

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen

The First Sunday in Advent

I. Introduction to the Next Section of the Letter to the Romans (5:1-8:39)

A. The Overlap Period

1. Jewish Christians - works of the Law
2. Gentile Christians- faith w/o the Law
3. The Final Resolution – Christians – faith and works

B. The shift in this section is from Faith to Hope (Hope of Salvation is God's Gift)

C. The fictional dialogue with the yet unbelieving Jew is dismissed

II. The Introduction to this Section is 4:18-21

Romans 4:18-21

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

A. The Faith of Abraham leads to his hope

B. The theme of Hope begins as we transition from Abraham and God to Adam and Jesus

III. The Structure of this Section (5:1 – 8:39)

A. Bookends 5:9 and 8:31-34

5:9 - Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

8:31-34- What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?

B. Hope rests upon Peace from Justification – from the Cross

C. The gift of the Son when we were yet sinners contrasts with how much more we will receive as friends of God.

D. The challenge for believers is to handle suffering in the present age

E. Endurance comes through the discipline of living the Christian life and accepting the hope in the future glory

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.

I. A Simple Structure – reminder of the Postural Circle for Preaching

A. s. 1-2 the bridge between the last section

B. Vs. 3-4 – provides a basis for boasting in suffering

C. vs. 5 the theological argument

D. Vs. 6-10 Two arguments concerning the Love of God

II. The New Relationship with God

A. State of Peace from Justification through the Cross changes our status

B. The Issue is our focus on the future – Eschatological Hope – (the end time)

C. Paul uses both Biblical and Post- Biblical traditions to make his point

More on Post Biblical Traditions later today

III. The Issue of Suffering

A. Present suffering has value now and in the future

1. Now in that suffering leads us to trust in God

2. Later because of the promised glory to come

B. God's Love through the Spirit of God present with us now in suffering is proof

C. A further explanation of suffering is the residual effects of the previous age and we are to note that it is not God's hostility towards us – "Suffering produced Character"

IV. Hope that comes from the Love of God – Two arguments based on logic

A. While we were yet sinner – the gift of a Son – God's Love

B. Now that we are redeemed by the Sacrifice of the Cross – More Love for friends

Romans 5: 12-21

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned -- sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of

righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. This Section begins the comparison and Contrast between Adam and Jesus

A. The Actions of Adam leading to sin and from sin to death

The action of Jesus leading to Eternal Life

B. The Issue of the Law

1. We expect vs. 12 to be followed by a statement of salvific action of Christ, but rather we find the discussion of the Law

2. The issue of the time between Adam and Moses no Law and yet sin

II. The Adam Tradition

A. Paul presupposes and acceptance of the understand that the action of Adam is the source of sin and death

B. This understanding is evident in the Jewish tradition and in Post Biblical Jewish Literature. Ezra 4 is an example,

“ For the first Adam clothed himself with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, and likewise all born to him”
Ezra 4: 3:21-22

C. Also II Apocalypse of Baruch with a different twist

“For although Adam first sinned and brought untimely death upon all, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself or herself the coming torment. And further each of them has chosen for himself or herself the coming glory...Adam is, therefore, not the cause except only for himself, but each of us, has become our own Adam”

II Apocalypse of Baruch 54:15-19

D. These writing are later than Paul's time, but hey show the continued development of that teaching outside the Christian Tradition

III. The Comparison of Adam and Christ

- A. Adam is the instrument of sin and death
- B. Christ is the instrument of Grace and Righteousness
- C. Paul does not portray humans as helpless - rather like sickness sin infects us
- D. Paul also views sin and collective – the radical selfishness of the human person

Culturally we can consider the following paradox. The “ISMs” race, culture, sex etc. lead us to create artificial states which remove the individual identified from the influence. An example is the welfare state. However, the human solution to human sin is not only ineffective but further is harmful. The welfare state creates more dependency and less personal responsibility

- E. The transmission of the Sin of Adam is not described
 1. The attachment is made later theologically not Biblically
 2. Of note is the issue of Original Sin and Sex – Augustine

IV. Why Paul uses Adam in this argument?

- A. Adam becomes the negative example for the positive Christ
- B. Paul also connects the historical Adam to the historical Christ

This is referenced in the nature of historical vs. mythical figures

- C. Paul use of Adam is also to direct our focus on the result of sin – death
- D. We should also reinforce the nature of this connection – Sin does lead to death and the Sacrifice of the Cross leads to life. But neither of these effects is automatic

V. Clarification Concerning the Law

- A. Paul argues that the presence or absence of the Law makes no difference
- B. This reflects the argument he made about the faithfulness of Abraham was the issue not the Law.
- C. Sin is of the human condition from Adam Law or no Law
- D. Likewise Law or No Law faith in Jesus and accepting the truth of Sacrifice leads to life