

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 5:19-21

Student Notes:

- **The Continued Contrast:**

Verse 19: “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Two things: 1. Adam's actions are put first, followed by Christ's. 2. Once again, we have comparison and contrast.

“Adam's disobedience made many sinners.” – Adam didn't “make them sinners” in that sense of the word. Instead, their sins are the natural follow-through from Adam's own disobedience.

The same must be said about Christ's actions. That the many are made righteous cannot mean that these people actually became morally good. Rather, using forensic, legal language, Paul is saying they were declared righteous.

- **The Necessary Diversion: The Law and Adam's Transgression**

Verse 19: “The law was added so that the trespass might increase.”

The Jewish assumption: God gave the Law so that sin would decrease and righteousness increase!”

The Gentile's question – John Piper: “*If God's purpose was that we would have an eternal life spent in seeing and savoring his glory, why didn't he just skip this terrible thing called human history and go straight to the goal?*”

Paul's preliminary answer: The Law of Moses was given to increase the transgression. What does he mean by that?

1. The Law was given to emphasize the singular transgression of Adam:

- Verse 15: "*By the transgression of the one the many died.*"
- Verse 17: "*By the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one.*"
- Verse 18: "*Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men.*"

2. The Law was given so that we go from a general transgression to a fuller realization of what transgression is.

Under the Law, the Jews had way more prohibitions than Adam did even if we just count the Ten Commandments:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.

What was the result of humans receiving the Law -- meaning the entire set of commandments -- not just the Ten Commandments? The answer is Adam's transgression was multiplied.

John MacArthur: 1. "*The law increases our sinfulness by seducing itself by its very prohibitions. 2. "The power in the law is the power to increase sin.*"

A third note: The Law increases the transgression because there is nothing in the Law that creates a morally correct person.

"Did keeping the Mosaic Code change their true, internal condition?"

Ezekiel 36:26-27: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." --

Law keeping did not change, rearrange, or transform the Israelites' hearts. It kept them in check; it outwardly forced them to comply with God's will. See: Matthew 23:27; Also: Romans 7:8-12

- **The Good News:**

Verse 20: "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more..."

A special Greek verb: "perisseuó". (See also Romans 5:15). Verse 20: "hyperperisseu". The grace that appeared "Is far, far beyond; way, way beyond; infinitely beyond."

The power of the one work of Christ on the cross: While the Law exponentially increased Adam's one transgression – though the rest of humanity – Christ's grace came along and increased far beyond those sins.

- **The Conclusion:**

Verse 21: "So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The first Adam brought the reign of death. The second Adam brought the reign of grace through righteousness.

Christ's grace met the powers of sins and death and defeated them. More than that, this grace becomes the controlling power in our lives. It will remain the controlling power of our lives right into eternity.

Because of Christ, grace did much more than Sin. That's what Paul has been saying throughout this chapter: Because of Christ's grace, we have peace with God. We have adoption. We have reconciliation. We have justification.

Where sin abounded, grace truly abounded all the more.