



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dr. S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“Man and Sin’s Remedy, or the End of Sin”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the teaching of Holy Scripture concerning man and concerning sin. And we thank Thee that it has brought us to sense our need and through the Holy Spirit we have been brought to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the remedy for our sin. And now, tonight, Lord, as we conclude our study in the subject of man, may the Holy Spirit again teach us the Scriptures, to Thy glory.

We pray, in Jesus’ name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight, our subject is “Man and Sin’s Remedy, or the End of Sin.” And this is our last study in this series of studies on anthropology and hamartiology. And so, we will not be having a class on any more Tuesdays, for a little while, cause as most of you know, I’m tired of Texas and so, I’m leaving [Laughter], three weeks from tonight. And, as I’m soaring over the Atlantic, I’ll be thinking of you while you’re sitting before your fires and enjoying Texas’ weather, and we head over into the cold country.

Now, our subject tonight is “Man and Sin’s Remedy,” and I want you to turn with me to Romans, chapter 5, again. And, we’re going to look at the latter part of the chapter,

which we have considered so often at various points in our study of Hamartiology, the doctrine of sin and Anthropology, the doctrine of man.

And, the outline tonight, as you can see, is very simple and very short, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that the message is going to be short. So, you must not be too hopeful.

First, a few words of introduction. We often trace our ancestors back generations, and if you were Charlestonians, you would trace them back as far as you possibly can. I think I have quoted in your presence before the saying that others have said about Charlestonians, that they are people who eat rice and worship their ancestors. And, we all have that native tendency to want to look back at our history and if it’s good to brag a little about it and if it’s not to forget it.

We use this kind of expression often when we say that we inherit certain characteristics from people who have preceded us. We say, John gets his brown hair from his grandfather or Mary gets her beautiful blue eyes from her mother or we may even say, he inherits his sour disposition from his grandfather or statements to this effect. And, one of the most famous was a statement that a 17<sup>th</sup> Century dramatist wrote of one of his characters, “He’s a chip of the old block.” And so, we have the expression that we often use, “he is a chip off of the old block.”

Now, Adam we have been studying and we have discovered that Adam is a fallen man, like Humpty Dumpty, he fell. But unlike Humpty, Adam can be made again. Now, that has been Paul’s point throughout this section. The main thing that he has been trying to stress is the unity of the many in the one. Whether the unity of the man in Adam or the unity of the many in the last Adam, Jesus Christ. There is a solidarity in sin and there is a solidarity in righteousness. And, we have been pointing out that as a result of our solidarity with Adam in his sin; we are guilty of the guilt of the first sin, Adam’s sin. And so the first sins guilt has been imputed to us. And, not only do we have the guilt of the sin of Adam imputed to us, but we also have inherited from him a corrupted nature.

And so, as a result of Adam’s sin, we are sinners; our nature, our inmost disposition is touched by sin, naturally. We are, to use the same type of doctrine and stress its pervasive aspects; we are people who are totally depraved.

Now, as we’ve been saying, totally depraved does not mean that we are as bad as we could be, that we have committed every sin that it is possible for a man to commit. It does not deny the fact that men do good; that they do civil good, that they may even do religious good or what appears to be religious good. But, what we are saying by the doctrine of total depravity is that “all” of man’s faculties are touched by sin and that he does not do anything that is acceptable before God. That is, he does not do spiritual good. And then, we pointed out that as a result of Adam’s sin, we are unable, the doctrine of inability is the doctrine touches our human will, and so, we have learned, I hope we have learned, that our human wills have been touched by sin and, consequently, they cannot respond positively to God. The only way in which the human will may respond positively to God is by being moved that way by the work of the Holy Spirit within.

So we have inherited the first sin’s guilt, we have a corrupted nature, we are unable to do any spiritual good, and then in one of our last studies, time before last, we pointed out that as a result of this we are subject to eternal punishment. And so everyone in Adam, because of Adam’s sin, has become affected in these four ways.

