

Sovereignty, Election, And Grace (Part Five)

Favor Is Given So We May Obey God's Law

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Given 06-Jul-02; Sermon #566

I'm going to begin this sermon with a number of questions that will lay the groundwork for not only this message, but also the next message as well. That's my plan, and maybe God will be in on that plan as well. I certainly hope He is.

Are God's sovereignty (which includes His almighty and detailed control over the affairs of His creation) and His grace and providence (through which He works in order to bring about His purposes for man), and human responsibility (which includes the doing of works of obedience to God's will) incompatible? In other words—far more simple—are grace and works mutually exclusive? Is salvation an "*either/or*" situation in which grace eliminates the need for works, or are these merely subjects that theologians bring up in order to appear intelligent and to have something to argue about?

What about prayer? Is prayer unnecessary because God already knows what we want even before we ask? Is prayer unnecessary because Almighty God knows where He is headed with our lives, and He is going to go there regardless of our free moral agency, thus in reality nullifying free moral agency? Does the fact that we are indeed called and have had our minds opened to the reality that this Almighty Sovereign God is part of our lives, reduce prayer to mere recitals of religious sounding clichès?

These are not easy questions, and the answers are sometimes slippery, but the stakes are too important to ignore. Is it not interesting to note that these questions don't seem to bother the writers of the Bible one iota? Nor do they bother me, because I think that we will see before we are done with these two sermons in this series that grace and works are indeed mutually exclusive in terms of salvation itself. I want you to focus on this "in terms of salvation itself." However, both play major roles in our lives as far as the overall picture of God's purpose is concerned, and grace plays by *far* the greater one.

This sermon is intended to lay a foundation that I hope to complete today. I say "hope," because though basic, and going over a great deal of familiar territory, it is also fairly complex. This is because it has quite a number of points to it, and quite a number of definitions of terms. As we begin, let me prove to you, in terms of salvation, that grace and works are mutually exclusive. Let's go back to a scripture we have been in at least six or eight times in the last several months.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace are you saved through faith: and that [meaning the faith] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

I do not see how this could be stated any more clearly. Good works do *not* save us. As we are being created in Christ Jesus, good works are a result. As we are being created in Christ Jesus, good works result from that creation. Good works are the fruit of God's creative efforts. That's what those three verses say. Good works are the fruit of God's creative efforts.

Psalm 51:10 is another very clear scripture, where David asks of God, "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me." David asked God to create in him a clean heart. Doesn't that give you the indication that David recognized he didn't have a clean heart, but he recognized also that he *needed* to have a clean heart, and that this clean heart would be a creation of God, and that a right spirit would also be a gift, or a creation of God? The implication is that this clean heart would be the kind that would bring forth *good* works, and that God would not despise it. Remember that David in Psalm 51 was repenting of a bad, *evil* work, as Jesus later stated in Matthew 15:16-20. Connect this to David's works, and our works as well.

Matthew 15:16-20 And Jesus said, Are you also yet without understanding? Do not you yet understand, that whatsoever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed *out* of the mouth come forth from the *heart* [from that evil heart David wanted to get rid of, and

wanted a *clean heart* created in him]; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man.

Bad, evil works all proceed from the heart, and I might add here, from the natural man. In biblical terminology, it is the *heart* that needs to be changed into one that will produce *good works*. Remember, David made it very simple for us to understand. He asked of God, he implored God, he entreated God—"Create *in me a clean heart*"—an acknowledgment that he had something in him that needed to be changed in order for him to produce good works. We see it confirmed by Paul in Ephesians 2 that "we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto (for the very purpose of) good works." If *we* are going to produce *good works*, it will result from God's creation of a clean heart in us.

We're going to be spending a great deal of time in this sermon in the book of Romans, and we're going to turn first to Romans 4:1-5, and then verse 13.

Romans 4:1-2 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertains to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works . . .

The subject here is *justification*. Justification means to align with a standard. Anybody who works with a computer understands about justified margins. It's the same principle, only we're talking about a *legal* principle here, and we're talking about sinners being *aligned* with a standard, and that is *God's* standard of what is right and wrong.

