

## ***Session 6 Grace: Called to Walk in God's Glory***

*Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Well, here in Romans 5-6 we're learning how to cooperate with the grace of God. And some of the most dynamic statements about the grace of God are found in Romans 5. And then the actual three main principles of how we cooperate with these glorious truths are found in Romans 6. And that's what we'll be looking at in the next couple of sessions in this series on "The Gospel of Grace."

Paragraph A. This is just a quick review. Romans 1-8 is the most complete presentation of the gospel of grace. In Romans 1-4 Paul established why everyone is in utter need of help from heaven. No man can save himself. Then he explains how weak and broken people can be saved as a free gift.

The conclusion of the matter is that we're justified by faith. We're justified. In a practical sense, that means God declares us righteous, "just as if" we had never sinned. He gives us His own righteousness, and we're justified or declared righteous. In essence, that means the same thing. We're justified by faith or confidence in Jesus.

And by the way, when the Scripture talks about faith, confidence in Jesus, it also implies responsiveness to His leadership. And so it's not just an intellectual confidence; it's a heart confidence. And that heart confidence responds in obedience to His leadership. And so when we have faith we say, "We want You! We want Your salvation. We want Your leadership. We want relationship with You."

That's the cry of faith, because some people separate the response of, "We're Yours, O God!" from the technical information that "We need Your help." It's more than a statement that we need His help and salvation; it's saying, "We need relationship with You. We need Your leadership." They all go together, and that's what "by faith" means in the New Testament.

### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS**

Well, in Romans 5 at the end of paragraph A, he brings to a conclusion these four chapters, Romans 1-4. It ends with being justified by faith. That's what it means practically. Romans 5 is arguably the high point of the whole book. Romans 6 gives us some practical ways that we can walk in victory over sin, and you could say Romans 8, but Romans 5 is probably the high point in terms of revealing how far the grace of God has gone and what it has provided to us and for us.

### **THREE RESULTS OF BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**

Paragraph B. In Romans 5, Paul sets forth three results of being justified by faith. Again, for four chapters he has laid out the logic of why we need to be justified and how we're justified. Now he gives us the three main results, the three dynamic benefits that happen in our life because we're justified. And we find these in Romans 5:1-2. And these two verses are absolutely dynamic in terms of their implications for your life. They tell us who we are in Christ in a very precise and summary fashion.

The reason this is so important is because one of the great issues, one of the great problems in the Body of Christ today is that we don't know who we are in God's sight. We don't really know what we possess. We might know it technically, but it doesn't touch us emotionally, often, and therefore we don't respond to it with all of our heart in confidence. I know a lot of believers who technically know the information but it doesn't

move them. They don't respond to God with confidence in the light of the information. And so really the information doesn't help them very much. If it doesn't produce confidence in our response before God, this information still has much work to do in our lives and in our heart.

Well, he gives us three very powerful results of being justified, three results of our salvation. And in these three, really, Paul is summarizing what the purpose of salvation is. He's summarizing what the grace message really is about.

Now before we even read these two verses, I want to say this: this is your story. This isn't just distant, cold, theological facts. This is your testimony; this is your story with God, and we need to personalize these three glorious truths.

And the way that we personalize them, the way I've found to be very helpful, instead of just reading the verses and saying "Glory to God!" is taking these three phrases, these three truths, and personalizing them by saying, "Thank You, God, that I have peace with You." I put my name in it, I thank Him, and I say my name.

And I picture myself before the throne of God and I say, "Father, thank You that I have peace with God. Thank You that I stand in grace. And thank You that I have confidence to experience the glory of God right now, today."

And when these truths get in our mouth and begin to awaken confidence in our heart, when we actually say our name and talk to God related to these truths, it will begin to warm our hearts and awaken a new confidence in us. It will change the way we feel and the way we act.