As a matter of fact, I think we can put it this way and simply say that all of humanity has been under foreign domination ever since Adam sinned. But there is another side to it, as we know. There is another lordship. There is another head. And, by faith in the one who has come after Adam, we may come from the first Adam into the last Adam, by abounding grace. We often sing a hymn with these words, “Grace, Grace, God’s Grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”

Now, that is what Paul is going to be stressing in these verses that we are going to look at tonight. And, the key word, the key expression that Paul uses is the expression, “Much more.” Let’s look at verse 9 first:

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Verse 10) “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

(And verse 15) “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

(And verse 17) “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

(And, finally, in verse 20) “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Now then, we want to look at our section tonight and take a look at, specifically, these things that Paul is talking about, stressing the abounding grace that is ours through our new head, the last Adam, Jesus Christ. Verses 13 and 14, express the unity of all in the sin of Adam. Let’s read those verses.

“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 them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”

What Paul is simply saying is this that as a result of the one sin of Adam death has penetrated the whole of the human race. But, further, he goes on to point out that as a

result of this penetration by sin of the whole human race, all have died and all come under the judgment of that first sin. And, the non-imputation of sin during the pre-Mosaic period proves that death comes from Adam’s sin. Listen to what he says in verse 13, again “For until the law,” that is, until Mount Sinai, until Exodus sin was in the world. No one questions the fact that men sinned from the time of Adam to Moses. But, Paul adds, sin is not imputed when there is no law. In other words, men did not die because of the sin that they committed during that period. They were sinners, they committed sin, they deserved to die because of their sin. But, sin is not imputed when there is no Law. Turn back to chapter 4, verse 15. Paul says “Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.” In other words, there is no overstepping of a law because there is no law. Well then, if men, though they sinned, are not reckoned by God to be guilty of breaking law, then why did they die? Death is the penal consequences of sin. So, if there was sin from Adam to Moses, but sin is not reckoned because there was no law, then why did men die? It would have seemed that they would have been guiltless of the sin that would bring death.

But you see, Paul’s theology requires us to believe that the men who lived between Adam and Moses are reckoned by God to have been guilty of Adam’s sin. And so, the fact that they died is evidence of the fact that they did not die because they committed sins themselves. They died because they had imputed to them Adam’s sin. And, he explains in verse 14, “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”

Now, it would seem to me that what Paul has in mind here, in verse 14, when he says, “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” that he is referring here to infants and imbeciles. That is, if this universal infliction of the penalty of death pertains even to those who have not sinned “after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”

Now, we could at least argue the case that the reason men died from Adam to Moses is because they committed personal sins. We might say, “Oh, but I don’t accept the theology of imputation that you’re talking about. It seems to me that the reason men died is because they sinned. And they are guilty because they have sinned. They are responsible for their own acts of sin. So then, I would say to you, well, is that true of an imbecile? Is he responsible for his own acts of sin? And you would say, No, I don’t guess so. But, they are an unusual case. Then, I would say, well, what about infants? Infants die. And infants have not had an opportunity to commit any sins for which they are responsible. And yet, they die? Why do they die? Well, if death is an infliction of a penalty because of sin, it’s not an infliction of a penalty because of “their” sin; it must be because they have participated in Adam’s sin. Well, that infant is a reference to a special class again. But, my dear disputant, in argument, all adults were once infants. And so, if infants are subject to the penalty of death because of Adam’s sin and not their own, since we all were at one time infants, at least, I think almost all of us were at one time infants, then it’s obvious that we all have come under the judgment of death. Because, if one infant dies because of Adam’s sin and then we establish this point that infants die because of Adam’s sin, and it is evident that they do not have any sin for which they are responsible themselves, well then, we all must be guilty of Adam’s sin. And so, Paul has very neatly pointed out then that there is a solidarity in sin and that all of us are involved in Adam’s sin. So, that is what he says in verse 13 and verse 14.

Now, let’s move on to the contrastive analogy of the two Adams. And, you will notice that at the end of verse 14, Paul has expressed in a clause a truth that is something of the theme of the verses that follow, for he has said here “Who is the figure of him that was to come.” In the Greek text, this is the word “tupos” from which we get in English type. Now, a lot has been made over type. Christians often speak about types. Some of them speak about others who believe in typology to an unusual degree. And, sometimes, they speak deprecatingly of them. They say, “He’s just so full of typology that most of his

interpretations are farfetched.” And, on the other hand others will say, “Well, he doesn’t see types in the Bible at all.” All of this is really nonsensical talk because the term “type” is not a technical term in the Bible. It simply means, an example, that’s all that’s involved in it.

