



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 5:15-21

"Grace Abounding and Reigning"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning, for our third and last time, to Romans chapter 5 and reading verse 12 through verse 21 for the Scripture reading. The message will be based on verses 15 through 21, but again, in order to look at the context, we'll look at verse 12 through verse 21. It's not easy to follow the apostle's thought through this section, and I always, when I think of it, reflecting upon the difficulty of following his line of thinking, remember that in the earlier days of the catacombs, it was not uncommon for people to be given a piece of thread which they carried with them and allowed it to unfold as they went down into the catacombs in order that they might be able to find their way back.

Now in the earlier part of the Epistle to the Romans, it is the apostle's desire to show us our sin, and that is the thread that enables us to follow his thinking. In Romans chapter 5, verse 12 through verse 21, it is the idea of the unity of the many in the one. And if we keep that in mind, we should be able to come out at verse 21 with an understanding of what he has been doing.

Many years ago, at least twenty or so, I was out at the Cotton Bowl for a Texas Aggie football game, and I don't remember who the Aggies were playing, but it probably was SMU. But in the half-time, as is the custom, the Aggie band, which is a great marching band, came out, and played their fight song. And then they went through their maneuvers on the field. And they have a very complicated maneuver in which, finally, in the midst of it, you look out and it appears as if the whole

band is walking in different directions. And some fellow jumped up in the stands near where I was and held up a ten dollar bill and says, "Ten dollars, they don't make it out." [Laughter] So, I think of that when I come to Romans 5:12 through 21. And if I wanted to make money, I would stand up and shout, "Ten dollars, two to one, the reader doesn't make it through without confusion" because it is a difficult section to follow, but if we just keep that one idea in mind, of the unity of the many in the one, both on the side of Adam and then on the side of the last Adam, we shall, I think, come out with an understanding of the principal things the apostle is trying to say.

Verse 12 begins,

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (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. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 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 offences unto justification. 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.)"

Notice that important addition, now, to the apostle's thought, "Those who receive abundance of grace." That will be important in the light of something that will be said later.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness (better rendered righteous act) of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience

of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. We bow together now in a word of prayer.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] The subject for this morning is, "Grace Abounding and Reigning." Often heard in the meetings of the saints is the hymn with the stanza, "Grace, grace. God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin." If there is one passage that explicates the thought of that, it is this one. With arguments of *a fortiori* nature, the Apostle Paul unfolds abounding and reigning grace that covers our sin. You notice the expression, "much more." It occurs five times in this section.

In the 9th verse, he says, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." And then in 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." These arguments are arguments, literally, from the stronger, "a fortiori" in Latin means "from the stronger," and the sense is that if we have accepted an argument then, surely in the light of the acceptance of that argument, we will have to accept even more certainly the following argument. And so the apostle argues in that way.

If, for example, we were enemies of God, but we were reconciled by God, that is, brought to the status of friendship, then surely if he did such a wonderful work when we hated him, he now will do the lesser work of saving us into his presence now that we love him. And then in verse 15, the apostle says, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." And then in verse 17 again, "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 in the latter part of the verse, he says, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

The apostle has traced man's fall, in Romans chapter 5 to the one sinning act of Adam. And as a result of that one sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden, four results have followed. In the first place, Adam's sin has imputed to each member of the race. Every single one of us is guilty of the sin that Adam committed. We have in our representative broken the law of God as expressed in Genesis chapter 2. Now, many of us, I do not understand why, but many of us who have actually done some study of the word of God have objected to Adam's stand for all men. For some reason they have the idea that it would be better for us to stand for ourselves individually.

Now, last time I gave you some reasons why God's plan is the most beneficent plan that could have possibly been exercised with reference to men. And I personally have no objection to it whatsoever. Charles Simeon wrote, "But we do not hesitate to say that if the whole race of mankind had been created at once, in precisely the same state and circumstances as Adam was, they would have been as willing to stand or fall in Adam as to have their lot depend upon themselves because they would have felt that whilst he possessed every advantage that they did, he had strong inducement to steadfastness which they could not have felt namely the dependents of all his posterity upon his fidelity to God."

So God actually has operated in such a way that he has been most beneficent in his dealings with us. He had one representative to act for men. He put him in an ideal environment, a sinless environment. He gave him every incentive to obey. He allowed him the maximum freedom and gave him a minimum, so far as forbidding action is concerned. He could eat of every tree which was in the midst of the garden, but of one tree he was unable to eat. In addition, he informed Adam that he was a federal head and furthermore, that his actions would affect his destiny. That is clear because the threats that God imposed were threats that were carried out upon Adam's destiny. He acted as a representative man, and so he acted with great incentive to obey, more incentive than any

one individual would ever have had. And so consequently, God in his infinite wisdom and goodness has acted in a most beneficent way toward men.

