

## Romans 5:12-6:23

### Adam and Jesus: 5:12-21

1. The Haarsmas (*Origins*, p. 197) present five views of Adam and Eve:
  - . Adam and Eve were created about 10k years ago and were the first humans
  - . God created humans ~150k years ago and selected a pair of them about 10k years ago to act as humanity's representatives. They sinned and their sinful status applied to all humans
  - . God used natural mechanisms to create pre-human hominids and about 150k years ago miraculously modified a pair of them, creating A&E. We are their descendants
  - . God created humans about 150k years ago using evolutionary creation and selected a particular group and revealed himself to them. They sinned and their sinful status was applied to all of us
  - . God created humans about 150k years ago using evolution. No single event occurred which can be identified as the fall. A&E are symbolic of human sinfulness.

Which of these is (most) compatible with Scripture?

2. Paul is using Adam, for his effect on humanity, to explain Jesus' ability as one man to effect a change on the part of many more of righteousness. While this passage assumes a literal Adam, do any of its conclusions hang on a literal Adam?
3. The mechanism by which Jesus effects righteousness is the Spirit, made available through obedience. Does Paul tell us what mechanism turns Adam's trespass into death for all?

### Slaves to righteousness

4. Paul makes the case in 6:15-19 that we are either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Contrary to Western culture, we are not all free agents; there is no third state. Paul's metaphor conjures images of the rank sinner transformed to the Christian on fire for the Lord and gospel. Many Christians, though, having successfully eliminated or avoided the entanglements of serious sin, do not experience the vitality of a life sold out to God in the power of the Spirit. If righteousness holds mastery over us, it is not a very demanding master.

How well does Paul's slavery metaphor describe you? Do you *feel* like a slave to righteousness?

5. Listen to Tim Keller's sermon, "Perfect Freedom", 10'45"—14'17" (or 16'03" or 16'40"). Is there any desire or pastime, object or priority in your life which, when threatened, causes a disproportionately strong response or fear or sadness or anger?
6. We have many responsibilities: career, family, church, etc. Each of these is necessary and good: we to work as unto the Lord (Col 3:23) in our careers; family is a gift from God (Ps 127:3) and a great responsibility (Prov 22:6); and while coffee service and ushering, committee work and, well, more committee work, aren't glamorous, we have a duty to serve in the church. And are we wrong to enjoy the time each week, when we are done with these things, in rest and relaxation as a gift from God (Eccl 3:13)? And aren't we wise to exercise (1 Cor 6:19) and keep our houses in order (Prov 13:4; 6:6-12)?

The danger in always doing good things is that we may fail to do great things. If all our duties leave us without time to immerse ourselves in Scripture and prayer, if we can't recall the last time we shared our faith or prayed consistently for an unbeliever, if we have stopped thinking of how we can increase our tithe, since after all we are already giving well above the average American Christian, then perhaps we should drop something good for the sake of something great.

If you had an extra six hours each week to do as you pleased, what might you do for others in Jesus' name?

### **Our new identity in Christ**

7. Paul says to "consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God" (6:11) and "present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification" (6:13). This passage parallels Colossians 3, where Paul also writes, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (3:2). In both passages awareness of our identity in Christ plays a key role in sanctification: "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (6:14).

*In Adam* we are alienated from God, draw our identities from the world, are guilty of sin, are isolated from God and from one another. *In Christ* we are alive to God, have an identity based on God's view of us, are completely forgiven and dead to sin, are united with Christ and other Christians.

*In Adam* all we care about can be threatened. *In Christ*, our treasure and our very selves are hidden in with God in heaven where moth and rust can't touch them. *In Adam* the meaning we find for our lives is temporary and the most successful often find only emptiness. *In Christ* even the least of us is granted work of eternal value. *In Adam* our names will be forgotten within four generations at best. *In Christ* we are an eternal community.

Paul's apparently telling you that in order to live into your new life in Christ you must remember your new life in Christ, and remember it often. What practical steps can you take to keep these facts ever before your eyes?

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*Fun fact:* "Despite [the] negative view of humanity [in the Noah story of Gen 8], Israel's sacred writing did not view the transgression of Adam and Eve as a fall from grace resulting in the corruption of human nature. While Israel's sacred writers acknowledged the presence of sin, they remained confident that Israel could do what the Lord required." [Frank Matera, *Romans*, p. 143]

*Extra fun fact:* In his enthusiasm, Paul interrupts himself: 5:12 is an incomplete sentence, lacking the "so also" to balance the "just as". Many versions (NIV, NRSV, ESV) represent this by breaking the sentence off with a dash.