And, consequently, all we are saying is that Adam was an example of him that was to come. That is, there are certain features about Adam that “Adamrate,” the ministry of Jesus Christ. When we say there are “types” in the Old Testament, we’re saying, simply, that there are there divinely intended all of the illustrations of the Bible are divinely intended, divinely intended “Adamrations” foreshadowings of the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ. All of the offerings of the Old Testament, for example, we say are typical. We do not mean that there is something unique about them other than the fact that they look forward to the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ. But here we have Paul saying that Adam is a type, a figure of him that was to come. He is a type of Christ.

Well, immediately, if we think about this for a moment we might say to ourselves, well now, if Adam is a type or an example of Christ, in what way is he an example of Christ? It would seem that he is an example in very few ways because Adam is the cause of our sin and death, whereas, Jesus Christ is the cause of our righteousness and light. It would seem that Adam and Jesus Christ have very little in common. And yet, we know that Paul calls Jesus Christ, “The Last Adam.” Further, he calls him the “Second Man.” And so, we do have this analogy between them. But what is the analogy?

Well, it is a contrastive analogy. Notice the 15<sup>th</sup> verse, after he has said that Adam is a “type” or a figure of him that was to come, he says: “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift.” In other words, these two Adam’s are alike, but they are alike in about one thing. They are alike in this that the act of each one of them affects those that are related to them. The act of the first Adam affects all who are related to him. The act of the last Adam affects all who are related to him. Otherwise, there is a marked contrast between the two, because in the case of the first Adam, men die. In the case of the second Adam,

the elect live, and so on. In other words, there is a contrast in almost every way except that they each in their act affect a large number of people, in that, they are similar. Now, I think we can also point out some other things that are similar, and I will refer to one in just a moment, but this is the primary way in which they are alike. Otherwise, they are contrasted. And, you will notice, throughout this section, that the apostle largely spends his time contrasting the first Adam and the last Adam.

Let’s read on in verse 15, “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of the one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” Now, here we have reference to the fact that Jesus Christ’s work there is a surplus of grace. He says, “Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, abounded unto many.” Let’s think about that for just a moment. What he is saying in the 15<sup>th</sup> verse is that Adam’s offense has led to the death of all that includes infants, that includes imbeciles, that includes everyone for everyone was in Adam. All of our genes and chromosomes were at one time in one man, in Adam, so that everything has come from him. And, our death has come from him. But, Paul does not simply say that things are restored in Jesus Christ. He says, “Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” And, it would seem that what he is trying to say here is that through the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ, not only do we have what Adam lost, but we have more than that.

I want you to turn back with me, if you will, to Leviticus, chapter 5 in verse 14. Leviticus, chapter 5 in verse 14. This is the great section of the Book of Leviticus that has to do with the Levitical offerings and, in the midst of it, there is an account of what is called the trespass offering. It is an unusual offering. And, in a moment I want to read these verses. But, let me remind you of this, in the case of the offerings; we have many offerings as you know in the Old Testament that point forward to Jesus Christ, there is a series of them here. For example, we have the burnt offering. We have the meal

offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. All of these offerings are Old Testament ceremonies that are designed to look forward to the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ. The burnt offering, for example, expresses among other things the perfect devotion of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in giving himself to the Father. The meal offering expresses the perfect character of our Lord, involved in his own act, in his person and in his act. The peace offering expresses how, through the ministry of the Lord, Jesus, peace has been brought between the rebel and God. The sin offering stresses the fact that the Lord, Jesus, has become sin for us. The trespass offering stresses a special side of the ministry of the Lord, Jesus. It expresses the side of the effects of sin. For example, not only did Adam’s sin cause Adam to lose life and righteousness, but Adam also affected us by his sin, so that his act affected himself and it also affected his progeny.

Now, in this offering, the trespass offering, there is a unique feature to it that stresses the fact that, not only is atonement designed to restore what has been lost, but to add to it. Let’s read a few verses of it, beginning at verse 14.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering. And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto,” in other words, he shall give another twenty percent, “Add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.”