Romans 4:2-5 For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory [or to boast], but not before God. For what says the scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and *it* was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his *faith* is counted [or imputed] for righteousness.

Romans 4:13 For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed [us], through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Tie this together with what Paul later said in Ephesians 2:8-10. Remember, we are saved by grace *through* faith. The subject here in Romans 4 is *justification* by faith. Justification is the clearing of one of guilt before God—tie the principle, the terminology, of Ephesians 2:8 to Romans 4—and it is by *grace*, through faith, not of works, that one is justified, aligned with God's standard of righteousness, cleared of guilt.

It is justification that gets us started on the road to the Kingdom of God. Without justification there is no holiness, and there is no Kingdom of God in our future. Justification opens the door to all of the good things in God's purpose. Without justification, there is no creation of us in Christ Jesus, and therefore *none* of God's workmanship producing good works.

Let me put this to you the way Herbert Armstrong did. He said, "*Salvation is by grace, but everybody who receives salvation does good works.*" Now why is this so? It is because of what **God** is doing. Remember, good works are the result of **Him** creating. We are **His** workmanship. Now why will those who are truly in Christ Jesus, by grace, do good works? Because good works are the evidence that God is creating a clean heart in them.

Do you remember the principle that Jesus gave in Matthew 7? He said "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit." In that metaphor, an evil tree—the tree is a human—is one that does not have God working in him, creating the clean heart that will produce the good works.

In terms of salvation, grace and works are mutually exclusive. This statement will make more sense as we move along later. They occupy different purposes in God's creative efforts of producing sons in Him image. Grace *frees* one. Works prove that one *has been freed!*

With that foundation, I'm going to go on to other elements that relate to God's sovereignty, grace, and works. We're going to go all the way back to the beginning to Genesis 3. I shouldn't say "all the way back," but pretty

close to the beginning. We are going to get an overview of some of the things that occur in this chapter—all 24 verses. I won't be reading all 24 all at once, and I probably will not read all 24, but I will read enough so that we get a pretty good overview of what occurred here.

In this chapter the Bible shows its evidence, gives examples, and produces principles by which we can understand, receive guidance, judge, and make choices in a clear and straightforward way.

Up to the beginning of Genesis 3, God created mankind, represented by Adam and Eve. He set them in a beautiful environment that was especially made to sustain life—the life of mankind. We will notice, in just a bit, that God nowhere appears personally in the first eight verses. Let's read those.

Genesis 3:1-9 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as god, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where are you?

Again you will notice that God nowhere appears in the first eight verses while the first sins are being committed. He is out of sight, but He is not completely out of mind, because both the tempter and mankind (represented

by Adam and Eve) are aware of Him, and directly mention Him. There is a lot here which we won't go into. The one twists what the Creator instructed, and the other ignores His instruction, deliberately choosing to break four of His laws.

It is exceedingly clear from these first eight verses that mankind is free to do what it does. This example shows that very clearly. They represented mankind. They had free moral agency, and God did not interfere, and He did not personally appear until after the event was almost over. Notice carefully in verse 9 that the verse shows *Him* seeking *them*, and *calling out* to them. It has application to you and me. We don't seek out God. He seeks out us. We find then their admission that they were deliberately hiding themselves.

Genesis 3:10-11 And he [Adam] said, I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he [God] said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?

They were deliberately hiding themselves from Him even though they were aware of Him. They were hiding themselves from Him, and through their experiences it was revealed to them that they were naked. Symbolically, they were not covered by righteousness. Notice also that following their sins, they were aware immediately of a sense of guilt, but they tried to cover their shame in a haphazard fashion by using inappropriate fig leaves—a symbol of their own righteousness.

It is also very clear that their perception of things has been altered by their sin, showing that the purity of perception has been damaged. They no longer, because of sin, see things in their reality—their spiritual reality.