He has conceived this plan by which all men act in their representative Adam, in order to prepare the way for men acting in a second representative the Lord Jesus Christ. So, just as men have fallen in Adam, apart from any act of disobedience on their part, so in Christ they may be raised to a status of justification of life apart from any act of theirs or apart from any merit of theirs. It is God's gracious way of dealing with men. And I can only say, in the light of pondering it that I cannot imagine any other scheme by which God may have dealt in a more beneficent way.

Upholding his law, demonstrating his righteousness and holiness and justice and at the same time manifesting his grace and lovingkindness to us. I must say, I love this plan that God has devised. It is the most fruitful plan for sinners.

Now that's the first thing though that happened when Adam sinned. His sin was imputed to each member of the race. Everybody is guilty, and incidentally, whether we like it or not, that is the state of things. And even if we did not like the plan or found it very confusing, we should, in wisdom, say, "Well that's the way he's done it. I may not understand it, and I may not really like it, but I'm going to submit to it because it is the plan of a holy sovereign God, and I had better submit to it." And you'll find that when you submit to the plan of God that, ultimately, the understanding will come and then you'll rejoice in the way that God has dealt with you.

The second thing that happened when Adam sinned was that his nature became corrupted, and he has given us a corrupt nature as a result. That corrupt nature, called by theologians in the special sense "original sin," has been passed on to all men. We are born in sin. As the apostle says, "We are by nature children of wrath." And if you have any doubt about it, just read your newspapers, and you'll see that we are children of wrath.

And the third thing that follows as a result of Adam's sin is that we are unable to respond savingly to the Word of God. Naturally, we do not respond to Scripture. If you were to take a look around you at the race, as a whole, you will see that this is carried out in the history of men. Men do

not respond to the word of God. They constantly rebel against it. Governments rebel against the word of God, too. Putting it in the words of the apostle in this same epistle, he says in the 8th chapter, the 7th and 8th verses, "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So in the nature with which we are born, we cannot be subject to the word of God. So then, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." That's why we cannot, of ourselves, believe in God because we are in flesh, "They that are in the flesh cannot believe God." There must be an operation of the Holy Spirit by which we are taken out of the flesh in order that we may believe. So that as a result of the regenerating work of the spirit or the efficacious grace of the spirit, whatever we call it is insignificant, we are brought to faith by the Lord God in grace.

And the final, the fourth effect of the sin of Adam is that all men are destined for eternal punishment. "Dust thou art unto dust thou shalt return," God said to Adam. He said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He died spiritually. He was told that as a result of that he would die physically, and if there is no deliverance from our spiritual death, that death is prolonged into eternity. And we suffer the second death, or eternal death, in the lake of fire.

And yet at the same time, Paul says Adam is a type of Christ. Well clearly, Adam must be a type of Christ, primarily, by contrast, not by comparison. For Christ is not the source of death, he's the source of life, justification of life. The thing that the apostle wants to use to clarify the relationship between the two Adams is this master idea of the unity of the many in one. All men stand in their representative Adam. All the people of God stand in their representative Jesus Christ. The act of Adam affects his posterity. The act of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross affects those who are the people of God. In that way there is a beautiful example of the work of the last Adam in the work of the first, for his work affects his covenanted people for whom he stands, just as in the case of Jesus Christ. As Augustine said, "God has dealt with two people. He has dealt with Adam, and he has dealt with Christ. And the rest of us fall into the relationship that he has set forth in the word."

Now the apostle is setting forth this epic contrast between the two representative men in verse 15, 16, and 17. He's just said that Adam is the type of Christ, but now he's going to show it's mainly by contrast, and so the 15th verse begins with an adversative conjunction, "But," he says, "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift." In contrast then, the negative is therefore stressed, one offense, death of many, one grace gift abounded to the many, not as the offense, so the free gift. He's speaking, primarily, of the results of the action of the first Adam and the action of the last Adam.

