

Monday, March 20, 2023 • Read Romans 5:20–21

Questions from the Scripture text: What entered (v20)? Why? And with what result, did sin abound? What had reigned (v21)? In what? What now (much more, cf. v20) reigned? Through what? Unto what? Through Whom?

How is the vast superiority of Christ over Adam displayed? Romans 5:20–21 looks forward to the sermon in this week’s midweek meeting. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **by the addition of the Mosaic law to what we had already sinned against, God prepared the way for displaying how much more grace reigns in Christ than even death reigned in Adam.**

God’s convicting and just purpose for the law: that the trespass might abound, v20a. God doesn’t tempt men to sin, but His good law makes the trespass to abound in two ways. The first is that it adds to guilt. The second is that our sinful nature takes advantage of it in order to increase, and is seen to be all the more sinful.

The entrance of the law increased our guilt. Some sins are more heinous against others. One way that guiltiness is increased is when we sin against more knowledge. The law increased the knowledge of God and His attributes, and this increased the offense, the trespass, of our sins. Another way that guiltiness increased is when we sin against grace. The law was a good and gracious gift from God, so the entrance of the law made our sin more guilty in that way. Finally, the Mosaic law entered as part of a gracious covenant with Israel, so that sin was now not only against the evident and glorious character of God but also against the explicit and gracious covenant of God.

The entrance of the law also provoked sin because our sinfulness took advantage of it. In 7:7–13, the apostle will explain how the law is good, but sin took advantage of the commandment to produce all sinful desire (cf. 7:8). Sin takes advantage of the commandment to deceive and kill sinners who come into contact with the law (cf. 7:11). Why would God permit this? 7:13 answers that it was to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin. So the law increased the offense not by tempting us but by showing how evil is the sinner’s sinfulness that it would even take God’s good law as an occasion for more sin!

This is what sin deserves: to have its guiltiness more fully condemned and to have its sinfulness more fully exposed.

God’s gracious and ultimate purpose for the law: that grace might super-abound, v20b. Although God would have been just to introduce the law to convict all men, there were some for whom He had another purpose. For, the Lord had foreknown some, whom He chose in Christ before the world began, that they would be conformed to the Son’s image (cf. Rom 8:29) and become like the Son in holiness (cf. Eph 1:4).

Grace, then, actually precedes our sin. It comes from a determination that God would finally have a multitude of children whom He adopted in Jesus and glorified in Jesus. Wherever one of these whom He would end up saving sinned, grace is determined to abound. Into this situation, when the law is introduced and causes sin to abound, then for those who are being saved from both the standing of being condemned and the state of being a sinner, grace super-abounds.

Christ’s “crowning” achievement: righteous people, living righteously, because they are going to live forever, v21. Where sin abounded, grace super-abounded. And now in v21, where death abounded, grace super-abounded.

Sin had reigned in death. v14 told us that death reigned from Adam to Moses. We remember the dreadful refrain of Genesis 5: “and he died... and he died... and he died...” Even among the believing family of Seth, there was the refrain of the reign of death. But it wasn’t just death that was reigning at the end of men’s lives, it was sin that was reigning in that death. Men were not only born to die one day, they were born already “dead in trespasses and sins” (cf. Eph 2:1, 5).

For every child of Adam, until he comes to faith in Christ, every sin he commits is a testimony: “sin reigns over me, and the final proof of it is coming when I die.” But for those who do come to faith in Christ, it is no longer sin that reigns over them but grace that reigns over them (cf. 6:14). How marvelous! There are children of Adam who are able to love God, who are able to love His law, who are able to benefit from that law. By sending His own Son, God has done what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (cf. 8:3). He condemned sin in the flesh by Christ, and now the believer’s new nature from Christ hates that sin that is in him, that sin for which Christ died.

This introduces a wonderful new dynamic in the believer’s life: every motion of the heart toward God announces, sin does not reign over me, grace reigns!” Every agreement of the heart with His law announces, sin does not reign over me, grace reigns!” Every desire to obey the good law announces, sin does not reign over me, grace reigns!” Every motion in acting upon that desire announces, “sin does not reign over me, grace reigns!”

The man who has been counted righteous has only been counted righteous through union with Jesus Christ. And the man who has been counted righteous through union with Jesus Christ has been given a new nature through union with Jesus Christ. Now, Jesus Christ is already his Lord. And, upon death, they will be both perfected in Christ and ushered into the full experience and enjoyment of His eternal life.