Now again, I just want to say really clearly for those who are new with the book of Romans, verses 1 and 2 are a summary of the whole gospel. This is the take-away, the bottom line. We'll see in our next session, in Romans 6:11-13, that He's going to give us three principles on how to cooperate with these facts here in Romans 5:1-2.

Let's read it. "Therefore, having been justified by faith. . ." (Rom. 5:1). In other words, having understood Romans 1, 2, 3, and 4, he says, "I just laid it out logically for you. And so what does it mean practically to you?"

Number one: we have peace with God (v. 1). Number two: we have access to the grace in which we stand (v. 2). We stand in grace. And, number three: we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Now you can interchange the word *hope* with the word *certainty*. We rejoice in the certainty that we will participate in the glory of God. As we will see in a few moments, that participation in the glory of God isn't just future. It is future, but it's absolutely present tense as well.

### **CALLED TO BE VESSELS OF THE GLORY OF GOD**

This, I believe, is one of Paul's most dynamic statements in the whole book of Romans. We participate in the glory of God right now, not just with a resurrected body, today. I mean, one of the main truths of the whole New Testament, when it comes right down to it, is that we as born-again believers host the Holy Spirit's presence. I mean, the Lord does things directly, straight from heaven without going through His people, but

most of what He does in this world He does through His people. He has called us to be the vessels that host the glory of God, the presence of God.

Now the glory of God is synonymous in practicality with our relationship in ministry with the Holy Spirit.

When Paul says, “We rejoice in the certainty that we’re participating in the Holy Spirit, in relationship with Him and in His ministry,” that’s what it means to participate in the glory of God. And that’s our number one assignment in life, to have this glorious relationship with the Father and the Son. And we’re the vessels through which the Spirit is released, through our words and our deeds. However, it’s clear in the Scriptures that this happens in a far greater measure according to how we agree with the Word of God.

I mean, the biggest problem in the Church is in our mindset. Many believers might know this information, but again, it doesn’t warm their hearts. It doesn’t produce confidence and a conversation in their hearts with God. It’s not enough to know these three facts, these three glorious truths. I want my heart warmed by them where they mean something to me. I want them to be in my conversation with God. I want them in my conversation with God and I want confidence in them so that I can respond to them.

### **THREE FACETS OF THE GLORIOUS DIAMOND OF GOD’S GRACE**

Well, he says we have peace with God. That means we have a deep relationship with God. That’s what peace with God means in one sentence. It’s not just that the negative animosity has been removed between us and God. That *has* been removed, so the enmity is gone, but peace is much more than the removal of the negative. It’s the fullness of God’s intention in relationship.

Number two: we stand in grace. We have a new position before God. We have new benefits that if we will speak them and believe them and have confidence in them, more will happen. If we neglect them, less will happen.

Number three: we rejoice, Paul says “I’m focused on, I’m grateful for the certainty that the glory of God moves throughout my life even in this age, and that it has continuity with the glory of God being released in my life in the age to come.”

Paragraph B. These are three facets of one diamond of grace. Someone might say, “Well, what’s the difference?”

Well, these three truths deeply overlap with one another, but they have distinctions that bring an emphasis to our understanding. And so I think of it as one diamond of grace with three different facets.

### **“PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST”**

Paragraph C. Peace with God. Now again, don’t just say, “We have peace with God.” I say, “Thank You, Jesus; Mike Bickle has peace with You. Thank You!”

Until it gets in your mouth, these truths won’t move you. Until this gets into your conversation with God the confidence won’t grow; your heart won’t be warmed, and it won’t change the way you think, feel, and act. I want to be changed in the way I think and feel. Paul says, “This is how you do it, right here”; but you need to engage yourself with these truths.

## **ACCESS TO A FULL AND ENJOYABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Paragraph C. The first great truth that's the result of being justified by faith (Rom. 1-4) is that we have peace with God. Now catch this: we're in a position to experience a full, affectionate, enjoyable relationship with God. That's what peace with God means in all of its implications. Again, it's not just our passport stamped *forgiven* so that God isn't mad anymore. It means so much more than that. We have a full and an enjoyable relationship with God.

