Because He Lives

Romans 5:15-17

The chorus of Gaither's great hymn says,

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone, Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!

The choir's cantata shared the goods news of Christ's death and resurrection. It was the greatest event of all human history. Jesus' death reconciled us to God and His resurrection brought us eternal salvation. Paul wrote in Romans 8:10, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

In Romans 5:15-17 Paul picks back up on that idea, "much more" to show how much greater, how much more certain, is what Christ has done for us through His death and resurrection. First, in verse 15:

1. Because He Lives, God's Grace is Greater than our Sin (Rom. 5:15)

15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

Paul contrasts the devastating effects of Adam's transgression—the many died—with the glorious effects of God's free gift and grace, which abounds to the many.

The "much more" refers to the superlative nature of salvation over judgment. Paul piles up words like "grace," "gift," and "abound" to emphasize how wonderful God's gift of salvation is, provided freely to us at Christ's expense. It is an undeserved gift and it abounds to us through the grace of God.

The word "offense" means to trespass, to step over the line. You "trespass" when you enter someone's property illegally. It's what happens when you deliberately break a rule. Someone may draw a line in the sand and say, "If you cross that line, you'll be in trouble." Trespassing is what you do when you say, "Oh yeah! You just watch me." And you step across the line.

That's what happened in Eden. God drew a line in the sand and said, "Don't cross it." Adam said, "Watch me." And he deliberately "crossed the line" when he ate the forbidden fruit. What Adam did was an act of total selfishness.

By contrast when Jesus died on the cross, He died for others. When Jesus died, it was totally for others. He had no sin of His own, so he couldn't be dying for Himself. His death was self-sacrificing. That's why Paul calls it "God's grace" and "the gift."

Thus in the very nature of what these two men did, Christ's deed was greater than Adam's misdeed, even as love is greater than selfishness.

Next in verse 16,

2. Because He Lives, Salvation is Greater than Condemnation (Rom. 5:16)

16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. How many sins did Adam have to commit in order to bring condemnation to the world? Only one. That's all it took. One sin and the world was plunged into darkness. One man, one sin, condemnation comes to the whole world.

On the other side of the ledger, how many sins were forgiven in the death of Christ? Paul says "many offenses." What Jesus did paid the price not just for Adam's sin but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2, **And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world**). Thus the power of Jesus' death and resurrection is far greater than the power of Adam's single, solitary sin.

Adam lit the forest fire that devastated the human race, but Christ not only put it out, He planted a new forest, an eternal one, for all who will receive His gracious gift.

Finally in verse 17,

3. Because He Lives We Will Reign in Life (Rom. 5:17)

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

As we said last time, Adam's sin brought death upon the whole human race. Death reigned.

But what Christ did for us in His resurrection is far greater than what Adam did through his sin. Adam brought the reign of death. But not only does Christ reserve that, Not only can you escape the reign of death, Also, you will reign in life through Jesus Christ. This begins now as you live in victory over sin (Romans 6). It also means that the sting and fear of death are removed, so that we are more than conquerors in Christ (Rom. 8:36-37; 1 Cor. 15:56-57; Heb. 2:14-15). But it also means that throughout eternity we will reign with Christ (Rev. 1:6; 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

Because of what Jesus has done, God takes sinners like us who receive His grace and makes us kings and queens in the age to come. It is almost too good to be true. The triumph of God's grace will not simply replace life with death, but will make us reign in life like kings in the presence of our Father forever and ever.

How much sin have you piled up? God's grace in Christ is more abundant!

How great is your guilt and debt? God's free gift and abounding grace is greater!

Are you living as a slave to sin and selfishness? Christ can set you free from the reign of sin and death and you will reign in life.

Are you living as a spiritual pauper? God has made us kings and priests to rule with Him.

In a few moments we will come to the table of our Lord. We will come to remember, to rejoice, and to reign in life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Before we come to this sacred meal, take a moment to ask God to examine your heart, your life. Are you truly in Christ? Is He abiding in you? Do you know for certain that your sin has been forgiven? Are you enjoying unbroken fellowship with the Lord Jesus?

Now is the time to get things right with the Lord.