It's awfully hard to make right decisions, to make right choices, when you're not getting the truth from what you're looking at, what you're experiencing. The choices are going to be misguided because the mind is not processing it correctly. And thus we find that Jesus said, "Unless you become as a little child (innocent; pure of heart; looking at things through the eyes of a child) you shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of God." These are *major* things that are happening here all in this one chapter. It tells us a great deal of why we

are in the circumstance that we are in. Then in verse 12, once they are confronted, the man (Adam) said:

Genesis 3:12-13 And the man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree; and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

They immediately justify by blaming somebody else for what they were responsible because of the way that they used their free moral agency. They used their free moral agency (which they were free to use) for sin.

Today, we are most likely to justify by blaming our parents. We blame the government. We blame society. We blame our peers (the ones we run with). We blame because we've been born poor, or whatever. I think you get the point. And so God clarifies the circumstance beginning in verse 14.

Genesis 3:14-15 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because you have done this, you are cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life: And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it [the seed] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

And so God clarifies things by showing that ultimately the tempter is assigned the greater blame, but mankind is also guilty of its share of irresponsibility of not keeping God's commands in this sorry mess as well. God then pronounces sentence upon them.

Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman he said . . .

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife . . .

They are condemned to living out life to nowhere the degree of fulfillment and happiness that they could have had, had they used their free moral agency in the best way.

Genesis 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

God pronounces sentence by evicting them from the very best aspects of the beautiful environment, but most serious of all He cuts *them* (representing all of mankind) off from direct communication with Him, their Creator, and makes them responsible for creating their cultures *without* that access, and therefore without His direct guidance. And so He condemns them to live life as they create their cultures through their choices.

But we passed over something. He also intimates in these pronouncements of His sentence, especially in regard to the tempter, that there is hope of deliverance for mankind from his condemnation of them at a later time when He said, "It shall bruise your head (the seed), and you shall bruise his heel."

I want you to reflect for just a while on how God is presented to the readers of His book right from the very beginning to this point. He is first introduced as Creator, and then as the Sovereign Ruler of His creation who dispenses laws for the regulation of life within the environment. He is out of sight, but oversees what is going on. He dispenses judgments against those who disobey, but also has the mercy, authority, and power to offer hope of deliverance from His condemnation of mankind at some time in the unspecified future.

It is this foundation that sets the stage for all that is written in the rest of the book. The remaining 99.9% of the book primarily deals with the history of God's further interactions with mankind, and the revelation of *how* mankind is going to be delivered from the condemnation that it is under.

Let's go back to the book of Romans, to chapter 5. We're going to go through verses 12 through 14.

Romans 5:12-13 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: For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

You will notice Adam and Eve were blamed. The law was there.

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude [in the same manner] of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

These verses specifically point to a peculiarity of God's judgment. God judged all of mankind—right down to today and beyond—at one and the same time based upon what Adam did in the Garden of Eden, because all of mankind was *in Adam*. His judgment basically was that as Adam did, so would all others who came from him.

We're going to go to Hebrews 7 where the author of Hebrews uses the same principle of judgment, but in a little bit different situation—a more positive one.

Hebrews 7:5-10 And verily [truly] they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood [the Aaronic priesthood which came from Levi; a family thing] have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham [they came out of the loins of the same man]: But *he* whose descent is not counted from them received tithes *of* Abraham [that person is Melchizedek], and [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abraham] that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die [the Levites; the Aaronic priesthood] receive tithes; but there [that time between Melchizedek and Abraham] he receives them, of whom it is witness that he [Melchizedek] lives. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes *in* Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

That is a judgment that is foreign to you and me, because he reaches the conclusion that Levi, who by the law receives the tithes of his Israelite brethren, also *paid* tithes to Melchizedek—not literally, but because Levi was in Abraham's body, he paid tithes two generations before he was even born. Actually it was three generations. Abraham gave birth to Isaac. Isaac gave birth to Jacob. Jacob gave birth to Levi. Three generations. Two generations had completely passed before Levi was ever born, and here he has Levi paying tithes. A very interesting way of judging.

We're going to go back to Romans again. We're going to see evidence that God's judgment (made on Adam and Eve) was correct.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I said earlier that 99.9% of the Bible appears after Genesis 3, after the foundation is laid there, explaining the whys and wherefores of how this condemnation that mankind is under is going to be broken and taken away. The Bible gives much history providing an overwhelming abundance of evidence that God's original judgment was correct—the judgment that He made in the Garden of Eden. The result of this is that mankind (man, every person) is in an impossible pickle between the Devil and his own carnal nature on the one side, and death on the other, because if he pays the penalty for his own sins, he dies.