Now that doesn't mean we're engaging in it, but it means it's available to us. And from God's point of view that's what He's offering us. And the good news is, even if we don't engage in it in the way we want to in this age, we will engage in it fully for billions and billions of years.

But beloved, I don't want to wait until the resurrection to enjoy this relationship. I love to say this: "Thank You! Mike Bickle has an enjoyable relationship with You. And You enjoy it and I enjoy it! I have peace with You."

Now, think about it; think about who God is. He's the God with burning desire. He's a God with burning love.

And when you have peace with a God who has infinite, overflowing love, beloved, love is going to touch you and move you, and it's going to bring delight in the relationship. We aren't talking about having peace with a theological equation. We're talking about a living being that's burning with desire, who in the essence of His being is love. All hindrances are completely removed. The only hindrance is in our un-renewed mind, which will never be fully renewed in this age, but the goal is to renew it more and more and more. And this is where we invest all of our strength in the relationship. This is where fasting and prayer and reading the Word come in. We don't do that to earn anything; we labor to renew our minds so that we can feel the fullness, the freedom and the liberty of what is freely offered to us in Christ Jesus.

Number one under Paragraph C. The enmity is totally gone. There's absolutely no condemnation. There's no need to be preoccupied with your failure after you've confessed it. The Father says, "I don't want that preoccupation with failure in the conversation anymore. You have peace with Me. Don't negotiate with Me."

I mean, we end up with this form of humility that's groveling before God. And He says, "Do you understand the measure of the righteousness I gave you in My Son? It's My righteousness; it will never improve. Do you understand the measure of peace you gave with Me? Nothing is in the way. Don't grovel. Don't get down in some religious humility that brings no liberty to your heart. Stand in confidence about what I say about Myself and what I say about who you are to Me and who you're in Christ. And accept the full relationship." That's what He's saying here, and it's massive, by the way.

## **LET YOUR LEGAL CONDITION BECOME YOUR LIVING CONDITION**

Paragraph D. We go to the next great truth. Again, it overlaps with the peace with God, but it has a different emphasis, so therefore Paul uses a different language. He calls it "standing in grace." Not only do we have access to a full and enjoyable relationship; we have all of the benefits positionally. Everything that God is going to make available in Christ has already been made available in terms of our legal position before Him. All of the benefits are freely ours and they're fully ours legally.

Now the challenge is to get what is happening in our legal position to be manifest in our living condition. That's the challenge. That's where the labor comes in. That's where renewing our mind comes in, because the more we agree with our thinking the more that happens in us.

Now here's what Paul declares throughout Romans 3 and 4: that we have been justified freely. We have entered a new state. We were under the reign of sin. We were under the reign of death. We'll find that here in verses 20 and 21 in a minute here in chapter 5.

However, we're in a new position: we aren't in the reign of sin and under it; we're under the reign of grace. It's an entirely new sphere, a new position before God. Again, many believers aren't aware of this. They aren't aware of what they possess. We have to discover this, but more than just becoming aware of it technically, we have to engage in it with our conversation with God so that it warms our heart and it produces confidence in us.

We'll find in a minute that wrong, non-biblical thinking—I'm not into the power of positive thinking, although this is positive. There's nothing more positive than having standing in grace, but I'm not talking about the humanism of positive thinking. I'm talking about believing the positive biblical truths which are extremely positive. I mean, they're positive beyond anything we can imagine.

And Paul tells us in Romans 12 that we're transformed by renewing what we think on: by altering our paradigms, our mindset, changing what we think and filling it with the truth that transforms our behavior and emotions. The challenge for transformation isn't just gritting our teeth and trying to do better. It's by renewing our mind with these truths, and they produce vision in us. This vision, this destiny, this dignity, this, "Wow! That's what I want my life to be about!" is what I mean. What vision these two verses give us! What confidence they give us if we will understand some of their vast implications!