## Leader's Intro

Einstein once said, "The [radio] is not difficult to understand. The ordinary telegraph is like a very long cat. You pull the tail in New York, and it meows in Los Angeles. The [radio] is the same, only without the cat."

So you need two things to send a telegraph message from NY to LA: the wires (the cat) and the impulse (squeezing the cat's tail).

Paul accomplishes a similar feat in Romans. Jews believed you needed two things to be righteous: You needed obedience to the law, of course, and the prophets also made it clear that you needed the right heart attitude. So you needed those two things: obedience and a heart turned toward God.

Paul points to Abraham and says, look, he's your radio: he was reckoned righteous by God because of his trust, without even having a law to obey. Paul shows you can get word from NY to LA without the telegraph lines, all based on the state of your heart.

Suddenly you can be a Gentile and be right with God without being circumcised or keeping kosher or any of the other elements of the law. You can imagine that when this was presented a bunch of hands went up. Question number one was, wasn't the law the very glue which for centuries held the Jews together no matter how hard the hammer of the Gentiles came down on them? So Paul has spent a few chapters showing his Jewish-Christian readers what the law *is* good for, and it's not for making people righteous.

Then week Paul answered another key question which will trouble the heart even of a modern believer: how do I know that God will still count me as righteous if I don't follow the law *and* I sin? And Paul says, look, God loved you enough to send his Son to die when you were dead in your sins; now that you are justified, you have nothing to fear.

This week Paul answers two more questions: First, how can one person, Jesus, affect the righteousness of so many others? And second, isn't this just going to be an excuse to sin?

In the process, Paul will answer a question which is common to *all* Christians modern and ancient alike, namely what do we have to do to see the change in our lives we so yearn for? Now that we are justified, how do we experience freedom from sin?

## Notes/Outline:

Keller: "If you're not changing the way you need to change, you don't lack any resources if you're a Christian, you've got them all. On the other hand, they need to be deployed. They don't happen automatically. If you ever fail to change, you're not remembering who you are. You are not conscious of who you really are. That's the key."

**Chapter 5:** Paul explains how one person, Jesus, can affect righteousness in so many using the parallel with Adam

12: *Therefore, as sin entered the world through one manifestation*

Death entered through sincerity

Death spread to all

Consequently, all sinned... *<this sentence does not end, but the topic's picked up again in v. 18>*

*<digression on sin before the law>*

13-14: Sin was in the world before the law, but not reckoned, but still exercised dominion even over those whose sin was not like that of Adam *<sin was in charge; now we are>*

*<how the gift is unlike the transgression; don't make the mistake of thinking Adam and Christ are equal>*

15-17: Not true that "as the trespass, so the gift:

By the trespass of one many many died;

*how much more* has the gracious gift of one many abounded for many

Not true that as the one man's sin, so the gift *<note: compares sin not to obedience but to the gift>*

By the trespass death ruled

*how much more* will those who receive the gift will rule in life through one man

18-19: disobedience of Adam : obedience of Jesus :: many made sinners : many **made righteousness**

*<note: not "many justified" but "many made righteous">*

20-21: The law multiplied trespasses; sin increased leading to more grace, exercising dominion through justification leading to eternal life

CHAPTER 6:

1: The question of the critics: doesn't this lead to antinomianism? Won't folks abuse their freedom?

2-5: Those who were put into Christ were put into his death and resurrection so now we walk in newness of life

6-14: you participated in the death of Christ, freeing you from sin

6-11: Our "old self" was crucified so that our sin might die and we might not be enslaved to sin, and so we must **consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.**

12: **Therefore do not let sin exercise dominion**, to make you obey their passions

13: **No longer present your members to sin, but present yourselves to God** as instruments of righteousness

14: Sin won't have control over you because you aren't under law, but grace

Parallel: 15-23: You can be a slave to sin or righteousness

15: Don't sin just because you are under grace

16-19: You were slaves to sin but by being obedient to the teaching you received you are free from sin, so  
**present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification**

20-23: You used to be free from righteousness and slave to sin, but you did shameful things leading to death.  
Now you are free from sin and slave to righteousness and get sanctification and eternal life