

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

PASTOR SANDY ADAMS

ROMANS 4-5

A little boy at Christmas time was helping his mom unpack decorations. As he carefully unwrapped the nativity set he found *the wise men - the shepherds - Mary and Joseph*. Finally he came to *the baby in the manger*. The little guy shouted, "Mom, here's the baby Jesus in his car seat!" There will always be people, who like this little boy, want to modernize the Gospel! Yet Paul's point in Romans 4 is that the Gospel needs no updating. The Gospel is timeless and immutable. It hasn't changed in 4000 years! The means by which a man becomes right with God, and fit for heaven, is the same today as it was in the days of Abraham. A person becomes pleasing to God not by *obeying rules* or *observing rituals* - not by *trying*, but by *trusting*.

Chapter 4, "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something to boast about, but not before God*." What set Abraham apart was not a moral superiority or diligent service. If so, he could brag on himself. "For what does the Scripture say? *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*." Here Paul quotes Genesis 15:6... Abraham was respected by men and loved by God because of his faith.

Abraham was the most revered figure in all Judaism. In fact, the rabbis exaggerated his virtue. The Jewish Book of Jubilees claims, "*Abraham was perfect in all his deeds*." The Jews believed God had accepted Abraham based on good works. Paul knew better - even Abraham needed God's grace. Paul does a little Scriptural digging to prove his point. He goes all the way back to Genesis, and flags the moment Abraham was declared righteous. You might assume it was after he uprooted his family and moved at God's prompting from Ur to Canaan... Or it was when he stood on top of Mount Moriah, lifted up his knife and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac... But neither case caused God to declare him righteous! When was it then? Paul takes us to Genesis 15, not exactly a highpoint for Abraham. He's *pouting*. He's *complaining and crying* over his lack of an heir. He's afraid without a son, he'll die and all his wealth will fall to his servant. Yet God speaks to Abraham, "*This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from you own body shall be your heir. Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.'* And he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'"

At Abraham's greatest point of *deficiency*, God shows His *sufficiency*. God blows him away with a promise. Abraham will not only have a son, he'll father a nation. As Scripture tells us, "*He believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness*." Faith made Abraham right with God. This man gained God's approval, not on the heels of *some great act on his part* - but on a *great promise from God's heart*... The father of Israel became pleasing to God not because of some *feat*, but because of His *faith*!

Verse 4, "*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt*." Most Americans assume, "*If I serve some, and give a little. If I try hard enough - be good enough, I'll be ok. God will give me a thumbs up*." But this isn't grace. It's wages. Salvation on these terms isn't a free gift. This is working up a good religious resume hoping it gets you into heaven. You've made God your debtor. You either trust in *God's grace* or *your grit*. If Abraham could be *good enough - pure enough - sure enough - endure enough* - then God would be obligated to Abraham. But God owes no man anything. He's no man's debtor. God is never forced to give, He gives freely.

This is why all God's blessing come by grace through faith! Verse 5, "*But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness*..." It's faith in what Jesus has done and will do that's counted as righteousness, not our own endurance and elbow

grease. There'll be no "Hallelu-mes" in heaven – only "Hallelu-jahs." All the glory will go to our God! The only reason we're saved is God's amazing grace!

"Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works..." Paul now moves from one *Hebrew hero* to another - from Abraham to David. He quotes Psalm 32:1-2... "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

Psalm 32 was written on the heels of David's downfall. His one night stand with the bathing "Bathsheba" resulted in a lifetime of pain and heartache. Adultery, deceit, murder, then an ugly cover-up - David was *unrighteous*. He had nothing to present to God. All He could do was cry out for mercy! When God forgave David He chose not to "impute" or credit sin to his account. God hit the "clear button" on His calculator. Presto, the record and reminder of David's sin vanished. *God cleared it out of his memory!* This is what God does for anyone who relies on the grace of Jesus.

Paul asks, "Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? Remember the Jews believed that circumcision was a prerequisite for God's acceptance. The uncircumcised could never be saved. Sadly, there're folks today with their own prerequisites. They might agree faith will get you to heaven, but if you really want to earn God's approval and blessing on earth you need more than faith - you need to speak with tongues, or witness, or take communion once a week, or dress appropriately, or listen to certain music, or educate your kids a certain way, or read a particular translation of the Bible – *the list is endless...* But if you don't meet their specific criteria you're considered a second-class Christian. Paul contends no *rite or rule or ritual* can add anything to a person's standing with God. We *obtain* and *maintain* God's approval by faith alone!