### **FULLY ACCEPTED WITH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**

Number one. Well, as we stand in grace, we now are fully accepted. And because we're fully accepted with the righteousness of God, we can feel confident in God's affections. Beloved, that's beyond exaggeration, the implications of the value of that. We're fully accepted in the beloved, fully. The righteousness of God is ours, a righteousness that can never be improved upon. A million years from now the righteousness you'll have the righteousness you had the day you were born again. It won't increase. It's the righteousness of God, fully, freely given to you in one moment. And the result is that we can feel confident in God's affection if we will fill our minds with these truths.

Now the devil is going to come along and fight you every single day against these three truths. He'll tell you, "You don't have peace with God. You're on probation. God is mad at you. God is giving you one more chance, maybe, and that's it!"

Beloved, that's a lie, but that's our un-renewed thinking plus the enemy coming to fuel that un-renewed thinking. I mean, we were born with that thinking. The enemy takes advantage of it and the Lord would challenge us to fill our mind with the Word of God. Because we stand in the grace of God, we have the indwelling Spirit. We have the authority of the name of Jesus. Beloved, we can use the name of Jesus to release the works of God and to stop the works of the devil. Again, the increase of the kingdom comes through believers saying what God says and doing the things He says to do. Our words and our deeds release the kingdom.

Now the problem is that the increase of the kingdom through us is often in a very small measure, but it's important to God and it's valuable. A lot of folks will say, "Well, I prayed for someone and said God loves them..."

That's saying what God says.

"Well, not that much happened. He looked at me and said, 'Gee, thanks. Well, so what?'"

Beloved the enemy will come and lie and steal that out of your heart. That's how the increase happens; we say the things that are true: "God loves you. There's a new day of beginning for you. His mercy is towards you. He's going to help you." These are simple, little things we say to believers and unbelievers, and we do simple little deeds: give them a little money, open a door, go help them in some small way. And the kingdom increases this way. It really does; that's the way it increases.

Some folks say, "Well, that's so little, I don't want to mess with a little increase."

And the Lord says, "No, you really need to do it My way." And occasionally there's a big increase. And together we make a big increase, and every now and then an individual will have a big increase. However, most of our individual contribution is simple, little phrases like, "Hey, God loves you," "Hey, I'm with you," and, "Hey, let me pray for you." And those little things accumulate and they touch hearts and they change people's mindsets and the kingdom increases this way; healing comes.

### **CALLED TO HOST THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE**

You're in a bad mood; you don't feel good; you sinned yesterday, and you feel rotten. Take your hand out of your pocket, have confidence in the name of Jesus, and say, "In the name of Jesus, Lord heal that shoulder," and I tell you sometimes that shoulder is going to get healed. I've had that happen a few times over the years when I was really in a mess and I said, "Oh my goodness! This stuff is real!" and the Lord could whisper and say, "It's not about what mood you're in or how much energy you have. It's about the fact that you said My word over a man with a sore shoulder. You said it!"

We're called to host the Holy Spirit's presence, to be the vessels that release it through simple words and deeds, but we have to take risks. And the risks aren't major; I'm not talking about major risk. Every now and then the risk might be big, and mostly the risk is little, but we have to take the risk.

And the risk is this: you're standing with the guy, and you look at each other, and you both look down, and he looks the other way, and he looks back, and the Lord tells you to say, "Can I pray for you?"

And the guy says, "I thought you would never ask!"

That's the risk I'm talking about. I'm talking about little risk. And you know what? More times than not, good people won't actually say a phrase. They won't say, "Hey, can we stop for a moment and pray?" They just won't. "Oh, I don't want to be religious. They'll think I'm going to prophesy and I might not have anything and then they'll be disappointed."

No, stop all of that. Just take the risk and say, "Hey, can I pray for you?"