Now the word offense is rather interesting because, literally, this word in the Greek text is a word that means something like "falling beside," that Greek noun, *paraptoma*, comes from the Greek, *pipto*, which means "to fall," plus a preposition that means "by the side of." And so, the word trespass or the word offence is a word that means a falling beside. Now we call what happened in the Garden of Eden a fall, and so in that sense this is a very appropriate word, the offense. "Not as the fall, so also the free gift." So the word itself, suggests the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. He goes on to say, "For if through the offence 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." I want you to notice the word, "abounded." In the Old Testament, there are a series of offerings that are set forth in the Book of Leviticus. Now Leviticus is a book to be read and studied. It has some of the most beautiful pictures of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That series of offerings with which Leviticus opens, the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, they are offerings that give various aspects of the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many years ago, before I ever went to theological seminary, I was in the insurance business. There was a time when I did work, and I worked in the insurance business and started out right at the bottom in my father's office. And one of the things that I had to do in the beginning was to make fire insurance inspections. And I was told by the man who took me out for the first inspection or so that the first thing that you must do in inspecting a building for fire insurance purposes is to stand off from the building on each side and get a good general picture of the building before you go

in. So you had to look at the front and the back and all of the sides before you went in and made an inspection of the interior.

The offerings are illustrations of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as you look at these five different offerings, and there are some other offerings as well which give light, but these offerings give us a fairly well rounded picture of the things that Christ accomplished on the cross. One of those offerings, a most interesting one is called the trespass offering. Now the trespass offering is different from the sin offering and different from the other offerings as well. It's a two-fold offering. That is, an offering was offered for trespasses against the Lord and then there were trespasses that were against men and a certain procedure is followed for trespasses against the Lord, and for trespasses against man. For example, in trespasses against the Lord, the person who was bringing the offering was to offer an expiatory sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice that paid for the guilt. He was to make restitution in case something had been stolen, and then the peculiar feature of it is that he was to add the fifth part there too. There was to be not only restitution but compensation. At the close of World War I, we had reparations that were to be paid to the allies. This was not restitution. This was restitution, plus a compensation for the things that the allies had suffered.

Now we might illustrate it in this way. Let's suppose that I were walking down the street with all of my money in my pocketbook and as I was walking down the street somebody should come up behind me and stick a gun in my ribs and say, "This is a hold up. Let me have your wallet." So, I take my wallet out and hand it to him. And he would look into it and find my three dollars and nineteen cents. And he'd be very disgusted, but nevertheless, he would take it, through it down and start off down the street. Well if there just happened to be a policeman nearby, I might yell, "Catch that man, he's just robbed me." And he might be caught, let's assume, and he would have the money in his pocket, my three dollars and nineteen cents.

But now if this were a trespass against the Lord, he would not only be responsible for an expiation of the guilt, that is, a payment for the crime, and not only responsible to restore it to me, but also to give me twenty percent more, so that I would actually be richer, having been robbed, than

before. I would have about sixty-four cents more. Instead of my three dollars and nineteen cents, I would have three dollars and eighty-three cents or so. So I would be richer as a result of having been robbed.

Now the application of this if I may suggest one, and I only suggest it, is that Adam robbed God of something that man owed God, and that was obedience. He was responsible to obey God. Well the last Adam has come, and he has paid the price, as a result, an expiatory offering for Adam's disobedience has been made, restitution has been made, and further compensation because God is now glorified as a result of what Christ accomplished on the cross. Grace has abounded in the sacrifice of Christ. But now the trespass offering was two-fold. It was not only against God, but against man. Trespasses against man followed a similar pattern. Man was to make restitution if he had wronged his brother. He was also to give compensation of the fifth part thereto, that is, the extra twenty percent, and he was to make expiation.

And the application is this, Adam not only robbed God of the obedience that was due God, but he robbed men of life and peace. As a result of Adam's offering, we are plunged into death. And we do not have peace. So, what we could not do the last Adam has come, and he has done. He has restored that which he took not away, the Psalmist says. So the Lord Jesus Christ comes, he didn't have to pay the debt, but in grace he is given so that he pays the debt and now, man has not only had the offering for his sins, the penalty has been paid, not only has he been restored to the place that he formally had, but as a result of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been delivered. We have actually been raised up and seated together with him in the heavenly places, restored to the very side of God. "Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded." So that we are much better off than we would have been had Adam never sinned. That's what the apostle means when he talks about the grace that "much more abounds" and the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness and abounded unto many. So the passage then speaks of that. "Oh loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came."

Looking at that fifteenth verse, someone might want to contend that, "Does it not say that everybody is going to be saved? For it says, 'For if through the offence of the one many are dead,' that many is everyone, is it not?" Yes, "Much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Is not that many, therefore, all men? So consequently the grace has been manifested to all men.

