

The Power of One

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Date: 15 February 2026

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[0:00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles. We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching that we hope will encourage you and strengthen your faith.

! Thanks for listening. Now, here's today's message. Have you ever thought about how the act of one person can change the course of history?

One person invents a smartphone and it changes how the world communicates. You have an athlete that breaks a world record.

Then every other athlete thinks they can do the same thing and do even better. One person makes a choice, makes a wrong choice behind the wheel.

And that one reckless act can change multiple lives forever. We call this the power of one.

[1:03] How one person can make such a great difference in the lives of others. Our lives seem to be defined by people we've never met. And usually we spend our lives trying to manage the fallout from bad decisions made before us.

And we're born into systems. We're born into families. We're born into cultures. We didn't choose. And we live with baggage that we didn't even pack. And so that is the culture in which we live. And this morning, we're going to look into the story of two men, two acts, and two very different results.

It explains why the world is the way that it is and what God did to fix it. So no matter what's in your past, Jesus provides a new future.

We've got a lot to cover this morning from verses 12 through verse 21 in the book of Romans chapter 5. And the verses we're looking at this morning, like our call to worship, can be fairly confusing to some.

[2:12] And we can get lost and it seems like it repeats itself. And it seems like it's really not making a whole lot of sense when it goes back and forth. So we're going to look at our verses this morning one chunk at a time.

Let's start with verses 12 through verse 17 of Romans chapter 5. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

And then we have a parenthetical statement all the way down through verse number 17. For until the law was in the world, for until the law sin was in the world, but sin was not imputed where there is no law.

Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned, according to the same likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of him who was to come.

That's a very important phrase. But verse 15, but the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense, many died much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

[3:24] And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation. But the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.

Verse 17, for if by one man's offense, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

Now, is your head spinning yet? It's a good possibility. We've covered quite a bit. And there's a lot of back and forth. There's a lot of comparison. And on the face of it, it can be pretty confusing. But don't worry, I'll break it down for us as we go through these verses. And the question is, why is the world the way it is? And in order to explain that, Paul goes back to two men, Adam and Jesus Christ.

And what Paul does is he takes us back to the beginning of human history. Paul says sin didn't start everywhere.

[4:39] Sin started somewhere. One man, one decision, one act of disobedience. And the thing is, Adam didn't sin as an individual.

Adam sinned as a representative of the entire human race. One of the ways that we refer to it is, Adam acted as the federal head of the human race.

So when Adam made that choice to take a bite of that fruit that God forbid, you and I sinned in Adam. He sinned as a representative of the entire human race.

When Adam sinned, everything and everyone connected to Adam fell with him. And so to understand this section of the book of Romans, we need to understand a few things.

First of all, I want you to notice that little word, one. That little word, one, is repeated 11 times through this section that we're covering.

[5:47] The key idea is our identification with Adam and our identification with Christ. And the second thing I would like for us to note is the word reign, R-E-I-G-N.

And it appears five times in this passage. Paul saw two men, Adam and Christ, and he saw each one of them reigning over a kingdom.

And then thirdly, we note the phrase much more. It's also repeated five times in this section. So the little word one, the word reign, and much more are going to be very important as we go through these verses.

So in short, this section is a comparison between Adam and between Jesus Christ. Adam, if you've read through the account of creation, Adam was given dominion over the earth.

He was given dominion over the animal kingdom. He was given dominion over creation. But he sinned, and in that sin, he lost his kingdom.

[6:58] He lost his dominion. Everything changed from that point forward. And because of Adam's sin, all mankind is under condemnation and under death.

And so when Adam sinned, Adam was considered condemned. And from that point forward, Adam began to die.

And everyone else who would come after Adam, who was born through Adam, would die. And then Christ came as the king of a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17.

He says, we are a new creation. Everyone who is in Christ. And so by his obedience on the cross, Jesus Christ was able to provide justification for all mankind.

And Christ not only undid the damage that was done when Adam sinned, and he acted as that representative of the entire human race, but Jesus Christ accomplished much more.

[8:07] He gave us much more. We have much more in Christ than we ever lost in Adam. We have much more that we've gained through the grace of God, through justification, than what we lost when Adam sinned.