Grace reigns through righteousness! But this is another way of identifying our new master. We have a new Lord. The man who is his own lord is really under the reign of sin. But the man who is under the reign of grace has a new Lord: “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So, the question for every reader is: am I spiritually dead and under the dominion of sin (which will be sealed forever when I physically die), or am I spiritually alive and under the dominion of grace (which will be sealed forever when I enter into eternal life)? And, if I am delivered and alive and growing in holiness, the further question is this: am I living as one who treasures every righteous movement of my heart as a display that “king” grace has a name: “Jesus Christ our Lord”?

What effect does the law have upon your heart? Is it, by spiritual death, increasing your guilt and your sinning? Or is it, by the Spirit’s giving you Christ’s life, showing that you are forgiven and alive? Which better describes you: someone who wishes that he could get rid of sin, or someone who wishes that he could get away with sin? Do your sins define what reigns in your life, or do your righteous desires/actions define Who reigns in your life? What will come of you, when you leave this world?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us Your law to make sin appear in its full guiltiness and sinfulness. And thank You, even more, for giving us Your grace in Your Son. Forgive us for whenever we sin as if we were servants of it. Grant that we would more and more offer our members as slaves to You for righteousness, so that it may be seen in our life that grace reigns and that Jesus Christ is Lord, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

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Romans chapter 5 verses 20 and 21. These are god's words. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound But where sin abounded grace abounded much more So that a sin reigned in death, Even so grace might reign. Through righteousness. To eternal life. Through Jesus Christ. Our Lord. So far, the Reading of God's inspired and inherent word.

The key, of course, the two verses that we have here. And this entire section. Which is from versus 12 through 21. Is. The exceeding glory and superiority. Of Jesus Christ. Our Lord. When we get to chapter 8 and the fact that there is no condemnation even now already for those who are in Christ Jesus.

What we will see is the superiority of Christ is displayed in part. Because those who are in Christ by his spirit, now Who applies to us as resurrection life. We actually have begun loving God. And desiring to obey him. Something we never did before. And so there's going to be that transition from chapter 7 into chapter 8 where Our desire to love God and obey him is in some ways, a cause of great distress for us.

Because we're not loving him like we should and we're not obeying and like we should But the fact that we do it all, Shows that Jesus has done something with the law could not do. The law could tell us that we ought to desire. To obey God that we ought to love him.

But it couldn't give us that desire and it couldn't give us that love. And Jesus has And his spirit. Has given us Christ. And Christ's resurrection life and started. To. Work the life of Jesus out in our lives.

And so, This section in Romans 5. Is. Is building off of that, conclusion. To the previous section. This rejoicing that we have in the hope the the certainty that we shall enter into God's glory. That which we had previously despised and he is He has made us alive and brought us to faith.

And we had fallen short of, but now, Uh, we Uh, we will Be glorified those who may be justified. He also glorified. We who have been counted righteous will last Uh, in a new heaven and a new earth. New earth where righteousness dwells and we will be righteous. We will be with the sun, the sun, the Lord Jesus.

And we will be like the sun The Lord Jesus. And that's the hope that we have. And so there was this rejoicing in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 11. And all of this comparison between Adam and Christ from verses 12 to 21. Has been to show.

How great how glorious the Lord Jesus is? Who is the one? Through whom we have been reconciled to God, the one through whom and in whom We rejoice in God. And now he's uh, he is praising the wisdom of God. And the way that he has brought this about in history, Because we didn't go straight from Adam to Christ between Adam and Christ was the introduction of the Mosaic Law.

Moreover, the law entered, That the offense might abound. So here's God's righteous and convicting purpose for the law. That the trespass might abound. We're already guilty of violating God's covenant with Adam and us. In Adam, we sinned in him. We fell with him. We were condemned. We were made sinners.

That it all are already happened. And then, God in bringing Christ into the world, brings the covenant of grace, through various administrations, including The administration of Moses in which the law was introduced to do, what? And here is one of the great purposes of the law. That the trespass, the offense might abound because now We are violating more.

We're not just sinning against God and his revealed character, we're not just Um, Sinning, because we're sinners. Who have trespassed? Against the God's explicit law from the covenant of works. The covenant of grace. Has a law too and we're sinning against that. And so the more from which Christ ultimately redeems us Uh, the more he is glorified.

So that's one way that our trespass abounds Um, that we are actually sending against more. Full and explicit revelation of God's law. And also our trespassing bounds, we send more. Against those things. Not so we send against more. But we sin. More greatly. And the reason is sin is so sinful.

