

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series two teachers will do Bible study from ROMANS 5:12-21.

Romans 5:1-11 summarised some of the blessings of being justified. Romans 5:12-21 emphasises the Christian's *legal status*, namely that he is justified in the eyes of God.

(S) **STEP 1. READ.**

Due to shortage of time, please read Romans 5:12-21 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER.**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in Romans 5:12-21. "Which truth in this passage is important for you?" or "Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?" Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries.

(S) An important truth for me is in Romans 5:12-19. The comparison between Adam and Christ illustrates that God does not simply deal with people on the basis of their individuality, but also on the basis of their solidarity with either Adam or Christ.

There is a striking analogy between our fall in Adam and our restoration in Christ. The justification of all believers in Christ *is illustrated* by the fall of all people in Adam. Just as the sin, condemnation and death, in which all members of the human race are involved, can never be explained in purely individualistic terms, but only in solidarity with Adam, likewise, the righteousness, justification and life, in which all Christians share, can never be obtained on purely individualistic terms, but only in solidarity with Christ!

First. Verse 12 explains only the first part of the comparison, "just as we are condemned in Adam, so we are justified in Christ". Just as the sin of Adam set in operation the inevitable consequences of condemnation and death for all people on earth, so according to Romans 5:18-19, the righteousness of Christ set in operation the inevitable consequences of justification and life for all believers in Christ!

Second. Verse 13-14 explains that the one transgression of Adam was the cause of the fall of all mankind. This is the first parenthesis. The fact that people died long before the law of Moses was given, proves that not the personal individual sins of people, but the one transgression of Adam, was the cause of their fall. Adam is therefore the representative head of all people on earth. Because he fell into sin, the whole human race fell into sin. Adam was *a pattern* or type of the one to come, namely, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is likewise the representative head of all believers. Adam and Christ are the two historical figures of God's redemptive revelation: Adam made redemption necessary and Christ accomplished and secured redemption.

Third. Verse 15-17 explains that the similarity between the fall and salvation is not completely parallel. This is the second parenthesis. It explains that the similarity between the fall into sin on the one hand and salvation from sin on the other hand is not completely parallel. The gracious work of Christ is much greater in scope and in direction than the destructive work of Adam.

Fourth. Verse 18-19 explains the whole comparison, "just as we are condemned in Adam, so we are justified in Christ". Just as Adam's transgression led to the condemnation of all the descendants of Adam, so the righteousness of Christ led to the justification of all who by faith receive God's gracious gift of righteousness. That is, just as all human beings descended from Adam in history are condemned, so all believers in Jesus Christ are justified. Just as Adam's disobedience caused God to regard and treat all people as sinners, so Christ's obedience causes God to regard and treat all believers in Jesus Christ as completely righteous.

(T) An important truth for me is in Romans 5:20-21. This is a summary of the contrast between man's sin and God's grace.

First. The law was added to increase sin. Between the time of Adam and Christ, the law was added. The "law" here stands for the whole Mosaic Law, the whole organised system of the Old Testament. This law was brought in between Adam and Christ, not with the purpose to be the means of gaining eternal life, but to be the means of realising the greatness of sin and death (Gal 3:24). The more knowledge man has of the law, the greater is his responsibility (Rom 4:15). The more the law works in the heart and mind of man, the more man's aversion against God is aroused and

causes him to transgress God's righteous commandments (Rom 7: 8,11,13). Thus, the only influence of the law in the time between Adam and Christ was to multiply transgressions and sins!

Second. The increase of sin brings about the much greater increase of God's grace. God's plan was to bring good out of evil. His design was to allow man's sin to abound so that his grace may even super-abound! All the many sins in the world became the occasion of the most wonderful display of God's grace. Although the law is still a very effective means to multiply the evil people do, God's grace has become a far more effective means to produce both righteousness and life! Although the influence of evil on the world is still very great and causes death in the fullest sense of the word, God's influence of righteousness on the world is far greater and causes life in the fullest sense of the word. The beneficial influences of God's grace infinitely transcend the evil influences of sin. God's grace is producing far more good in this world than the evil, which sin produces in this world. God's grace super-abounds, not necessarily in the numbers of people that are saved, but certainly in the scope and the direction that grace has in the lives of people. Adam's influence of evil on the world is far outweighed by Christ's influence of good on the world!

(S) **STEP 3. QUESTION.**

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 5:1-11 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions.

1st Question. (5:12-19). In what way is Adam a pattern of the coming Jesus Christ?

(T) The apostle Paul teaches that every person in the world stands in a certain relationship to both Adam and Christ. Because of the one trespass of Adam, all people in the world stand condemned in God's eyes. And because of the righteous act of Christ, that is, his death and resurrection, all believers in Jesus Christ are justified. Romans 5:12 has been interpreted differently by people mainly because people hold different views about the relationship between the acts of their ancestors and its consequences for their descendants.

