

Romans 5:12-19

**Theme:** The impact of God's intentional gift

There was a time in my life when I thought that if I died in the middle of committing a sin, I'd go to hell because I didn't have a chance to repent and be forgiven. I'd imagine saying or thinking something bad and – wham – t-boned. Instant death. “What then?” I'd wonder. Maybe you've wondered this, too. Chapter 5 of Romans is such an excellent chapter because it dispels this thinking by explaining that we stand in grace by faith as a status we enjoy continually. We rejoice before God during and through all life brings because we're reconciled to him through Jesus! Have some doubts about that? Don't feel like you're justified all the way or that your faith isn't enough? There's a lot of people who feel this way. It comes from life, from experience with the brokenness of the world and with guilt, “Jesus undid the ruin of this? Really? Jesus took away my guilt, my additions to the ruin that earn death, my sins?” Yes. Jesus has overcome the world, paid for sin, beat death itself.

To make this clear, Paul says five times in different ways that the gift God gives is so much better, more meaningful, impactful, good because it's God who gives it. God isn't like us. We make choices unaware of the aftereffects. Which, therefore, do you think will be ultimately more impactful and produce a better result for people: God's gift given very intentionally so sinners would have eternal life or human mistake, sin, made ignorant of result? It's what God does, every time! Even though the result of what humans did is intense, it doesn't, can't, and will never be able to hold a candle to what God has done, does, and will do.

To show how completely enormous and able to put back together and save God is, Paul explains the mess that creation is as we know it. When Adam sinned, all aspects of creation, including the crown of it, the people, succumbed to death's decay because every aspect of creation was subject to and affected by sin since the crown of creation, people, sinned. That one act, first thing not in-line with God's will, resulted in people losing God's perfect image and being made in their own image, affected by sin and fated with death image. With one notable exception, all the people from the time of Adam onward died even though there weren't any laws of God to break earning death until Moses gave them. How? The will of God, his expectations for life, were written on the hearts of all those people and all those people broke it. Sin. Contribution to ruin. Death. Repeat. Into this, God gives the gift of God, his own Son.

The gift, given by God Almighty, is entirely superior to the result of a person's sin. The result of that sin is pretty big, right? We've felt the sting of death! We've lost close loved ones. We fear the future sting of death knowing it's ahead for each of us and that each and every one we know and love will die. All of that whole bag of fear because one person sinned. Big impact, but it's nothing compared to God Almighty's. “*But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*” (**Romans 5:15**) What a statement! It squarely places the God of creation against a person. The human impact is big, to us, but it's nothing compared to the Lord Jesus and the infinite impact of his grace.

Paul says to think about it like this, “*The judgement followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.*” (**Romans 5:16**) One sin resulted in death for everyone. One sin is serious. But then, after an unknowable number of sins all with just as serious of consequences, one gift of God results in the making righteous of all those who did the sins. God's grace is infinitely greater. Who is the most powerful member of the Justice League? It's not Superman. No way. Batman can take care of him. It's Flash because he becomes pure speed, pure time and space in motion. His signature move? The Infinite Mass punch. The theory is that as an object's velocity increases, its mass

increases also. If something is moving at infinite speed it would then land with infinite force. Powerful move. Impactful. Saved the day lots of times.

Jesus is infinitely more powerful, excellent, and wonderful in every way than any comic book hero. He is the true Lord of Life, the one Champion of Salvation, and the only Defender of Sinners who defends them by being perfect for them in their place, forgiving their sins, and fighting against their enemies in their stead securing for them access to the never running dry but always overflowing fountain of God's faithful saving love through suffering, by not looking very champion-y at all, but enduring gruesome treatment. **(Romans 5:17)** Jesus dethroned death ending its reign and caused righteousness and life to rule instead from his throne of grace. When Jesus, the King, sets up a throne and kingdom, how much greater and more excellent isn't it going to be than any accidental reign set up by a man's failure? Jesus' reign, the abundance of life and forgiveness and righteousness he chooses to give is of such greater magnitude that it shouldn't be compared because it flows from his empty grave and his empty cross! This is the grace which now saves you and in which you now stand!

If you thought that was a thorough enough treatment of comparing the effect of Adam to the effect of Christ, you lost count! Paul has two more! Fourth: that one trespass led to condemnation for all, but one righteous act, Jesus' whole life and death, leads to life for all people. Fifth and final: *"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."* **(Romans 5:19)** The last point and lingering one is that your salvation stands on the achievement of Jesus, his obedience to the Father's will, by living in love before God and people.

Jesus overcomes the havoc of the fall's most personal to each person consequence of death. He overcame it by his righteousness, not Joe's. Jesus is the one who speaks in defense, who forgives. He is the impactful one. My sin is a big deal, yes, but Jesus can handle it no problem. So if you ever did or ever do think like I did and do on occasion, "God couldn't forgive this. God can't fix me, too broken. What if..." just don't. Ha. Remove that thinking from your spiritual vocabulary. Don't think of yourself so highly, ya finite person, that Jesus can't love, forgive, and restore. He loves to and will always.

God gave you his Son on purpose, knowing the weight of our sin. His grace hesitate, run out, or fail. The gift stands. Jesus lives. He reigns and with him, so do you. Amen.