Now, in this offering which is this trespass offering which represents a sin of trespass against the Lord, there is involved expiation, there is in that 15<sup>th</sup> verses reference to the animal that is to be brought. And so, there is atonement expiation. In verse 16, it

is stated that he shall “Make amends for the harm that he has done.” In other words, there is restoration, or restitution. And, in that 16<sup>th</sup> verse there is also a “fifth part” added thereto. So, as a result of the sin, God is actually a gainer through this transaction. There is sin on the part of man, but man brings the offering in order to expiate the sin, then he makes amends for it, he restores that which has been taken away and adds the fifth part thereto, so that God is richer through this transaction. Later on, another aspect of the offering which is for or against man, in chapter 6, the other part of it, we have the same little ritual that is undergone. There is restitution, there is expiation and then there is compensation to the brother who has been wronged, so that the brother is better off.

Now, these are the things that happen when Adam sinned. When Adam sinned, he lost life and righteousness for himself then he lost it also for us. But not only that, he took away from God the righteousness and the obedience that man should have rendered God. And so, in the trespass offering there is an designed intent to on the part of God to represent that in the ministry of the Lord, Jesus, we have not only the restoration of all that belonged to God, the perfect obedience of the son of God, the expiation of the sin, but the addition of the fifth part thereto. That is, as a result of the beautiful obedience of the Lord, Jesus, he renders to God that which is more pleasing to God than the obedience of men would have been, because of its excellence.

And, furthermore, not only through the ministry of the Lord, Jesus, is God better off than he was before, so to speak, because we have this beautiful picture of the infinite obedience, the infinitely perfect and lovely obedience of the Lord, Jesus, but men are better off, too, for their sin has not only been expiated, they have not only been restored to the kind of life that Adam had, but they have been given the fifth part thereto, so that we enjoy a kind of life that Adam did not have. And so, the fifth part has been added thereto. It’s just as if I were to be walking down the street in the dark and someone should come up behind me and stick a gun in my side and say, “Stick your hands up.” I don’t even think they bother to do that anymore. I think today they just shoot you

through the back. But, nevertheless, let’s suppose we’re back in old times and men actually do hold you up. And so, I stick my hands up like that and he says, “Let me see your wallet.”

And I say, “Uh, oh” because I know that I have three dollars and nineteen cents in my pockets. And so, he gets my wallet out and he gets his three dollars and nineteen cents, and he’s very upset over it, of course. But, nevertheless, something happens and he runs with my three dollars and nineteen cents. And so, I hastily call the police and the police are Johnny-on-the-spot, as usual, and they come out immediately. And they locate the suspect and they manage to arrest him. And so, the poor man is tried for his crime and he must expiation to the law, furthermore, he must restore the three dollars and nineteen cents that belongs to me. But, if we were under the divine law of the trespass offering, he would be required to give me sixty-three cents back. So, I would not only have three dollars and nineteen cents, but I was actually having sixty-three more cents, which on the spur of the moment I believe equals about three dollars and eighty-two cents. And so, I’d say, “Ah, I’m glad I was robbed because now I’m rich.”

Well now, that is a simple human illustration of what we have in the trespass offering of the Lord, Jesus Christ, because he has restored that which he did not take away. He came to offer the sacrifice. As a result of his sacrifice, God is infinitely pleased and glorified through the perfect obedience of the son, something Adam could never have rendered to God, and we are better off because we have the kind of life that Adam did not have. So, when Paul writes in verse 15 “Much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” He’s speaking about the beautiful effects of the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Well, let’s read on, verse 16:

“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s

offense death reined by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

Now, here in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, Paul adds a new fact as he goes along in his recounting of the ministry of these two men. He tells us in verse 17 how this gift is received. He says “Much more they who receive abundance of grace” And so, there in that little word, receive, which is the Greek word, *lambano*, which means to receive, it is the word of receiving Jesus Christ as one’s Savior. “They that receive abundance of grace.” And so, the way that this is given to us is by grace. It is something that we receive, Paul says. Let’s read on. Verse 18, “Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” And so, here, we have a redemptive act upon the part of Jesus Christ, and on the other hand, an infernal kind of act upon the part of Adam, and in this 18<sup>th</sup> verse, Paul has reached, in a sense, the kind of climax of his argument here, by saying, that “By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, and so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came unto all men unto justification of life.”

Now, I want you to notice a couple of things in the 18<sup>th</sup> verse. And the first thing that I want you to notice is that little expression, “the righteousness of one.” For, in the Greek text, this word really means the “righteous act” of one. And, he is referring, of course, to the work of the Lord, Jesus Christ, on the cross at Calvary. That was his righteous act.

