

## Abraham was Justified by Faith (4:1-25)

In chapter 4, the Apostle Paul presents several irrefutable reasons why justification is by faith. Since he had already presented his case that God declares His people righteous on the principle of faith instead of works, he now illustrates that truth through the life of Abraham. He has already said that the Old Testament ("the law and the prophets" – 3:21) bears record to the doctrine of justification by faith. So the discussion of Abraham's faith serves also as a proof of the fact that in the Old dispensation, just as in the New, men were justified by faith and not by works of the law.

- Paul's major reasons for teaching the doctrine of justification by faith are: (1) Since justification is a gift, it cannot be earned by works (vv. 1-8). (2) Since Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, circumcision has no relationship to justification (vv. 9-12). (3) Since Abraham was justified centuries before the Law, justification is not based on the Law (vv. 13-17). (4) Abraham was justified because of his faith in God, not because of his works (vv. 18-25).
- In verse 1, Paul calls the reader's attention to Abraham - "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?"
  - ➔ Here we have the first of six occurrences of the question, "What then shall we say?" (6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30).
  - ↳ Paul asked this question to reflect on the arguments that the Jews would raise against the doctrine of justification by faith. The objection of a Jew would be, "How does your doctrine of justification by faith agree with what the Scripture says of Abraham? Were there not some advantages in the rite of circumcision which God has instituted for the Jews through Abraham? Are they not justified by the rite of circumcision? So the apostle set his mind to answer this inquiry.
    - So he referred to Abraham as "our father, as pertaining to the flesh." Paul is calling the attention of the Jews to their revered ancestor, Abraham. They claimed that their physical relation to Abraham was of great spiritual value. Hence, Paul knew that an argument drawn from Abraham's life would be of much value in convincing them of the truth of justification by faith.

### He was justified by faith, not by works (vv. 2-8)

- In verse 2, Paul presents a hypothetical situation concerning Abraham, which was not the case, that the Jews may clearly see his instruction on justification by faith. He writes, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God."
  - ➔ Paul here presents a "condition contrary to the fact." He did not say that Abraham was justified by works, but that "if Abraham were justified by works." Paul also says that if Abraham were justified by works, he had something to "glory" (the Greek word *kauchēma* means "boast" or "brag" cf. 2:17, 23; 3:27).

- ↳ But, Paul insisted, his boasting could only be before other people, not before God. If a person could establish his finite righteousness by works—though that is impossible—he could never boast of it in God’s presence.
- ↳ To prove his case, Paul turns to the Scripture in the following verse.
- Paul appeals to the Scripture for establishing divine authority for his teaching. So he asks, “What saith the Scripture?” (v.3a)
  - ↳ He then cites Genesis 15:6 and declares, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (v.3b). Paul had quoted this verse in Galatians 3:6 - “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
  - ↳ What does it mean to say “Abraham believed God”?
    - This statement certainly means more than just the fact that Abraham believed that God exists. It means that Abraham believed in God and the whole covenant of grace that God has presented to him, including the Gospel of Christ.
    - Take note that here Paul is not discussing about faith in the existence of God, but faith in the redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus which leads to justification of a sinner. Believing in the existence of God while rejecting His only plan of salvation that is in the atoning sacrifice of Christ will not justify a sinner.
    - Paul’s words to the Galatians proved to us that Abraham believed the Gospel of Christ, which was foretold in the prophecy “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3; cf. Gen 18:18) and its extended form “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen 22:18; cf. Gen 26:4; 28:14). Paul writes in Galatians 3:6-9, “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”
    - John Calvin’s comment on this verse is also worthy of our consideration, as it adds further light to our understanding of Paul’s words about Abraham’s faith. He writes, “The word ‘believe’ is not to be confined to any particular expression, but it refers to the whole covenant of salvation, and the grace of adoption, which Abraham apprehended by faith. There is, indeed, mentioned there the promise of a future seed; but it was grounded on gratuitous adoption: and it ought to be observed, that salvation without the grace of God is not promised, nor God’s grace without salvation; and again, that we are not called to the grace of God nor to the hope of salvation, without having righteousness offered to us.”
  - ↳ Because Abraham believed God, God imputed righteousness to his account.

- Abraham, by believing, embraced nothing but the favour offered to him. Abraham, being persuaded of God's blessings in Christ, trusted in God's promise. It was then imputed to him for righteousness. So it naturally leads us to the conclusion that Abraham was not otherwise just, but only as one trusting in God's goodness and faithfulness in His promised Seed, Jesus Christ, the Saviour.
- Again, let us heed Calvin's very helpful comments - "Only let us remember this, — that those to whom righteousness is imputed, are justified; since these two things are mentioned by Paul as being the same. We hence conclude that the question is not, what men are in themselves, but how God regards them? not that purity of conscience and integrity of life are to be separated from the gratuitous favour of God; but that when the reason is asked, why God loves us and owns us as just, it is necessary that Christ should come forth as one who clothes us with his own righteousness."
- The verb "counted" translated from the Greek word *elogisthē*, which is from *logizomai*. It is both a legal and accounting term that carries the idea of crediting something to another's account.
- What does the phrase, "it was accounted to him for righteousness," mean? It is not that God saw Abraham as a righteous man and hence declared him justified on the basis of his own righteousness. Rather, when Abraham believed on God's Gospel promise, God reckoned him righteous.
- From the Scriptural account of Abraham's life, Paul concludes, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (vv.4-5).
  - In these verses, Paul expressed a general statement that compares faith with work as the basis for justification.
    - ↳ According to verse 4, when people work, they earn their wages. Their wages are not gifts, but rewards for their efforts or labour. The word "debt" (v.4c) simply means "that which is due, as a fair compensation for the work that is performed, according to the contract." A worker's wage is what is owed to him because he earned them, and is not graciously given to him as a gift.
    - ↳ According to verse 5, justification is granted "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." Justification is not granted to those who try to inherit it by their righteous deeds. In other words, justification cannot be earned by works. Rather than attempting to earn God's favour by meritorious deeds, one must simply trust. Justification is granted only to those who believe.
  - Though he "justifieth the ungodly," he does not justify their ungodliness, but the ungodly man from his ungodliness. God's justifying of the ungodly (*asebē*, "the ungodly, impious"; cf. 5:6) does not mean that He will think of them as those who have never

committed any sin. Nor does it mean that His righteousness is infused into them, making them personally meritorious - for then they could not be spoken of as "ungodly" (cf. v.5). But it means that Christ lived and died in their stead to atone for their sins; and that the merits of His death and even His own righteousness will be accounted to believers so that it is proper for God to regard and treat them as righteous in His sight.

- Paul also said, "his faith is counted for righteousness." God justifies the sinner, who is without a righteousness of his own. He justifies the sinner by imputing the righteousness of another, even that of His own Son, unto the sinner who comes to Him by faith in the atoning sacrifice of His Son.
- Justification is made possible by the real transfer of Christ's merits to the sinner who believed on Him. So when God looks at that person who has trusted in Christ, He sees the unrighteous person covered with the righteousness of Christ.
- Righteousness is a gift. God freely gives it to those who believe. The disparity between legalism or merit and grace is seen most clearly in the fact that God grants a right standing to people of faith and not people of legalism or works.
- In Romans 4:6-8, Paul brings in David's words to further establish the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. He is trying to drive at the point that this is not a new doctrine, but one that God's people of the Old have believed, experienced, and declared. He writes, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
  - ➔ Here Paul says that David described "the blessedness of the man" to whom God had imputed righteousness "without works."
    - ↳ The word "blessedness" (*makarismos*) speaks of the state of happiness resulting from the favours received.
      - When a man with no claims of righteousness because of his sins comes to God by faith in His redemptive plan in Christ, he is blessed with the imputation of righteousness and all blessings that flow out of it.
  - ➔ Then he cites words from Psalm 32:1-2, which is a penitential psalm of David.
    - ↳ "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (v.7)
      - One who is justified can be assured that all his "iniquities" (*anomia* – lawlessness, lawless deeds or unrighteousness) are forgiven (*aphiēmi*). The lawless man deserves sever punishment from God. To be forgiven is a great blessing indeed. This is God's gift of grace.
      - He is also blessed in that his "sins" (*hamartia* – wrong or evil deeds) "are covered" (*epikalyptō* – to put a cover over). God conceals the sins of the believing sinner by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ;

and thus they remain concealed or hidden from God's view. He has entirely removed them out of sight, and thrown them into oblivion. In other words, God will no more look at them; and He will no more remember them.

- "By these words," says Calvin, "we are taught that justification with Paul is nothing else but pardon of sin."

↳ "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (v.8).

- It is certainly a blessing that God will never again count our sins and hold us guilty.
- Happy is the man to whom God does not reckon his sin, for he is then delivered from God's condemnation and judgment.

### **He was justified by faith, not by circumcision (vv. 9-12)**

- Paul began this section by asking "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness" (v.9).
  - ↳ Paul again raised the question of the special position assumed by the Jews concerning their standing before God.
  - ↳ The word "circumcision" refers to the Jews and "uncircumcision" refers to the Gentiles.
    - The concern was that whether the circumcision, the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants, guarantees the justification of all the Jews, which Abraham received by faith. He repeated the authoritative scriptural declaration that Abraham was declared righteous on the basis of his faith.
- Paul continued, "How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision" (v.10).
  - ↳ Here Paul challenges his readers to consider Abraham and his justification. He asked them as to whether Abraham's justification occurred before or after he was circumcised.
  - ↳ Answering his own question, Paul stated that it was not after, but before! ("Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision") Abraham's age is not stated when he was declared righteous (Gen. 15:6). But later when Hagar bore him Ishmael, he was 86 (Gen. 16:16). After that, God instructed Abraham to perform the rite of circumcision on all his male descendants as a sign of God's covenant with him; this was done when Abraham was 99 (Gen. 17:24). Therefore the circumcision of Abraham followed his justification by faith by more than 13 years.
- From the above facts Paul derived that "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in

the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being yet uncircumcised." (v.11).

