

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ROMANS 4-5

This morning I want to start with a Top Ten List. Here are the top ten things in life that never change...

- 10) Everyone is accountable to someone.
- 9) No one lives forever (*unless you're raptured*).
- 8) You can't please everyone.
- 7) You'll never catch up with the Joneses. (*There is always someone a little further along than you.*)
- 6) You can't control what someone else thinks.
- 5) Yesterday. (*You can't change the past.*)
- 4) Where you come from - your origin.
- 3) Injustice. (*Life isn't always fair.*)
- 2) Pain. (*A part of life is dealing with hardship.*)
- 1) The way to heaven.

The way to heaven has never and will never change.

God set up the itinerary to heaven at the onset of history, and the way you get to heaven then, is the way you get to heaven today. The way to heaven never changes. This is the point Paul makes in Romans 4...

The Gospel Paul preached in 58 AD was the same Gospel that made Abraham right with God in 1800 BC. Nothing over the 2000 years that separated Paul and Abraham changed or improved the Gospel. And there's been no alterations or modifications to the Gospel over the 2000 years since! The Gospel of God is immutable.

We become pleasing to God not by *obeying rules* or *observing rituals* - **not by trying, but by trusting.**

Romans 4 begins, “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.”

Abraham was the most revered figure in Judaism. He was the father of God’s people, Israel. In fact, the rabbis exaggerated his virtue. The Jewish Book of Jubilee claims, “Abraham was perfect in all his deeds.”

The Jews assumed God accepted Abraham because of his goodness or good works. It was his stellar character, untarnished pedigree, exemplary morality, diligent service that gained God’s approval, *but it was none of the above*. If so, Abraham could’ve boasted...

Paul does a little Scriptural digging to prove his point. He goes to the beginning of the Torah, to Genesis 15:6, and flags **the moment** Abraham was declared righteous. He says in verse 3, “For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Abraham was chosen by God for one reason only - **his faith**.

It’s interesting, you might think God chose Abraham after one of his triumphs, his high points...*When he uprooted his family at God’s prompting and moved them from Ur to Canaan... Or when he stood on Mount Moriah, and lifted up his knife to sacrifice his promised son Isaac...* But neither case won God’s acceptance.

No, Genesis 15 was not a high mark for Abraham. At the time he was *pouting* - *complaining* that he had no heir.

Abraham feared that he would die without a son, and be forced to leave his wealth to his servant.

Yet in his moment of doubt God spoke to Abraham of that servant, "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 lowest moment of *deficiency*, God blew him away with His *sufficiency*.

God promised Abraham, not only would he have a son, he would father a nation. And at that moment, Genesis 15:6 we're told, "(Abraham) believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." Abraham's faith made him right with God! He gained God's approval, not because of *a great act on his part*, but because of *a great promise from God's heart*. The father of the Jews pleased God and was accepted by God, not because of a *feat*, but due to His *faith*!

Paul continues in verse 4, "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt." This sounds like an All-American concept, "A good day's work deserves a good day's pay." Pay your workers.

Though this might be a good rule for the workplace, it doesn't apply to God's kingdom. If God's favor, *thus our salvation*, can be earned; then it makes God our debtor. God owes us. And God is no one's debtor!

Thus, salvation can never be earned. It's not wages, it's a gift - by "grace" - it's love that's on the house! A person either trusts in their *own grit* or in *God's grace*.

If Abraham could be *good enough, pure enough, sure enough, or endure enough*; then God would be obligated to him. But God owes no one. All His blessings come freely by grace through faith! Thus, 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 our faith in God’s promise that justifies us, and gains for us a right standing with God. This means heaven will be full of “**Hallelu-jahs,**” not “**Hallelu-mes.**” In heaven it’s God Who gets the glory!

Verse 6, “**Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works...**” Paul now moves forward 800 years in history, from 1800 to 1000 BC, and from one *Hebrew hero* to another, from Abraham to David, to prove the way to heaven hasn’t change.

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.***” This was written after David's downfall. His one night stand with “*Bathsheba*” followed by murder and an ugly cover-up caused him years of heartache. David had been *unrighteous*. He had nothing to present to God in the way of good works.

Yet God chose to forgive David’s sin. He didn’t “**impute**” - or credit his sin to his account. God hit the clear button on his calculator. Presto, the record of David’s sin vanished. *God cleared out His memory!* This is what He does for everyone who trusts in the grace that’s in Jesus. God does not impute sin.

Paul asks, **“Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also?”** Remember the Jews believed the act of circumcision was a requirement for God’s favor. Uncircumcised Gentiles could never be accepted or blessed by God.