Then prophesy over him, and here's the prophecy: "God loves you." That's the prophecy. It doesn't have to be, "On October 18 of next year, \$5,000 is going to come your way." Just say, "God loves you," and you're prophesying. And I tell you, as simple as this is, people don't do it, and they don't do it for decades. They go decades without doing this.

### **HOPE IN THE CERTAIN PARTICIPATION WE HAVE IN THE GLORY OF GOD**

Number two, Paragraph D. In verses 20 and 21, Paul takes this very truth about standing in grace and brings it to another level. I mean, he really amplifies what it means to stand in grace. And so we have Romans 5:1-2, and these two verses really are the strength and power of the whole message of the book of Romans.

Now as glorious as these first two are—I mean, peace with God, a full affectionate relationship with God and standing in grace, a new position, with new authority, with all of the benefits of the covenant—are you kidding? How glorious is that? Then there's this hope of the glory of God. Let's read it again. We rejoice in that certainty. That's the key! Hope. *Hope* means certainty in the certain participation we will have in the glory of God.

Now again, I'm not saying this to be negative; I'm saying this to alert you. Many believers don't go here. This is one of the strongest, most powerful statements in the book of Romans. In Romans 5:2, Paul said, "I rejoice" (Rom. 5:2, paraphrased). Not only do we have confidence, because to rejoice you have to be confident. But you also have to be focused. You can't rejoice in something you aren't focused on. And so it implies confidence and focus.

I'm focused. I'm confident that I'll experience and participate in the glory of God in my life, every day. Again, it happens in small ways: telling people God loves them, helping them, looking around and talking to the Holy Spirit, saying, "Holy Spirit, with my friends, my family, in my familiar setting, in my familiar environment, I want to say a few phrases here and there throughout the day that actually change the environment of the two to three people I'm talking to."

And it doesn't have to change the environment dynamically, although sometimes it will. Maybe only one of the people has a little spark that touches them and the other two kind of roll their eyes, but beloved, the environment has been changed because you're there. You're actually participating in the glory of God right then.

And if you can rejoice in that, if you can have confidence in it, you can get focused on it. If you can value that, if you would value that, Paul said, "You'll participate in the glory of God a whole lot more." Maybe many small installments or little releases of the glory of God; a heart that's touched is a bit of the glory of God.

You pray for the guy's shoulder and it gets touched a bit; it's not even fully healed, but that's still participating in the glory of God. It's not the devil that healed his shoulder. It's not the flesh. Beloved, to rejoice in the glory of God means you have confidence it's going to happen. It means you value it. It's worth doing. It means you're focused on it. It's part of your awareness. This is a mindset.

### **TRIALS CANNOT STOP THE GLORY OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE**

Number one. Paragraph E. Now Paul is referring to experiencing the glory of God or participating in it in this age and the age to come, and it's not either/or. Many commentators will only say this is about the age to come.

It's not just about the age to come, because in the very next verse Paul says, "Trials won't stop the glory of God in your life" (Rom. 5:3, paraphrased). He's talking about the glory of God in this age, not just in the age to come, but he's certainly talking about the glory of God in the age to come as well.

Paragraph one. Many can't see the evidences of God's glory because it looks different from what they think, meaning it's small; it's moving a heart in a way that you can't measure and can't always see. Not always; sometimes it's very dynamic, and collectively it's often dynamic, what thousands and millions of people can do in unity in the Body of Christ. However, individually often it's small and invisible, meaning the heart is moved; the guy may think all day about that one thought. And it might lead him to repent of an issue or even a thought pattern as a believer. To break his agreement with a wrong thought pattern, that's the glory of God working in you. It really, really is. You've encouraged them. And even though we can't see it and can't measure it, even though it's often invisible, it's working in someone's heart.

Even in healing, you pray and a bit happens, and you don't fully know, but it's all part of a continuum. The Lord may be saying, "There are many who are going to pray and your prayer is a key one," and your prayer may be the one that brings a great change. Who knows? We don't have to measure it, but we have to have confidence that it operates.