- "The sign of circumcision" was "a seal" (sign) of Abraham's being declared righteous because of his "faith." This was received while he was still uncircumcised ("*he had yet* being uncircumcised").
  - ↳ Circumcision, as a "sign" or "seal," was an outward token of the justification Abraham had already received.
- God's purpose was that Abraham be "be the father of all them that believe" and are thereby justified.
  - ↳ This included both the circumcised (Jews) and the "uncircumcised" (Gentiles). Abraham is a father to all who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being yet uncircumcised."
    - Obviously, then, the rite of circumcision, which many Jews rely on for salvation, contributes in no way to one's status before God. As far as Justification is concerned, circumcision gives them no special standing before Him, because God declares one as righteous only on the basis of faith in the work of Christ.

### **He was justified by faith, not by the law (vv. 13-17)**

- Then Paul dealt with the Jew's boast of the law. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."
  - The Jews also considered the Law, a special revelation of God's moral standards through Moses, as the basis for their special standing before God. But Paul reminds them that it was not through Law ("not" is emphasized by its position at the beginning of the Greek sentence) that Abraham and his offspring ("his seed") "the promise, that he should be the heir of the world."
    - ↳ God's promise in Genesis 12:1-3 preceded the giving of the Law by several centuries (cf. Gal. 3:17 – 430 years).
    - ↳ Being "heir of the world" probably refers to "all families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3) and "all the nations of the earth" (Gen. 18:18; cf. Gen. 22:18), for through Abraham and his descendants all the world is blessed. He is thus their "father" and they are his heirs. These promises of blessing are given to those to whom God has imputed righteousness, and this, Paul added once again, is by faith.
      - Believers of all ages are "Abraham's seed," for they enjoy the same spiritual blessing (justification) which he enjoyed (Gal. 3:29). (However, God has not abrogated His promises to Abraham about his physical, believing descendants, the regenerate nation Israel, inheriting the land [Gen. 15:18-21; 22:17]. These promises still stand; they will be fulfilled in the Millennium.)
- Paul continued, "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." (vv. 14-15).



- God whom Abraham believed is then described as one “who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Abraham believed God as the one who gives life to the dead and calls “things that *are* not” (the nonexisting things) “as though they were” (as existing). Identifying God in this way obviously refers to God’s promise in Genesis 17 following the statement quoted above that Abraham and Sarah would have a son of promise when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:17, 19; 18:10; 21:5; cf. Rom. 4:19). That he would be the forefather of many nations seemed impossible in his and Sarah’s childless old age.

### He was justified by faith in God’s promise (vv. 18-25)

- In the last section of chapter 4, Abraham’s confidence in the inviolability of divine promise is defined as faith. Therefore, faith is an unwavering reliance on God’s promise, which issues in hope.
- Though from a reproductive point of view both Abraham and Sarah were dead, the old patriarch believed that God’s promise of a son to him would come to pass. Paul describes his faith in verse 18, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.”
  - ↳ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed. The contrasting prepositional phrases “against all hope” and “in hope” depict the nature of Abraham’s faith.
    - ↳ παρ ἄλπιδα (*par elpida* - “against hope”) could be taken as “beyond hope” in the sense that it went beyond the outer limit of human hope. When human hope is exhausted, Abraham believed in God-given hope. Real faith is found only when God-given hope stand over against human hope.
      - Abraham believed what God said, though it was impossible from a human standpoint. He believed that with God all things are possible (cf. Matt 19:26).
      - He believed what God has spoken to him in Genesis 15:5 – “So shall thy seed be.” Abraham’s faith was not a “leap into the dark” but a leap into the security of God’s Word and promise. His hope was not the invincible human spirit rising to the occasion against all odds but a deep inner confidence that God was absolutely true to His Word. He put his confidence in God’s promise on the rational ground that God was fully able to perform what he had promised.
    - ↳ God honoured his faith, and he became the father (ancestor) of many nations. This was God’s promise to him – “So shall thy seed be” (cf. Genesis 15:5).
- Verses 19-21 restate in specific details the first part of verse 18 about Abraham’s hope.
  - ↳ In verse 19, Paul described Abraham’s faith further. “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”

- ↳ Because Abraham remained strong in faith ("being not weak in faith"), he refused to consider ("he considered not") the fact that his body was good as dead at the age of an hundred years (Gen. 17:17; 21:5) to have a child. Abraham also disregarded the fact that Sarah was unable to conceive a child. She was unable to bear a child all through their life together (cf. Gen. 16:1-2; 18:11) and it is certainly true for her at age 90 (Gen. 17:17).
  - To become "weak in faith" is to let the mind doubt the veracity of God's promise. Though Abraham was conscious of his own utter impotence, he gave no credit to it because he relied simply and completely on the all-sufficient power of God. He did not allow the difficulty to affect his faith in God's promise.
  - John Calvin comments, "But as he laid aside the consideration of all this, and resigned his own judgment to the Lord, the Apostle says, that he *considered not*, etc.; and truly it was a greater effort to withdraw his thoughts from what of itself met his eyes, than if such a thing came into his mind."
  - Even though his experiences in his body were contrary to the promise of God, Abraham believed the promise God gave to him.
- ↳ In verses 20-21, Paul says that in spite of the humanly impossible situation, Abraham did not waver, but believed God's promise to him concerning a son. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
  - ↳ "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (v.20a). The word "stagger" (*diakrino*) means "hesitate," "waver" or "doubt" (cf. James 1:6). Abrahams never wavered in his confidence in the promise of God. He remained steadfast in his hope for the fulfilment of God's promise.
  - ↳ Then it is said of Abraham that he "was strong in faith" (v.20b). The verbal phrase "was strong" is the translation of the Greek verb *enedynamōthē*. Its root word *endynamoō* means "empower" or "strengthen." This verb is in passive form, and thus suggests that Abraham was strengthened or empowered by God as he exercised his faith in Him.
    - By these words, Paul could not have meant that Abraham never struggled in believing God's promise. In fact, Abraham acknowledged his difficulty in perceiving the reality of God's promise. We read, in Genesis 15:2-3, "And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." In the next verse, we read about God assuring and strengthening Abraham. "And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (v.4).

- Likewise, we may also encounter difficulty in fully comprehending how God would fulfil His promises, but that does not necessarily mean that we totally reject His promise or that we are faithless.
- Abraham's faith was strengthened by God through the ordeal. As muscles develop when kept in tension, so was Abraham's faith strengthened by the experience he was going through. "No one indeed comes forth a conqueror from this contest, but he who borrows weapons and strength from the word of God" (Calvin).
- ↳ Paul continues his description of Abraham's faith and says that it was "giving glory to God" (v.20c)
  - Believing in God's promises gives glory to God. No greater honour can be given to God than by affirming what He has revealed by faith. While unbelief and doubt dishonour God, faith in God's promises praises God as a God of truth, faithfulness, omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, grace, etc.
  - Our faith bears testimony to God as worthy of others' faith and confidence. Our faith in God exalts Him before fellow men.
- ↳ Paul also says that "And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (v.21).
  - Abraham did not believe on God as though he was taking a chance. Instead, he was fully persuaded that God is able to perform that which He has promised. The phrase "fully persuaded" leaves no room for doubt. It calls for complete capitulation to the power and goodness of God.
  - God's power matches His promise. There is no promise of God that He cannot perform. He who promised is also able to perform it.
  - A believer should not be concerned about his weakness, misery and defects, but be wholly focused on the power of God alone to fulfil His promise. In the same vein, if the fulfilment of God's promise is dependent on our righteousness or worthiness, or our ability and wisdom, it can never be fulfilled.
  - We must believe that God can do all things, and that He will most certainly exercise His power for the accomplishment of His word. The hand of God is ever ready to execute whatever He has declared by His mouth.
  - What confidence in God this spiritual forefather possessed! He "believed in hope" (Rom. 4:18); he was not weak in faith despite insuperable odds (v. 19); he was not divided in his thinking by unbelief (v. 20a); he was empowered by faith in God (v. 20b); and he was fully persuaded God has the ability to do what He had said (v. 21).
- In verse 22, Paul declares that it was because of such a firm faith in God and His promises that righteousness was imputed to Abraham. "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."
  - ↳ "And therefore" (*dio kai*) points to Abraham's unwavering faith which Paul discussed in the preceding verses as the ground for his justification.

- ↳ John Calvin comments, "It becomes now more clear, how and in what manner faith brought righteousness to Abraham; and that was, because he, leaning on God's word, rejected not the promised favour. And this connection of faith with the word ought to be well understood and carefully remembered; for faith can bring us nothing more than what it receives from the word. Hence he does not become immediately just, who is imbued only with a general and confused idea that God is true, except he reposes on the promise of his favour."
- ↳ Abraham's unwavering faith in God's promise, which predicted the eventual arrival of the Messiah and His Gospel, was credited to him for righteousness.
- The apostle illustrated the truth of justification by faith through the Scriptural record of Abraham, now in verses 23-25, applies the same truth to all who believe on Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."
  - ↳ The divine juridical decision "it was imputed to him" was not written down for Abraham alone. It was also written in reference to us. Like Abraham, we also exercise faith in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Our faith will be regarded in the same light. God will credit righteousness to us as well.
  - ↳ Abraham's faith was directed to what would come to pass, even the death of Christ. Our faith is also directed to the same work of Christ that has already occurred.
  - ↳ Repeatedly in this chapter, Paul referred to Abraham and other believers having righteousness credited to them because of their faith (vv. 3, 5-6, 9-11, 23-24).
  - ↳ Paul once again affirmed Christ's central place in God's programme of providing righteousness for sinful people by grace through faith. In verse 25, Paul writes concerning Christ that he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."
  - ↳ Both Christ's death and His resurrection are essential to that work of justification.
    - He was delivered (by God the Father; cf. 8:32) to death "for our offences" (lit., "on account of or because of" [*dia* with the accusative]. The word "offences" (Greek - *paraptōmata*) can also mean "trespasses" or "faults," etc. Christ's death as God's sacrificial Lamb (cf. John 1:29) was to pay the redemptive price for the sins of all people (Rom. 3:24) so that God might be free to forgive those who respond by faith to that provision (cf. Isa. 53:4-6).
    - Christ was raised again "for our justification" ("on account of" or "because of" [*dia* with the accusative]) our justification. Christ's resurrection was the proof (or demonstration and vindication) of God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice (cf. 1:4).
    - Calvin's comments are very helpful at this juncture. "As it would not have been enough for Christ to undergo the wrath and judgment of

God, and to endure the curse due to our sins, without his coming forth a conqueror, and without being received into celestial glory, that by his intercession he might reconcile God to us, the efficacy of justification is ascribed to his resurrection, by which death was overcome; not that the sacrifice of the cross, by which we are reconciled to God, contributes nothing towards our justification, but that the completeness of his favour appears more clear by his coming to life again."

