

Sermon Guide 12.6.20 - Romans 5:18-21

Grace Reigns

You have seen those before and after weight loss advertisements on TV, usually in January. They contrast what someone looked like before the diet to what they look like after the diet. Their pitch can be very persuasive.

Merriam-Webster defines contrast as “compare or appraise in respect to differences.” You would recognize the use of contrast in several Bible stories, such as the prodigal son and his older brother, Jacob and Esau, Mary and Martha, and David and Goliath, to name a few. One of Jesus’s parables using contrast is the house built on rock and the house built on sand. *Read Matthew 7:24-27*. You probably can sing the children’s song about this parable. The main focus in this parable is the differing foundations.

In today’s passage, Paul continues the contrast between the two foundations of Adam and Jesus. Really, it is a summary on top of a summary of Adam, through his disobedience, bringing death, and Jesus, through His obedience, bringing life. Let’s look at what pastor Chuck has to say about God’s grace and the importance of having Jesus as our foundation.

Grace Reigns

- I. Condemnation or Justification – Romans 5:18**
- II. Righteousness through Jesus’ Obedience – Romans 5:19 / Ecclesiastes 7:20 / Philippians 2:8 / Romans 4:5**
- III. Law or Grace – Romans 5:20**
- IV. Grace Reigns – Romans 5:21**

Condemnation or Justification (v 18)

This is bad news and good news. The bad is that we stand condemned from Adam and our own sins. The good is that we can be made righteous through faith in Jesus. Chuck puts it this way: “Sin entered the world through the *one* transgression of Adam. Through the *one* act of righteousness, the death of Jesus, justification came to all men.”

John Piper makes the following statements:

“Adam acted sinfully and, because we were connected to him, we were condemned in him. Christ acted righteously and because we are connected to Christ we are justified in Christ. Adam’s sin is counted as ours. Christ’s righteousness is counted as ours.”

“Adam did not comply, and we were counted or appointed sinners in him. Christ did comply with his Father’s will and we are counted righteous (obedient) in him.”

Read verse eighteen. Do you see yourself as condemned because of Adam’s sin?

Warren Wiersbe states, “If God had tested each human being individually, the result would have been the same: disobedience.”

Have you come to the place in your head and heart that you confess yourself as a sinner, a sinner against God?

Wiersbe goes on to say, “But even more important, by condemning the human race through one man (Adam), God was then able to save the human race through one Man (Jesus Christ)!”

Have you repented, turned away, from your sins? Have you confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and believed in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? Chuck asks if you stand condemned or justified?

If you have ever watched the show *The Curse of Oak Island*, you have probably heard Marty Lagina say the phrase, “This is very significant,” in response to a discovered artifact. The phrase “justification of life” is very significant, as it carries the message of eternal security. However, it precedes the phrase “to all men.” Many have used this for a universalist interpretation of salvation. Chuck talks about the importance of contextual interpretation. This particular phrase cannot be taken out of context but placed in the context of the gospel message found throughout His Word.

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. The following resource is helpful in understanding the importance of contextual interpretation: <https://www.gotquestions.org/context-Bible.html>

Read Romans 3:24-25 and Ephesians 2:8-9. What do these verses say about faith? How do you interpret verse eighteen in light of what these two verses say about faith?

Righteousness through Jesus’ Obedience (v 19)

“Look at God!” That is the phrase sometimes spoken by believers when God answers their prayers. There is no better time to say that phrase than in response to verse nineteen.

Our pastor says, “We are thus made sinners in the sense that we became legally guilty in God’s sight. In the same way, but with the exact opposite effect, Christ’s obedience causes those who believe in him to be made *righteous* in God’s sight.”

Read Philippians 2:8. Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient, even to death! Now read Philippians 2:5-11. What does this passage say about Jesus and what He did? What does this passage say about who we are to be like? In what ways are you like Jesus? In what ways should you be more like Him?

Law or Grace (v 20)

Paul does not neglect Moses and God giving the Law through him. Paul knew his audience held a high regard for the Law, albeit an unhealthy view. Paul knew his

audience would struggle with where the Law would fit in all of this, so he defines the role of the Law.

Chuck shares that the Law increases transgressions in a couple of ways. After using the seatbelt illustration, Chuck says, “In a similar sense, the coming of the Law codified what was sinful. It wasn’t that sin didn’t exist before. Rather, it became a documentable offense after the coming of the Law. The ignorance excuse became much more difficult to justify.” He goes on to say, “The law identifies particular transgressions, so that those acts can more easily be seen as sinful and thereby cause men to see themselves more easily as sinners. In that sense, the law increases transgression.”

There is another way the Law increases transgressions. Our pastor says, “The Law is therefore a corollary both to righteousness and to unrighteousness. For the lawless person it stimulates him to the disobedience and unrighteousness he already is inclined to do. For the person who trusts in God, the law stimulates obedience and righteousness.”

Would you say your life reflects obedience to God? Would God say it does? In what areas of your life do you struggle obeying God? Read John 14:21-24 and John 15:1-11. Are you abiding in Christ? Do you listen for His voice in your prayer times?

Grace Reigns (v 21)

Chuck makes the following statements:

“Saying that sin reigned in death is saying that, through the sin of Adam, sin has taken hold of the world. It has ruled the world the way an evil tyrant rules a country, destroying it bit by bit rather than allow any rebellion, until the whole place is laid waste.”

“But the energy and new life of the kingdom where grace reigns are depicted in the second half of the verse. Instead of the reign of sin and wrath, we have the reign of grace, an energetic rule full of new possibilities. The reign of grace goes forward toward its goal, which is the life of the age to come, the time when God will usher in the new creation in which all wrongs will be put to right.”

How do you answer Chuck’s question, “If you died today, would you be under the reign of grace or the reign of wrath?”