

WALKING THROUGH ROMANS – PART 9

ROMANS CHAPTER 5:12–21 – ADAM AND CHRIST: THE JUXTAPOSITION

The driving question remains: Has God remained faithful in a fractured world?

In the previous lesson, Paul showed the results of righteousness through faith. He highlighted peace with God, hope, endurance, and reconciliation. Now Paul steps back from individual experience and moves toward a broader understanding of humanity itself. Rather than focusing primarily on individual actions, Paul examines the condition and direction of humanity through two representatives: Adam and Christ.

This section is built upon a juxtaposition. A juxtaposition occurs when two people, ideas, or realities are placed beside one another in order to highlight their differences and outcomes. Throughout Romans 5:12–21, Paul places Adam and Christ beside one another through a series of contrasts and comparisons. One introduces sin and death. The other introduces righteousness and life. One act contributes to humanity's brokenness, while the other opens the way toward restoration.

BUCKET 1 – ROMANS 5:12–14

Paul begins by explaining how sin and death entered human history.

He argues that sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death entered through sin. Because of this, death spread throughout humanity. Paul traces humanity's broken condition back to Adam's actions and uses Adam as the starting point for understanding the human condition.

The Greek word often associated with sin is *hamartia*, meaning to miss the mark or move outside of God's design. Humanity continually wrestles with this reality. Sin is more than an isolated mistake. It represents living outside of God's intended order and purpose. Every person must wrestle with moments of missing the mark and stepping outside of God's design.

Paul also discusses death. Death is not limited to physical death. It includes the power and consequence of separation from God. Sin produces separation, and separation produces death. Adam's actions introduced both realities into the human story, creating a condition that affects all humanity.

Paul's argument is larger than Adam as an individual. Adam becomes representative humanity. Adam is not merely one person in history; Adam becomes a picture of humanity itself. What entered through Adam spread throughout humanity because humanity now exists under the condition of sin and death. Paul is not attempting to condemn Adam alone. He is using Adam as a representative of the larger human condition.

This means humanity does not simply commit sin. Humanity lives under the weight of a fractured condition called sin. Without the intervention of God, people remain burdened by the effects of brokenness, separation, and death.

Paul introduces the first major juxtaposition. Death enters through Adam, but life enters through Christ. Even while discussing Adam's failure, Paul points toward Christ by referring to Adam as a type of the one who was to come. The contrast between Adam and Christ begins to emerge before Christ is fully introduced into the argument.

Paul also explains that death existed before the Law was given. The Law did not create sin. The Law exposed sin. The Law revealed humanity's inability to live according to God's standard. This

means humanity's brokenness runs deeper than written rules because the condition existed before the Law itself.

Brokenness did not begin with us. Humanity continues to experience the effects of decisions that stretch across generations. Sin, separation, and brokenness have a long history. Yet Paul points toward Christ as the One capable of lifting the weight of humanity's fractured condition and providing a path toward restoration.

BUCKET 2 – ROMANS 5:15–17

Paul now shifts from Adam's trespass to Christ's gift.

The free gift is not like the trespass. Adam's actions introduced sin, death, and condemnation. Christ's actions introduce grace, righteousness, and life. While Adam's actions brought devastating consequences, Christ's work provides a completely different outcome.

The language of gift becomes important in this section. The Greek word *charisma* refers to a gift that is freely given. Paul emphasizes that what God provides through Christ is not earned or deserved. It is received. The gift is rooted in grace.

Paul also highlights the Greek word *charis*, which means grace or undeserved favor. Humanity does not deserve what Christ provides, yet God freely extends grace anyway. Through Christ, God offers a gift that humanity could never earn through its own efforts.

Paul contrasts the outcomes of Adam and Christ repeatedly throughout this section.

Adam's trespass brings condemnation. Christ's gift brings justification. Adam's actions release death. Christ's actions release life. Adam's actions contribute to humanity's brokenness. Christ's actions provide restoration.

Yet Paul pushes the comparison even further. Grace does not merely match the damage caused by sin. Grace exceeds it. Grace overflows beyond the effects of Adam's trespass. The work of Christ is greater than the failure of Adam. The power of grace is greater than the power of sin.

Paul's argument is filled with hope. Humanity may struggle because of the human condition, but the condition does not cancel God's ability to restore. Through Christ, believers receive grace, justification, and life. The damage introduced through Adam is surpassed by what Christ provides.

Humanity may be impacted by Adam's trespass, but it does not have to remain trapped by it. Through Christ, people move from victims of sin's effects toward victors through God's grace.

BUCKET 3 – ROMANS 5:18–19

Paul now brings the comparison between Adam and Christ into full clarity.

One man's trespass leads to condemnation for all. One man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all.

Adam represents disobedience. Christ represents obedience.

Adam's actions contribute to humanity's brokenness. Christ's obedience opens the way for humanity to be made right with God.

Paul returns to the concept of justification. Justification means being declared right. Through Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, believers are placed in right standing with God.

This creates one of the clearest contrasts in the passage. Adam's disobedience produces condemnation. Christ's obedience produces justification. Adam's actions reveal the depth of humanity's brokenness. Christ's actions reveal the depth of God's grace.

The question then becomes whether believers will remain trapped in Adam's pattern or move toward the freedom offered through Christ. Humanity may be born into a broken condition, but it does not have to remain there.

Paul points toward repentance, transformation, and spiritual growth. Believers are called to move away from the patterns of brokenness and toward the life God intends. Transformation involves intentionally moving toward God and embracing the grace made available through Christ.

The image of transformation points to genuine change. God does not desire for people to remain trapped beneath the weight of sin. God desires freedom. Through Christ, believers can move from condemnation to justification, from brokenness to restoration, and from being trapped by sin to triumphing through grace.

BUCKET 4 – ROMANS 5:20–21

Paul closes the section by highlighting the superiority of grace.

The Law increased awareness of sin. It exposed humanity's inability to fully meet God's standard. Yet where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

Paul's point is not that sin is good. His point is that grace is greater.

Grace overflows beyond measure. No matter how significant humanity's sin becomes, God's grace exceeds it. The power of grace surpasses the power of sin. Sin may be real, but grace is greater.

Paul presents one final juxtaposition.

Sin reigns through death. Grace reigns through justification leading to eternal life.

Both sin and grace are described almost as ruling powers. One dominates through death and separation. The other leads toward life through Jesus Christ. Humanity must determine which influence will shape the direction of life.

This is why grace has the final word. Humanity's story is not ultimately defined by Adam's failure or humanity's brokenness. Through Christ, a new possibility emerges. God's grace provides restoration, renewal, and life.

Throughout this section, Paul repeatedly places Adam and Christ beside one another. He places trespass beside grace, condemnation beside justification, death beside life, disobedience beside obedience, and sin beside grace. Yet every comparison arrives at the same conclusion: what entered through Adam is surpassed by what Christ provides.

Humanity may experience the effects of brokenness, but brokenness does not have to define the future. Through Christ, grace reigns where sin once ruled, life emerges where death once dominated, and restoration becomes possible where brokenness once prevailed.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Paul presents two representatives, two realities, and two outcomes.

Adam introduces sin, condemnation, and death.

Christ introduces grace, justification, and life.

Humanity experiences the effects of brokenness, but brokenness does not have the final word. Through Jesus Christ, grace exceeds the damage, life overcomes death, and restoration becomes possible.

The question is not whether brokenness exists. The question is whether we will continue living under the weight of Adam's condition or embrace the grace made available through Christ.