Now the first thing that we must bear in mind is that the term "all," and the term "world," for that matter, does not always mean everyone, nor does the term "world" include everyone. Not only once, but many times the term "all" is a limited all, limited by the context. For example, when the Lord Jesus Christ was to be born, it was stated in Luke chapter 2 and verse 1, well, I think I'll just read that verse for you, Luke chapter 2 and verse 1, speaking of the enrollment, Luke says, "it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world (all the inhabited world) should be regulated (or registered)." And so there clearly, it's not a reference to everybody in the whole world, but all who were affected by that particular law.

In the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John, individuals came to John the Baptist, "And said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." Why it is clear that all men do not come to Jesus Christ. But this is a limited all. Just as we read in the 1st Epistle of John, "The whole world lieth in the wicked one." Well not everybody in the world lieth in the wicked one, but these are general statements limited by the context.

Now here in this passage, that "all" or "many" in this case is limited by the context. When he says, "The grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many," that is limited by the statement in verse 17, "For if by the one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." So the many, is the many who received the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the offense has abounded unto the many, "all," in death, but the grace of God has abounded to the many who receive the abundant grace of God that is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, someone might say, "Well that's just really, after all, the abundance of grace that is potentially available for all, or that is possibly for all." But this chapter doesn't speak of possibility. This chapter does not speak of potentiality. You cannot find it in it. This chapter speaks of certainty. All we have to do to understand the Bible is simply to observe the context carefully so that the many in the case of Adam is all. The many in the case of Christ is those who receive the abundance of grace that comes through him.

Now that new fact, in verse 17, the apostle stresses. It stresses how this gift of abundant grace is received. In Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he said that sometime before he wrote his comments, he saw a card which had been beautifully prepared, typographically, and on that card there was an illustration of the pyramiding abundance of the grace of God expressed in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 20 and 21. That's the famous passage that reads, "Unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," and he said it was arranged in a pyramid form, and at the top were the words "Unto him," and then each line "Unto him who is able," "Who is able to do," "Who is able to do all we ask," "Who is able to do all we ask," "Who is able to do all we ask or think," "Who is able to do abundantly above all we ask or think," "Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us." This is something of the wonderful abundant grace of God manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 17 he says that those who, "Receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." So, as death reigned by one; they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in themselves. The receivers become kings. But in the future it is "shall reign." So he looks forward to the future when men who have received the abundance of grace shall truly reign. He refers, of course, to the millennial kingdom in which those who have been identified with the Lord Jesus shall exercise rule together with him.

Now in the next two verses, verses 18 and 19, he introduces a formal comparison between the two men. "Therefore," or consequently then, verse 18, "As by the offence of one judgment came

upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness act," that's a reference to the cross, "by the righteous act of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And again, "Unto all men," is defined by the context. "All" who are in Christ, he says in 1 Corinthians 15, or here, "All who receive abundance of grace."

Now, you've noticed this term "free gift" here. He has used the term "free gift" in verse 15, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift," verse 16, "But the free gift is of many offences unto justification." There are two words for gift here. One of them really does mean grace gift. The other means, simply, a gift. But here he has inserted "free gift upon all men unto justification of life." Now "free gift" is tautologous, if you say gift, you've said that which is free. If you say free, you've said that it is a gift. We often say we are saved by free grace, but all we have to say is free because if we're saved freely, we're saved by grace, and if we're saved by grace, we're saved freely.

Now yesterday, I was maneuvered out to the antique show here in Dallas. It was obviously a maneuver because my wife actually paid for my entrance in. So I went in. There were ninety dealers in antiques who were out at the women's building in the fair park area. Ninety businesses, in effect, I think I walked through eighty-one of them or so. And I did not find any free gifts out there. In fact, the only thing I wanted was probably one of the most expensive things there. I sat down in front of a little table, and I reached over and took the card that was attached to it. It was just a small little table, and it was thirty-eight hundred dollars, which was a little too much for my three dollars and nineteen cents that I had in my pocket. Now if I had looked over and it had said free gift, I would have said, "I think I'll take two or three of these if you don't mind." [Laughter] But it didn't say that. If you were to go into a store and it should have free gift on it, well then that would be an exhibition of something given apart from cost. You wouldn't have to have a penny.