"Faith alone" was the battle-cry of the Protestant Reformation. Roman Catholicism had no problem with faith, or the value of the blood, or Christ as Mediator, or biblical authority. Their squabble was with the word "alone." Rather than faith alone, they added good works. Rather than the blood of Christ alone, they added the Sacraments. Rather than the Priesthood of Jesus alone, they added human priests. Rather than the authority of Scripture alone, they added church tradition. But Paul and the Reformers were clear – **It's by faith and faith alone.**

"For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised." The Hebrews said you had to be circumcised to be right before God, *but when God pronounced Abraham righteous was he circumcised?* Check the chronology. Abraham believes and is declared righteous in Genesis 15:6. Circumcision isn't instituted until Genesis 17:10 – a full 14 years later. Circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's righteousness. When God declared him righteous, it didn't even exist. Likewise, baptism, communion, church attendance - all the add-ons - have nothing to do with *our* right standing with God. They help us grow, but our relationship is based on faith.

Verse 11, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also..." Circumcision was a sign. Like baptism or communion it's an outward mark of an inward faith. A sign doesn't *confer* righteousness, it merely *confirms* the righteousness that comes by faith. The uncircumcised Gentiles didn't have the sign, but they still had the substance – they had faith – and that made them right with God.

Abraham was father of believing Gentiles and believing Jews... The issue that saved both was not religion, but faith. "And the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised. For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Here's another argument Paul uses for justification by grace through faith. Abraham was declared righteous 500 years before the Law was given on Mount Sinai. Obviously, righteousness comes apart from the Law. God never intended the Jews to become right with Him by keeping rules and regulations. The Law exposed sin. It didn't save. Salvation has always been by faith!

Verse 14, "For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect..." *The Law* and *the Promise* are mutually exclusive. Something can't be *purchased* and *given freely* at the same time. One nullifies the other. You can't trust in Christ *and* depend on good works. God's blessing is like a butterfly. Try to catch it with your hands and it'll flutter just out of reach, but rest in your faith and it'll land on your shoulder. When it comes to our salvation the Father *thought it*, the Son *bought it*, the Spirit *taught it*, the Bible *brought it*, Satan *fought it*, but Faith *caught it*...

"Because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression." As we discussed in chapter 3, the Law's purpose was to *expose sin*. Without a standard we wouldn't have known we were in violation. You don't know you're speeding if the speed limit isn't posted.

Paul concludes, verse 16, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace..." How many people lack confidence in their relationship with God? "Do you know God loves you?" "I guess so." "Are your sins forgiven?" "I hope so." "Are you going to heaven when you die?" "I think so." But with God's *grace* there's no *guesswork*. You find a certainty when your relationship with God depends on *God's promise* not *your performance*.

Ever play "Chutes and Ladders" with the kids? Climb and climb the ladder - get nearer and nearer the prize - but your always thinking one wrong spin and its down the chute. This is how some folks live the Christian life. They're confident as long as they're doing good and climbing higher, but *spin into sin* and they feel as if its down the chute. Grace assures us that even when we spin into trouble we don't lose our place on the board. Jesus died so we could get another spin and another...

Verse 16, "So that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations")" Whether you're a law-abiding Jew, or a law-breaking Gentile the blessings of God are received the same way – by the promise of God's grace. We all need to follow in Abraham's footsteps and have faith!

But the question arises, "what is real faith?" James 2:19 tells us, "even the demons believe - and tremble!" To illustrate real faith Paul points to Abraham. Abraham teaches us our need for faith, and what real faith looks like. In verse 17 we see the *preoccupation of his faith*. In verses 18-21 the *application of his faith*. And in verses 22-25 the *ramification of his faith*.

Notice the **preoccupation of his faith**... verse 17, "In the presence of Him whom he believed - God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did..." Abraham believed in a God who is all-mighty. He starts with nothing and brings something out of nothing. Say you took an art class and were told to sculpt a small statue - but no one was issued any molding clay. You'd question the teacher's sanity. "What's the deal! Something can't come from nothing" - *but it can with God!* When God created the universe He brought *thin air* out of *thin air!* He created the world "ex nihilo" - a Latin word for "*out of nothing*." Even today, when all hope is depleted... when there's no spark left in a marriage... when the kid seems to be a lost cause... when the business is about to go under... *our God is still able to bring something out of nothing!*

And God also specializes in resurrecting the dead – *dead people, dead dreams, dead hopes*. Long before the resurrection of Jesus - as Abraham and Isaac started up the mountain, he told his servant, , "We will come back." Not just "I" but "WE." Isaac was the heir to God's promises. I'm sure Abraham was puzzled that God wanted him to sacrifice the fulfillment of those promises. Abraham rationalized it by believing God must be able to raise Isaac from the dead.

