being fulfilled. Look at the contrast in verse 18. Through one trespass came condemnation for all men.

The trespass proved that as creatures, we can disobey, that we have free will, God-given free will, and we can exercise it, and we can choose against God. And once we make that choice, we start to decay and degenerate, and everything around us decays and degenerates. The earth itself came under a curse through no fault of its own.

The earth was cursed because of us. In Adam, man sinned and man fell, and man became unproductive. Man became one of the agents by which everything disorganizes, everything decays and deteriorates.

Everything is unlike God. God is characterized by life. Us and our world are characterized by death.

And so through that trespass, there was condemnation for all. We were all condemned to that same existence of unfruitfulness, the same inability to please God, inability to participate in the productive side of God's purpose. But through one act of righteousness, the act of Jesus Christ on the cross, His obedience, came the declaration of righteousness to the many, to as many as receive Him.

And what does that tell us? It's not talking about taking us from death to life in the forensic sense, in the judicial penalty sense. It's talking about the functional sense, the productive sense. It's so hard for us to shake looking at things in a heaven and hell scenario.

But that's what Paul, and I think that's why he keeps giving us these different views. He's saying, look at the difference between man without salvation and man with salvation. Look at the difference between man apart from the righteousness of God and man with the righteousness of God.

Now, the imputation of righteousness at the point of salvation changes our eternal destination. But the imputation of righteousness at the point of salvation does not change our function. It doesn't change our level of productivity in God's plan.

That's the choice that we make every single day. And we can decide that we're going to be productive and we're going to be functional by works, by ministries, by activities, by wearing a hair shirt, by afflicting ourselves, by going out and doing things we really don't like because we feel like, well, God's got to be proud of me now because look at this uncomfortable, painful thing that I'm doing and I'm doing it for Him and so He's going to look at that and say, well done. Paul says, no.

Any Jew can do that. Any Jew can put on the sackcloth and ashes, sacrifice the best of the flock, bring it down there and say, okay, God, I've kind of earned your favor here. I've done this good deed.

Paul says, no. God forbid. The way that God accounts us righteous is when we understand His

plan, we trust in it and we let God do His work.

God is the source of righteousness. Righteousness is a gift from God. It isn't something we generate even after salvation.

Look at verse 19. Through the disobedience of one, the many were constituted sinners. The many were declared sinners.

Through the obedience of one, the many are declared righteous. Now, notice this doesn't say through the lack of faith of one, everybody's going to hell and through the faith of one, everyone's going to heaven. What is the contrast here in verse 19? Disobedience and obedience.

Now I ask you, is salvation a matter of obedience? It's not. Salvation is a matter of faith. So we're not talking about salvation here.

We're talking about attitude toward God after salvation, the obedience that comes from faith. To obey God, what is the great commandment that Jesus left us? Is it a work or is it an attitude? Is it a deed or is it a thought? A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, that you minister to one another, that you disciple one another, that you evangelize one another. It isn't what it says, is it? In John 13, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another.

A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another. We have to obey that command. And what shape does that obedience take? We can't obey.

It's such a frustrating command if you're thinking like an Israelite because you can't go do something to love. You have to be something to love. You have to think a certain way.

You have to see life and reality from a certain perspective to love. And it's a perspective that God plants in us through his word and through his spirit. And we acquire that perspective through faith, through looking at the word of God and accepting that as reality and denying and pushing away anything in our mind that doesn't conform with the word of God and what it says.

The disobedience of Adam, did Adam stop believing in God? Did Adam stop caring about God? Adam disobeyed God. God said, don't eat and he ate. The obedience of Jesus Christ wasn't an issue of whether or not Jesus believed in his father or not.

It was an issue of going to the cross. Jesus did not want to go to the cross, even though he loved us and he was willing to go for the joy that was set before him. But he said, father, if there is some other way, take this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but thine. And that's the decision that faces us. Is it going to be our will and our viewpoint, our idea of what constitutes righteousness or is it God's? For Jesus Christ, what constituted righteousness? Obedience to death, even the death of the cross.

It started in faith, but it worked itself out in action. And the love that Christ had was an agape love. And once he had that attitude and understood where he was, that faith prompted works.

And that's what James talks about. If you're saying you have faith and it's not coming out in works, go back and take a look at your faith. There's something the matter with it.