Now, I know that it is true that Jesus Christ in his life fulfilled the law, and he fulfilled the law for us. But the thing that Paul stresses is not so much our Lord’s fulfilling the law for us, as the fact that Jesus Christ went to the cross and there died for us, for atonement in the New Testament is always linked with the cross of Jesus Christ. It is said to be in his blood, or by his blood, it is said to be through the cross. It is said to be by

the one righteous act, and that is the meaning of the term here. “By the righteous act of one.” So whenever we talk about atonement we are talking about the saving work of the Lord, Jesus on the cross at Calvary.

Now, in this, again, Adam and Christ are alike in the sense that their acts affect a great number of people. Adam’s act affects all of those in him. Jesus Christ’s act affects all who are related to him. And so, in that sense, they are alike. I think there is another sense in which they are alike, too. Paul does not develop this, but I think it’s fair to say something about it at this point because we might get the impression that Adam and Christ were only alike in that the act of the one affected the many. Remember, in the Old Testament, when Eve was created, Adam was put into a deep sleep by God. I’ve suggested or referred you rather to the fact that the invention of chloroform was related to that particular experience that Adam had. Adam was put to sleep and God operated, as a surgeon, on his side, and took one of his ribs and out of that rib he constructed a woman.

I was sitting in Believers Chapel about nine years ago, in one of the Bible classes, and I think Mr. Howard Pryor was teaching the Sunday school class. And he was teaching the Book of Genesis and he was talking about this particular thing, and one of the elders was sitting by me and you want to know what elders are talking about all of the time, they look very solemn and pious, you know. But when Mr. Pryor was expounding this particular text and talking about how Adam was operated upon and that rib was taken out of the side of Eve. One of the elders, who is a medical doctor, punched me in the side and said, “Dig that side kick?” [Laughter] Which was a unique observation on that particular part of Genesis, chapter 2, to me.

Well now, you remember that Adam was put to sleep and out of the rib, Adam received his wife. Well, that of course, is a beautiful little illustration of how Jesus Christ, upon the cross, gave his life for those who were to be his, the church of Jesus Christ, and out of that deep sleep of the cross, the basis was laid for the bringing of the church to our

Lord as his bride. And so, there is a remarkable analogy in that, between Adam, the first, and Adam, the last.

But, let’s go on with Paul’s exposition. Verse 18 also says, “By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Free gift. Now, that’s a strange kind of expression, isn’t it? It’s the kind of expression you’d only find in the Bible.

Someone came to Mr. Spurgeon once and asked him why he was always talking about “free grace.” Free grace. And the man went on to say, “Mr. Spurgeon if it’s grace, it’s free. And if it’s free it’s grace. So why do you keep talking about free grace.” Well, he said, “I guess the reason I talk about “free grace” is because I just want to make assurance doubly sure.” So, we’ll talk about “free grace,” but let’s remember that grace is free, and if it’s free, it’s grace.

Today is this is the time of the year when people think about Christmas shopping, and how nice it would be if we could just walk into any of the stores and get our gifts on the principle of free grace, that is not having to pay for them. Well, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

Now, let’s continue, verse 19: “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Now, here, you’ll notice Paul adds one other thing. He has pointed out that the act of Adam affects all in Adam, the act of Jesus Christ affects all who are related to him. Further, he has said the way we receive the death is that we are in Adam and it comes to us as a judgment. The way we receive the gift of life in Jesus Christ is we receive it as a free gift. Furthermore, in verse 19, he moves to the inner side of these things and says that the reason for the judgment that came upon all is Adam’s disobedience. So, he looks at the inner side of the act; not so much the outer transgression as that which expresses the heart of Adam when he did his act of transgression. And so, also, in the case of Jesus Christ. In one verse he has talked about the act objectively, it is the righteous act of one, when he died on the

Cross. But it is the expression of an inner obedience. And so in verse 19 then, we look at the inward side of this. And, he adds, “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Now, we come to the superiority of abounding grace. Someone who is listening very carefully and who knows anything about Jewish law at this point might have an objection. He might say to Paul, “Well, Paul, did not the Law deal with sin and righteousness? Was it not the purpose of the Law of Moses given on Mount Sinai to deal with those two things? Was it not designed by God to deal with sin? Was it not designed to deal with righteousness? Now, Paul, you are making Adam the source of both. You are making Adam the source of sin, Adam the first. You are making the last Adam the source of righteousness. So where does the Law come in? After all, Paul, almost all of the Old Testament was written to men under law. Exodus 20 is very early in the Old Testament. The whole rest of the book represents men under law. What effect then does law have on salvation? According to you, it has very little.”