I heard of an old seminary professor who had a sure-fire way to predict the success of his students. And all he had to do was listen to a single sermon... He said, "I come to hear if they are *big-goddess* or *little-goddess*. Some men have a god who can't do miracles, hasn't spoken infallibly, and doesn't intervene for his people. They have a little god. I call them little-goddess. But there are other men who have a great God. He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands fast. He shows Himself strong on behalf of them who fear Him. These men are big-goddess and God will bless their ministry." Abraham was a big-godder and his BIG GOD responded to his faith!

We all have faith... You get sick and go to a doctor who's name you can't pronounce. His diplomas you don't verify. He writes a prescription you can't read. Its filled by a pharmacist you've never met. He measures out a chemical compound you don't understand, from a container you can't see, puts it in

bottle you can't open... yet you take it, and expect to get well - that's faith! We all have faith, the only question is the object of our faith. *Is your faith in God or in you?* In Mark 11:22 Jesus told His disciples, "Have faith in God."

Now look at the application of Abraham's faith... verse 18, "Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the oldest woman to birth a baby was 57 years old. But the Bible tells us that Abraham's wife, "Sarah," should hold that title. She delivered Isaac at the incredible age of 90. Long past menopause - her reproductive chances *hopeless* - Sarah and Abraham *hoped* in God! Her friends said, "forget it." Her doctors scoffed, "impossible." The only urging this couple had to hold onto was a word from God. God made a promise and Abraham refused to give up on God.

Abraham knew the facts. Faith doesn't deny the facts! It just goes beyond the facts. It outreaches reason and logic. When God makes a promise contrary to the facts, faith stops listening to logic and listens only to God! Perhaps there's a sin you can't shake - you're up against impossible circumstances - you're in a relationship that's on the rocks - everyone in your life is telling you to *give up* and *give in*. Stop listening to what everyone else is saying and trust God. Hold on to God's promise. In His time He will fulfill it.

Verse 19, "And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about 100 years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb." Abraham kept acting on God's promise. Even though he was 100 and Sarah 90 they kept locking the door to their bedroom at night. Sarah, 45 years past menopause, took her temperature every morning! Imagine the clerk at Baby Warehouse when they picked out their furniture. And what a weird baby shower Sarah must've had! Of all the ladies present only Sarah really believed she was going to have a baby.

Here's the point, true faith isn't *passive* it's *aggressive*. Saving faith is faith to the extent that I'm willing to act on what I believe. If real faith prays for rain it walks out with an umbrella! If it asks God for a job, it leaves in work clothes. Real faith sees things - not as they are - but as God promises to make them. That's why even if you don't feel like praying - or you're not in the mood to read your Bible - or you're afraid to advertise your faith... do it anyway. Trust God to bring fruit from your barrenness - to resurrect the right feelings - to produce life from your emptiness... Believe that God will make good on His promises to you - even though right now your playpen is empty. Remember when God creates He takes nothing and makes something beautiful! "Faith is the bird that sings to greet the dawn while its still dark."

Verse 20, "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." Between the giving and receiving of Abraham's promise 25 years elapsed, yet he refused to waver. The longer you have to wait, the harder it is to remain confident. The more opportunity there is for doubts to creep in. Faith becomes tougher. This is why the opposing football team tries to "ice" the kicker. Just before the field goal attempt they'll call time out. They want to give the kicker time to think about the importance of his attempt. Maybe a little doubt will slip in. Well, Abraham refused to get "iced." His faith never wavered! He was "fully convinced" that God was faithful. He even gave "glory to God" in advance. He started the high-fives before he even teed up the ball.

Verse 22, "And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Here is the beauty of the Gospel in a nutshell... God gives to Abraham and us the righteousness we lack, in exchange for the faith that we show.

Of course, if you've read the OT you have a problem. Abraham was not always a man of faith. The name "Hagar" isn't just a pair of slacks! What about the slave girl, "Ha-gar," that Sarah sent into the tent to have Abraham's baby? Hagar went in a *maid* and came out a *mom!* Don't forget that story! Obviously, faith doesn't have to be perfect in order to be effectual. God forgives even our lapses in faith. God treats me *just-as-if-I'd* never sinned, even when I do. All the OT saints failed and were flawed, but not once is an OT sin re-hashed in the NT. Evidently, when God forgives He forgets!

