

Romans Summary
Week 9, Wednesday November 9, 2016
Romans 5:1-21

Paul continues to unpack what this justification which we have through Jesus' death and resurrection entails. From one angle of vision we have peace with God. Peace is a term very important to the covenantal people — the long hoped for *Shalom*. Yet, it also has resonances for the Gentile community, in so much as, Caesar brought peace through his justice. So Paul is reminding the Gentiles of this new (or better) peace which comes from this new justice, which comes from this new Lord.

Again, this is not just a Lord, this is the Messiah. So, the Messiah ushers us into grace, as if it were a room to stand in (read Temple language). And now, we have the appropriate boast. Not in our ethnicity or in our own standing, rather we boast in what Christ has done — the glory of God. A part of our justification is the restoration of that glory; to be God's vice-regents over creation itself.

From another angle of vision we have tribulations which we can also boast in. Not because we are suckers for punishment, but because we know that going through trials brings an ability to endure and move forward, which creates proven character, tested character, and the tested character is one which hopes. Hope, in this setting, is not a 'cross your fingers' kind of hope, but a sure hope. It's sure because we have love for God through the holy Spirit in our hearts — marks of the new age.

Paul keeps unpacking. He is giving the grounds for this sure hope which is, again, Christ. The basic logic is that normally people don't even die for 'good' or 'godly' people, but God demonstrates the 'greatness' of his love because Christ died for us while we were still ungodly, weak, still sinners, and enemies. So if God has done this 'hard' thing, this unheard of thing, then how much more will he finish it now that he has justified us. So, again, our boast is not in ourselves, or our goodness, but in Christ alone.

Paul begins to take his argument to the next level, by comparing this new status in Christ to the old status in Adam. These anti-God powers of Sin and Death are playing the role of Pharaoh in this new Exodus drama. Then he interrupts himself to clarify two things. Even though there was no law, there was still sin — it just wasn't imputed. So there are those who have sinned like Adam did, meaning against a direct command, and those who sinned in a manner different than Adam, namely without a direct prohibition. All still sinned though.

However, God's free gift of grace is greater than the transgression (Adam's). Christ did the harder thing. Adam sinned and than sin (and death) naturally spread to all humanity. But Christ comes when there are many sins and many sinners (where Adam ended up not where he started) and brings justification and deliverance from sin. So, the grace-gift out weighs the death-heritage.

Paul then answers another implied question, what is the purpose of the Law? It came so that the transgression would increase — it was here, where sin was at it's fulness that God's grace came in and dealt with the powers of sin and death. We have been brought out for Egypt.

“To Die For” reflection and discussion questions:

1. Why is Paul’s word ‘yet’ or ‘still’ so important?
2. Why do we reject Paul’s gospel? What is required for us to accept it?
3. What is God doing to us when Christ died for us?
4. Who is the ungodliest person you can think of? Did Christ die for them?
5. What is the story of the Bible if it’s not us seeking after God?