And so now, Paul answers that implied objection. He tells us in verse 20, “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Now, that Greek word “to enter” is a word that means to “come in alongside”. It was a word that was used of an actor who played an accessory part in a play. It is as if, for example, we are looking at a scene in a theatre and in the forefront of the stage, the two principal actors or actors and actresses were playing out an important scene, and everybody’s attention was focused upon them. And, it is as if at the climax of their acting which we were looking at, there should someone enter by the back part of the stage, like a butler, and go over and take an ashtray and empty the ashtray into a little sack and walk out again. In order to express the acting of an accessory part, this Greek word would have been used. The law came in alongside. The law was not the important thing. The important thing was sin. But, the law came in, in order to reveal sin. The law came in that the offense might abound. The law came in not only to reveal

the fact that we were sinners, but even to instigate us in sin, because, as you know, human nature is such that the moment that you say to human nature “do not do that,” that is the one thing that we want to do.

We know, for example, from history that when prohibition was enacted, that was the reason people began to drink. The moment that we passed the prohibition laws, there were a lot of people said, “I think I’d like a drink.” [Laughter] In fact, John Nance Garner, one of your own Texans. You notice I’ve been living in Texas longer than I’ve lived anywhere else, when I’m out of Texas, I say I’m a Texan. But here, I’m not too happy about this illustration. So, here, you Texans, one of your own famous Texans, John Nance Garner, it is said on very good authority, that when the Prohibition law was passed, that whenever he invited people into his home, before dinner, he would walk over to the side board and he would pull out a decanter of whiskey and he would open it up. He would put down a few glasses. And he would pour out the whiskey. And then he would take it and pass it around to various ones, and then he would raise it up and say, “Let’s strike a blow for liberty.” [Laughter] And, as a result of that, that’s not why he began to drink, but that was one of the things that urged him on.

Now, I know, I must confess, that during the war when we began to find it very difficult, that is, the war, World War II, when coffee became very difficult to get, well, who should begin to drink coffee? But S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. I never had drunk coffee before. So far as I know, I’d never drunk a cup of coffee in my life until the World War II came and we were told that coffee was very difficult to get. And so, consequently, when it was offered, I began to take it. And so, I’d become a coffee drinker as a result of that.

Now, the law came in alongside that the offense might abound. And, it’s very interesting too, to me at least, that the word in verse 20 for offense is the Greek word, *parapiptōma*, which means to fall by the wayside. And, it is a beautiful word and very fitting for Adam, for you see, Adam had a fall, like Humpty Dumpty. And so, what the text says for us then is that the law entered that the fall might abound. In other words, on

Mount Sinai, God gave the law and he gave the law as a rule of life for Israel. But, he also intended that by that law Israel should recognize their sin, should see their sin in new light, in heinous light, and they should then turn to the remedy that was to come, the Lord, Jesus Christ. And so by virtue of the law coming, as a result of that, the offense, the fall in the lives of all who were interested in spiritual things, the fall might abound in them. So when the law came and said, “Thou shalt not do this,” “Thou shalt not do that,” “Thou shalt not covet,” and we broke the law, then the fall abounded in us. We saw that we, too, had sinned, as Adam discovered in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed the injunction of Genesis 2:17.

So, Paul says, the law came in alongside that the fall of Adam might abound in the lives of all who were exercised spiritually by that Law of Moses. And, further, he adds, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Now, all who read the Greek text know that this is an unusual word. It’s more than multiply. Paul does not say, “Now, where sin abounded grace multiplied.” What he does say is something like this, “Where sin abounded grace did super-abound.” In other words, it is his way of expressing the fact that although the law brought me to the knowledge of their sin and cause the fall to abound in the hearts of all who were exercised by those, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, so that they came to see that they were sinners. In spite of all of the magnification of sin, grace did, through the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ, super-abound.