- It was both Christ's death and resurrection that effected our justification.

## Blessings of Justification (5:1-11)

In chapter 5, the apostle lists the blessed experiences of those who are justified by faith. This is suggested by the word “therefore” (in Greek, *oun* – a connective particle) at the beginning of verse 1. It connects the blessings mentioned in this section to the truth of justification by faith, which Paul discussed in the earlier chapters (cf. 3:21-4:25).

### Peace with God (v. 1)

- “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v.1).
  - The participial clause, “Therefore (since) being justified by faith” describes antecedent action to the main clause, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
    - ↳ In fact, the phrase, “therefore being justified by faith” summarizes the entire argument of chaps. 1–4. Those who have placed their trust in Christ can rest assured that their faith has been imputed to them as righteousness (cf. Rom 4:24, 25).
  - “We have (*echomen*) peace with God.” The first benefit of justification that Paul mentions here is “peace with God.”
    - ↳ Firstly, it speaks of the new relationship that God has granted to the justified sinner, as he turned to God in faith (cf. Eph 2:14–15; Col 1:21–22).
      - The sinner who believes of Christ is no more at war with God. He is no longer under the wrath of God.
      - All the hostility caused by sin has been removed by “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
    - ↳ “Peace” is also the joyful experience of those who live in harmony with God. Calvin says, “Then peace means tranquility of conscience, which arises from this, — that it feels itself to be reconciled to God.”
      - True religion is often represented as *peace* with God.

### Access to God’s grace (v. 2a)

- “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” (v. 2a).
  - Here we are instructed of the second benefit of justification.
  - It is by faith in Christ, which justified us, that we have received “access” into “this grace wherein we stand.”
    - ↳ The word “access” (*prosagōgēn*) depicts a person being brought into the presence of someone of high standing, while the word “stand” (*histēmi*) emphasizes the continuing availability of that privilege.
    - ↳ The Lord Jesus, besides being the Agent of the believer’s enjoyment of peace with God, is also the One through whom we have gained access (cf.

Eph. 2:18; 3:12) by faith into this grace in which we now stand. Believers in Christ stand in the sphere of God's grace. Christ has brought them to this position. He is their means of access.

- Those who believed in Christ remain in God's grace permanently. We are in the sphere of God's constant favour.

### Joy of Glorious Hope (vv. 2b-5a)

- ". . . and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed." (vv. 2b -5a).
  - ➔ Here, Paul mentions the third benefit of justification by faith. Our justification leads to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (v.2b).
    - ↳ The Greek word for "rejoice" (*kauchaomai*) denotes "exultation," "jubilation," etc. A person who is justified by faith can keep on rejoicing because of the future "hope of the glory of God." So Paul is saying to Christians, "Let us exult in our hope of attaining God's glorious ideal."
    - ↳ Christ has secured for us a hope. This ultimate hope is to share in the "glory of God."
      - While Jesus was praying, He said, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17:22; cf. 1 Peter 1:18-21).
      - In 1 John 3:2-3, we read, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
  - ➔ In the rest of this section, Paul describes how the hope of God's glory affects us in this pilgrim journey on earth.
    - ↳ So he says, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (v.3).
      - As the glorious future in God's presence awaits them, they are able to rejoice in their sufferings. The word "rejoice" is *kauchōmetha*, the same word in verse 2. The believers' joy is not simply something they hope to experience in the future but a present reality even in times of trials and distress.
      - "Tribulations" is *thlipsesin*, "afflictions, distresses, pressures." James wrote along the same line: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2).
      - This is not mere stoic endurance of troubles to make the best out of a bad situation. This is spiritual glorying in afflictions because of having come to know (from *oida*, "to know by perception") that the end product of this chain reaction (that begins with distress) is "hope". Christian suffering is a source of joy because its purpose is to build spiritual character in the believer.

- "Tribulation" brings about "patience" (*hupomonēn*, "steadfastness," the ability to remain under difficulties without giving in; cf. Rom. 15:5-6; James 1:3-4). Only a believer who has faced distress can develop steadfastness. That in turn develops "experience" (*dokimēn* ["proof"] here has the idea of "proven character"), which in turn results in "hope."
- As believers suffer, they develop steadfastness, which deepens their character. A deepened, tested character results in confidence and hope that God will see them through till they share in God's glory.
- A believer's hope, since it is centred on God's justification and His promises of future glory, does not disappoint him ("maketh not ashamed"). "Maketh . . . ashamed" means "put to shame because of disappointment" in unfulfilled promises. This affirmation concerning hope in God is a reflection of Psalm 25:3, 20-21 (cf. Ps. 22:5; Rom. 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6). Hope never disappoints (v. 5). It does not let the believer down.

### Assurance of Divine Love (vv. 5b-8)

- ". . . because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (vv. 5b - 8).
  - ➔ Here, Paul mentions the fourth benefit of justification by faith; and it is the assurance of divine love.
    - ✧ In fact, the love of God is mentioned in verse 5, as the reason why Christian's hope (resulting finally from affliction) will not be ashamed.
  - ➔ God has poured out ("shed abroad") His love into our hearts. God's love, so abundant in believer's hearts (cf. 1 John 4:8, 16), encourages them on in their hope. And this love is poured out by (better, "through," *dia* with the genitive) the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. God floods our hearts with His love through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
    - ✧ The Holy Spirit is the divine Agent who expresses to a believer the love of God, that is, God's love for him. The reality of God's love in a believer's heart gives the assurance, even the guarantee, that the believer's hope in God and His promise of glory is not misplaced and will not fail.
      - This ministry of the Holy Spirit is related to His presence in believers as the seal of God (Eph. 4:30) and as the earnest or down payment of their inheritance in glory (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14). Later Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit Himself has been poured out in believers (Titus 3:6). Each believer has the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) in the sense that He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13).
  - ➔ In verses 6-8, Paul reminds his readers about the greatness and magnificence of that divine love.

- ↳ This description of the character of God's love towards us explains why its pouring out assures believers of hope.
  - God demonstrated His love by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. This demonstration was, firstly, "when we were yet without strength." God loved us when we were still powerless (*asthenōn*, "without strength, feeble"; cf. John 5:5).
  - Secondly, it came to us "in due time." In a *timely manner*; at the proper time. (As we read in Galatians 4:4, "But when the fulness of the time was come")
  - Thirdly, it was expressed as "Christ died for the ungodly." Clearly Christ's death was a substitutionary death, a death in place of others.
  - "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." A person willing to die for a righteous man or for a good man obviously is offering himself as a substitute so that the righteous or good man can continue to live. This is the highest expression of human love and devotion.
  - However, God's love contrasts with human love in both nature and degree, because "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Though a few people might possibly be willing to die to save the lives of good people, though that is rare, Christ went well beyond that. He died in the place of the *powerless* ("without strength" (v. 6), the ungodly (v. 6; 4:5), sinners (5:8), and even His enemies! (v. 10).

### Salvation from Wrath (vv. 9-10)

- "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (vv. 9-10).
  - ↳ Here, Paul mentions the fifth benefit of justification by faith, namely, salvation from wrath. He began by saying, "Much more then." There is much more to the blessings of justification.
  - ↳ Paul then emphasizes the indestructible link between the believers' present status before God ("being now justified by his blood"), and their future status ("we shall be saved from wrath through him"). Thus the apostle recapitulates the main assertions about the hope of the justified in verses 1-8.
  - ↳ In verse 9, Paul firstly speaks of "being now justified" (declared righteous) "by his blood" (literally, it means "by means of his blood").
    - In the present passage "his blood," refers to the blood of Christ that was shed in His crucifixion and death. When Paul speaks of "the blood of Christ," he is, of course, drawing from the language of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which emphasized the significance of the shedding of blood in the atoning sacrifice for sins. The atonement was effected *then* by the sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat (Lev. 16:15-18). The Old Testament sacrificial system required the blood of

atonement; and in the case of the Lord Jesus, it was also by blood (cf. Heb. 9:14, 22) - by the blood of atonement, even His own blood. This, the apostle distinctly states in this verse.

- Having believed in Christ's atoning sacrifice, which He achieved by the shedding of His blood in His death on the cross, the believer now stand justified before God. Only by believing in the atoning sacrifice of Christ's blood and life on the cross that one can stand right with God (cf. Rom. 3:25).

↪ Then, in verse 9, the apostle also relates to us that those who are justified by Christ's blood can have the certainty concerning their salvation from God's coming wrath - "we shall be saved from wrath through him".

- The word "wrath" (*orgē*) appears 9 times, of which, 7 times it refers to the judgment of God (Rom. 1:18; 2:5, 8; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19), and 2 times, the judgment of human government (Rom. 13:4, 5). God's wrath had been constantly raging against unrepentant sinners (Rom. 1:18). All such unrepentant sinners will face God's great indignation and wrath - "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5; cf. Rom. 2:8). God's wrath against man's sins is declared by the law of God (Rom. 4:15), though He has been patient towards those "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom. 9:22). Now in Romans 5:9, Paul declares that only by the blood of Christ one can be saved from the coming wrath.
- There is a "wrath" to come, and only true believers of Christ's atoning death shall escape it. No true believer will experience God's wrath (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:8-10). Justified sinners will never be condemned to hell (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1).
- The word "saved" (from the Greek word *sōzō*) appears here for the first time in Romans; and it is found altogether 6 times in the epistle. In all of those appearances in this epistle, the verb refers to the salvation offered to those who believe on Christ's atoning death. The verb is used here in future tense - "shall be saved" (cf. v.10, 9:27). But it is also used in past tense (Aorist - 8:24). Our salvation has past, present and future dimensions - we are saved (justification), we are being saved (sanctification), and we shall be saved (glorified). At the point when a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he, being justified, enters into the state of salvation. But his experience of every aspect of salvation is yet to be completed. It will be fully realized through sanctification and glorification. Everyone, who is justified and therefore saved, shall be certainly glorified when he shall taste his ultimate salvation from God's coming judgment and enter heaven.