So even if mankind is relieved of the original condemnation to death by somebody else *paying* that penalty, it still leaves mankind with the problem of having a heart very strongly inclined to continue breaking the commandments, and once again bringing himself under condemnation. That's where you and I are.

It is obvious to even the casual observer that mankind has a desire to worship something greater than itself, but it has no access to the Creator God. Man was cut off from God right in the Garden of Eden. From the time of Adam

and Eve man has no access to the Creator God, and indeed there is worldwide confusion of religious thought providing clear evidence that man does not even know what to look for in order to find Him. So over here you have Buddhism. Over here you have Shintoism. Over there you have Taoism. Over here you've got Hinduism. Over here you have Islamism. Over here you have Christianity.

It goes on and on and on, and everybody with this desire to worship God comes up with different answers as to what God is like and what His instructions for mankind are. There is mass confusion because the perception has been ruined by sin. It alters reality about morality, about ethical things, and about righteousness.

Before we go any further we have to start understanding some terms we throw around left and right, maybe just assuming that we all understand what we're talking about. The first series of terms here is: *salvation*, *grace*, *gift*, and *works*.

1. SALVATION:

In the Old Testament, five different Hebrew words are used and translated into the English *salvation*. Four of those words are all derived from the same root. That root word means, "*to save, to free, to deliver, or to prosper.*" We can use any one of them and they would be correct.

The fifth word means *to rescue*. In addition to that, the New Testament uses three words translated into *salvation*, but these three words are all related to one another. They all come from the same root, and that root means (just like the Hebrew word), "*to deliver, to save, to protect.*" So whether Old Testament or New, all the words are so similar in meaning that there is virtually no difference. All the words picture a deliverance from, a rescue from, protection from, or a setting free from some difficult circumstance in which one is helpless and has little or no power against. In other words, it is "*rescue, or setting free, or deliverance, or saving from*" an impossible pickle between the Devil and human nature on one side, and death on the other.

Depending upon the translation that one uses, the following synonyms (which might appear in any context, depending upon what the context is

addressing) would be: "*save, savior, free, deliver, deliverance, deliverer, rescue, prosper, protect and heal.*" So usage then depends upon the context, and all of them might appear regarding a situation that is past, present, or future.

2. GRACE:

Like salvation, it means essentially the same thing, whether in Hebrew or in Greek, but there is much more written in the Greek New Testament, and so we're going to use it. It comes from *Strong's* #5485 (*charis*), and the word phonetically transliterated into English is "*car-ese.*" I spelled it on my paper "*car-ese.*" That is just the way it sounds. It indicates graciousness of manner, literally, figuratively, or spiritually. Grace designates favor on the part of the giver. The same word though designates thanks on the part of the receiver. This is why people will say at a meal, "*Would you please say grace?*" That is a correct use of the word, because we have received this from God, and so we express graciousness of manner back toward the giver who has given it.

It is God's tender sense of our misery caused by sin that displays itself in His efforts to lessen and entirely remove our misery; efforts that are hindered and defeated only by man's continued perverseness, as Jonah displayed.

If you want a simple one-word definition or use for grace, it is "*favor.*"
Grace is favor .

Related to *charis*, and derived from the same root, is *Strong's* #5486, *charisma*. *Charisma* is the gift that one receives without any merit of one's own. It is a gift involving grace (graciousness of manner). In other words, gracious manner (*charis*) motivates God to grant or favor with a gift (*charisma*) to the receiver something he has not earned. Thus in the Bible, *charisma* most frequently refers to any of the many endowments the sovereign God gives by means of His spirit to His children.

We're going to go to Romans 12, and I'm going to give you several examples of this.

Romans 12:6-9 Having then gifts [*charisma*] differing according to the grace [*charis*] that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith: Or ministry, let us wait [or serve] on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching: Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity: he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Every single one of those qualities is a gift from God—*charisma*. It is a gift given, not because we've earned it, but because God, in His graciousness of manner, wants to get us out of our pickle.