Mr. Spurgeon says, “The Law is a storm which wrecks your hopes of self-salvation but washes you up upon the Rock of Ages.” And so we are rescued and we are restored and raised to the side of the eternal God as a result of the ministry of Jesus Christ. And so, we sing, “Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, yonder on Calvary’s mount out poured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.”

And, now we come to verse 21, all of this is for the purpose, “That as sin hath reigned unto death,” in Adam and in all of the little Adam’s after exercised enough to see

their sin. “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” In other words, where sin has ruined men; so grace is to reign.

Now, there is one phrase in this 21<sup>st</sup> verse that I think is of the greatest importance, and I want you to be sure to get that tonight, if you get nothing else, because I am convinced that many of us do not really understand the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in our salvation. We are inclined to look at this grace in a way that does not really do it justice. We’re inclined to think of grace wrongly. We’re inclined to think of our salvation as something that God has brought about by, well, just by a kind of fiat. We’re inclined to think of our salvation as God having a soft spot in his heart and because he has a soft spot in his heart, he has forgiven us. We’re inclined to think of it along that line. I think the average Christian, at least in the earliest stages of his Christian life, is inclined to think that his salvation is a gracious salvation in the sense that God has been kind to him and has forgiven him. And, they forget the fact that this forgiveness of God is a righteous forgiveness. It is based on righteousness. Notice that little expression that “Grace might reign through righteousness.” God has not, in our salvation, lowered his standards one bit. Please, remember that. Not one bit. He is just as holy in his relationship to us as he was in the condemnation of Adam.

Now, we think of God as a holy God in Heaven. Luther spoke of him as a “Holy God in Heaven waiting to hurl his thunderbolts of wrath and judgment upon men,” because he had a great sense of his sin. Well, that’s right. But let me assure you that the God who has forgiven is also the same God who justifies. And, he is no less holy in his justification than he is in his condemnation.

Let me say one other thing, it was not a gracious thing that we were saved, in the human sense. We think of grace in the sense of “well, he was very gracious, he was very kind. He relaxed his own standards a little bit and was kind to someone and he did something for them graciously.” It was an act of grace upon the part of God to send

Jesus Christ. He did not have to do that, speaking humanly. It was an act of grace to give the son, but the salvation that we possess is a righteous salvation. For, you see, the reason for all of this is simply that Jesus Christ paid the total penalty. He paid the total penalty for the guilt of the first sin of Adam. He paid the penalty of our depravity, our corrupted nature. He paid the penalty of eternal wrath, he paid the penalty of our inability. In other words, all of the effects of sin, Jesus Christ bore. And he bore them to their fullest. He righteously exhausted all of the wrath of God upon sin; all of the judgment of God was poured out upon him. All involved in all of these aspects of sin that we’ve been talking about. When he cried out, “My God, My God, was hast thou forsaken me,” he was bearing that judgment.

Now then, as a result of what he has done for me, I don’t have to go into heaven and knock on the door and say, am I going to get in? Why, because of what Jesus Christ has done and the fact that my salvation is laid in righteousness, why, I knock on the door of heaven and I say, ‘open up, I’m coming in.’ Because, I’m coming in righteously, righteously, on the basis of what Christ did. I don’t have to apologize. I don’t have to think that God has turned aside and relaxed his standards in allowing me in. He’s not relaxed them at all. Just as Holy, just as terrible in his holiness in my salvation as he is in Adam’s condemnation. And, don’t ever forget, my dear Christian friend that he’s still that same kind of person, too. And, all of our sins are to be seen in the light of a “Holy God.”

So I love that little expression, “That grace might reign through righteousness.” Jesus Christ paid the total penalty. My salvation is a just salvation. I have it. And it is just. It gains me entrance to heaven. It gains me all of the things that go to make up my salvation – righteously. He didn’t have to say, “You owed a thousand dollars but I’ll let you off with only paying nine-seventy-five.” No, he paid it all, in our substitute.

Now, did you notice how this chapter ended. It ends with eternal life. It began with eternal security. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through

our Lord, Jesus Christ. Or, let us have, as the texts of some of the manuscripts read, “Since we’re justified by faith, let us go in having peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ, because we have it.” At any rate, the chapter that begins with the security of the believer ends with eternal life. And, it is all by one person. Notice that chapter 1, verse 1 says, “We have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus Christ.” And, in verse 21, “We have righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord.” “So who but an inspired writer,” R. C. H. Linsky has said, “Could put such a volume of saving truth into twenty-one short verses.”