↪ The truth of salvation mentioned in verse 9 is repeated in different words in verse 10 - "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

- ↳ Those who were once enemies of God are now “reconciled” to Him “by the death of his Son.” The verb “reconcile” (*katallassō*) means “to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken” (Louw, Johannes P.; Nida, Eugene Albert: *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*). Sinners who lived in hostility with God are now brought to God by Christ, who took God’s wrath against their sins by dying on their behalf on the cross.
  - Reconciliation is the removal of enmity that exists between sinners and God. It denotes the change in the relation of God and man effected through Christ’s atoning death which removed the offence which caused the disruption of peace and harmony.
  - It is God who initiates this reconciliatory effort through Jesus Christ (cf. vv. 6, 8). Hence, Paul uses the passive form of the verb here – “we were reconciled.” In other words, we were made subjects of God’s reconciling act through Christ. Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, further confirms this truth – “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”
  - People who seek to be reconciled with God through some sort of self-transformation, self-redemption, and their own works of righteousness are doomed to fail and to fall under God’s judgment. Only by trusting in the reconciling work of Christ through His death that a sinner can ever come to a loving, peaceful relationship with God.
- ↳ Since reconciliation has been accomplished by Jesus’ death, Paul says, “much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”
  - After affirming that Jesus Christ died to reconcile us to God, Paul asserts that “much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” He is saying that there is still stronger and more striking argument for the reality of the eternal blessings of the justified.
  - Now the apostle says that our eternal salvation is guaranteed by “his life.” Here, the phrase “his life” is mainly a reference to His life as our resurrected Saviour who intercedes on our behalf before the Father. Now He lives forever on the right hand of God (cf. Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22), making intercession for us before the Father (cf. Heb.7:25). His resurrection, ascension, present intercession, and all guarantee our eternal salvation. In Romans 8:34, Paul points to Christ’s intercessory ministry as our resurrected, living Saviour to assure us of our eternal security - “Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

### Joy in God (v.11)

- “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (v. 11).

- ➔ The last in the list of blessings of justification that Paul has mentioned in Romans 5:1-11 is the blessedness of rejoicing in God. By the words, "And not only so," Paul was saying that there is still more blessing. In addition to all that he has already mentioned in this passage, he adds one more blessing, namely "joy in God."
- ↪ The Greek verb for "joy" (*kauchōmenoi*) means "glory," "exult," etc. It is an expression of unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy (Louw, Johannes P.; Nida, Eugene Albert: *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*). The legitimacy of one's exultation is based on the reason for their glorying.
  - The verb for "joy" in Greek is present participle; and hence it indicates a continuing experience of rejoicing in God for those who believed on His Son ("our Lord Jesus Christ") and received the "atonement" (*katallagē* - reconciliation), which He has provided.
  - According to Paul, every Christian can rejoice in God continually, if he counts the blessings of Christ's atoning work. It is when a Christian fails to meditate on what Christ has accomplished for him that he fails to rejoice.

## Sin and Death by Adam, Righteousness and Life by Christ (5:12-21)

The first word of this passage "Wherefore" suggests that the plain and obvious purpose of this passage is to show the significance and benefit of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ Jesus. In order to achieve that purpose Paul has used a contrastive parallelism between the work of Adam (and its results in sin and death), and the work of another man, Jesus Christ (and its results in justification and eternal life)."

### Adam, Sin and Death (v. 12-14)

- "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (v.12).
  - ↳ The "one man" by whom sin came into the world is Adam, the first man whom God has created out of the dust of the earth.
    - ↳ It is by him that "sin entered into the world."
      - Paul is not saying that sin started with Adam. Sin started with Satan, for 1 John 3:8a says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." Satan is the one who tempted Eve with sin in the Garden of Eden; and hence he must be the first sinner among all of God's creation.
      - As far as the human race is concerned, though one might argue that it is Eve who was first tempted and sinned in the garden of Eden, the apostle speaks of the man, Adam, as responsible for the entrance of sin into the world because he was the federal head of the human race. It was to him that God has given His commandments, even the prohibition of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15-17). Eve was tempted by Satan, but Adam chose to agree with Eve to be disobedient to God's command. Although Eve disobeyed God first, Adam, having the headship over Eve and the whole human race, is guilty of letting the whole world fall into sin by his disobedience. Adam's choice of disobedience to God resulted in a condition of moral and spiritual corruption, which is then transmitted to all future descendants.
      - Here, the word "sin" is both singular and definite (ὁ ἁμαρτία) in the Greek text. Here, it is not used to indicate any particular sin, rather the deteriorated or corrupted moral propensity. In other words, it indicates the fallen or sinful nature that became inherent in every man.
      - "Original sin": This theological term is not a specific sin or a particular act of disobedience. It is a reference to the fallen nature of every man that he has inherited from Adam, their federal head, who disobeyed God. This theological term describe man's condition as sinful, not because of sins that he has committed, but the original sin or the fallen, sinful nature, which he inherited as a child of Adam. We sin

- because we have a sinful nature (the original sin). The corruption of man's nature is passed down from Adam to every man.
- When God first created Adam, he was not created with a sinful nature or a disposition toward sin. But once he chose to rebel against God's sovereign command that prohibited him from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he became morally and spiritually corrupt, and by him the whole mankind.
  - The historical Adam represented the whole human race as their federal head. This is God's plan; and this is the best. Because, just as Adam represented man in his fall, Christ represents man that His righteousness might justify him before God.
- ↳ Then Paul says, "and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
- Along with sin came death. Death is the natural consequence of sin. It was not built into God's creation, but it came as God's punishment for man's sin.
  - The death of which Paul spoke was, on the one hand, physical. While Adam and Eve did not die physically for a number of years, the seeds of death were planted at the moment of disobedience.
  - More importantly, Adam and Eve died spiritually. Spiritual death is separation from God, which would eventually culminate in "second death," even the punishment in hell (Revelation 20:14; 21:8). Since the fall of Adam, man had no power to please God on his own, but only to serve his sinful passion. Paul describes man's condition as "dead in trespasses and sins . . . ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2).
  - Through Adam, sin and its dreadful consequence, even death, spread to everyone. The reason for death to come upon all men is that "all have sinned" in Adam. The Greek past (Aorist) tense of the verb shows that the entire human race is viewed here as having sinned in Adam's act of disobedience. The original sin from Adam has come upon all men and it is proven by the existence of death upon all men. In the next verse, Paul also mentions man's continual sinning as an evidence of their fallen nature.
- "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (vv.13-14).
    - ↳ In verse 13, Paul tells us that even before the written law was given to man sin existed. The written law of God was to help man to take sin into their account ("imputed"). Though the law was not yet given in writing, Paul asserts that sin existed.
    - ↳ The existence of death and sin before Moses also shows that the law of God existed even before it was handed to Moses in its written form. Paul

has established this truth in Romans 2:14-15, when he mentioned that the law was written in the hearts of every man.

- ↳ So the giving of the law was not to say that there was no sin before Moses, but that the existence of sin and its condemnation may be further affirmed in the minds of men. The law proclaimed to man, the reality of both sin and its punishment, death.
- ↳ The existence of sin is proven even before the giving of the written law, as Paul mentioned in the previous verse, by the reality of death. Paul again asserts this truth in the next verse – “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses”
  - ↳ Death existed after Adam, even though no one sinned “after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” No descendant of Adam could commit the same sin that Adam committed in the Garden of Eden, because God had driven Adam and Eve out of the garden. They could not have entered the garden to have access to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
    - This yet another proof of the transmission of sin and death from Adam to all his descendants.
- ↳ Then Paul introduced the fact that Adam “is the figure of him that was to come.” He was saying that Adam was a type of Christ. This he mentioned as a transition to his introduction of the work of obedience of Christ, who was to come.

### Christ, Righteousness and Life (v. 15-21)

- “But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (v.15).
  - ↳ What Christ gives is contrasted with what Adam did.
    - ↳ “But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift”
      - In its nature and effect, Christ’s “free gift” (*charisma*, “grace-gift”) is not like the “offence” (*paraptōma*, “false step,” “departing from a path or norm”) of Adam.
    - ↳ “For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”
      - The point of the first contrasting parallel is the degree of effectiveness – “much more.” The reason of this “much more” is to be found in the abounding mercy and goodness of God.
      - The trespass of the one man brought physical death to many. By contrast, God’s gracious gift that came by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, far surpassed sin and death that came upon mankind. God’s grace through Jesus Christ is far greater than our depraved condition.
      - John Calvin commented, “since the fall of Adam had such an effect as to produce the ruin of many, much more efficacious is the grace of

God to the benefit of many; inasmuch as it is admitted, that Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy." He also wrote, "the sin of Adam has destroyed many, he draws this conclusion, — that the righteousness of Christ will be no less efficacious to save many"

- "And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification" (v.16).
  - ↳ Again what Christ gives is contrasted with what Adam did.
    - ↳ "And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift"
      - Here Paul introduces the *second* point in which the effects of the work of Christ differ from the sin of Adam.
    - ↳ "For the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification"
      - God passed "judgment" (*krima*) on Adam ("one") and by him the entire human race received "condemnation" (*katakrima*, "punishment").
      - "But," by contrast, "the free gift" (*charisma*, "grace-gift,") in relation to ("is of") "many offences" resulted in "justification" (*dikaiōma*, "a declaration of righteousness," also used in 1:32, 2:26; 5:18; 8:4).
      - God's grace, as Paul stated repeatedly, beginning in 3:24, is the basis of a person's being justified, declared righteous. And this was in the face of "many offences" (*paraptōmatōn*; cf. 5:15, 17-18, 20).
- "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (v.17).
  - ↳ This is the third contrast between what Christ gives and what Adam did.
    - ↳ "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one"
      - In Greek, the first-class condition in the first part of the verse assumes the statement to be true, if (since) by one man's offence death reigned. This fact is confirmed by verses 12 and 14. Death is a tyrant, ruling over people and bringing every person under its fear and into its grip (cf. Heb. 2:15).
    - ↳ "Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ"
      - As a result it of God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness, they who receive it shall reign in life through the one Man, Jesus Christ.
      - Whereas death reigns like a tyrant over all, believers in Christ, who receive God's grace, reign in life. In the one case people are dying victims under a ruthless ruler; in the other they themselves become the rulers (cf. Rev. 1:6) whose kingdom is one of life!