Let's go to I Corinthians 1 to see some others.

I Corinthians 1:7 So that you come behind in no gift [*charisma*]; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is Paul's prayer: that God will give us every gift in an abundant quantity so that we are able to use it to glorify Him, and to be in the Kingdom of God. Richard went through those gifts in I Corinthians 12:4-11. I won't go through them again. Everyone of them is a *gift* that God gives by His spirit in *this* context to enable us to bear our burden within the church and produce unity and quality of character, as we shall see as we go on.

We have salvation. We have *charis* (that is, grace). We have *charisma* (that is, gifts). The next one is the word *works*.

3. **WORKS:**

This is Strong's #2041. It is *ergon*. It simply means, "*action, labor, or toil.*" It is the expending of energy. It means, "*the application of mental or physical effort to produce a purpose.*" It is the expending of mental or physical energy to produce a purpose. In other words, it is a *work*, but it also indicates the purpose that is produced. It is used that way. It is both the energy that

produces the product, and it is the product. You can understand that when we say, "*Well, that was a good work.*" If we were speaking partly Greek, we would say, "Well, that was a good *ergon*," or "That was a bad *ergon*." It indicates not only the energy expended, but what is produced as well.

Remember from Genesis 3 that it was God who sought out Adam and Eve. That is, He *called* Adam and Eve. We're going to touch on some very basic scriptures because we want to maintain the thought of how all of these things, after the sin, are flowing from God, enabling us to do what is necessary to be delivered, because we have our part to play in this.

John 6:44 No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Here we are beginning to follow up on what God first did there in Genesis 3. After they committed the sin, after they got themselves in the pickle, who was it that first moved to get them out of the pickle? It was God.

That same process is repeated with you and me. We don't know what to look for in God because we are so confused. All our ideas of God are a mixture of truth and error. We have no idea really what to look for. We are hiding ourselves from God. We are clothed, not literally, but figuratively, with fig leaves. We have some knowledge of the fact that we are naked, we are guilty, but God intervenes in our lives, and calls us out. He reveals Himself to us and begins to give us a picture of Him that is according to truth.

This is an action. This is one of the first steps of grace to you and me. He gives us the gift of being able to perceive Him in a reality—truth—as He is. This principle is carried almost to extremes by God for our benefit.

Romans 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength [draped in fig leaves, as it were, not knowing where to turn], in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were yet sinners Christ died for us, setting the stage for us to be given a gift of incomparable value; not because we have earned it in any way, but simply by God's gracious manner to begin freeing us from the misery that we have created through our sins. He went to such extreme that He did this while we were sinning against Him. Philippians 2 addresses this, showing how God became flesh.

Even though He was flesh, He was still God, and His sacrifice has to be understood as not just the giving of His life, but the sacrifice actually began before the creation of the world when He volunteered to be the sacrifice of man. And then He becomes man, and His entire life—His entire sinless life—is part of His sacrifice that enables Him to be the payment of the debt that we have accrued through our sins. And so God calls us, and all of this has gone on before we ever came on the scene, or really understood any or very little of it.

I Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

God had this all planned out as to what He was going to do.

I Corinthians 2:8-11 Which none of the princes [meaning the leadership in education, in business, or whatever] of this world knew: for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard [these things are not physically discerned], neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them [here's another gift] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

By God's spirit—not human intelligence, not through natural law, but by a freely given gift (*charisma*), motivated by *charis*, comes an enlightening of the mind to spiritual things that are mysteries to the mind of the natural man.

Romans 5:15-17 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, has abounded unto 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. 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.

Perhaps, if we can understand this, it is right here in Romans 5:15-17 that God's grace most obviously appears on the salvation scene to effect mankind's rescue from the impossible pickle. It might be good to note that "gift" (*charisma*) appears twice in verse 15. Beginning in verse 12 through 17, Paul shows a parallel by way of contrast between Adam and Christ. The parallel is that in each case one man is involved. I think you know that back in I Corinthians 15 Christ is directly called "*the second Adam*."