And this idea is still around... *that certain deeds or rituals are prerequisites to God’s blessing.* There are Christians who believe faith alone gets you to heaven, but if you want God’s blessing you need more than faith - you earn it by *(fill in blank)*. For some folks it’s a form of baptism, or speaking in tongues, or taking communion once a week, or how you dress, or your music choices, or reading a particular Bible translation, or attending a certain church - *the list is endless.*

But if you don't meet their criteria you're considered a second-class Christian. Here, Paul contends that no *rite, or rule, or ritual* can add to our standing with God. ***We obtain and maintain His approval by faith alone!***

Remember **“Faith alone”** was the battle-cry of the Protestant Reformation. Roman Catholicism had no problem with faith, or the blood of Jesus, or Christ as Mediator, or biblical authority. Their issue with Martin Luther and his allies 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 in the book of Romans is crystal clear: **God’s favor is gained by faith and faith alone.**

Verse 9, “For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.” Again he goes back to Genesis. “How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.” The Jews said you had to be circumcised to be right with 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 being righteous. When He was declared right with God, the ritual didn't even exist. Likewise, baptism, communion, church attendance - *all the add-ons* - have nothing to do with our standing with God. They can help us grow, but our relationship with God is established by 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 and communion, it was an outward mark of an inward faith.

A sign doesn't *confer* righteousness, it *confirms* the righteousness that comes by faith. The uncircumcised Gentiles didn't have the sign, but they had the substance or **faith**. Faith made them right with God.

And thus, Abraham became the father of believing Gentiles and believing Jews. The issue that saves all men isn't religious rituals, or good works - but faith.

Verse 12, “**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 for righteousness by grace through faith. Abraham was declared righteous 500 years before God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Thus, righteousness preceded the Law.**

The way to heaven 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 *free* at the same time. One nullifies the other. You can't receive salvation through the work of Christ **and** your own good works.

“**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, not save the sinner**. Without a standard we wouldn't have known we were in violation of God's Law. You don't know you're speeding, if the speed limit isn't posted.

But it's not the Law that saves us. “**Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace...**” It's sad the folks I talk to that lack confidence in their relationship with God. You ask,

"Do you know God loves you?" "*I guess so.*" "Are your sins forgiven?" "*I think so.*" "Are you going to heaven when you die?" "*I hope so.*" But with God's *grace* there should be no *guesswork*. You find a certainty when your relationship with God depends on *God's promise* not *your own performance*.

Ever play "Chutes and Ladders" with your kiddos? Climb and climb the ladder - get nearer and nearer the prize - *but you're always thinking one wrong spin and it's down the chute...* And this is how some people live the Christian life. They're confident as long as they're doing good and climbing higher, but suddenly they *spin into sin* and they feel as if it's down the chute.

Grace assures us that we'll never lose our place on the board. Jesus died so we could always spin again...

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-ignorant Gentile, the blessings of God are received the same way - by the promise of grace.

Let's follow in Abraham's footsteps and have faith!

But the question arises, "*what is real faith?*" And to answer that question, Paul examines Abraham's faith. For Abraham doesn't just show us the need for faith, but his example helps us see what real faith looks like.

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 an all-mighty God - *Who brings something out of nothing...* Say you take an art class and you're told to sculpt a statue, but no one is issued any clay. You'd question the teacher's sanity. “*Hey, something doesn't come out of nothing*” - **but it can with God!**

The Bible teaches when God created the universe He did so “*ex nihilo,*” which is Latin for “*out of nothing.*”

Even today, *when hope is depleted... or there's no spark left in a marriage... or an adult child seems to be a lost cause... or a business is about to go under...* our God is still able to bring something out of nothing!

And God also specializes in resurrection. Paul says of God “*who gives life to the dead...*” *dead people, but also dead dreams, dead relationships, dead ends.*

Long before the resurrection of Jesus - as Abraham and Isaac started up the mountain, Abraham told his servant, “*We will come back.*” Not just “*I*” but “*We.*”

Isaac was the heir to God's promise. And it puzzled Abraham that the Giver of that promise told him to sacrifice the fulfillment of that promise. He rationalized it by believing God could raise Isaac from the dead.

I heard of an old seminary professor who had a sure-fire way to predict the success of his pastors-in-training. All he had to do was listen to a single sermon.

He said, "I come to hear if they are *big-Godders* or *little-godders*. 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-godders. 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-Godders and God will bless their ministry." The patriarch Abraham was a big-Godder and his BIG GOD responded to his faith!

Hey, we all have faith! You get sick and visit a doctor who's name you can't pronounce... his diplomas you haven't verified... the prescription he writes you can't read... it's 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... *and yet you take it, and expect to get better - **that's faith!*** We all have faith...

The only question is the ultimate object of our faith. In Mark 11:22 Jesus declared, "Have faith in God."