Well, this is the aim of Paul to show us victory in Christ. He dwells on Adam as a sketch to a portrait. So what does it matter that Adam was disobedient? Jesus Christ has been obedient. What does it matter that Adam gave us sin and death? Jesus Christ has given righteousness and life. What does it matter if Adam’s old skin cannot be taken off? Jesus Christ has come in our skin and has accomplished atonement for all who recognize that they are sinners and have come to him. And so it’s the much more that counts with Paul. And, it counts with Paul in two spheres. It counts with Paul in the world sphere, the history of a nation, Adam goes: Christ is come. The power of sin is clearly seen; but the power of grace, although only seen by faith, has come to a null and swallow up sin and death. It’s difficult for any of us who wear Adam’s clothes to be optimistic about history. It’s very difficult for us to look out upon world history and have any assurance that things are going to turn out all right because as we read the paper day after day it appears as if things were getting worse and worse. But, we know that things are going to turn out beautifully. God is working all things according to the counsel of his own will; and he is working toward the day when he shall bring all of the intelligences of the universe – to the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

And, in the Bible, you know, you can see this working, and, in human history. In the day of Joash, who would have thought that things were going to turn out all right? But, in the midst of the sin and the judgment and the rebellion, Joash was saved.

When we come into the history of the Christian church, not only the early church, when it appeared as if the early church would have been wiped off the face of the earth, God was working. In the history of the Christian Church, down through the years, who would have thought that the Paris “blood wedding” of the Huguenots, as it has been called, might be the means by which God should preserve his testimony. And so on, down to the present days through the Covenanters and others, the one and only last Adam, Jesus Christ, is the Master of all of the circumstances of life. And, we can be sure that no matter what happens, Jesus Christ is going to be acknowledged by all men as Lord. He’s not the Alpha and the Beta. He’s not the lord of some, he is the Lord of all and he is the Alpha and the Omega!

And, of course, that brings us to the second sphere in which grace reigns, because Christ, on Good Friday, crushed the “Old Serpent.” And that’s the individual sphere, the history of me and the history of you. And, Paul is interested in that. And so, I say to you tonight, are you in this “Last Adam?” Do you know what it is to possess a salvation that is righteous? Do you have any assurance that you were in the eternal covenant? That the Father made with the Son and with the Spirit? In which the Son and the Spirit and the Father have been working out in history? Do you know that your name was known before the ages? Do you have an assurance that you belong? Do you feel, as a result of what you have read in Holy Scripture that you could walk right up to the door of heaven and knock on it and say, “Open up, because I belong here. My debt has been paid by my substitute, Jesus Christ. And, I have a righteous salvation. Move aside angels, let me in. I want to see the Lord.” Do you have that sense of assurance and boldness? Well, that’s what you should have. And, consequently, you should be joyous and happy, because you have it. Well, may God, the Holy Spirit, if you don’t have it, have it bring you to conviction of your sin. And, may he enable you to see that remedy for sin is though Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And, if you’re not one of the elect? Wouldn’t that be a horrible thing? Who knows who the elect are? I don’t. Bob Nixon tells me he’s one of the elect. He doesn’t look like one to me. [Laughter] You know, those questions can be settled very simply, if in your own heart, you come to Jesus Christ. He’s looking for sinners to come. And, if you acknowledged you’re a sinner and come to him, and received the free gift; you’ll have it. And that will demonstrate that you are one of the elect. So, may God work in your heart. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful that in the ages of eternity past, a compact was entered into by the all-wise trinity, and we were included. And, we thank Thee that amid all the vicissitudes of history, Thou hast accomplished Thy purposes. But, while at times it is very difficult to see Thy hand, we know that underneath are the everlasting arms. And, we thank Thee, Lord, that we have not only a salvation given to us through grace, but also a grace that is in righteousness, just, totally just. And so, we have boldness, because we come in him, and we are related to Thee through him. And Lord, we pray, that if there should be one person in this auditorium who has not yet come to Jesus Christ, give them no rest nor peace until they do come.

This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.