

**Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church**  
**Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 5, Verses 12-21**  
**Notes from Tuesday September 28, 2010**  
**Last Revised on October 4, 2010**

**Songs**

**Opening Prayer**

**Introduction**

In this class, for those of you who are new, we are studying the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

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Last week we began studying Chapter 5, covering the first 11 verses.

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Tonight I want to begin by rereading and briefly discussing that passage.

**The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 1-11 (Review)**

OK, then, will someone please read the first 11 verses of Romans Chapter 5 in Japanese.

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Thank you. Now will someone please read those same verses in English.

- 1       Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
  
- 2       Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**
  
- 3       More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,**
  
- 4       and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,**
  
- 5       and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**
  
- 6       For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**
  
- 7       For one will scarcely die for a righteous person---though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die---**
  
- 8       but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.**

**10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**

**11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Thank you.

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I would especially like to direct your attention to Verse 1 of Chapter 5, which reads:

**(Verse 1)**

**Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

As we discussed last week, the first word, “*therefore,*” looks back and probably refers to all or most of what Paul has written so far in this letter to the Christians in Rome,

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and the little clause that follows the word “therefore” (i.e. “*since we have been justified by faith*”) is how Paul summarizes the foregoing material,

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The first four chapters of Romans are, in other words, an exposition of what Paul means when he says “*we have been justified by faith.*”

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Q. So having read those chapters, we ask, once again, what does Paul mean when he says “*we have been justified by faith?*”

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Q. Or let’s break it into pieces: what does he mean when he says “*we have been justified?*”

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A. He means that now we **are** righteous in God’s sight, whereas formerly we were **not**.

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A. He means that **despite** our manifest sinfulness, God has **counted** us as righteous?

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A. And while this goes a little beyond what Paul is teaching just here in Romans, we know from reading more broadly in this letter and elsewhere in the Bible, that a **declaration** of righteousness by God, will finally work its way out as actual righteousness, moral perfection, in eternity. One day we will actually be like Jesus and live with him eternally.

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Q. OK. So how does such justification happen? How do we translate from from unrighteousness to righteousness...from darkness to light...from death to eternal life?

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A. “*By faith*” according to Paul

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Q. But what exactly does **Paul** mean when he says we have been justified “*by faith?*”

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A. Well this is what he has been unfolding for us in the first four **chapters** of this letter!

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And this goes to show that, in some sense, “*justification by faith*” is not a simple concept or at least it is not a concept that can be fully explained in a few words. Paul works hard to explain it in four chapters and I dare say nobody understands it without the help of God, the Holy Spirit.

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A. For one thing, when Paul says that we have been “*justified by faith,*” Paul means to say that we have **NOT** been justified by any thing that we, or our ancestors, or our race, or our society, or our church, have **done** or refrained from doing.

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A. On the contrary, Paul says, we are counted as righteous before God **DESPITE** all of the really terrible things we have all done, and that we all continue to do, all the time.

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A. Our righteous standing before God is, surprisingly enough, Paul tells us, because of something that **God** Himself has done, in and through **Jesus Christ**.

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God put **Jesus** forward, Paul tells us, as a **propitiation** by his blood to be received **by faith**.

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We **believe** that we will **not** be punished for our sins, as we know we deserve, because we believe that Jesus has **already** suffered that punishment **for** us...on our behalf. **That** is what we believe.

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This is the **content** of our faith

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The fact that we truly **do** believe these things about God, and believe God about these things, is the faith which God **counts** as righteousness.

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When that faith appears in us, by definition, we know that we have been **moved** from death to life.

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Such faith, as we must repeatedly remind ourselves, is not something that we can take credit for.

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Faith is something that we are given, and it is something which grows and develops and expresses itself in us, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit, but faith is not something that we can ever “do” by ourselves. Faith is an operation of God in us.

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Such faith is the gracious, miraculous, free, gift of God to all who are being saved by God.