But we've got to get the horse squarely in front of the cart. And the horse is faith and the cart is works. And through disobedience came unfruitfulness, condemnation, opposite of God's standing.

Through the obedience of Jesus Christ, standing with God, the declaration of righteousness comes. And Paul's point, like we've talked about in the past few lessons, is none of this has to do with what we perform by way of works. We didn't get this.

We didn't ask for this sin that we have in Adam. All of this stuff in the left-hand column, how many of us voted for that? How many? How many? When did God ask me, would you like to be condemned and be conceived in sin and born in iniquity? Would you like to be fruitless and hopeless, helpless, and useless? Everybody that wants that, raise it. Nobody ever asked us, did they? We got that with no action on our part.

And all of this in the right-hand column comes to us the very same way, through no action on our part. In Adam all die. In Christ shall all be made alive.

And it's a matter of faith, where we trust that God can do what he says he will do. Look at verse 21. On the Adam's side, sin reigned in death.

Remember what he argues in this chapter? He says, death reigned from Adam to Moses. Now think about that, death reigned. And the implication is death doesn't reign now.

Death doesn't rule. Death doesn't have the power that it had from Adam to Moses. And if you follow the argument, he says, when the law came, things just got worse.

Because the law came in and the trespass increased. How does death reign? How does death rule? Through sin. What is sin? The opposite of what God wants.

The opposite of production. The opposite of fruitfulness. The opposite of righteousness.

The opposite of reflecting the glory of God. That's death. Death reigns in sin.

Every time we sin, death is reigning. God is not glorified. Righteousness and fruitfulness are not there.

So sin reigned in death. Now grace reigns and the result is eternal life. And once again, this eternal life is the full-orbed comprehensive package of everything God wants to do for us as his

children.

It's such a terrible thing to limit the gift of God, which is eternal life, to just a ticket out of the lake of fire. Once again, we think that's the most important thing. And what could be better than that? In God's eyes, that's just the beginning.

That's just crossing the line into a new realm of light. And once we're in the kingdom of light, like he talks about in Colossians chapter 1, we've been transferred into that kingdom. Well, we've got a function there.

We've been signed up. We're citizens of another kingdom. And that citizenship wasn't the goal.

That citizenship is the means to an end. So this is what Paul is arguing. And getting back to the idea of chiasm, I want you to notice here that in verse 17, and this is one of the things that throws us when we read this section of Romans.

Verse 17 says, through the trespass of one, death reigned. I'll read it to you here out of the RSV because that's what I have in my hands as I'm standing up here. But in Romans 5, 17, it says, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man.

But then he says, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life. And it doesn't seem like there's a one-to-one correspondence there, does it? Because we have through the trespass, death reigns. And then in the other side of it here, we have receiving the gift of grace, believers are reigning.

Well, what's the correspondence between trespass and believers? Death used to reign, now believers reign. It doesn't quite correspond. And the same thing happens in verse 18.

Through one man's trespass, there is condemnation for all. No, I'm sorry, I'm looking at verse 16. He says, the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin, for the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation.

But the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. So we have the trespass on the one hand and we have the gift on the other. And the point here is that there is a chiasm going on between verses 16 and verses 17.

Verse 16 begins with one, which is Adam. Verse 17 ends with one, which is Christ. Through the one man, Jesus Christ, believers reign in life.

So that's the outside bracket, the beginning of verse 16 and the ending of verse 17. The end of verse 16 talks about after many trespasses comes the gift. The gift of righteousness.

And then in the beginning of verse 17, we also have trespass. So we have a correspondence between Adam and Christ on the outside and trespass on the inside. And the main, why is that

important? What does that tell us? The contrast here, what happened in Adam? Judgment and condemnation.

What happens in Christ? Reigning in life. The contrast is between lack of production, lack of fruit, lack of ability to please God and reflect His glory versus reigning in life. These are the two opposite poles.

You see what I'm getting at here? The opposites are not heaven and hell. The opposites are operational death or ruling and reigning in life through Christ. Those are the poles that define this argument.

And the point that I'm trying to make here is what's in between there? The trespass, the failure of man. Our failure isn't going to accomplish anything. Our failure is what makes the poles exist.