One. Our modern age tends to emphasise individualism. In this age of individualism, people reject the idea that there is any relationship between the sins of their ancestors and its consequences for them as their descendants. They hold that every individual is *only* responsible for his own personal evil deeds and as a consequence suffers *only* for his own personal sins.

Therefore, they interpret Romans 5:12 as follows: The first man to commit a personal sin was Adam and therefore the first man who deserved to die was Adam. Sin and death entered into human history for the first time through Adam. All his descendants *only followed his bad example*. They also committed personal sins and as a consequence died. In this way of Adam's bad example, death came to every individual, because every individual personally sinned.

Two. The Bible teaches both our solidarity with one another as well as our personal responsibility. There is definitely a relationship between the sins of our ancestors and its consequences for us as their descendants. The Bible teaches that every individual is responsible for his personal evil deeds and its consequences, not only for himself, but also for his descendants! The Bible gives several examples:

The example in Ezekiel chapter 18. God emphasises the personal responsibility of every individual for his own sins. The Israelites living in exile in Babylon blamed the sins of their ancestors for their present misery in exile. They said, "The fathers eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Although it was true that the exile in Babylon was God's punishment for the sins that their fathers had committed in Israel (Jer 16:10-13), the prophet Ezekiel emphasises the individual sins and the personal responsibility for its consequences! Every sinner will certainly die for his personal sins and not only for the sins of their fathers or ancestors.

The example in Exodus 20. God emphasise the solidarity of every individual with other people in the human race. On the one hand, the Ten Commandments encourage us that our personal obedience of God's commandments will certainly have great positive results for our descendants. In Exodus 20:6, God says, "I show love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments." But the Ten Commandments also warn us that our personal disobedience of God's commandments will certainly have serious consequences for our descendants. In Exodus 20:5, God warns, "I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me." Everyday we can see the effects that the sins of parents in the areas of alcohol, drugs, sex, criminality, racism, hatred and religious fanaticism have on their children!

There is therefore solidarity between us and our children and our children's children, and also solidarity between our neighbours and us. The Bible not only teaches the personal responsibility of each individual, but also teaches the solidarity of each individual with his family, with his religious group, with his community, with his whole nation and

even with the whole world. What happens to other people definitely effects what happens to an individual! And what happens to one individual definitely effects what happens to other people!

The example in Romans 5:12-19. The apostle Paul also emphasises the solidarity of all people of the human race with their ancestor, Adam and the solidarity of all Christians with their Saviour, Jesus Christ! He teaches that what happened to Adam had an effect on all people belonging to the human race. And he teaches what happened to Christ had an effect on all people belonging to Jesus Christ. That is why Paul calls Adam a *pattern* of the one who is to come, namely Jesus Christ. The personal sin of Adam and its consequence of death affected every individual of the human race. Likewise, the completed salvation work of Jesus Christ affects every individual who believes in Jesus Christ.

Three. All people sinned in solidarity with Adam and all believers in Christ are pronounced righteous in solidarity with Christ. In Romans 5:12-19, Paul does not contrast the sin and death of Adam to the sin and death of his ancestors. He rather contrasts the sin and death, brought by Adam to all people in the world, to the righteousness and life, brought by Jesus Christ to all Christians in the world! In verse 19 he says that the disobedience of the one man, Adam, *made* the many sinners and the obedience of the one man, Christ, will make the many righteous. The word “made” or “make” means “to legally constitute”. Adam’s one act of disobedience “made or legally constituted” every individual of the human race a sinner! A *sinner* means a person who misses the right relationship to the God of the Bible, to other people and to himself. He misses a personal relationship with the God of the Bible, God’s holy characteristics in his life and God’s purpose for his life. In the eyes of the holy and righteous God, not a single member of the human race is righteous anymore! God regards and treats every member of the human race in his or her natural state as a sinner on account of what Adam did.

But the solidarity of the whole human race with Adam is contrasted to the solidarity of all Christians with Jesus Christ. Christ’s one act of obedience “will make or will legally constitute” every believer in Jesus Christ a righteous person. A righteous person has received the right position to the God of the Bible, is completely forgiven and will go to heaven. In the eyes of God, every single believer in Jesus Christ is righteous! God declares, regards and treats every member of the Body of Christ as righteous on account of what Jesus Christ did.

Adam is the representative head of all natural people. What happened to Adam has a profound impact on the whole human race. All natural people sinned in solidarity with Adam and consequently are *condemned to die in solidarity with Adam*.