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This, then, has been is a summary of the first four chapters of this letter, as they are condensed in the first half of Verse 1 of Chapter 5: “*we have been justified by faith.*”

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Now let's turn our attention toward the second half of Verse 1 of Chapter 5.

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*“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,”* (the first half of Verse 1) *“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (the second half of Verse 1).

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Q. So what does Paul mean when he says that *“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?”*

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Paul will now spend four chapters unfolding this idea: Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8.

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So you can see that Verse 1 of Chapter 5 is a kind of hinge, connecting the first four chapters of the letter, which seek to explain how we are justified by faith, with the next four chapters of the letter, which seek to explain how we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Therefore in some sense Verse 1 of Chapter 5 is also a kind of condensation of the first eight (8) chapters of Paul's Letter to the Romans.

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In these chapters Paul is saying: Because we have been justified by faith we have peace with God. Jesus is as the center of all of this. It is He who justifies us and brings us this peace with God.

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So let's talk now about “peace with God”

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Q. Let's begin by asking simply what Paul may possibly mean by the word “*peace*?”

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A1. When most of us hear this word, we first think of “*peace*” as being the “opposite of war,” don't we?

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A2. Upon reflection we may also think of “*peace*” as the “absence of war” or perhaps as the “end of war.”

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A3. And we may think not of war “literally” but of some lesser struggle which comes short of war, and for which war is merely a metaphor. A “trade war” for example or a “war” between a husband and wife.

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But in any case, “war” and “peace” whether literally or figuratively are set opposite one another in some fashion in our minds.

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So when we hear that we have “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*,” we might easily imagine that Christ has brought to an end some kind of a “war” between God and Man.

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However to speak of there being any kind of a “war” between God and Man, or between God

and Satan, or between God and anyone, is simply to speak nonsense, and to misunderstand completely what is meant when we say Lord God Almighty.

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The idea of a war between God and Man is more ridiculous than the idea of a modern army with nuclear weapons going to war with a handful of children on a kindergarten playground someplace.

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It is a “category error.” Man and God are not in the same category, cannot be set opposite one another, cannot possibly go to war with one another in any meaningful sense. If and when God should wish to wipe out Man and all creation, he need simply speak the word, and we are gone.

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Indeed we continue to exist because God sustains our life. He doesn’t need to take any positive action to overcome us. All he would need to do is to withdraw his support. And we would cease to exist. Isn’t it amazing that God is the one who actually sustains and maintains in existence those who would oppose him!

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The Bible is filled with stories to help us understand this, perhaps especially the story of Noah, which is a story of how God nearly did wipe out all human life. That Noah and his family escaped was certainly not the result of them having been victorious over God and the flood!

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On the contrary, the facts that Mankind exists and that we continue to exist despite our sin can only be explained in terms of God’s grace and divine forbearance. And this is grace and forbearance to which God has voluntarily bound himself (only God can bind himself) through many promises.

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We exist not because God lacks the power to overcome our rebellion, but because he uses, and is committed to using, his unlimited power in strangely gentle and unimaginably humble and self-sacrificial ways: to save us despite ourselves, by sending Jesus to die in our place and then helping us to believe in this salvation and, through this belief, to be **reconciled** with Himself.

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The word “**reconciliation**” appears in verse 11, of chapter 5, and is a good word to help us understand what Paul means when he says in Verse 1 that we have “**peace**” with God.

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Because the word “reconciliation” does not normally carry with it the idea of “war” as an opposite, which as I have suggested is potentially misleading when speaking of God.

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We are not so much at **war** with God before we have peace with Him, as we are **separated** from God, by our own choosing.

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One cannot help but think of the story which Jesus told, of the Prodigal Son. The Father was not at war with his errant son. On the contrary, he was anxious for his return and he did all that he would to welcome this son back --- to be reconciled with him. To have their family relationship restored.

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We could also say that the Father and his son found peace in the end, and that is true, but their peace had not been disrupted by war, and certainly not on the part of the Father. Their peace had been disrupted by the foolish rebellion of the son, and by the son's reluctance to return home.