Now the apostle says that we're saved by grace. We say free grace. Mr. Spurgeon said a man came to him one time and said, "Why do you talk about free grace. Of course, if it's grace, it's free." He said, "I do so to make assurance doubly sure." So, we'll talk about free grace, but we'll understand that it's redundant. It's a tautology. Isn't it wonderful that in our salvation that's the way God has

given us salvation? It is in grace. It's freely that we are justified. All right it's by free grace that we have been justified because in the Bible we read that one must repent, but then we read, in another text, that the repentance is a gift of God. We read that in order to enter into the experience of grace, we must have faith. But faith, in another text, is said to be the gift of God. So it is true, we are saved by free grace. Magnificent method of salvation and the only one suitable to individuals who haven't got a single spiritual penny in their pockets to buy a relationship with the Lord God, beautifully adjusted to paupers, spiritually, free grace salvation.

Well the apostle says, "It has come unto all men unto justification of life," that is, a justification that leads to life. Now, that anticipates what he's going to say in chapter 6 and chapter 7 and chapter 8 because he there speaks about walking in newness of life that we have by virtue of justification. He speaks about the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. So he anticipates what he's going to be thinking about by that expression, "Justification of life."

Now in the nineteenth verse he adds one more point. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one the many shall be made righteous." And there he turns to the inward causes of things and talks about the disobedience which brought about the fall and the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, which has made it possible for men to be declared righteous. So a question by this point would be raised by a Jewish man whose listening very carefully, or anyone who understood the Bible, who had read the Old Testament, he would say, "Now wait a minute Paul, did not God give the Law of Moses to deal with sin and righteousness? If as you have said everything relates to these two men, Adam the first and Adam the last, then why was the law subsequently introduced on Mount Sinai?" Or to put it another way, did not the law deal with sin and righteousness, but you're making the two Adams the source of both? You're saying men have fallen in Adam, and men are raised up through Jesus Christ. What then is the place of the Mosaic law? A natural question and a good question, so the apostle says, in verse 20, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound."

The word "entered" is a word that was often used in ancient literature of an actor who played a subordinate part in a particular scene. We might imagine a play here on the platform. We might imagine Robert Redford and Elizabeth Taylor enacting a scene here on the front of the stage. And all of the eyes of the audience are on the two. The man and the woman, and in the midst of the scene a butler may come in walk over to a little table, price tag thirty-eight hundred dollars, reach down and take up the ash tray and empty it and walk out. Well he would have entered in alongside and then moved out with having an inferior status in that particular scene.

Well that's the word the apostle uses here. He says, "The law entered, that the offence might abound." The law is not the important thing. Sin is the important thing. The law is the means by which sin comes to be known, and furthermore, the law is the means by which sin is made to abound that men might see the sinfulness of their hearts. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound."

Now that is the characteristic of law, not only the Mosaic law, it's the characteristic of almost all law. Almost all law provokes the rebellion. You're walking down the street, and somebody will say, "Wet paint. Do not touch." So what do you do? You go over and yes it is wet. [Laughter] That's the very thing that makes you do it, that law that says don't do it. And if you see a sign that says, "Do not expectorate here." You look on the floor, and there will be tobacco juice and various other kinds of things because expectoration has taken place. It was not there until the sign was put up, but as soon as the sign is put up, there will be some expectoration there. That's characteristic of human nature because we are sinners, and, "The law enters that the offense might abound."

It is said, I don't know how true it is, that John Nance Garner, who was later the Vice President of the United States after the passing of the prohibition law -- and incidentally, in the prohibition law, the prohibition law was responsible for many people turning to alcohol, when they were told by the law that they could not drink, well then they took some drinks, and there was one fellow that took it and he said hmm, tastes so good, it must be sinful, [Laughter] wasn't long after that that he was an alcoholic. Many people became alcoholics as a result of the prohibition law. I'm

not passing judgment on whether we should or should not have a law relating to drink, but the facts are that it did stir up the sin nature of a lot of people, they broke the law because of the law of prohibition -- but it was said of John Nance Garner, that he used to, because he was a man who imbibed a little bit, whenever he had visitors at his place out in Texas, he would go into the living room, open up the side board, take out a decanter, and pour out a couple of drinks and say, "Let us strike a blow for liberty," because of the prohibition law.