- The fact that it is “those who receive” God’s grace and gift emphasizes that those provision made by God must be appropriated by faith that its glorious results may be enjoyed.
- “Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (vv.18-19).
  - ↳ In these verses Paul concludes his contrasting parallelism between Adam and Jesus Christ begun in verse 12. Paul reduced the contrast to the briefest possible statement.
    - ↳ One’s offence (Adam’s sin) is contrasted with one’s righteous act (Christ’s sacrifice). The result of Adam’s sin (everyone under God’s condemnation) is contrasted with the result of Christ’s work (justification offered to all). One brought death; the other brings life.
    - ↳ The same conclusion is stated in different words in verse 19, where Adam’s act is called disobedience and the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is called obedience. As a result the many were made (lit., “stand constituted as”) sinners (cf. 11:32). In the second half of 5:19 the many means “those who receive” (v. 17). They are not simply declared righteous (the verb *dikaioō* is not used here), but they will be made righteous in the process of sanctification, culminating in glorification in God’s presence. The word “made” (from *kathistēmi*) means “stand constituted as,” the same verb used in the first half of verse 19 in the words “were made sinners.”
- “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (vv.20-21).
  - ↳ Paul, finally explains how the Mosaic Law fit into all this.
    - ↳ Paul explained that the Law was added so that the offences (*paraptōma*, cf. vv.15-19) might increase (“abound”). The giving of the Mosaic Law (clearly meant here in light of vv. 13-14) did *result* in the increased awareness of man’s trespasses (the consequence of any law).
    - ↳ The result was that where sin abounded, grace increased all the more (“overflowed superlatively”; cf. “overflow” in v.15). What a contrast! No matter how great human sin becomes, God’s grace overflows beyond it and abundantly exceeds it.
    - ↳ God’s goal is that His grace might reign through righteousness (the righteousness of Christ provided for people) to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Dead to sin, Alive in Christ (6:1-10)

In this section, the Apostle Paul shows that the justification of sinners by faith in Christ does not lead men to live a life of sin, but, on the contrary, to holiness. He explains that justification of sinners, which is freely given by God's grace, does not promote the idea that the justified person can continue in his sinful life. Here the Apostle Paul seems to anticipate a distortion of his previous statement in 5:20 that "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

- So he asked in verse 1, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"
  - ↳ This question might have arisen from two groups, namely, the antinomians as well as the legalists.
    - ↳ The antinomians, who desired a life of sinful pleasure, have misinterpreted the doctrine of justification through faith by grace, as providing an excuse for their sinful activities. They claimed that if they continued in sin, it will provide an opportunity for God's grace to manifest more abundantly. This is indeed a despicable claim. How wretched it is for a son to consider himself free to sin, because his father is gracious, patient and forgiving!
    - ↳ The Jewish legalists, who feared that justification of sinners by the free grace of God might lead to spiritual and moral mayhem, might have also wondered whether such excuses would be cited by some to continue in their sin.
  - ↳ Or it might be a question, Paul himself has cited in order to avoid any misrepresentation of the doctrine of justification by grace by those false teachers and also to draw out more clearly the implications of the Christian's experience of grace.
  - ↳ Paul wanted his readers to know that "those that draw such inferences from the previous premises, they put a false construction upon the apostle's doctrine, and a paralogism or fallacy upon themselves" (Matthew Poole).
- The apostle was certainly not in agreement with the opinion expressed in the above question. The apostle voiced this idea only to reject it vehemently: "God forbid" (v.2a)
  - ↳ The expression, "God forbid," is a strong denial of what is implied in the rhetorical question of verse 1. The answer is a resounding "By no means!"
    - John Calvin comments, "He (Paul), however, first rejects it by an indignant negative, in order to impress it on the minds of his readers, that nothing can be more inconsistent than that the grace of Christ, the repairer of our righteousness, should nourish our vices."
  - ↳ Paul then goes on to explain the reason why a justified sinner cannot think that God's grace would grant him consent to continue in his sins.

## Dead to sin (v. 2b)

- “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (v.2b).
  - ↳ Here Paul answers the question with another rhetorical question. His question was based on a grand truth about those who are justified, and it is “we that are dead to sin”
  - ↳ Take note that here it is not said that sin is dead to the believers, but that the believers are dead to sin. This is a reference to believers’ once-for-all break from sin because of their union with Christ, which Paul discusses in the following verses.
    - Christians are to sin like dead men in the grave are to the pleasures and activities of this life.
    - Hence Paul asked, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” To say that one is dead to something is to denote that he does not render himself to its influence over him. When a man is dead, he is no longer under the influence and control of the normal experiences of life. He is unaffected by the affairs of this life. Likewise, Christians who are united with Christ, being dead to sin, should not live any longer to sin.
    - This truth finds expression again in verse 11, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Cf. Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:24). According to Paul, the key to our holy living is not some overwhelming emotional experience that brings about a miraculous change, but a constant recognition of the great truth that believers are dead to sin and alive unto God. As we reckon ourselves thus, we find pleasure in living in righteousness unto God than living in sin.
    - Sin continues in force in its attempt to dominate the conduct of the believer. But a man who believed on Christ and has been redeemed from his sins and God’s wrath, would reject its influence. Living in sin habitually is the mark of an unredeemed person. Hence, the question, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Obviously, believers cannot live in sin if they have died to it.
    - Calvin comments, “Christ indeed does not cleanse us by his blood, nor render God propitious to us by his expiation, in any other way than by making us partakers of his Spirit, who renews us to a holy life. It would then be a most strange inversion of the work of God were sin to gather strength on account of the grace which is offered to us in Christ; for medicine is not a feeder of the disease, which it destroys.”
    - While commenting on this verse, Donald Grey Barnhouse said, “Holiness starts where justification finishes, and if holiness does not start, we have the right suspect that justification never started either.” We are justified that we may serve God in holiness.

## Baptised into Christ (vv. 3-10)

- Here, Paul mentions our identification with Christ as yet another proof of the fact that justified sinners must not continue in their sins.
- In verse 3, Paul writes, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"
  - ➔ Here Paul declares through his rhetorical question that living habitually in sin is not possible for those who are identified with Jesus Christ.
  - ↳ The word "baptized" (*baptizō*) here does not mean "immersed" as some have argued. Here it is used to denote being united with Christ. While commenting on this verse, Kenneth S. Wuest explains the use of the Greek word *baptizō* as "the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition. And that is its usage in Romans 6." (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader*). This word is used with the same meaning in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2.
    - This spiritual union (the mystical union) with Christ cannot be effected by the human administration of the sacrament of water baptism. It is the Holy Spirit that baptizes us into Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). It is a divine act that brings a believing sinner into a vital union with Jesus Christ in order that the believer might be rendered dead to the power of his sinful nature and also that he might be made alive unto the righteousness of Christ (cf. Gal. 3:27). This truth is further explained in the rest of this passage.
- At the end of verse 3, Paul also mentioned that those who "were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." He then continued in verses 4 & 5, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."
  - ➔ Here Paul declares that the divine act of baptism that united us with Christ, also united us with His death, burial and resurrection, and thus effecting a total change in the nature and conduct of the believers.
  - ↳ Christ's burial shows that He actually died. Likewise, Christians' burial with Christ by Spirit baptism shows that they in fact died with Him to their former sinful ways of living. The life of sin is no more their way of life. They consider it as a thing of the past being dead to it by their union with Christ's death.
  - ↳ Being united to Christ, His death and burial by the Spirit of God, we also become partakers of the power and benefits of His resurrection – "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

- Death and burial are not the end of the story. In God's redemptive plan, burial is followed by resurrection. As Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glorious power, so also are we raised by the power of His spirit to "walk in newness of life."
  - In other words, our union with Christ also ought to be marked by our "walk in newness of life." The word "walk" (*peripateō*) is often used to express one's conduct or way of life. The word "newness" (*kainotēs*) suggests newness of quality and character. Hence the phrase, "walk in newness of life" denotes a transformation in the conduct of the believer's life from sin unto holiness. Our life is changed from that of a sinner to that of a saint by being baptized into Christ, His death, His burial and His resurrection. The lives of believers will certainly manifest the work of the Spirit's baptism that has united them with Christ. Hence, believers' way of life ought to be different from their pre-conversion days (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek 36:26).
  - Here, the Apostle is not simply exhorting us to imitate Christ, as though the death of Christ is a pattern for all Christians to follow. Instead, he declares to us the solemn truth that while Christ's death is efficacious to demolish the depravity of our flesh, and that His resurrection to effect a renewed nature and conduct in our lives. We are brought into a participation of this wondrous spiritual experience by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - Charles Hodge comments, "As Christ died and rose again literally, so his people die and rise again spiritually. As Christ's resurrection was the certain consequence of His death, so a holy life is the certain consequence of our dying with Christ. There is not only an analogy between Christ's literal death and resurrection, and the spiritual death and resurrection of the believer, but there is a casual relationship between the two. The death and resurrection of Christ make certain the justification and sanctification of His people."
- ↪ In verse 5, Paul says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."
- The "if" is the "if" of a fulfilled condition, the "in view of the fact," or the "since such and such a thing is so."
  - In the Greek, the phrase "have been planted together" (*συμφυτοὶ γεγόναμεν*) consists of a perfect tense verb (of *ginomai* - "to become"), which speaks of a past complete act and its abiding results, and the noun *sumphutoi* (*συμφυτοὶ*), which depicts a living, vital union of two individuals growing up together. According to Albert Barnes, the word *sumphutoi* means "sown or planted at the same time; that which sprouts or springs up together; and is applied to plants and trees that are planted at the same time, and that sprout and grow together. Thus the name would be given to a field of grain that was sown at the same time, and where the grain sprung up and grew simultaneously. Hence it means intimately connected, or joined together." Here the word emphasizes the vital union of the believer and the Lord Jesus, which Paul has discussed in verses 3 and 4.