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Reconciliation was a matter of the son coming back to where he belonged and to where he had always been welcome.

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The welcoming arms of God are seen in the gospel. There we can see and believe that God is seriously committed to being reconciled with us, and that He Himself will do and indeed already has done all that is necessary to welcome us home.

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All we need to do is to believe this and come home.

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This belief, this faith in God and his goodness, and his love for us, is what the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts, as Paul says in Verse 5 of Chapter 5.

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The first 5 verses of Chapter 5, as we saw last week, basically make the point that this loving and eternal relationship which God intends to have with us, is often perfected through our suffering in this present life.

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Verses 6-11 of Chapter 5 help us see that our present suffering is something that we have in common with .... God .... through Christ. God in Christ came to suffer **with** us and **for** us so that we could be reconciled with Him. And he did all of this while we were openly hostile to him.

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He could have had a war with us...I suppose... in which case we would not exist now. But instead he came and gave up his life for us, so that now we are reconciled with him and at peace with Him.

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This is as much review as I will do this evening. Now let's read on.

### **The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 12 - 14**

Will someone please read verses Verses 12 - 14 of Chapter 5 in Japanese

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Thank you. Now will someone please read these verses in English.

**12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned---**

**13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.**

**14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.**

Thank you.

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Verse 12 reads:

**(Verse 12)**

**Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned---**

Here again we are faced with a passage that begins with the word “therefore”

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and here again the word “therefore” looks back to material that precedes it.

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Here, most likely, it looks back to the first 11 verses of Chapter 5 and the idea developed there that we have reconciliation and peace with God through Christ.

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and Paul wants to take that idea and develop it in all its fullness.

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As shall become clear, he has the idea of comparing the reconciliation with God which Christ has accomplished with the separation from God which began with Adam in the Garden of Eden.

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He begins that comparison here in Verse 1, but he interrupts himself to address related concerns in Verses 13 through 17.

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He then apparently resumes his original comparison in Verse 18, which also begins with the word “therefore.”

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The comparison when he finally makes it, benefits greatly from the digression in verses 13 through 17 and the additional amplification and correction that follows in Verses 19 -21.

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Before even getting into the detail, we can see that the comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ is important but difficult and highly nuanced and, therefore, potentially misleading.

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We must compare them, perhaps, but we cannot “simply” compare them because they are finally not in the same category.

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Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, and God, is in a category all by himself.

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Adam was merely a man....special in some ways (he was the first man and is in some sense representative of all men) ... but nevertheless a man and not the Son of God or God as Jesus

is.

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That Paul is very sensitive to this distinction will become clear, and this sensitivity explains his long digression in verses 13-17

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Setting all of that aside for the moment, Verse 12, once again, reads:

**(Verse 12)**

**Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned---**

OK, so here, first of all, we get the thought that sin came into the world through one man.

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This is an unmistakable reference to the story of Adam and Eve in the Old Testament Book of Genesis

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One of the most important precepts taught by that story is that, in the beginning, God created everything, and it was good.

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In the beginning, everything was OK with God.

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Sin is, basically by definition, that which is not OK with God.

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the first not OK thing that happened, was when Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

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Therefore, truly, sin entered the world through one man.

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Once this happened, the whole world was no longer OK, no longer as God had made it.

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There was an unstable, ungodly, unrighteous element in the world.

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And it spread like a virus: all men sinned.

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The result of sin, by God's decree, was and is death.

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If we sin then we must surely die.

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That was and is the rule.

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Verse 13 reads:

**(Verse 13)**

**for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.**



Here Paul anticipates a question or objection that someone might raise, and which, indeed, some of the Rabbis probably had raised in debates in which Paul had participated.

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The question or objection is this: how could the men which lived between the time of Adam and the time of Moses be said to have sinned?

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Everyone agrees that Adam sinned, because he disobeyed a direct command from God.