And some of this much more, we already had explained in chapter 5, verses 1 through 11. So what do we see? What do we see here in verses 12 through 17?

What Paul says is that sin entered into the world through one man, Adam. And when sin entered, death followed.

And we have a general result. That's sin. Or excuse me, that's death. And because there was a general result, there had to be a general act.

And that was Adam who made the choice. And so all die from that point. And the word Paul used for entered that we see here in verse 12, therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world.

[9:21] That word entered suggests that sin walked into the world like an uninvited guest who refuses to leave. And that is our sin nature.

That's what you and I are born with. And that's what you and I have until the moment that we are translated or transferred into heaven's kingdom.

Now, here's the hard part for many people to understand, for many people to grasp. Paul says, what did death do? According to verse number 12.

And thus, death spread to all men, all women, every boy, every girl.

Death moved to the human race like a virus. It spread throughout the entire human race. Even before God gave the law through Moses, people were dying.

[10:21] Why? Because we didn't just inherit Adam's eye color. We didn't just inherit Adam's hair color. We inherited his sin nature.

And so what happens is we were born into spiritual bankruptcy. And we don't have to wait until we sin in order for us to suffer from the penalty of sin, which is death.

Because think about it. How can babies die? Babies never had a choice. Babies never knew the difference between right and wrong.

Sometimes babies take a breath and then die. The reason why is death spread to all mankind because of Adam's one act of disobedience.

God doesn't wait until we sin in order for us to be guilty of the lake of fire. We're born into that state. We're born into spiritual bankruptcy.

[11:27] And as a representative of the entire human race, Adam's sin was considered by God to be the sin of all people. And the penalty of all people would then be death.

So death was judicially made the penalty of everybody. Well, some of us say, well, that's not fair. God didn't give me a choice. Right? So I literally have had people say that.

Well, that wasn't fair. Now, if I would have, how many times have we said that? Well, you know, if I would have been there, I would have. If I would have been there in Jerusalem at the cross, I wouldn't have been one of those saying, Yeah, right.

Think about it. The fact that God judged the entire human race through one man's sin and judicially gave the death penalty to all people was an act of grace and mercy.

And you say, well, pastor, how can you say that? Because think about it. Excuse me. To begin with, if God had tested each human being individually, I believe the result would have been the same.

[12:42] Would have all eventually chosen to disobey God in some form, in some way or another. So if...

If God would have left the decision to every person that ever lived, and you and I would have made the decision to disobey God, then we would be individually under the penalty of death.

And so we would each be accountable for our sin. And so then, how would the entire human race be made right with God?

Every single one of us would have to find another... Every one of us would have to find a sinless person to die for us. I mean, does that make sense?

If we all acted individually, and judicially, we all had to die for our own sin, then we would... In order for us not to die and go to the lake of fire, we would have to find a sinless person to die for us.

[13:48] In the world, there was only one sinless person who's ever lived, and that's Jesus Christ. And so, if you think about it, one person, Adam, acting as the federal head of the entire human race, allowed one man, Jesus, to act as the federal head of the entire human race through his death, his burial, and his resurrection on the cross of Calvary.

So by one man sent it into the world, but that made possible for one man to die for the world. And that's Jesus Christ. And that's the only thing that makes it fair, because then someone else can take the place for us.

Someone else can take our penalty. Well, the thing is, Paul doesn't leave us in the cemetery. In verse 15, he says, but the free gift is not like the offense.

The offense was a slip, a fall, a trespass. Adam tripped, and we all fell with Adam. But the free gift, charisma, that the Greek word that Paul used for grace, is a gift of grace that we didn't earn.

The reality is, God worked according to grace before the law was ever given. God works according to grace, works according to grace even after the law, because it was through Abraham's faith that allowed God to make Abraham right, or declare Abraham righteous.

[15:23] Way before, 430 years before the law, where Adam brought condemnation, Jesus Christ, according to our verses here, he brings justification.

He allows us to be made right before God. And notice this, Paul says, death reigned through Adam. But believers don't simply survive through Christ.

It says that we reign through Christ. We are able to reign through Jesus Christ. Grace doesn't merely rescue us. It restores our position in Christ.