- Because of our union with Christ, our lives shall manifest "the likeness" of his death and resurrection. The word "likeness" is *homoiōma* (ὁμοιωμα), referring to a likeness or resemblance which Thayer says in this case amounts almost to an identity. In other words, since we are permanently united with Him, our renewed lives shall resemble His death and resurrection.
- A transformed, new life in Christ certainly portrays the justified sinner's death to sin, just as Christ's resurrection followed His death.
- As a result of the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection, the power of sin over him is broken. This truth is further developed in verses 6 and 7. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."
  - ↳ Believers know that their union with Christ means that their "old man" (the pre-conversion sinful man) is crucified with Him. The old sin-plagued man is no more alive to seek after the pleasure of sin ("old man" - cf. Eph 4:22,24; Col 3:8-10). The old man is none other than the unregenerate man, who was a servant of sin, without Christ and under Adam's headship as a fallen creature. He was under moral bondage and guilt.
    - ↳ Take note that Paul says "our old man is crucified with Him." The verb "crucified" suggests death, especially when it says "crucified with Him." Moreover, the verb is in Aorist tense, indicating an action that is already done once and for all." The old man of every true believer is already crucified with Christ.
    - ↳ Though it is true that sin is alive and that our Christian life is a long battle against sin (Romans 7), our victory over sin is sure because with Christ our old man is already dead, and by His resurrection power we are created to be a "new creature." "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
    - Because the old man is already crucified or dead, we become very distressed in the presence of sin, this is especially so when we fall into sin. We then seek God's forgiveness and also His power to fight off the temptation of sin. If the old man is still alive, then we will have no qualms about continuing in sin.
  - ↳ Paul then says that the old man is crucified "that the body of sin might be destroyed."
    - ↳ The phrase "the body of sin" does not mean that a human body is sinful in itself. It means that being fallen creatures, our physical body is controlled or ruled by sin. Elsewhere, Paul also clearly mentions that sin works through one's human body (cf. 6:6, 12-13, 19; 7:5, 23).
    - ↳ Sin reigned in our bodies before our regeneration. But now, our old man being crucified with Christ, the power of sin is broken; it is rendered powerless or ineffective. The Greek verb for "destroyed" (*katargeō*) speaks of being reduced to a condition of absolute impotence and inaction.

The power of sin over us is stripped off, because of our spiritual union with Christ.

- Paul continues to tell us the reason why God has crucified our old man and destroyed the absolute power of sin in our body. It is "that henceforth we should not serve sin."
  - ↳ In his unregenerate state, a believer was enslaved to sin. But because the "old man" is crucified, the dominion of sin over our body is broken, and thus our enslavement to sin. So, we are exhorted that "we should not serve sin."
- In Jesus Christ, we died to sin; and the old nature was crucified so that the "body of sin" is rendered inoperative. It is a fact of history that Jesus Christ died on the cross. It is also a fact of history that the believer died with Him; and "he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7). Here Paul describes a great spiritual truth, which will be practically experienced by the believers in their lives. We are not "free to sin" as some would have us believed, but "freed from sin." In Christ, we are set free from the servitude of sin.
- In view of the fact that believers are united with Christ in His resurrection, they will inherit the benefits of His resurrection life; and Paul speaks of it in verses 8–10. Paul, as a good teacher, repeated himself in this section that the truth about the benefits of our union with Christ may be fully understood by his readers. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."
  - In verse 8, Paul again stated the foundational truth that those who died with Christ will also live with Him – "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." This is not a promise of life after death with Christ in heaven but of a life to be lived out here and now.
  - In verses 9 & 10, Paul appeals to the common knowledge among God's people. The Christian faith and life are built upon the knowledge of wonderful Gospel truths. Faith is not a "leap in the dark" but assurance of God's truth in our minds.
    - ↳ Having been raised from the dead, Christ cannot die again. Christ's resurrection broke the tyranny of death forever. Sin and death are forever defeated by our resurrected Lord. We now live in His victory, by dying to sin and living for Christ.

## Living unto God (6:11-23)

In this section, the Apostle Paul instructs believers how they ought to live their lives unto God.

### Reckon the spiritual realities in Christ (v. 11)

- He said in verse 11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
  - "Reckon ye . . . yourselves": The Greek word for "reckon" (*logizomai*), is used forty-one times in the New Testament. Nineteen times it appears in Romans alone. It has been translated as "reckon," "count," "impute," "conclude," "reason," etc.
    - ↳ Here the emphasis is that the believers must take into account or believe the spiritual realities that God has provided for them in Christ. They need to count those truths as really true in their lives.
      - Reckoning is a matter of faith that results in action. Reckoning is not trying to imagine or feel the realities, nor having a full knowledge of it. Reckoning is acting on the truth that has been accepted by faith.
  - The first spiritual reality that Christians must take into account and act upon it is that they are "dead indeed unto sin."
    - ↳ Let us take note that here we are not commanded to become dead to sin. But we are told that we are dead unto sin. In verses 1-10, Paul has taught us that we have been baptized into Christ and His death, a spiritual reality that God has granted by His Spirit to all who believe on Christ. So we consider it to be true in our minds that in Christ we are dead to sin. This is not a psychological activity or a mind game, whereby you affirm something over and over again in the hope of it being a reality. But it is the exercising of faith in what God has already done for us in Christ Jesus. Thus, as we consider ourselves to be dead to sin, we cannot seek after the enticements of sin.
      - Let us also take note that the apostle is not saying that sin is dead, but we are dead to sin. Sin may well be alive with all its seduction and lure, but we count ourselves to be dead to them, because we are one with Christ and in Him dead to sin.
  - The second spiritual reality that Christians must take into account and act upon is that they are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
    - ↳ While we are dead to sin, we are alive to God. This spiritual reality is granted to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.
      - Our life must be now dedicated to live for God's glory. Nothing else matters to us. In Christ, our passions and goals are all unto God.

## Yield to God (vv. 12-14)

- Here we are taught that the dominant principle in the life of believers is no more sin. Now God reigns over us, and we should now yield ourselves as His instruments. Sin may well attempt to have reign over us, but we should not obey it.
  - In verse 12, we read, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."
    - ↳ Here sin is personified as a tyrant who seeks to reign over our mortal body. Though sin is no more our master, it still seeks to have dominion over our bodies. Since we are alive unto God, we should not let sin reign over us.
      - If we allow sin to reign, we will obey the lust of our mortal body, which we have yielded to its dominion. We should resist sin's attempt to reign over us.
  - In verse 13, we read, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."
    - ↳ Because sin still seeks to bring us under its tyranny, we should not yield the members of our body to work out the unrighteousness of sin.
      - The word "yield" (*paristēmi*), means "to place beside or near," "to present," "to put at one's disposal," etc. It is a present imperative verb with the negative particle *mē* (μη), thus commanding us to "stop yielding." We are to stop putting the members of our body at the disposal of, at the service of sin to work out its unrighteousness.
    - ↳ "But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."
      - Here the Greek word for "yield" (*paristēmi*), is the aorist imperative, which commands a once for all action to be done at once. In other words, Paul is saying, "Put yourselves at once, and once for all, at the disposal of God." This is a once for all act of the believer dedicating himself to God and His service that we serve Him always. We are never to be in doubt as to whom we should obey. God is our master, and Him alone will we serve. We are among those who are dead to sin, but also alive unto God to yield the members of our body and soul to God for working out His righteousness.
  - In verse 14, we read, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."
    - ↳ Here Paul declares to us that though sin once terrorized us, using the law that exposed our sinfulness and declared our condemnation, it cannot anymore bludgeon us with the law, because we are saved by His grace.
      - We have no need to live hopelessly anymore under the tyranny of sin. God's grace has removed the curse of the law against our sins by the death of Christ. So now by His grace, we live unto Him.

## Serve God (vv. 15-23)

- Here while trying to answer another possible question raised by Paul's antagonists, he instructs us that, we, being dead to sin and alive unto God, should serve God.
  - ➔ In verse 15, Paul answers the rhetorical question. "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."
    - ↳ Some might wonder, "If Christians are not under the law, which *forbids* all sin, but are under grace, which pardons sin, will it not follow that they will feel themselves released from the obligation to be holy?"
      - He clearly answers, "God forbid." As before, his reply was *mē genoito*, which means "may it never be" or "By no means!"
  - ➔ Paul then continued to explain why being under God's grace does not mean that we can commit sin as we like. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
    - ↳ Paul started by a fact that known to all. If we yield willingly to anyone, it means that we are his servants (*doulos* - slave).
      - Then, he presents a logical deduction – "whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." In other words, those who serve sin, being servants of sin, will be led to death, alienation from God now and forever. But those who live in obedience to God, beings servants of God, will be led to righteousness, a clear sign of eternal life.
      - The contrast in verse 16 is between sin and obedience. From this, we may rightly deduce that the essence of sin is disobedience. Sin is not simply something that we can't help doing but something we deliberately choose to do in direct violation of the will of God. The righteousness to which obedience leads is the fruit of the eternal life He gave us (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10).
      - Servitude to sin is replaced with servitude to God. The master we obey is a clear evidence of whose slaves we really are.
  - ➔ In verses 17-18, Paul continues. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
    - ↳ Paul gave thanks that although the believers in Rome had at one time been slaves to sin (all outside of Christ are), they are now freed from that master.
      - This freedom from slavery to sin was evidenced by the fact that they "obeyed from the heart" "the form of doctrine," which was preached unto them. Paul may have been referring to the wonderful apostolic instructions of Christian faith and practice that they were instructed with.
      - The gospel message with all its instructions on holy living was gladly obeyed. Saving faith is always obedient to God's Word. This has

proved that they are no more servants of sin, but servants of righteousness.

→ In verse 19, Paul continues, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

↳ Firstly, Paul here refers to the analogy of masters and servants that he has been using. He says that he used that illustration drawn from the common life of man ("I speak after the manner of men") because of the "infirmity of your flesh." In other words, Paul used such an analogy to help his readers to overcome their weakness in understanding the spiritual realities that he was discussing.

↳ Then he repeats the idea of slavery that he already used in verses 16 & 17.

○ Before their regeneration, like all unsaved Romans, they had offered their bodies ("your members") as servants "to uncleanness" (*akatharsia* – "in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living"). As they yielded to themselves to such immoral life, they ever increased in their sinful deeds – "to iniquity unto iniquity." The word "iniquity" (*anomia*) literally means "lawlessness" or "transgression of the law" (cf. 1:24-27; 6:13). Thus they had voluntarily become enslaved! Sin breeds sin, which breeds more sin.