That when we hear God's law and he's going to get to this when he talks about coveting. Like we heard about. In our catechism lesson. Sinister sinful though, when we hear what God's law says the the sin That is within us and we ourselves as sinners before we come to Christ.

When we hear God's law. We want to break it. And so sin is exposed for what it is, how wicked it is. How hostile to God, how hostile to, what is good. And the law, the law says, then the exceeding sinfulness of sin. So, two ways the Introduction of the law increased, the quantity of our sin, And the Introduction of the law.

Showed the exceeding sinfulness of our But the purpose was not just that we would sin. Uh, More and more sinfully. The purpose of the law was that grace would Abound. So, we're sin. We're sin abounded. He says in verse 20. Grace abounded, much more or grace. Super abundant. His purpose, the the goal of all things has been to adopt those, whom he is saving.

To conform them to Christ that he would be. The firstborn among many sons and glory. That's been the purpose of all things. Since before time began God, purposing in himself. To do that. Um, And the place that the law then has and the increasing of the trespass has is then.

That wherever, Those. Whom he was going to justify and glorify. In Jesus sin, grace must come along. Grace must give them life. To believe in Jesus. Grace must give them that faith. In Jesus grace must give them union with Christ Christ himself and all his benefits. Grace must give them not just a righteous standing before God, but a new state.

Of having. A new nature that is going to win. And a former nature that remaining sin, that is going to be eradicated and eliminate it. And so there are all of these certainties about the grace of God. Where grace is going to overwhelm us in. So what happens if sin increases and increases so much that it's abundantly what happens when sin abounds Well, for those that God is saving Grace.

Super abounds. And that's been the point. God's gracious and ultimate purpose for the law. Is a grace would super abound. Which shows? The glory of Christ has crowning achievement. The reason we use the word crowning is because of the The verb raining. Here in verse 21. So that as sin reigned in death, And

spiritual death.

People in this world are sinners. They show that their spiritually dead. Every sin that they commit from their sinfulness. Is a new declaration. That. Their spiritually dead. And sitting rains and death. Every sin. An unconverted person commits. Says long live the king. Sin. Rained in death. There's a new king.

For the believer. Is not a subject of king sin. He's now a subjective king grace. There's a subject of king jesus. And so it says a sin, reigned in death, even so Grace might rain. Through a righteousness. To eternal life. Through jesus christ. Our lord. So earlier, he said, Death rent in verse 14.

And as death reigned verse 21 sin, reigned in that death. But now christ reigns And grace. From christ's reigns. And how do we see it? Grace rains through righteousness. Unto eternal life. Death has been defeated our spiritual death. Believers are made alive. They have not just not only this righteous standing with God.

But a new Self a new state of our existence that we love him. We want to obey him. And that says, Jesus has been here. And sin doesn't rule these people anymore. Jesus's grace rules. These people. They love him. They want to obey him. And not only, Uh, Do they want to obey him?

But one day they will. You can't start, you can't have your righteous standing already, which can never be lost and make a beginning and righteous living already. Which cannot fail to be completed. Without without it being completed. And so as we are, we have our righteous standing and we've begun our righteous living.

Uh, we know where that ends it has to end an eternal life. So you have this through righteousness to eternal life. And, The way that we have been brought from the reign of sin, Into the reign of grace. Is through jesus christ, our lord And so, Every desire of your heart to love god.

Every obedience. Every right and good thing that you do. That says long live, the king. Long live king jesus. This is the reign of his grace. You have the The, the bg and Ag. Before grace and and the year of his grace in your life. Thankfully praise god. For many of you, you don't You might not even remember.

Before grace, but you are in. In the new kingdom of your life, the new season, the new season of history of your life, Where you've entered the period of the empire of grace. And we've been delivered from The empire. Of sin, and we desire. That everything. We feel everything we think.

I think we do. Would say long live king, jesus. This is the empire of his grace.

Spray.

Our father in heaven. We thank you and praise you. For your design to glorify the sun. And yourself in him and your spirit with you and with him. That this design was, By saving centers. Even such sinners as. Would respond to your good law. By sending more. And we confess that apart from you, And apart from your grace, we are dead.

And we are under the reign of sin subjects of sin. And happy. To be so. But, We thank you that you did not leave us to be. The willing subject of sin because it was your desire. The grace would super abound. And that christ the glorious king. Uh, would be praised and glorified.

By the reign of his grace. And we pray that you would make us willing subjects of grace. Willing subjects of jesus. That our whole life would be a showing forth. Of the goodness and glory of our king. For we ask it in his name. Amen.