Now to have confidence in the glory of God is the same thing, practically, as having a conversation, a relationship with the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The glory of God released through us in this age or the age to come is about the Spirit's ministry in relationship to us. He's talking about developing our relationship with the Holy Spirit here.

### **THE GOD WHO WANTS TO BRING HIS CHILDREN INTO THE GLORY OF GOD**

Paragraph two. Now some people don't know this thing about the glory of God. Let me tell you this: it was fitting for God to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). He wants to bring His children into the glory of God.

Number three. 1 Corinthians 2. We're talking about a wisdom that God ordained before the ages (1 Cor. 2:7). God had a plan way back before Genesis 1. What was that plan about? To release the glory of God in you; that's what the plan was. God has been working to release His glory. He wants you to participate and partner with His glory. His glory isn't something that He experiences while we're at a distance, nullified out of the relationship. He wants us participating and partnering in the very glory that He has committed to filling the earth. He wants His sons and daughters, His eternal companion, His bride in deep participation with Him when His glory fills the earth. He doesn't want to release it apart from a dynamic relationship with us. And again, that's a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

### **THREE WAYS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE GLORY OF GOD**

Paragraph F. Now here's how we participate in the glory of God, in three ways. Again, we speak words and we do deeds, helping someone in small ways: giving money, giving a little encouragement, helping with love. I mean small things. They all add up; they all matter.

We participate in three ways: externally, internally, and eternally. In Romans 6 he's going to develop that, and I'll wait until next week. However there's an internal dimension where we're changed in our emotions, and we can deal with anger, lust, and bitterness, and it's the glory of God operating in us now in this age. Now it's in fullness in the age to come, and only in part in this age, but beloved, any part of the glory of God is worth it,

and I want it! I don't care what the measure is, I want it. And whatever measure He gives me now, I want more a bigger measure later. I mean *later* as in *today*. Whatever measure He gives me, I don't ever want to measure it; I just want more of whatever He gave me, and I love that. Because His glory is magnified, His love is magnified when we participate with it in a deep way.

### **THE GLORY OF GOD IS MANIFEST IN OUR MINISTRY AS WE MINISTER NOW**

Number two. His glory is released externally. Again, that's our ministry to other people, our circumstances, our relationships, where our relationships are strengthened because we say right words and we say prayers and we serve. Our relationships are strengthened and the glory of God is manifest in our ministry as we minister to people right now.

For example, right now the glory of God is being manifest throughout me. There are at least three of you in this room who are saying, "You know what? I'm going to do this differently." That's the glory of God. "Yes, God! You did it! You said You would!" I don't know if it's three or 300; I can't measure it, but if only three are moved a little to say, "I'm going to do this," I was used in the glory of God just now.

And I'm confident. I came here tonight to be used in the glory of God. Not just here, but praying for people backstage, driving here, I want to be used in the glory of God because I said some prayers on the way here. I did! I said prayers for me for your sake. I said "Lord, if You don't help that boy they'll have a long night!" I was talking about me.

Paragraph two. Matthew 25. Now again, the stumbling block of the glory of God externally and even internally is that it's small. It's few, and it's little. However, Jesus is going to give us the shock of our life one day when He says, "You know those little things? Well done."

You'll go "Well done? They were so little."

"Well done. You did them before Me."

Number three. Eternally: well, we know the resurrected body, the New Jerusalem, eternal rewards; it goes on and on.

So he tells us these three things: peace with God; full, enjoyable relationships; standing in grace; a new position, a new sphere where you have full acceptance with God, the indwelling Spirit, the authority to use the name of Jesus, etc.

Now Paul anticipates people saying, "Yeah, but what about trials? What if trials come? Doesn't that contradict the glory of God?"

And Paul says, "No, trials come. If you respond to them rightly, even the trials can't stop the glory of God. They enhance it" (Rom. 5:3-4, paraphrased).