Verse 23, "Now it was not written for (Abraham's) sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." With Abraham and David God set a precedent. He works with His people by faith not works.

Chapter 5, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Understand your status in Christ... You've been justified by faith. You're forgiven. You're right with God... But that's not all. For justification has perks... We also possess *peace with God*, and *access to God*, and *joy in God*. We are standing in grace right now, and we'll be rejoicing in glory for all eternity.

In fact, His grace is at work in us right now to perfect us in our trials... Verse 3, "And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation..." The word translated "*tribulation*" is the Greek word "*thilipsis*." It means "*to crush or squeeze under pressure*." Sometimes God squeezes us. He engineers pressure-packed circumstances... to break and shape us. When you're squeezed don't try to escape... "*knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope*." If you want endurance, godly character, optimism for the future then don't hop out of the pressure-cooker. God is cooking up something good in you.

Verse 5, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Here's one more perk to add to our list - *the love of God*. God *sets out* His love in His Word, but He *pours out* His love by His Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit that makes God's love perceptible, tangible, touchable.

"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Amazing! Once, a little boy was asked to donate blood to his sick sister. He didn't really understand the procedure, but he loved his sister and would do anything to help her. So, when the needle was removed from his arm the little guy said to the nurse, "Tell me, when am I going to croak?" He'd agreed to the transfusion thinking it would cost him his life! Yet the little boy's brave and selfless act still falls short of illustrating the love of Jesus. It's one thing to die for someone you admire and loves and who loves you. It's an altogether different issue to lay down your life for an enemy! Note the words in these verses... *when did God fall in love with you?* When you were "*without strength*," "*ungodly*," "*sinners*," even "*enemies*". Before you gave a rip about God - God demonstrated His love for you in an extreme way.

Before you gave the first inkling you'd ever serve, or follow, or love Him - God went out on a limb - *a limb called the cross* - to prove He loved you! God, didn't wait until you were lovable to start loving you. Even at your ugliest and dirtiest He is willing to take you "*as is*" because of faith in Jesus. While we were still sinners - Jesus died in our place. On April 6, 32 AD, God made a scene. He made a point for earth and heaven to see. He proved for all time just how much He loves us... God *sets out* His love in His Word. He *pours out* His love by His Spirit. And He *works out* His love on the cross.

Verse 9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 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." An interesting name for God appears in Ezekiel 7:9, "*Jehovah-naka*" (nawkaw') or "*the Lord who strikes*." God is no pacifist. One day He'll strike the wicked world with a sharp sword! God is *the Lord-who-strikes*, but He doesn't want to strike you. He loves you, so in your place He struck His own Son. Thirty-nine times His back was *slashed* with a whip. His brow *pricked* with prickly thorns. His hands and feet *perforated* with stakes. His side *pierced*. And His heart *punctured* by a spear. I hope you get the point! Jesus was struck so you wouldn't have be. The *God-who-strikes* became the *God-who-was-stricken*. Jesus died on a Roman cross to save you from the wrath to come and reconcile you to God.

Tennyson once wrote of Roman religion "*The gods are hard to reconcile*." The Roman idols were *gods with a grudge*. They had to be won over. Their anger and reluctance had to be overcome. But the cross was not man's effort to appease an angry God. It was God's plan all along to reconcile us. God takes the initiative - He goes out of His way - to have a relationship with us.

Verse 11, "And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." The lost world we live in approaches life with fingers crossed. They're hoping luck is on their side. We approach life with our eyes fixed on the cross! God demonstrated His love. He made a scene. He spoke in an undeniable way. So why do we doubt Him? Why so you demand He tell you twice? What more could He do to better say He loves you, than what He's already done!

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...” It’s amazing how the actions of one can change the destiny of millions. On August 6, 1945 United States President Harry Truman authorized the dropping of an atomic bomb on the Japanese island of Hiroshima. Every building within 4.7 miles of its impact was obliterated – 90,000 people died instantly from the blast - eventually 320,000 people died from the fallout. This one event changed the world. It ushered in the nuclear era.

But in our text we're dealing with another, "*Adam bomb*" - a *A-d-a-m bomb*. In the Garden of Eden, the first man, *Adam*, *bombed!* He blew it, he sinned. He ate the forbidden fruit, and launched a rebellion against God. This Adam bomb is responsible for far more deaths than Truman's. It brought death to all humanity. Everyone of the 100 billion humans who've lived since time began have been impacted by Adam's bomb!