In Adam, we lost our kingship. We lost our dominion over the earth. But in Jesus Christ, the Bible says we reign as kings. And we reign according to what the Bible says, we reign much more.

The grace of God by the gift of one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. Because we share, verse 17, we share the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.

[16:29] Adam made a decision that changed everything but the obedience of one rewrote the entire story of the human race. Then what Paul does next in verses 18 and 19 is he distills the argument down to its simplest form.

One trespass, one sin, led to the condemnation of all. One righteous act led to the possibility for justification that brings life.

Let's look at verse 18. Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation. Even so, through one man's righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous. Adam didn't have to commit a series of sins.

It wasn't, well, Adam, okay, you've reached the end of the line. Okay, we're going to have to call, we're going to have to call a timeout, and I'm going to have to judicially declare you condemned and everyone, no, one sin, one choice.

[17:48] Remember, that little power of one, one man, one choice, but also one man, one act, and he was able to make it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

Paul calls it, according to verse 18, he calls it, he calls it an offense and a disobedience. The word offense means trespass, to cross over the line.

God told Adam how far he could go, and Adam went beyond the appointed limit. But you shall eat of every tree of the garden of Eden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

So God gave the limit. Adam crossed the line. That's what that word trespass means, is to cross over the line. excuse me. And in contrast to the trespass of one, we see in verse 18, therefore as through one man, one man's offense, judgment came to all resulting in condemnation, even through one man's righteous act, meaning Jesus is Christ, death on the cross, Paul calls it the obedience disobedience of one.

You can also look at Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 through 12. That's kind of a parallel passage.

And what Paul does here is Paul uses a play on words and he says, where he says the Adam's disobedience is the Greek word *parakoues*, literally a failure to hear or hearing a miss.

[19:42] And then he talks about Jesus' obedience, *hupakoues*, which means to listen with submission.

So he kind of uses a play on words. Adam kind of missed the mark. He heard a miss. He didn't get it right.

But Jesus' obedience is what made the difference. With his act, it could make everyone righteous. Adam disobeyed.

It made the rest of us sinners. Christ obeyed. And literally says the many are made righteous. And here's the good news.

Christ's obedience didn't just cancel our guilt. It created a new status for us. What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say? Those of you who memorized it. But all those of us who are in Christ are a new creation.

[20:42] We're a new creature. Nothing like us ever existed. And so we are given a brand new status in Jesus Christ. We're not just forgiven, we're declared righteous.

That changes how we see God, that changes how we see ourselves, and that changes how you and I can live. Now in our culture, we like the idea of self-made people. To think that we are the masters of our own destiny.

But the reality is we're not the masters of our own destiny. Paul is telling us it's not about your act, it's about the act of Jesus Christ.

It's not about what you can do on earth that makes a difference that gets you right with God. It's trusting what Jesus did. It's the act of Jesus Christ that makes us righteous. It's not us turning over a new leaf.

It's not us going to a meeting and getting things right. No, it's not what we can do. It's what Jesus Christ has already done that makes us right.

[21:47] We can spend our whole life trying to be good enough to get right with God, but it's only the power of one, Jesus Christ, that can change our status.

Now, what Paul does is he anticipates a question. People are going to ask, what about the law? Come on, Paul, what about the law? Remember, there were a lot of Jews that Paul spoke to, Paul wrote to, and the question in their mind was, okay, what about the law?

I know you talk about grace, I know you talk about sin, and Jesus, or the Messiah, and all of this, but what about the law? His answer is surprising. He said the law didn't fix it.

The law wasn't given to fix the sin problem. The law in the Old Testament wasn't given so people could have a standard for us to try to reach in order for us to be made right with God.

The law didn't fix the problem, it just exposed it, it exposed, it didn't restrain rebellion, it just revealed how deep the rebellion of the human race ran, because it's in our nature to sin.

[22:56] The law made sin visible and undeniable. Let's look at verses 20 and 21 as we wind this down. verse 20. Moreover, the law entered.

Paul gives us the reason why God gave the law. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. Now you're thinking, well that sounds a little strange. Just bear with me a bit.

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. See that word again? Much more. So that as sin reigned, see that word? Reigned. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Somebody asked, well why would God want sin to abound? The point of the law isn't to fix the problem. It was to show us how big the problem really was.

