

The Parish of Wellow

Understanding our story

Romans 5:12-21

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Sermon Notes

The Letter to the Romans - Vital Statistics

PURPOSE:

To introduce Paul to the Romans and to give a sample of his message before he arrives in Rome.

AUTHOR:

Paul

TO WHOM WRITTEN:

The Christians in Rome and believers everywhere

DATE WRITTEN:

About AD57, from Corinth as Paul was preparing for his visit to Jerusalem

SETTING:

Apparently Paul had finished his work in the east, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after first bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there. The Roman church was mostly Gentile but also contained a great number of Jews.

KEY VERSE

'Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' Romans 5:1

KEY PEOPLE

Paul, Phoebe

KEY PLACE

Rome

SPECIAL FEATURES

Paul wrote Romans as an organised and carefully presented statement of his faith- it does not have the form of a typical letter. He does however; spend considerable time greeting people in Rome at the end of the letter.

To understand our story Paul argues we need to get to grips with:

- i. The Story of Adam (Romans 5:12-14)
- ii. The Story of Jesus (Romans 5:15-19)
- iii. The Role of God's Law (Romans 5:20-21)

2.1 The Story of Adam (Romans 5:12-14)

- Adam's disobedience against God unleashed sin on the human race.
- Death follows sin - by death Paul means: not only spiritual death i.e. separation from God, but also physical death, and also eventual eternal death which is eternal separation from God's presence and love.
- Death has dominated the human race ever since Adam, Paul explains, because everyone has sinned: " All have sinned and fall short of God's glory" (Romans 3:23)
- Paul describes 'Death' in v. 14 as if it were a cruel emperor who is ruthlessly ruling over the human race. Try as we might to escape the dominion of death, all of us whether we like or not have an appointment with death.
- Our experience of death says Paul is directly connected to Adam's original disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

2.2 The Story of Jesus (Romans 5:15-19)

- Paul explains that Jesus is able to undo everything that Adam has ruined
- Paul now contrasts Jesus with Adam. Through Jesus we are able to move from:
 - death to grace (verse 15)
 - being 'victims to death to 'victors who rule' (verse 17)
 - sinners to saints (verse 18)
- Jesus is the key to God's rescue plan of restoring relationship with him.
- It is Jesus' obedience versus Adam's disobedience that is absolutely crucial to God's rescue plan.
- Because Jesus was perfectly obedient and without sin he is the only person who is able to replace death with grace and restore our relationship with God.
- The trouble is that we live in a world where people are trying to find a way to have a relationship with God that doesn't include Jesus.
- Our role in this community as a church is so important, because no one else in the world will tell people that our relationship with God can only be restored through Jesus Christ.

2.3 The Role of God's Law (Romans 5:20-21)

- The Jewish audience in Rome would want to know what role God's law had in God's rescue plan.
- Jews believed that when God gave the nation of Israel the 10 commandments through Moses that this undid everything that Adam had done. They believed Israel was the second Adam, the new humanity. They thought that Israel had been successful where Adam had failed. So after God gave the law The Jews believed that there were two humanities a person could be part of:
 - i. Humanity in Israel which was saved from Adam's sin by obeying the 10 commandments.
 - ii. Humanity in Adam which was still under Adam's condemnation.
- Thus, at the end of the age only humanity in Israel would be saved following judgment.
- Paul gives us a very different picture here in Romans. Paul agrees that:
 - God had given the Jews the law through Moses.
 - The law had a role to play in God's rescue plan.
- But he argues the law itself doesn't undo sin rather it tells us exactly what sin is. So instead of liberating the nation of Israel from Adam's sin, the law simply made the reality of sin even clearer.
- Paul argues that humanity is actually now divided into the following two groups:
 - i. Humanity in Jesus which is the Christian church
 - ii. Humanity in Adam which is the rest of the human race.
- At the end of the age, those who are joined to Jesus will be saved following judgment.
- God's way of overcoming the power of sin wasn't by giving law to regulate sin but by drowning sin with a waterfall of grace.
- We can't undo Adam's failure by trying harder or by obeying rules. It's impossible to overcome the power of sin by our own self efforts. Our own efforts simply produce more sin, more frustration and more failure. Only God's grace can deal with our sin.
- The law says Paul simply set the stage for the entrance of grace into the world.

3. Questions to consider

3.1 How do both Adam and Jesus affect our status with God?

3.2 Why did God give the 10 commandments? Why would Paul's view differ to that of a first century Jew? What effect does the law have on us?

3.3 A friend says to you one day that he cannot accept that Jesus is the only person that can restore our relationship with God. What would Paul's answer be? What would your answer be?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293

Matthew Street 13th February 2005