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And everyone agrees that, from the time God gave the Law to Moses, until this day, everyone except for Christ has disobeyed the law in some manner or degree.

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But what about the people who lived before Moses, and who received no word from God?

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That is the question!

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Paul's answer is simple, and obviously true upon reflection,

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Every single one of those people sinned and fell short of the glory of God.

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A lot of their sin might not have been recognized as sin, because there was not law.

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But it was nevertheless sin....meaning not OK with God.

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Indeed the story of Noah, of Babel, and many other stories in the Bible paint vivid pictures of sin in the time before Moses!

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There is further proof of this in the fact that all of those people (except Enoch) **died**.

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Verse 14 reads

**(Verse 14)**

**Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.**

With or without the law, with or without a direct command from God, everyone except for Christ has sinned and, therefore, everyone except for Christ has died because of their own sins.

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We are all, as they say, dead in sin.

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Christ was different because he alone, of all men who have ever lived, was without sin.

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That is why Christ alone, of all men who have ever lived, was qualified to die for the sins of others!

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 He died for our sins, and rose from the dead, so that we could rise and share eternal life with him.

---  
 Adam sinned like all the rest of us, but he is different from us in one respect: his was the first sin and therefore the beginning of sin among men in the world.

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 Yet Paul says, here in verse 14 that Adam was a “type” of Christ.

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 Which is to say that Adam was in some particular respect a “Christ-like” figure.

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 But Paul wants to be very, very careful in how he portrays the similarity between these two men who were in most respects not merely opposites, but infinitely, categorically, different.

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 Let’s read on.

### **The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 15 - 17**

Will someone please read verses Verses 15 - 17 of Chapter 5 in Japanese

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 Thank you. Now will someone please read these verses in English.

**15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.**

**16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**

**17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.**

Thank you.

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 You see how carefully and almost reluctantly Paul compares Christ to Adam.

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 Again Verse 15 reads:

**(Verse 15)**

**But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.**

Adam and Christ were similar in the sense that both of them were men.

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Adam and Christ were also similar in that they both received a direct command from God.

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Adam disobeyed God's command, so sin entered the world, hence everyone sinned, therefore everyone died. So Adam's disobedience had wide-spread and long-lasting consequences. (Basically he killed the world.)

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Jesus obeyed God's command, all of them perfectly, and freely gave up his perfect life, as an atonement for the sins of many, thereby giving eternal life to those who were dead in sin. So Christ's obedience had wide-spread and everlasting consequences. (Basically he saved an eternal kingdom out of the world that Adam had killed.)

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Paul clearly means to say that the obedience of Christ is absolutely different in kind and infinitely greater in power and effect than was the corrupting influence of the disobedience of Adam.

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We need to ponder this...long and hard.

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Each person who receives blessed eternal life as a free gift from God through Christ, is redeemed eternally from the mountain of personal sins, under which they lie dead many times over!

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And this is multiplied many times over, by the many people who are redeemed by Christ.

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Men are naturally curious as to the numbers: how many shall finally be alive in Christ, and how many shall remain dead forever in their sins.

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But I think there is no answer to that question which is given to man, and I don't think that Paul is trying to make such a numeric comparison, here or elsewhere.

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Verse 16 perhaps makes what Paul is saying here more clear. It reads:

**(Verse 16)**

**And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**

God created a perfect world.

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The perfection was destroyed by Adam, through what may seem to us in retrospect, like one tiny little sin.

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But it seems that way to us, because we are looking back through the history of humanity which is filled by an uncountable number of much greater sins which men have subsequently committed.

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The sentence of death hangs over all of that history, and rightfully so. The world needs to die and be recreated, and this has been true since Adam took that first small step away from God.

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But God has been merciful and patient and still, even now, freely offers to preserve from the coming destruction all who put their trust in Christ, despite how bad things have gotten in the world since that first little transgression.

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**Instead of erasing Adam, in other words, and all of the men who have since been born into sin and death, God purposes to bring many sons to glory through the free gift of life available in Jesus Christ.**

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This finally becomes even more clear in verse 17, which reads:

**(Verse 17)**

**For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.**

Do you see it?