○ But Paul exhorted believers now to offer the members of their bodies as slaves "to righteousness unto holiness." He has already explained "righteousness" (*dikaioisune*) as the fruit of obedience (v.16). An obedient, righteous life will lead to "holiness" (*hagiasmos* – KJV translates it as "holiness" five times, and "sanctification" five times). As we yield ourselves as obedient servants to God's righteousness, we will become more and more sanctified and thus be holier and holier. While unbelievers and disobedient men degenerates from sin unto more sin, believers who are obedient grow in righteousness.

→ In verses 20-23, Paul continues, "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"

↳ Here Paul indicates the superiority of being enslaved to righteousness and God.

↳ He firstly described the dire consequence of sin and then the wonderful benefits of being servants of the righteousness of God.

○ In verse 20, Paul reminded his readers that when they were enslaved to sin, they were "free" from righteousness. Whatever religious ceremonies, good works or charitable act one might do before his salvation, they are all accounted as unrelated to the righteousness that God is pleased with. Paul described his own good works and

religious performances as dung in Phil 3:8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

- In verse 21, Paul asserted that their enslavement to sin only produced things that the believers are now ashamed of. Hence Paul said in Ephesians 5:12, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." But even worse, he says "the end of those things is death." "Death" here refers to second death, spiritual death that leads to eternal torment in hell.
- But in verse 22, he cites two outcomes ("fruit") of those who are "freed from sin, and become servants to God." They are holiness (*hagiasmos* - sanctification) and "everlasting life." Being servants of God they work out righteousness and thus live a sanctified life. Being freed from sin, which is proven by their submission to God, they inherit eternal life.
- Finally, in verse 23, Paul expresses two inexorable absolutes as an encouragement to live as servants to God, and not to sin. Firstly, "For the wages of sin *is* death." Eternal damnation ("death") is the reward ("wages") for man's sinful deeds. But, secondly, "eternal life" is "the gift of God, . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord." Eternal life, being the gift of God is not earned by one's deed, but received freely through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Christ is the giver of eternal life (cf. John 14:6; 10:7-9).

## Christian and the Law (7:1-13)

- The word "law" is used twenty-three times in chapter 7. Though in the first part of this chapter, Paul deals with the law of God, it must be noted that the word "law" is not always used with reference to the law of God. Therefore, each of its occurrences must be carefully understood within its context.
- Paul begins the discussion on the topic, Christian and the law, with a rhetorical question – "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"
  - ↳ After addressing the Christians in Rome as "brethren," the apostle turns his attention to those who are concerned about their relationship with the law. So he said, "for I speak to them that know the law." This does not necessarily mean that he was talking to the Jews only, but also all those who have some understanding about the law and hence concerns about their relationship to the law.

### We are dead to the Law (vv. 1b-6)

- In this passage, the Apostle Paul teaches us that in Christ we are dead to all the penalties and curses of the law, and thus we are delivered from being under the dreadful dominion of the law.
- Firstly, Paul mentions a fact that is generally known to all - "the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth."
  - ↳ The word "dominion" (*kurieuei*) means "rules as lord." In other words, the law exercises authority over a man as long as he lives. Once a man is dead, the law has no authority over him.
- Secondly, Paul uses an analogy of marriage to illustrate the above fact that the law has no dominion over a person who is dead. In verses 2 and 3, he writes, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."
  - ↳ A married woman is "bound" (perfect tense, "has been bound and stands bound") to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage ("from the law of the husband"). His death frees her from that marriage.
  - ↳ Then Paul continued the illustration, pointing out that if a wife marries (literally, "if she comes to" - *ginomai*) another man while her husband is still alive she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband is dead, she, being freed from the law of marriage to him, will not be called an adulteress if she would marry (literally, "she comes to") another man. In other words, a widow who marries again is not guilty of adultery.

- Thirdly, in verses 4-6, Paul applies the earlier illustration of marriage to a Christian and the Law. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."
  - ↳ A Christian, who is joined to Christ by faith, is dead to the Law. In fact, Paul says, "ye also are become dead to the law" (literally, "you were put to death" – Aorist, Passive, Indicative of *thanatoō*). The aorist tense of the verb emphasizes the finality or completeness of our death to the law. We were put to death by the divine act of God (cf. Romans 6:3). God's grace that we received by faith in Christ brings our death to sin and the law.
  - ↳ Paul says that it is "by the body of Christ" we died to the law. Jesus suffered in his body and died to bear the curse of the law against our sins. Thus Jesus by His suffering and death brought an end to the law's judicial dominion over us. By His suffering and death, Christ has met all the demands of the law. He took our place and died to release us from the penalties of the law.
  - ↳ Some have wrongly interpreted Paul's words here, saying, "the law is dead to Christians and therefore it is totally irrelevant to them." Such an interpretation will lead to an Antinomian mentality. Paul is not teaching that Christians should forsake the law. It is not the law that is dead, but the Christian to the law by the body of Christ. This is nothing more, but a description of how we have been justified by Christ's death as He suffered the curse of the law against our sins. It was certainly not Paul's intention to teach that the law is no more relevant to Christians. In fact, he teaches us later in this chapter that the law is good and relevant to Christians (cf. Romans 7:6,12,16).
    - In verse 1, Paul has already said that "the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." Notice that not as long as the law lives, but as long as the man lives. The law doesn't die, but the man dies. The law is forever. God has appointed it to be an everlasting declaration of his holiness and justice. So, let us take special note that Paul is describing how we have died to the law through the death of the body of Christ, and not how we ought to forsake the law of God.
  - ↳ Now, we are freed from the grip of the law by the body of Christ, who suffered the law's penalty of death on our behalf, just as a widow is freed from the husband by his death. Through His death, we are granted freedom from the bondage of the law's curse that "that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
  - ↳ By His death, we are dead to the law and thus freed to be married to the risen Christ. A new relationship is thus granted to us through Christ's

death and resurrection. In a sense, believers are united to Him as His bride (cf. Eph. 5:25).

- ↳ Then Paul tells us the purpose of our new "marriage relationship" with the risen Christ – "that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
  - The law constantly taught us what God's righteousness is. It also warned us against sin and condemned our sins. Nonetheless, the law on its own could not transform us in order to produce fruits that are pleasing to God. What the law failed to bring forth from us, our relationship with Christ would produce. Our justification by faith in Christ's death and resurrection is not a license to forsake the law, but a powerful transformation unto living out the righteousness that the law proclaims.
  - We are delivered from the stranglehold of the law as we are united with Christ by faith; and we are united to Him that we may bring forth fruit unto God. Charles Hodge in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans says, "As deliverance from the penalty of the law is in order to holiness, it is vain to expect the deliverance, except with a view to the end of for which it is granted."
  - Galatians 2:19-20 says, " For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
- ↳ Paul then continued to explain in verses 5 and 6 how we are delivered from the bondage of the law unto a renewed life of holiness. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." In these two verses, Paul explains to his readers how the law works in the unregenerate (before our conversion) and the regenerate men.
  - In verse 5, he talks about the unregenerate and the law. He described the pre-conversion condition of the believers ("when we were") as "in the flesh, the motions of sins." The word "flesh" (*sarx*) often means sin nature (cf. Rom. 7:18, 25). "The motions of sin" (*pathēma* – cf. Galatians 5:24) simply means "the passions," or "the evil affections," or "the corrupt desires." Paul is saying that the sinful passions of unregenerate man, being exposed and condemned by the law, were working through the members of his body to bring forth fruit that leads to death. In this epistle, Paul repeatedly speaks of sin as producing death (cf. 5:15, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:10-11, 13; 8:2, 6, 10, 13).
  - In verse 6, Paul says that we, being identified with Christ and His death, are delivered from the Law which held us in death. The purpose of this release "from the Law" is that we may "serve" (*douleuō*: "to be a slave" or "serve like a slave") "in the newness of spirit, and not in

the oldness of the letter." The phrase "in the newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" does not suggest, as some wrongly interpreted, that we are not required to keep the letter of the law, but just the spirit of the law. Instead, Paul is saying that we are called to serve God "in the newness of spirit" which is the result of being united with Christ as a regenerated people, and not in spiritual deadness which is the oldness that the letter or the written law has been proclaiming to us. In fact, Christians are renewed through their redemption in Christ in order to obey both the letter and the spirit of God's law.

## The Law and Sin (vv. 7-11)

- Paul begins this section with rhetorical questions – "What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?*" Paul knew that the preceding discussion on Christians' deliverance from the law would raise such a question.
  - ➔ "Is the law sin?" The response from Paul is a passionate denial – "God forbid" (*mē genoito* Certainly not!) Though the law awakens one's knowledge of the presence and condemnation of sin (7:5), it does not mean that the law itself is sin.
    - ↳ In fact, Paul said later, the Law is holy (v. 12) and spiritual (v. 14). Paul went on to explain that the Law made sin known (cf. 3:19-20).
  - ➔ Paul then goes on to be more specific in his explanation of the nature of the law and the negative response to it within man's heart. He says, "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was dead*" (vv.7b-8).
    - ↳ Firstly, he says that the law exposes sin – "I had not known sin, but by the law" (v.7b; cf. 3:20; 5:13). He then gives a specific illustration that how the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17; Deut. 5:21), makes him aware of the presence of lust (*epithumia* – covetousness or craving) in him. As the law of God reveals God's holy standards, man becomes more aware of his moral and spiritual corruption.
    - ↳ Secondly, Paul says in verse 8 that the law is taken advantage of by sin to commit more sins by rebelling against its demand of righteousness. He said, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Sin within man seizes the exposure of sin by the law, as an opportunity (literally, "taking a start point" [*aphormēn*, a base for military operations or for an expedition]; cf. Rom. 7:11) to be more rebellious by producing in him every kind of covetous desire.
      - The Law is not the cause of the act of sin. It is the sin nature within each individual that causes all the evilness of man's thoughts and actions. As Paul concluded, "without the law sin *was dead*." This does not mean that sin has no existence without the Law (cf. 5:13), but

that without the Law, sin's presence and rebellion are not fully recognized.