Jesus Christ is the Representative Head of all Christians. What happened to Christ at his death and resurrection has a profound impact on everyone who believes in Christ. All believers in Christ died in solidarity with Christ and were resurrected in solidarity with Christ and consequently are *pronounced righteous in solidarity with Christ*.

Of course, all people *did not literally or actually sin through Adam*, and *neither did believers in Christ literally or actually die with Christ*. But the one sin of Adam was legally and effectively made to be the sin of all people of the human race. Likewise the death of Christ was legally and effectively made the death of all Christians and the resurrection of Christ was legally and effectively made the resurrection of all Christians.

Four. Solidarity means receiving a legal position and a particular nature and following an example. How should we view *solidarity*? Solidarity with Adam is more than merely following Adam’s *sinful example*, because in Psalm 51:5, David says that he was born with a sinful nature. Solidarity with Adam means that Adam’s *sinful nature* was passed on to all his descendants in the human race. And solidarity with Adam means that Adam’s sinful legal position was also passed on to all his descendants in the human race (5:12-19). Likewise, solidarity with Christ means that Christ’s righteous legal position and his righteous and holy nature were passed on to all people who believe in him and believers follow his righteous and holy example.

2nd Question. (5:15-17). How is the work of Christ greater than the work of Adam?

(S) *The fall into sin and salvation from sin* are not completely parallel.

One. The gracious work of Christ is much greater in scope than the destructive work of Adam! Christians are saved, not only from the consequences of Adam’s *one transgression*, but also saved from the consequences of all their personal *innumerable transgressions*, such as: guilt, condemnation, defeat, sickness, death, and eternal punishment! God’s *righteous judgement* took into account only *the one sin of one man*, Adam, and the whole human race was condemned as unrighteous. But God’s *gracious justification* takes into account *the many sins of many people*, that is, the sins of all who become believers in Jesus Christ, and all believers in Jesus Christ are declared righteous! Therefore, the purpose and end result of God’s gracious work is many times bigger than the purpose and end result of Adam’s destructive work!

Two. The gracious work of Christ is much more positive in direction than the destructive work of Adam. Adam's transgression caused everything to move in a negative direction: to righteous condemnation and death. But Christ's righteousness causes everything to move in a positive direction: to gracious justification and life! This proves that *God takes much more pleasure in bestowing grace than in executing judgement.* Paul recognises the operation of judgement - it works relentlessly. Many died! But he also recognises *the abounding plus* in the operation of grace - it not only negates the operation of judgement, but it abounds unto the opposite, unto justification and life! Many are justified! Sin reigned through condemnation unto death, but grace reigns through righteousness unto life (21)! God's judgement has great effects, but God's grace has much greater achievements! We are not only *saved from* death and meaninglessness, but are *saved to* attain eternal life, which includes an eternal meaningful life and task!

3rd Question. (5:18). Does the Bible teach that all people in the world will be saved?

(T) If verse 18 is taken out of context, it would seem that it teaches that just as all people who have ever lived in the world are legally condemned because of Adam's one sin, so also all people who have ever lived in the world will be legally justified because of the one act of righteousness of Christ. The words "all people" in the Bible does not always mean *every individual who ever lived* on earth without exception.

One. The universal term "all" must be limited by the necessary condition connected with the blessing. Romans 5:17 says that the condition for justification is "to receive God's grace and gift of righteousness." Likewise, the rest of the Bible teaches that only those people who "believe in Jesus Christ" will be saved. Thus, the Bible does not teach universal salvation. The condition for salvation is faith in Jesus Christ.

Two. The universal term "all" must be limited by the nature of the subject or the context. For example, in Mark 1:37, 5:20, and 11:32, "all people" must be limited to all the people mentioned in the context. Likewise, in Romans 5:18, "all the people who are condemned" must be limited to those who descended from Adam by ordinary generation, because Christ himself is an exception. And likewise, "all the people who are justified" must be limited to those who are connected to Christ through faith. Paul is not thinking of the numerical extent, but of the way God's plan operates! God condemns all people connected to Adam, but he justifies all people connected to Christ.

Three. The universal term "all" is used to combat the sinful attitude of exclusiveness of the Jews in general, when they say that they are better than the Gentiles. Paul emphasises that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile: "all people" who are saved, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, will be saved in the same way (Rom 10:12)! Whoever believes in Jesus Christ, has eternal life, but whoever does not believe in Jesus Christ stands condemned already.

(S) **STEP 4 and 5. APPLY and PRAY**

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application God wants you to turn into a *personal application*. Then take turns to pray about one truth that God has taught you in Romans 5:12-21.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. Use "the five steps" Bible study method to prepare Romans 6:1-11.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's Kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".