Now, the point that he's going to go on to make in chapter 5 has to do with the law. Because the law of Moses doesn't solve this problem. The law of Moses makes matters worse.

Why is the law being introduced in this discussion? What is the point of bringing up the law? Who's he writing to? What is the standard of righteousness in this church in Paul's day? Keeping the law. If we keep the law, we'll be righteous. If we observe the feasts and do the sacrifices and get circumcised and strap a little copy of the Ten Commandments to our head and strap it on our hand and if we do all the little rituals and the deeds that are in the law, we'll be righteous.

Can you see from the presentation of this argument that that flies directly in the face of the purpose of God? God's whole purpose is to demonstrate that the efforts of man don't cut it. God's not going to institute a system and say, well, here's a system where man's efforts are going to count for righteousness. Do these efforts and you'll be righteous.

God never said that. He said, do these efforts and you'll be blessed. He said, do these efforts and I will smile on you and I will not discipline you.

But He never said, do these things and I will declare you a righteous man. What do the prophets say? What does God require of you? But to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Doing justice and loving mercy and walking humbly spring from an attitude of the heart, don't they? It springs from recognizing the world as God created it and as God sees it.

By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. That discussion has to do with believers. After salvation, it doesn't change.

We still can't do works for righteousness. Our righteousness that God gifts us with is going to result in works. It's just the reverse.

Once we are declared righteous through faith, works will follow. They will be the fruit of faith. So that's the argument he's making.

So he brings up the law. Why does he bring up the law? Look at verse 20. Law came in, why? To straighten men out, to overcome evil with good.

That isn't what it says, is it? Law came in and what happened? The trespass increased. Why is that? The law was a standard of behavior and God said, I'm going to put this in front of you and demonstrate the magnitude of your death. The magnitude of your non-functionality, your unfruitfulness.

We talked last time about the law coming in because he says here that sin is not accounted where there is no law. Remember that in the earlier part of chapter 5, verse 13? Sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law. We talked about there being a road with cars going up and down and there's quite a volume of traffic, but nobody knows quite how much until you run one of those little meter hoses across there.

Take the number of bumps and divide it by two and that tells you roughly how many cars went across. I was talking with Patty earlier this evening. Another example that occurs to me that probably is closer to Paul's argument here is when someone starts having heart problems, you start getting arrhythmias.

You can, if you're silting up with cholesterol and so forth and your blood pressure goes up and you start getting a cut off of circulation to your heart, your heart will beat in a funny way. It doesn't beat the way God intended. Well, that can go on for some time and then pretty soon you have a major symptom and they rush you to the hospital.

What do they do? They hook up the EKG. They hook up the scope and you start to see the little familiar heart wave pattern. There's the big spike and then the little dip and then the smaller spike and all that.

If you ever accompany somebody to the hospital and read the literature, you find out what each of the little, you got the P wave and I can't remember all the little parts of it, but there's a very detailed analysis of that wave and they can look at that and tell exactly what's the matter with your heart. Well, this part of your heart is not beating right anymore and this is happening too early and this is happening too late. Well, was that happening before? Yes, it was, but you couldn't see it.

You couldn't reckon it until you got hooked up to the meter. That's what the Mosaic law did. When God issued the law to the Israelites, He said, I'm your God, you're my people, you've promised to obey, here it is.

What happened? It just put a magnifying glass on the operational inability of mankind in the person of Israel to generate righteousness because even people who were faithful could not generate righteousness. Even people who were obedient and kept the law from their youth, it didn't produce righteousness. Why? Because it's an external system.

You can't work righteousness from the outside in. You can't get someone to do an external act and have it sink into their heart and change their thinking and their attitudes. It just doesn't happen that way and that's what the law demonstrated.

It was like a meter on a very diseased heart and it showed how great our inability was. We're going to pause now and when we come back, we're going to look at a couple of scriptures that illuminate this comparison and bring this to light. We're going to see two other occasions where Paul addressed this subject in very similar terms.

I think by the time we've finished, this will flow and make sense in terms of seeing this problem and this solution from God's perspective and not from our own. We have to get beyond the idea of salvation and look at the idea of the glory of God, the purpose of God in revealing himself and his nature in us and through us. And the means by which he does that is what we'll be taking a look at when we come back.

Let's pause now and take a break.