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 World Records, the oldest woman to birth a baby was from Spain. She was 66 years old... But the Bible tells us the record actually belongs to Abraham's wife, "Sarah."

Abraham impregnated Sarah at the incredibly old age of 90. Long past menopause - her reproductive chances *hopeless* - Sarah and Abe *hoped in God!* Friends said, "forget it." Doctors scoffed, "impossible." The only urging the couple had

was a word from God. God promised, and they refused to give up on God.

This couple knew the facts. Faith doesn't deny facts! It just looks beyond the facts. Faith factors God into the equation. *Perhaps it's a sin you can't shake, or a grim medical diagnosis, or a seemingly impossible situation, or a relationship that's hit the skids, or finances that have dried up* - and everyone tells you to give up.

Stop listening to everyone. God has the final say.

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.”** Here is faith, Abraham kept acting on God's promise. Though he was 100 and Sarah was 90 they kept locking the bedroom door at night. Sarah 45 years past menopause, was buying sexy lingerie and home pregnancy tests... Imagine the clerk at Baby Warehouse when they picked out a crib... And what a weird baby shower Sarah had! Of all the ladies present only Sarah believed she was going to have a baby.

Understand, true faith isn't *passive*, it's *aggressive*. It's faith to the extent that I'm willing to act on what I believe. *Real faith prays for rain; then walks out with an umbrella!... If it asks God for a job, it leaves the house in work clothes...* Genuine faith takes things, not as they are, but as God promises to make them. God is able to take nothing and make something beautiful.

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 the receiving of Abraham’s promise 25 years elapsed, yet Abraham refused to waver. Often, the longer the wait, the harder it is to remain confident. The more opportunity there is for doubts to creep in.

This is why the opposing football team often tries to “ice” the kicker. Just before the field goal attempt they’ll call time out. They want the kicker to have time to think. If the slightest doubt slips in, he’ll miss the kick.

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 his foot struck the ball.

Which brings us to verse 22, “And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Here is the beauty of the Gospel. God gives us the righteousness we lack, in exchange for the faith that we show. Here, faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness...

Of course, if you read the OT you have a problem. Abraham did not always show faith. The name “Hagar” isn’t just a pair of slacks! Recall the slave girl named “Hagar,” that Sarah sent into the tent as her proxy to have Abraham’s baby? Hagar went in a *maid* and came out a *mom*! It was not a bright spot for Abraham!

Obviously, faith doesn’t have to be perfect in order to be effectual. *An overall faith includes lapses in faith.*

And God forgives the lapses. Remember, justification means God treats me *just-as-if-I’d* never sinned, even when I

do. All the OT saints were flawed, and failed at times, but not once is an OT sin re-hashed in the NT. Evidently, **when God forgives He really does forgets!**

“Now it was not written for his 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 for us. How they were saved is how we're saved today. The way to heaven doesn't change. It's by faith in Jesus.

Romans 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.”** As a believer in Jesus here is the status you've received... You're **“justified”** - God treats you as if you never sin even when you do. *And justification has its perks..* You have **“peace with God”** and **“access to God”** and **“joy in God”** and the **“hope of God.”** You stand in grace now, and in God's glory for all eternity.

In fact, God's grace is at work in us now to perfect us through our trials... Verse 3, **“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”** The Greek word for **“tribulation”** is **“thilipsis”** - meaning **“to crush or squeeze under pressure.”** At times God squeezes us. He engineers pressure-packed situations to break us and shape us.

And it's vital, when you're squeezed, don't try to escape. Throughout my son's recent battle with Covid I reminded myself **never waste a crisis**. If God puts on the squeeze, let Him do the molding He desires. We're told, "**knowing that tribulation produces**" endurance, godly character, optimism. Pay attention to the lessons.

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.**" Another perk of justification is *the love of God poured into our hearts*.

Notice, God **pours out** His love by His Spirit into our heart. But He **sets out** His love by Jesus on the cross.

And speaking of God's love, "**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.**"

Once, a little boy was asked to donate blood to his sick sister. He didn't understand the procedure, but he loved his sis and would do anything for 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?**" The little boy had agreed to the blood transfusion thinking the procedure would cost him his very life! *That's love.*

Yet his brave and selfless act is still short of the degree Jesus loves us. Paul says it's one thing to die for someone

you love and who loves you. It's a totally different issue to lay down your life for an enemy!

Notice again, *when did God fall in love with you?* When you were "*without strength,*" "*ungodly,*" "*sinner,*" verse 10 even "*enemies.*" Before you cared a rip about God, He demonstrated His love for you on the cross.

Before you showed God the first inkling you'd ever serve Him, or follow Him, or love Him - He 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. While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us.