Even as the first Adam was the beginning of the human race, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is the beginning of the spiritual race. What Paul is contrasting is the effect, we'll say, that one action has on the future of mankind: one action by Adam, one action by Christ. So the contrast is in the fact that Christ's influence for good far outweighs Adam's effectiveness for evil.

I'm going to read this series of verses from a modern translation. Perhaps it will be helpful to understanding.

But the free gift is not like the trespass [the sin]. For if by reason of the trespass of one [Adam], the many died; much more did God's grace [*charis*] and the gift [*charisma*] come by grace [*charis*] of this one man, Jesus Christ. Again, the gift of God is not like the result of one man's sin, for judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation; but the free gift followed **many** trespasses [all the sins of mankind, adding up generation after generation after generation], and it brought **justification** [clearing]. For if by the trespass of one death reigned [ruled] through that one, much more

will those who receive the overflowing fulness of grace and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

The free gift is not like the trespass in that it is far more effective than the trespass. In Adam's case, the one overall sin resulted in condemnation. But in Christ's case, His work of redemption (rescue, redeeming, buying back) made provision for the forgiveness not only of Adam's sin, but also of all that followed from Adam's sin. So Christ's sacrifice suffices for all the sins committed by all of those who, through God's grace, place their trust in Him.

For those who trust Him, the condemnation (the pickle we are in) is replaced by justification (being made righteous by *Christ's* righteousness), which in turn then opens salvation to us.

Romans 5:18-20 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. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound [meaning become clear; that sin becomes clear], but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

What these three verses here do is clarify further God's purpose in extending His grace. God's freeing us, His deliverance of us, His saving us from the pickle that we are in, does not result in us being free to do whatever we want. It only frees us to do righteousness. That's where this is heading. This is leading into chapter 6, and Paul is summarizing chapter 5 and building a bridge into chapter 6 where we begin to see *extremely* clearly why God justifies us through grace.

I have already told you, so that we will understand as we go along, God frees us from the pickle that we are in (from our condemnation), in order that we might be righteous, and *do* righteousness. Righteousness, in the biblical sense, is only those works which are consistent with God's character.

Righteousness is only those works which are in harmony with God's law, and with God's will. Grace in no way frees us from *not* having to obey God's law. Grace frees us for the very purpose of *obedience* to God's law.

Three times in this paragraph, beginning in verse 12, Paul has mentioned Christ's sacrifice. By this he means not just Christ's death, but His entire sinless ministry. His entire life was a sacrifice. Now does this sacrifice apply to everybody on earth? If one stayed right here one might get the idea that it does, but it most assuredly does not. He simply does not address the issue in this paragraph. However he does address it elsewhere. Turn to Romans 1:16.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation [deliverance, setting free, rescuing] *to every one that BELIEVES* .

All that he said in Romans 5 only applies to those who *believe* ! The only ones who are empowered to believe are those He has *called* , because they are the only ones that are able to understand—to understand the truth—because by His spirit He has revealed it. The rest are still in different degrees of confusion, hunting for God. Those who are called and have the truth revealed then truly recognize that they have been the recipients of God's favor and *gifted* for the purpose of *obeying* .

Until God rescues us, frees us, gives us salvation, delivers us, we are entrapped, we are enslaved, we are in bondage to continue sinning. It is *grace* that empowers us to be free to obey. Until we are given that grace we are not free to do good works. As we go on I will show you that they have to be works that are approved by God.

Romans 3:21-22 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that *believe* .

Do you see how specific this is? These things that we are going through only apply to those who believe, and when they believe, the evidence will be that they are doing the works that God is creating in them to do. That will be the evidence that they believe.

Romans 3:23-25 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins *that are past* .

That is an important point there. Justification only applies up until one is baptized and made righteous before God through grace. Then something else kicks in, because we're going to be held responsible for our sins.

I Corinthians 15:22-23 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that *are* Christ's at his coming.

First it comes to the first fruits, and so it applies to us now.

Romans 4:21-25 And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 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.

We will stop there. I guess that's about as good a place as any. We have kind of reached a bit of a conclusion; but God-willing, when we return from France I will pick up this subject and go on so that we understand this subject hopefully a great deal more clearly.