- In verses 9-11, Paul shows how the law holds the sinner in spiritual deadness or condemnation - "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."
- ↳ "For I was alive without the law once": Here the apostle testifies of his experience prior to his awareness and understanding of the full impact of God's commandments. He lived a pharisaical life of legalism, which was a self-effort to live according to his sin-marred thinking of the law. Paul had served the "oldness of the letter" of the law, which he mentioned earlier in verse 6.
- ↳ "But when the commandment came," Paul says, "sin revived, and I died." The clause, "but when the commandment came," does not speak of the giving of the Mosaic Law, but the proper understanding of the law in Paul's mind at his conversion. The result was that "sin revived" or "sin became alive." This means that the presence and power of sin within him became more vivid and real to Paul. As a result, Paul "died" in the sense that all his feelings of religiosity and goodness within him became null and void under the scrutiny and sentence of the Law. He became spiritually devastated and ruined.
  - Paul reiterates the above truth in verses 10-11. "And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*." The Greek word for "commandment" is both singular and definite, and hence it represents all of God's law. God's law was given to help people to live in God's righteousness and blessings, but it actually brought forth spiritual death because of sin in human hearts. The fault is not in the law, but in the sinfulness of man.

### Our Proper Response to the Law (vv. 12-13)

- In verses 12, Paul declares emphatically that the law is holy - "Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."
- ↳ This verse is the definitive answer to the question raised in v. 7, "Is the law sin?" Certainly not. In fact, the law is holy. No Christian should treat the law as faulty or evil. It is God's holy law, revealing His holiness.
- ↳ The commandment is "holy, just and good." The law of the holy God is consistent with His holy nature. The righteous God cannot decree an unrighteous commandment. They are just and good. There is nothing that is unfair or injurious in His commandment. The law is "good" because it is intended for the very best for people.
- ↳ In this entire discussion, Paul was not depreciating law as such. Apart from the Law, the principle of sin would have remained unexposed and the

sinful man unaware of his spiritual deadness. His point had been that the law has been abused by sin for more rebellion, sin and death.

- ↳ So Paul once again asks a question in verse 13 in order to bring about the right response from us towards the law. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."
- Paul was asking whether it is possible that the law which is good and pure would change to work evil? Can that which tends to life, be made death to a man?
  - In answer to this, the apostle repeats that the fault was not in the law, but was in man himself, and in his sinful propensities. The sin that caused more rebellion against the law, actually deceived (*exēpatēsen*, "led [him] astray"; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14) him into death. The law does not lead anyone into sin or death.
  - Sin deceived him and had been working death in him (literally, "killed" him), not physically but spiritually. Sin is like a personal enemy within. In so doing, sin exposed its own true character as sin. It demonstrated how unspeakably sinful it really is by using that which is good to bring about death. Paul says the sinfulness of sin that deceives us to rebel against the holy law of God is "exceeding," and that means is sinfulness "beyond measure, to an extraordinary degree."
  - While the malignity of sin is unutterable, the Law of God, instead of being sin (Rom. 7:7), remains forever holy, righteous and good.

## Christian and Indwelling Sin (7:14-25)

- This text is immensely helpful to all Christians in their struggle against sin. It provides clear insight into the cause of their daily struggle with sin.
- Nonetheless, some misunderstandings concerning "of what stage in his life is Paul speaking?" in this passage need to be clarified first that we may correctly understand his instructions in it.

### Of What Stage in His Life is Paul Describing?

- The first misconception is that Paul is describing the unregenerate or pre-conversion condition. "Proofs" cited:
  - ➔ Verse 14c - ". . . sold under sin".
  - ➔ Verses 25a,c - "O wretched man . . . . body of this death"
  - ➔ We reject this view because
    - ↳ Paul used the present tense; and hence he was not describing his past experience, but his present experience as an apostle.
      - "I am carnal, sold under sin" (v.14)
      - "O wretched man that I am!" (v.25)
    - ↳ Paul's description of his delight in the law is not true with the unregenerate
      - "we know that the law is spiritual" (v.14a)
      - "I consent unto the law that it is good" (v.16)
      - "*I delight in the law of God* " (v.22.)
- The second misconception is that Paul is describing the awakened, but not yet saved condition. "Proofs" cited:
  - ➔ 14b: " I am carnal, sold under sin"
  - ➔ 25a,c - "O wretched man . . . . body of this death"
  - ➔ Martin Lloyd Jones who takes this view says, "What sort of man is Paul describing therefore? He is describing a man who is experiencing an intense conviction of sin, a man who has been given to see, by the Spirit, the holiness of the Law; and he feels utterly condemned. He is aware of his weakness for the first time, and his complete failure. But he does not know any more."
  - ➔ We reject this view, because
    - ↳ Paul was talking about his own present experience as an apostle
      - The view does not account for the change from the past tense of the verbs (vv.1-13) to present tense (vv.14-25).

- It is also not true that the man of the text does not know who can deliver him (vv. 24-25).
- The third misconception is that Paul is describing an unsundered life of a carnal Christian or a backslidden Christian. "Proofs" cited:
  - ➔ They allege that the man is a defeated Christian. v14b: "I am carnal, sold under sin"
  - ➔ The man is self-focused – so the word, "I" occurs 26 times; and the words "me" "my" "myself" about 12 times.
  - ➔ We reject this view, because
    - ↳ Paul was talking about his own present experience as an apostle Though it is true that Christian struggles with his sinful nature, the "Carnal Christian" theology is an erroneous doctrine, which Paul does not endorse. Paul never says that a Christian can go on living in sin.
      - In fact, Paul calls sinning Christians to repent quickly and yield their bodies as servants to righteousness (Romans 6:11-13).
    - ↳ This doctrine teaches that a man can be a Christian without surrendering his life to Christ as his Lord. Such a doctrine is totally against the Bible. No one can expect to be a true Christian without accepting Christ as your Saviour and Lord.
      - Romans 10:9 - "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
    - ↳ Moreover, Paul strongly warns us that to be carnally minded without repentance and submission to God is to be in the unregenerate conditions.
      - In Romans 8:5-8, Paul says, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. . . 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."
- The Correct understanding of this passage is that Paul is describing a growing or matured Christian who is in constant war with the indwelling sin in him. "Proofs" cited:
  - ➔ Paul's delight in the law
    - ↳ "we know that the law is spiritual" (v.14a)
    - ↳ "I consent unto the law that it is good" (v.16)
    - ↳ "I *delight in the law of God* " (v.22)
  - ➔ Consistent with Paul's teachings on the spiritual battles of every Christian

- ↪ Romans 6:11-13 "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."
- ↪ Romans 6:18-19 "18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
- ↪ 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
- ↪ Colossians 3:5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
- ↪ 1 Peter 2:11 "11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
- ↪ Romans 8:13 "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*"
  - Every Christian is in a battle against sin, and he is being sanctified each day. Sanctification is not about a conceited thinking that how good we have become.
  - It is the awareness of how sinful we really are and how much more we have to be renewed by trusting in Christ and His Spirit in the light of His law.

## The reason for the struggle with sin

- The first reason that Paul mentions is the his appreciation for the law of God
  - ↪ Paul's delight in the law
    - ↪ He says in verse 14a, "we know that the law is spiritual."
      - The verb "know" comes from the Greek verb *oida*, which generally means "to perceive," "notice," "discern," and "discover." Its verbal form is perfect, participle; and hence it indicates a deep-seated, continuing conviction that is cherished in the heart.
      - The word "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) indicates that which "belongs to the Divine Spirit," or "pertaining to the Spirit." Since it has its origin in God, it must of necessity give expression to the holiness of God's character.

- ↳ Again he says in Romans 16b, "I consent unto the law that it is good."
  - The verb "consent" comes from the Greek verb *sumphemi*, which means "to give assent to a particular proposition" or "to agree with." It is in present tense; and thus it indicates his unhesitant, continuing consent to the goodness of the law.
  - The word "good" *kalos* denotes "a positive, fine moral quality, with the implication of being favorably valued," "beautiful," "noble," etc. So here the law is appreciated as good and not evil or sin.
  - Paul was agreeing that the law is a noble thing (v. 16).
- ↳ He says again about the law in verse 22, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."
  - The verb "delight" (*sunedomai*) means "to be happy as the result of the pleasure derived from some experience." Paul viewed the law as from God; and hence, "the law of God." It was the controlling principle of his life. It is true that in his inner self he joyfully concurred with the law of God.
  - As the psalmist put it, he was the man blessed by God whose delight is in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2; cf. 40:8). This confession removes the possibility that Paul was speaking about his life before coming to Christ.
- The second reason that Paul mentions is the Christian's awareness of the presence of sin in his body.
  - ↳ **Romans 7:14b "but I am carnal, sold under sin"**
    - ↳ In verse 14, against the "spiritual" law, he describes himself as "carnal."
      - The word "carnal" (*sarx - flesh*) can also be a synonym for body (*soma*). But when it is used in contrast to "spirit" or "spiritual" (*pneuma*). It is undoubtedly a reference to sinful nature of man. That is why KJV correctly translated it as "carnal."
      - This is further verified by the following explanatory phrase, "sold under sin." Paul is saying that in his present redeemed state, he is still a fallen creature. A similar phrase is found in verse 23 – "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." The members of his body is still a prisoner of the law or principle of sin.
      - Until we are fully redeemed or glorified, every Christians shall find within him a principle of sin working against the desires of his redeemed soul. This Paul explains further in verses 15-16, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."
      - Again in verses 17, Paul explains how the awareness of the presence of sin causes the struggle within him – "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The redeemed inner man does not

approve the sin that is still present in his body. The sinful nature is not ruling the redeemed person, but it still finds its residual dwelling in his flesh.

- Then in verse 18, he says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" Here the pronoun "me" is not a reference to the redeemed, renewed man, but "my flesh," the sinful nature that is still present in his life. There is nothing good in the "flesh." The proof of it is "for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Though his redeemed inner man desire to do that which is good and acceptable before God, the flesh is contrary to it. It must be noted that Paul is not saying that he is totally incapable of doing good, but he is merely acknowledging the struggle of sin that is present in his life. Because of the presence of sin, he is not completely perfect in his obedience to the law (cf. Philippians 3:12-14). So he confesses, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (v.19).
- In verse 20, he says, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Here Paul identifies the source of sin in a Christians' life, which is not the Redeemed inner man, but the presence of sin.
- In verses 21-23, he laments again about this struggle against the lingering sin in his life – "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." As he delights in the law of God, the principle of sin that worketh in the members of his body presents him a great conflict to deal with.
- So he laments again in verse 24-25 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
- But he ends with a joyful declaration of victory – " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." The struggle will go on. But in Christ, our hope of victory is real.