

The Reign of Grace

Paul is working his way to a command in 6:12 where he will say that we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies such that we obey it. Is that even possible? Can we do it by just trying harder? Paul's command flows from what he says in Romans 5 and 6:1-11. These passages explain that Jesus defeated sin in a way that changes everything. Our ability to obey this command is rooted in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. And so this week and next we're going to study what Paul says is true of those who believe in Jesus. Our passage today is a dense theological discussion in which Paul compares and contrasts the sin of Adam and the sacrifice of Christ. The actions of each had huge implications for all of humanity. Ultimately, Paul will argue that in the lives of those who believe, the grace of God trumps the sin of Adam making it possible for us to obey the command of 6:12.

Read Romans 5:12-21

1. How would you summarize the core issues that Paul is dealing with in this passage?
2. What does Paul teach about sin and death (vv. 12-15)?

Steve said:

Here in Romans 5 Paul is giving us a theological explanation of this reality: because of Adam sin and death have spread to all; we now sin by nature and by choice.

3. What does it mean that we "sin by nature and by choice"?
4. How does Paul describe the "free gift" (vv. 15-17)?

5. What does it mean that we “will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (v. 17)?
6. What does he mean when he says, “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (v. 20)?
7. How would you summarize the argument Paul makes for why the effect of Jesus’ sacrifice is superior to the effect of Adam’s sin?

Steve said:

If you are a believer in Jesus, do you think about the grace of God the way Paul has described it in this passage - as far superior to sin in power and effect? More specifically, do you believe that God’s grace is greater than your sin? . . . Whether or not we believe that our God is One whose grace is greater than our sin will affect whether or not we can obey a command like we find in Romans 6:12, “Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts. . .” As long as you believe that your sin is greater than God’s grace that command will seem unreasonable and impossible. But if you believe that **God is a God whose grace is greater than your sin**, you’re in a place to experience that grace and begin to understand how it applies to your specific sin. I would encourage you to wrestle with this question this week: Do you believe that God’s grace is greater than your sin? Instead of believing that your sin is all-powerful in your life, allow God to convince you that His grace trumps your sin through Jesus Christ. Read and ponder this passage, pray and invite God to show you the depths of His grace, and talk with others about these truths.

8. What are we actually saying if we say that we believe that God’s grace is greater than our sin?
9. Practically, how might genuine belief in the truth that God’s grace is greater than our sin begin to help you obey the command of Romans 6:12?