

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Romans 5:15-21

August 27, 2017

In Romans 5:15-21, Paul concludes his argument of the doctrine of justification by comparing and contrasting Adam and Christ. All humanity is born in Adam, inheriting our sin nature from our first father. While we may be tempted to think this is not fair, Paul turns any objection on its head by demonstrating that this is also how righteousness and salvation works. Just as Adam's sin is imputed to those that are in him, Christ's righteousness is imputed to all that are in him. So, if we think it's unfair that we suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, we must also think it's unfair that we reap the benefits of Christ's obedience.

1. In vv15-17, Paul is contrasting the what comes of those in Adam versus what comes of those who are in Christ. Twice he states that the free gift is not like the trespass.

—Discuss how the gift of grace is not like the consequence of sin. Take time to read the verses slowly and carefully and brainstorm how the work of Christ is so much different than the work of Adam.

—Consider the phrase in v15 “abounded for many” and in v17 “the abundance of grace.” Discuss with your group what the concept of abounding and abundant grace says about the nature and character of the gospel.

—What impact should these truths have on how we share the gospel (and the confidence we share it with)?

2. In v17, Paul speaks of death and grace as being things that “reign” over us. We tend to think of ourselves as free agents who are in control of things, but this verse paints a different picture. We are subjects, either to the kingdom of darkness or the Kingdom of God.

—Read Ephesians 2:1-3 and Ephesians 6:12. What do these verses tell us about the status of a person who is in Adam and not in Christ and spiritual warfare?

—Read ahead to Romans 6:12-19. Discuss what this passage says about the Christian life and sanctification. How does this verse dismantle “easy believism” and cheap grace?

3. In v19, Paul says we are made righteous by the obedience of Christ. Read Hebrews 2:10-18 and Hebrews 5:7-9

—In what ways did Christ “learn” obedience? Discuss why this truth is important in our understanding of the gospel.

4. In v20-21, Paul concludes with the glorious truth that where sin increased through the illuminating work of the law, grace abounded all the more and covers all our sin.

—Take some time to dwell on and discuss the beauty of this truth—that grace fully covers all our sin.

—How does reminding ourselves of this truth help and empower us to resist the residual reign of sin in our lives?