Paul was a rabbi and he's using rabbinical logic to make his point. His thinking is distinctively Jewish. Jews held the concept of "*Racial Solidarity*" or "*Federal Headship*" – that one person can act on behalf of a nation of people. Remember the challenge of the Philistines. Rather than waste the lives of thousands the two sides sent out a champion to fight on behalf of their nation. It was David versus Goliath. The Jews had an "*one for all*" mentality. This is Paul's rationale. One person, a designated representative, can act by proxy for a whole race of people. Thus, when Adam sinned, as father of the human race, his sin was passed down to all his future descendants.

Here's what's happened... the entire human gene pool has been contaminated. You and I are born with tainted blood. It's poisoned with sin. You've heard the expression "*One bad apple spoils the whole bunch.*" That's true. Adam ate an apple, and became a bad apple. The Bible teaches that every human is born with a sin nature. It's been said, "*we aren't sinners because we sin, we sin because we're sinners.*" We inherit sin from Adam. Ephesians 2:3 says we "*we are by nature children of wrath.*" Mom, dad, I hate to break it to you, but that cute, precious, adorable little baby you tuck into bed at night is in reality a diabolical sinner incognito.

Ever bit into an apple and discovered a worm inside? There's no hole in the skin, and you wonder, "*how did the worm get in there?*" What happens is an egg is laid in the apple blossom, and when the worm hatches it finds itself on the inside of the apple. It has to eat its way out! And this is how sin works. It begins inside us, and eats its way out into his attitudes and actions. An entire football team is penalized when one man jumps offside. Likewise because of Adam's bomb the whole world is born into sin and subject to death. "*In a sense our death warrant is written into our birth certificate.*"

Verse 13, (*For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come...*) Follow Paul's logic... For 2600 years - from Adam to Moses - mankind sinned, but because the law had not been given, God didn't hold mankind accountable for his sin. Yet people still died? A death sentence was still being applied and carried out. All mankind was suffering for the sin we inherited from Adam. Even though we weren't guilty of Adam's specific sin, we still received his punishment.

I know this sounds unfair to modern-day Americans, but before we accuse God of unethical treatment there're a couple of points we need to consider. First, what makes you think you could've done better than Adam? Here's a \$100 bill to any honest person who can go a week without committing a sin - no lustful thoughts, no selfish desires – a C-note for just one sinless week! When the United States competes in an international track meet we send our fastest men and women. If we lose I don't moan and grumble that I wasn't given a chance to race. I know the runners we sent to represent our nation were our very best - *far faster than me* – thus, if they lost, I lost with them! This is how we should feel about Adam. He was God's special creation. An unmarried man - no hurts or hang-ups. If anyone could've lived a sinless life it was Adam. He was the best humanity had to offer, yet he still bombed.

And here's the second reason we shouldn't buck Paul's logic... Verse 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.*" If *sin* enters the world through one man's *rebellion*, then *salvation* enters through one man's *righteousness*. Think of it like this, if you insist on standing on your own two feet – *and don't think it's fair to be burdened with Adam's sin* – then God will allow you to make your own attempt at a sinless life. If you're the one responsible for your own sin, then

you're the one responsible for your own salvation. Because sin is passed down by *one man*, salvation can also be received from *one man*. Forgiveness is passed down to us by faith in Jesus!

Verse 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. 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.) Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." Through the power of one, Adam, sin reigns in the world, but now through the power of one, Jesus, grace reigns in us.

And note the contrasts in these verses.... Adam brought condemnation, Jesus brings justification... in Adam we're bound-up, in Jesus grace abounds... in Adam we receive a sentence of sin, in Jesus we receive sinless status... in Adam there's death, in Christ there's life. John Calvin once wrote "**Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy.**" The *damage* done by Adam's sin is more than made up for by the *deliverance* that comes through the Jesus' obedience. Adam's bomb is not nearly as potent as the explosion of grace that comes through Jesus.

Chapter 5 ends, "**Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**" In the original language it reads, "where sin abounds, grace super-abounds." **Sin can't cause a breach grace can bridge.** I love how the Phillips translation renders this verse... "Though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God His grace is wider and deeper still!"

Mel Trotter was a hopeless alcoholic. When his little girl lay in her casket Trotter stole the shoes off the corpse to buy some cheap wine. But one day Mel walked into a rescue mission and met Jesus. He was so incredibly transformed that 8 years later he was opening rescue mission across the country. Though sin had abounded in Mel's life, grace abounded much more. Though sin can have a vice-grip, grace is stronger. Be thankful that God's ability to forgive, and lift, and save is mightier than our ability to mess life up!