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We are not guilty because of **Adam**; we are guilty because **we** have sinned.

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This has been true of **every** man (except Christ) who has ever been **born** into this world.

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We have all been **born** into sin. We have all been, if you will, been born **dead**.

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Or if you prefer we have all been born, destined to live a very short time, and **then** to die.

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Throughout all of human history, death has **reigned**.

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But the free gift of righteousness offered to all who believe, brings out of this death, **life eternal**.

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Adam's little sin, in other words, rendered the whole world broken and unstable and ultimately unsustainable, but the free Gift of God in Christ, shall pull much everlasting good out of this mess!

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And of course that was and is God's eternal plan! Jesus is not "**Plan B**."

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It was **because** of Christ who was to come that God created the world as he did.

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 We now return (with much caution and correction) to the comparison that Paul set out to make in Verse 12.

**The Letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 18-21**

Will someone please read verses 18 - 21 of Chapter 5 in Japanese

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Thank you. Now will someone please read these verses in English.

**18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.**

**19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**

**20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,**

**21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Thank you.

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Once again, Verse 18 reads:

**(Verse 18)**

**Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.**

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The “*therefore*” now looks back, I think, to everything that has been written since Verse 1 of Chapter 5.

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The relationship between God and Man was broken at the beginning, when Adam disobeyed God. **All** men have been born into **death**.

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But in order to be reconciled with Man, **God** put forward **Christ**, so that everyone who believes is saved from sin and death, and reborn into blessed eternal life. That’s the plan.

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This benefit is very great and extends, in some sense, even **beyond** the body of believers.

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Because Christ and his kingdom is and has always been the goal and **purpose** of all creation.

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The Eternal Kingdom is the only reason why destruction of the passing, fallen world has been

delayed!

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Verse 19 reads.

**(Verse 19)**

**For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**

Here Paul is carefully making a point that we have already noted.

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Specifically that, while it is true that Adam's transgression **condemned** us, this is only true in the sense that it made us sin **too**. We are not condemned for **Adam's** sin, but for our **own** sins,

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which are, by and large it seems to me, much worse than Adams!

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We have had more practice with sin than Adam did and more time to be degraded by it.

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The righteousness which is **counted** to us, through faith in Christ, is different in this way from the sins which we **actually** commit.

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All of the sins are truly **ours**. All of the righteousness is eternally **Gods!!**

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**Apart** from God, all that man **can** do, is sin.

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But finally, when this fallen world is rolled up like a scroll and put away (Hebrews) and the New Heaven and the New Earth are fully revealed, our righteousness will be made perfect in Christ, so that we no longer will sin, and God will be all in all.

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Then we shall truly be, children of God, as Jesus already is!

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Finally Paul wanted to remind his readers that none of what has been said is contradicted by the Law, but on the contrary is only amplified by the law.

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Verse 20 read:

**(Verse 20)**

**Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,**

Since Adam, there has always been more than enough sin in the world to kill us, each and every one.

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 The Law does us the favor of making this more clear.

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 It also has the effect of making us **more** sinful, but that's OK because God's grace is big enough to handle any amount of sin.

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 The proof of this is that God was able to forgive even the cruel death and desecration of his dearly loved, only begotten son. If God can forgive that. He can forgive **anything!!!**

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 The chapter concludes in Verse 21, which reads:

**(Verse 21)**

**so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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 Apart from Christ, the situation of all men, is that we sin and die,

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 and the law does not help us with that, except to show us how hopeless our situation is.

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 In the Kingdom of Christ, the situation is completely different.

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 We are **admitted** by grace through **faith**.

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 The free gift of God is **eternal life**.

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 Meaning not just everlasting life ...life without the possibility of death,

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 but blessed life ... to live forever without the possibility of sin.

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 therefore uninterrupted fellowship with God.

**Closing Prayer**