And here's how we respond to the trials rightly: we rebuke the devil; we resist it. We submit to the part that's God, and we repent of the part that's our own sin and foolishness.

And so if I'm the one that did it, with the devil's help I repent and rebuke him, and the Lord works through the whole process. Because if you respond rightly, even your problems won't stop the glory of God; that's how sure it is.

**HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS GETTING INTO WHEN HE CALLED US**

Paragraph B. And he says, "Let's bring it up a notch. It's more than your troubles." He says, "Our participation is so certain because God planned it. He committed to it when you were sinning and you said, 'I don't even want You, God,' and that's when He came up with the plan for you.

"And so if He planned this for you when you were completely rejecting Him," Paul says, "how much more will it work when you're saying yes to Him? Even when you didn't want Him, He wanted you; that's how secure this is."

Because when we blow it by sinning, we say, "Oh no, God, can You believe it? I just did this; can You believe it?" We think God is confused because we're confused by our sin, or *surprised* is the better word I'm using. God is surprised because we're surprised: "I can't believe I did that!"

And the Lord would say, "Well there's a lot more where that came from, but I want you to know I'm not ever surprised."

I love the song that Misty sings. God knew what He was getting into when He chose us and called our name. He knew what He was getting into when He called you. You didn't surprise Him. While you were a sinner with no strength, He said "I've poured love on you."

Paragraph C. Now he says, "The confidence goes beyond that." We were once enemies of God. We weren't just sinning; we were hostile. He said, "I want you. I want you" (Rom. 5:6, paraphrased). "How much more, how much more now that you love Me will this be surely manifest in your life?"

Paragraph D. Now you'll have to read Romans 5 on your own; this is just a little snapshot. Our confidence is even greater enhanced by verses 12-21. And if you've only read verses 12-21 once or twice, it might overwhelm you. You might think, "Well, I don't have a clue what this is about."

Well, I have a bit here in Paragraph B. Paul is saying, "In our union with Jesus, we have union with Him, so therefore what is true about Jesus in His humanity is true about us in our salvation."

Jesus is fully God before He ever became human, and He's fully God every step of the way. However, as a man He lived by the anointing of the Spirit and the favor of God, and whatever was true of Him is true of everyone in Christ forever. That's Paul's point here. And it may take you a minute to work through that, but it's a glorious passage that I don't want to go into at this moment.

Then it comes to the crescendo again: Romans 5:20-21. I told you, verses 1 and 2, the first two verses and the last two verses of Romans 5, are the crescendo. He says it again: "You were under the reign of sin" (Rom. 5:20, paraphrased). Now when you were under the reign of sin, you were under condemnation. You were in big trouble. I was in big trouble. It's real. We were powerless before sin. We were powerless to stop satanic attacks. We had only darkness; when we read the Bible we couldn't understand it in a way that would inspire us to obey

God. That's what it means. I mean, an unbeliever can read the Bible and understand some facts. But they can't read it in a way that moves them to obey God. They can't understand God or His Word in that way. They're in darkness.

### **THE REIGN OF SIN; THE REIGN OF GRACE**

Paragraph E. Verse 21. "As sin reigned in death. . ." (Rom. 5:21). We were under the reign of sin. Sin like a monarch dominated our life in those four ways I described there. We were under condemnation. We have no power to resist sin in our heart. We have no ability to have light, spiritual inspiration. We have no divine destiny in that relationship, because we don't have a relationship with God; we're under the reign of sin. We're under the dominance of the monarch king sin and death, and it's utter death. And every human being is either under sin or under the reign of grace.

Paul said "In the same way that you were totally under the dominance of sin's reign, you're now under the dominance of grace's reign." The problem is that you don't know it. The problem is that you don't talk to the Spirit along these lines. The problem is that you don't have confidence in it, so it doesn't move your heart so that you respond. But you're still as much under the reign of grace as every other born-again believer.

