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## **Week 5: Hope as a Result of Righteousness by Faith (Rom. 5:1–21)**

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### **The Place of the Passage**

The Bible reveals the secret to inconceivable and unconquerable joy. It is this, according to [Romans 5:20](#): if we are in Christ, our sin cannot outpace God's grace. In [Romans 5](#), Paul continues to develop his grand gospel narrative, the epic story of the redemption that is available for sinners in Christ Jesus. Previously he has shown us the sinfulness of all mankind, Jew and non-Jew alike. Then he showed us that God demonstrates his righteousness even in the forgiving of sins because he has placed the punishment for those sins on his sinless Son. This is how God's righteousness comes not to condemn us but to save us! As the plot thickens in [Romans 5](#), Paul begins to explore the implications and applications of the gospel announcement that God saves sinners. From here, through [Romans 6](#) and beyond, Paul will go on to discuss why the gospel of grace outlined in [Romans 1–5](#) promotes holiness rather than a license to sin.

### **The Big Picture**

[Romans 5](#) preaches a comfort and peace surpassing each and every earthly circumstance, placing the Christian who is justified by faith in a place of utter security and hope.

### **Gospel Glimpses**

**CONDEMNATION FOR EVERYONE, LIFE FOR ANYONE.** In [Romans 5:18](#), Paul explains how sin has come to "all" because of Adam's sin, and how, similarly, the grace of God in Christ comes to all. The Bible clearly teaches that God's wrath remains on those who do not receive God's gift of grace by faith, and that they will therefore receive eternal condemnation for their sins. Therefore, [Romans 5:18](#) should not be seen as teaching universalism (the belief that every individual person will be saved). Rather, in light of Paul's discussions throughout Romans of the roles of Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) in God's saving purposes, this verse should be seen in terms of "transculturalism," that is, it teaches that people of all kinds will be saved. Paul's use of the expression "the many" in [Romans 5:19](#) helps to clarify this. The gospel is for "the many," Jews and Gentiles alike.

**"ABOUNDING GRACE."** The promise of [Romans 5:20–21](#) is thrilling. Because those saved by grace through faith are freely and fully justified, having been forgiven, counted righteous, and reconciled to God the Father, no sin can overcome God's abundant grace. He is more ready to forgive than we are to sin. And oh, how prone to sin we are! We are

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chomping at the bit, aren't we? Wretches as we are, who will rescue us? Praise be to God for his glorious grace ([Rom. 7:24–25](#)). There is more grace in him than sin in us.

**Definition: Universalism**

The unbiblical belief that all people will be saved from eternal damnation, regardless of whether or not they come to faith in Christ.

## **Whole-Bible Connections**

**THE LAST ADAM.** [Romans 5:14](#) offers us a glimpse of a truth that Paul more directly reveals in [1 Corinthians 15:22](#), where he writes, “as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” As sin and death entered the world through Adam, grace and life entered the world through Jesus. In this way, Jesus is the second (or “last”) Adam ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). This template, what is sometimes called “typology,” is seen throughout the Old Testament. All of the heroes of the faith were stained by Adam’s sin. Jesus, the sinless redeemer of what Adam corrupted, is the truer and better Adam, the prophet, priest, and king that we all so desperately need.

**Definition: Typology**

A method of biblical interpretation in which a real historical object, place, or person is recognized as a pattern or foreshadowing (a “type”) of some later object, place, or person. For example, the Bible presents Adam as a “type” of Christ ([Rom. 5:14](#)).

## **Theological Soundings**

**CHRISTUS VICTOR.** On the cross, Jesus Christ absorbs the wrath of God, the due punishment for our sins, and thereby satisfies the justice of God and purchases our pardon. This is often called “penal substitution,” because it describes the fulfillment of the Old Testament’s blood sacrifices as a punishment (penal) in the place of the sinner (substitution). But though penal substitution is the center of Christ’s atoning work, the Scriptures explain it in other important ways as well. One of these views of the atonement is traditionally called *Christus Victor*, a Latin phrase that essentially means what it looks like—Christ the Victor. Jesus on the cross became not just the propitiating sacrifice for sin but the conqueror triumphing over sin and the powers of evil. His crucifixion was in reality a coronation! [Colossians 2:15](#) and [Hebrews 2:14–15](#) speak to Christ’s triumph clearly, but there are also shades of it throughout [Romans 5](#) in Paul’s use of “reign.” Sin reigned in us before Christ died. At the cross, Christ reigned over sin, triumphed over the evil rule, and thereby showed himself, even on the cross, Lord over us.

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# BIBLE STUDY

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**“TO INCREASE THE TRESPASS.”** We can always count on the Bible to “shoot straight” with us. No one is as honest with us about us as God is. So when Paul writes in [Romans 5:20](#), “Now the law came in to increase the trespass,” we have no choice but to admit what is true of us. When someone tells us not to do something, we instinctively want to do it. Ever heard the phrase “Rules are meant to be broken”? Here is a convicting truth about the law: It doesn’t just reveal our sin; in many ways it provokes us to sin even more. Not because the law is bad, but because we are. What amazing grace that God would forgive our perverse tendency to turn even his holy law into an opportunity for sinning.

## Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of [Romans 5:1–21](#) for your own life today. Note the personal implications for your walk with the Lord in light of (1) the Gospel Glimpses, (2) the Whole-Bible Connections, (3) the Theological Soundings, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses
2. Whole-Bible Connections
3. Theological Soundings
4. [Romans 5:1–21](#)

## As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a moment to ask for the Lord’s blessing and help as you continue in this study of Romans. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, reflecting on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you.

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