On April 6, 32 AD God made a scene for all heaven and earth to see. Once and for all, He demonstrated His love for us. If you ever doubt God's love, He loves you this much (arms stretched). God **pours out** His love by His Spirit, but **sets out** His love on the cross.

Verse 9, "*Much more than, 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.*" Realize, God is no pacifist. One day, in His wrath, God will punish this evil world with a sharp sword! He is *the Lord-who-strikes*, but He doesn't want to strike. God loves us, so in our place God 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 spikes. His side *pierced* and heart *punctured* by a spear. **And I hope by now you get the point!** Jesus was struck so you wouldn't have to 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 to reconcile you to God.

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.**” Roman pagans crossed their fingers and hoped, but Christians hope in the cross. Through the cross of Jesus mankind was reconciled, or brought back into fellowship with God.

“**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 man can change the destiny of millions.

On August 6, 1945 US President Harry Truman dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese island of Hiroshima. Every building within 4.7 miles of its impact was obliterated. 90,000 people died from the blast, another 320,000 Japanese died from the fallout. The bomb changed the world. It ushered in the nuclear era.

But in our text we're dealing with another, “*Atom bomb*” - an *A-d-a-m bomb*. For in the Garden of Eden, the first man, *Adam, bombed out!* He sinned. He ate forbidden fruit, and launched a rebellion against God.

This Adam bomb is responsible for far more deaths than Truman’s bomb. It brought death to all humanity.

Paul was a rabbi by training, and here his thinking is distinctively Jewish. He uses rabbinical logic to make an important point. The Hebrews held to the concept of "[Racial Solidarity](#)" or "[Federal Headship](#)" - it's the idea that one person can act on behalf of a whole nation.

Recall the Philistine challenge - rather than waste the lives of thousands of soldiers why not both sides send a champion to fight on behalf of their nation. It ended up being David versus Goliath. But it illustrates how the ancient Hebrews had a "[one for all](#)" mentality.

And this is Paul's rationale here. One person, a designated representative, can act by proxy for a whole race of people. Thus, when Adam sinned, as the father of the human race, he acted on behalf of his descendants - his sin was passed down to his progeny.

Here's what happened when Adam bombed... *we call it "[The Fall Of Mankind](#)" for a reason.* The entire human gene pool was contaminated. Thus, you and I are born with tainted blood. We're poisoned with sin.

You've heard the expression "[One bad apple spoils the whole bunch.](#)" That's more true than you know.

Adam ate an apple, and became a bad apple. The Bible teaches that thereafter every human is born with a sin nature. It's said, "[we aren't sinners because we sin, we sin because we're sinners.](#)" We inherit our sin from Adam. Ephesians 2:3 puts it "[we are by nature children of wrath.](#)" Mom, dad, I hate to break it to you, but that cute, precious, adorable baby you tuck into bed at night is in reality a diabolical sinner incognito.

Ever bite into an apple and discover a worm inside? There's no hole in the skin, and you wonder, "how in the world 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 eats its way out! *And this is how sin works.* It begins inside us - we are born with sin in our heart - and it eats its way out into our attitudes and actions.

It's interesting, that an entire football team can get penalized five yards when one man jumps offside.

Well, 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 was yet to be given, God didn't hold us accountable for our sin. *Yet people still died!* We were under a death sentence. So if we weren't punished for our sin; we must've suffered from the sin we inherited from Adam.

I realize this idea of suffering for someone else's sin sounds unfair to modern ears, but before we accuse God of unethical treatment consider a few points.

What makes you think you could've done better than Adam? You would've bombed too, probably far worse.

When the US competes in an international track meet we send our fastest runners. If we lose I don't grumble that I wasn't given a chance. I know the runners that represented our nation were *faster than me* - if they lost, I would have too! This is how I feel about Adam. He was God's special creation, an unmarred man. He had 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 Adam still bombed.

And here's another 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* can enter by one man's *righteousness*.

If it were up to us to be sinless and we failed; then only we could save ourselves. But since we're sinners due to Adam's sin we can become righteous through the righteousness of a Savior. In God's wisdom, sin was passed on by *one man*, so salvation could also be received from *one man* - and His name is 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 reigned in the world, but now through the power of one, Jesus, grace reigns in us.

And note the contrast, *Adam brought condemnation, Jesus justification... In Adam sin rules, in Jesus grace abounds... In Adam there's death, in Christ there's life...* John Calvin wrote, "Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy." Adam's bomb was not nearly as potent as Jesus' explosion of grace!

Chapter 5 closes, "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." The Greek text reads, "where sin abounds, grace super-abounds." Sin can't cause a breach, that grace can't bridge.

Here, I love the Phillips translation, "Though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God His grace is wider and deeper still!" Because of grace there is nothing you've done Jesus won't forgive - *if you ask...*