"The law entered that sin," or the offense, "Might abound." "But," Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The word that he uses is a word that doesn't mean to multiply. He uses a word that means to multiply right in the first part of the verse, "Where sin multiplied, grace did super abound." And so, sin was made known and also caused to increase in acts of sin by the giving of the Mosaic law, but where sin multiplied as a result of the giving of the law, the grace of God has super abounded. Mr. Spurgeon says, "The Law is a storm which wrecks our hopes of self-salvation, but it washes you up upon the Rock of Ages." How wonderful it is to come to an understanding of our sin, and by the coming to the understanding of our sin, to realize our lost condition, and how we need to flee to the rock of ages the Lord Jesus Christ, and be delivered by him. "Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded," in the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John Bunyun, we know, primarily, because he wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*, but Bunyun wrote also an autobiography. And he entitled his autobiography *Grace Abounding for the Chief of Sinners*. John Bunyan was a strong Calvinist who believed in the strong Doctrines of Election and Reprobation, but he understood what it was to be saved by grace, through abounding grace. And he wrote about that abounding grace, that overflowing grace. Dr. Barnhouse says, "We ought to render this text, or could render it, where sin reached the high water mark grace completely flooded the world in the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ." And so we sing, "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt."

Now the apostle says it all had a purpose, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Incidentally,

isn't it an interesting thing that this text begins, this chapter begins with "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?" That's the way it begins with, "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And here, in the latter part of the chapter, in the last verse of the chapter we read, "That grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." So, just as we began with peace through our Lord Jesus Christ, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have grace reigning at the end. Here is a magnificent chapter in which we begin with peace and security and we close with eternal life all through the one man, the Lord Jesus Christ. What a fitting conclusion. And when Mr. Linski, the Lutheran commentator, says in his commentary, "Who, but an inspired writer could put such a volume of saving truth into twenty-one short verses? We have to say Amen."

Now I do want to say one last word, if I may. It won't take me but just a minute. You'll notice the apostle says, "Grace reigns through righteousness." Many orthodox and evangelical preachers and teachers unwittingly distort the doctrine of the grace of God in some small ways. They make grace to be less than it is because of the human desire to have some part in our salvation, however small. For example, they frequently will use as an illustration of grace, one man owing another man a hundred dollars. Suppose, this is pure fantasy, suppose you owed me a hundred dollars, and suppose I were to come to you and say, "John I want you to know you can tear up that note." Someone might say that's pure grace, but that really wouldn't be pure grace. Not the kind of grace that we're talking about in the Bible. In the divine sense, forgiveness of a debt is not grace. Tearing up a note is not grace. Remission of a penalty is not grace. The pardon of a criminal, by a governor who exercises clemency, is not grace. You see the Bible says that, "Grace reigns through righteousness." The debt must be paid. The penalty must be paid. To affirm that God forgives sin because he's a great-hearted individual and tears up our notes is to distort the grace of God and most of all, it is to take away the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was absolutely necessary for our Lord Jesus Christ to pay the penalty. The debt has to be paid. God does not tear up notes. He does not

exercise clemency and pardon criminals when the debt is not paid. He is not unrighteous. He is righteous. He is holy. He is just. The penalty must be paid.

We are not saved through grace, except insofar as God in grace has given the Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation is a righteous salvation. To put it in another way, all that Jesus Christ did when he came and died on the cross is grace because God freely gave him in grace. He didn't have to do that. But what God does toward us in pardon and forgiveness is in righteousness which results from the grace of the gift of the Son. Our salvation is a righteous salvation. When we get to heaven, we are there righteously. We have a right to be there because God has given the Lord Jesus Christ who has paid our debt and we have a right of salvation. "Grace reigns through righteousness." Our God is a holy God, a just God. Therefore, he will not forgive sinners by tearing up the notes. He will not exercise clemency like a governor who pardons a criminal. A payment must be made, but he has given the Son of God to come and make the payment, graciously. And as a result we have a righteous salvation.

What a magnificent plan. The whole of God's plan from beginning to end is a testimony to the magnificent infinite wisdom of a merciful God. How anyone could object to his glorious plan I do not know except by virtue of the fact that in the fall of man we have turned into rebellious sinners against the throne of God who deserve an eternity of wrath. May God deliver us. May God work in the hearts of any in this meeting and bring you to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. May, in wonderful grace, he cause you to see what you are. And may by grace you flee to him who is the sacrifice given in grace but who provides us with a righteous salvation. Come to Christ. Don't leave this auditorium without, in your heart, saying, "Lord, I do acknowledge I'm a sinner. I see that Christ has died for sinners. I want this righteous salvation. I do receive Jesus Christ as my savior. I do not trust in my good works, my church, my prayers, my observance of the ordinances, my education, my culture, and my background. I trust only in Christ." May God help you to come. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the wonderful expression of the saving work of Jesus Christ that the Apostle Paul has given us. Lord, we adore the wisdom of our God, and we magnify his grace. We thank Thee for the righteousness and holiness of our God. But, O God, we are astounded. We stand in awe of...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]