It's like a flashlight in a dark messy room. The flashlight doesn't fix the room. Young people wouldn't that be nice?

[24:08] You turn on your flashlight and it cleans up your room for you? No. What the flashlight does is when you walk into a dark messy room, you turn on the flashlight and it makes the mess abound.

Does that make sense? So when the law entered, when the law came in, or literally the Greek construction is the law came beside sin and what it did was it shined the light on sin and it made it look like, my, how much sin there is.

So it made, in our perception, it made sin abound. People were sinning way before the law. All the law did was expose the sin to the light.

And it made us realize how bad we really are. Excuse me. So we see it for what it really is. And then what Paul does is he probably gives us maybe one of the most famous words in the chapter. He says, but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. grace abounded much more is a mathematical term that means to super abound.

[25:31] To super abound. It's the idea of a flood of grace that completely swallows up the puddle of sin. It's a flood of grace that super abounds and it just literally swallowed up the penalty of sin.

Grace takes it all up. So the result is grace now reigns. Sin doesn't reign anymore. Death doesn't have to reign anymore. Jesus Christ conquered death on the cross of Calvary.

And so death no longer reigns. We don't have to die. Now we'll die, our physical bodies will die, but we don't have to be dead spiritually. We can be made alive through God's Holy Spirit, through what he's accomplished on the cross of Calvary.

Sin used to be the king of our life, and the final word was death. But now for the believer, grace is the new king, and the final word is eternal life.

He provides grace for all those who trust Christ as their Savior. And in our world today, it often feels like sin is the biggest thing about us.

[26:44] Our sins, our past, can sometimes seem like the greatest thing about us. We feel defined by our failures. But Paul says, grace is bigger than your biggest mess.

Let me say that again. God's grace is bigger than your biggest mess. If your sin is a ten, God's grace is ten million. Have you played the game with your kids?

I love you to the moon. and you say, no, I love you to the moon and back. No, I love you to the universe and beyond.

If you feel like your sin is ten million, God's grace is like a hundred quintillion. I mean, that's what Paul's saying.

Grace abounds. Grace super abounds. Grace is bigger than your biggest mess. So, no one can say, you know what? I'm too big of a sinner. Paul says, don't worry.

[27:51] God's grace is bigger than that. God's grace can save you because it's super abounds and we can reign. Grace reigns and we are now in a new kingdom and grace is the king through Jesus Christ.

Sin once ruled through death, now grace rules through Jesus Christ. The throne has changed hands. Every person lives under one of two reigns.

We live under Adam just like when we're born and we live that way without turning our life over to Jesus Christ and trusting him. Then we live under the reign of, under the domain of Adam, under the reign of Adam and Adam's reign leads to death but Christ's reign leads to life.

You see, we don't escape Adam's reign by trying harder. You move out of Adam by moving into Christ, by trusting Christ as your Savior.

And the Bible says we are now placed into Christ, in Christ. So the question I believe Romans 5 forces us to answer is, who are you standing in?

[29:07] Are you standing in Adam as a condemned human being? Or are you standing in Jesus Christ, justified, being made righteous, and by God's grace, you're forgiven, and you're made into a, you're given a new status, you are a new creation.

Because what one man broke, one man restored, and then some. See, everything in your life changes when you realize that your identity isn't rooted in what you do, but in the one to whom you belong.

See, the power of one changed the world at the cross. And that same power of one can change your life today. all you need to do is trust Jesus at the cross, and what he did at the cross.

Let's pray. Father, as we've come together today, Father, we've looked at what can be a rather confusing portion of scripture.

There's a lot of back and forth, a lot of one this, one that, this reign, that reign. But, Father, it was simply helping us to understand that by one man's act, we were all made sinners.

[30:39] But by one man, the righteous one, Jesus Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, was able to act in one act and able to take away sin for the entire world, everyone who believes and trusts in Christ as their Savior.

Father, I pray this morning that if there's anyone who has yet to move from Adam into Christ, who has yet to stop trying to be good enough and earn salvation and simply surrender and realize that the penalty of sin is death, the wages of sin, and would simply surrender and trust what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary as being the full payment, that was how we can be made right with you.

Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks for joining us today. We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week.

If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org. We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week, and we'll see you next time.