Beloved, you and I came under the reign of grace fully, instantly in our legal position the minute we were born again. Now the challenge is to fill our mind with the knowledge of what is true about us so that it warms our heart and gives us confidence to respond and it gets into our conversation with the Spirit, and we talk to the Spirit along these lines. Again, we say things like "Thank You, Holy Spirit, that I will walk in the glory of God today."

We talk to Him with the understanding that more often than not it's going to be small measures, but it's still the glory of God. And God will remember it forever and reward me forever for these little things I do called loving people and serving in secret. And what a glorious way to live! And to talk to the Spirit along those lines is powerful.

### **LABORING TO ENTER INTO THE REST OF GOD**

Now under the reign of grace, it's the opposite of the reign of sin: full affection with God. Now God has the affection, but if we don't renew our mind we don't feel it. Beloved, I don't want to live not feeling the affections of God for me. And my affections for Him, I want to feel them.

Hebrews 4 says we labor to enter rest (Heb. 4:11). We labor to renew our mind; that's where the labor is. The fasting and prayer doesn't earn us anything, but it positions us to feel the power of truth. We put our cold heart before His bonfire. The power isn't in putting the cold heart there; the power is in the bonfire, in His presence.

And so the reason I say this is because some folks say, "Well, if you pray and fast, or you study the Bible, are you not earning it? Is it now works?"

No, not if your attitude is hunger and you say, "Lord, my prayer and fasting is so weak and feeble anyway; how could that possibly change me?" It's the power of the fire I'm sitting in front of that changes me because He is so gracious; that's not earning me anything. That's called the grace of God.

## **THE PLACE WHERE PEACE TRIUMPHS OVER ANGER**

Number two. Well, we have the indwelling Spirit, and we'll talk more about Romans 6 in our next session. Romans 6 tells us how to practically interact with the indwelling Spirit in a way that causes peace to triumph over anger in our soul. We have the authority to use the name of Jesus. Again, you could be in a bad mood, you could be tired, you could have been in a horrible mood yesterday, but you've repented of what you've done and you meant it. I'm not taking about rhetoric; I mean you said, "Lord, I don't want to do that."

I tell you, the authority works because of who He is, not because of how good we're doing. However, in our un-renewed thinking, when we blow it, when we do wrong things, when we don't spend time in the Word of God, our mind gets dull. We don't have confidence in the glory of God. We don't even think about it. We get self-absorbed; we get self-preoccupied. We get more focused on what we don't have instead of what we do have in Christ. We get more focused on how hard it is and how bad we are instead of who God is and who we are in Christ.

And that mindset actually quenches the Spirit's activity in our life. We don't ever speak the Word to God; we theoretically believe it but it's never in our conversation with God, so the vibrancy of it doesn't move our hearts. And again, that's next week; I'm getting ahead of myself.

### **"RECKON YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN, BUT ALIVE IN CHRIST"**

Paragraph H. Paul said it a few verses later, but he's talking about Romans 5. He said, "Here's what I want you to do. I want you to reckon yourself. I want you to see yourself as not under the reign of sin anymore. I want you to see yourself as under the reign of grace" (Rom. 6:11, paraphrased).

Beloved, it begins by seeing our self. And then what we see, we say to God, "Thank You God that this is true!" and the devil attacks it and we resist it. We see, then we say, and then our confidence increases and the feelings begin to increase. It all goes together. Paul said here in verse 11, "You have to see yourself in a new way."

Paragraph I. We see ourselves. Here's what God wants us to see and to say to Him. We're enjoyed by God. We're indwelt by the Spirit. We're empowered by the authority of Jesus. We're commissioned with a destiny. Beloved, our life is so meaningful even if the things we do are little and no one sees them. God sees them and we experience the glory of God now and it has continuity with the glory of God in the age to come. And He rewards us in the age to come for the little things that we did here. Not because we're earning some rewards, because rewards are God showing us how He feels about the way we loved Him when we were on the earth.

Amen. We'll end with that! Next week, Romans 6. Let's stand.