

## Sermon Outline

### HEADS OF STATES: A STUDY OF ROMANS 5:12-21

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#### ONE ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (ROMANS 5:17-19)

#### I. Hard Gospel Truths to Keep Christians Going

- A. As Christians, we live not merely by principles of conduct or good values. We live primarily by an unrepeatable, historical fact that happened more than 2,000 years ago on Jewish soil.
- B. This fact conditions everything that we do.
- C. This fact is the *free gift* of Romans 5. This gift is described in several ways. It...
  - 1. comes from “the grace of God” (v 15).
  - 2. comes “...by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ” (v 15).
  - 3. brings forgiveness, justification and life (v 16).
- D. God can extend such a gift to truly undeserving sinners because the Lord Jesus Christ has completed the Law of God for his people.
- E. Just as condemnation comes to us on the basis of Adam’s sin, justification and eternal life come to us on the basis of Christ’s righteousness.

#### II. Those Who Receive Grace and Righteousness (Rom 5:17)

- A. “For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ” (v 17).
- B. Christians are not those who have earned righteousness. Instead, we are recipients of a gift: “...those who *receive* the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness...”
- C. As a result of receiving that gift, we now “reign in life.”
- D. But again, we did not get to that state through hard work, rigorous piety, the completion of some personal heroic struggle against evil, or by way of ascetic self-discipline.  
—We got to where we now are “through the one man Jesus Christ.”

#### III. One Act of Righteousness (Rom 5:18)

- A. If we reign in life “through the one man Jesus Christ,” it is because Jesus Christ earned that right for us: “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (v 18).
- B. The “one act of righteousness” is the entirety of Jesus’ life considered as one, uninterrupted act of righteousness that fulfills the Law/Covenant of Works for all his own, so earning justification and life for them.
- C. Because he is our federal head, the Lord Jesus’ perfect life is sufficient to cover the sins and lacklustre works of all mankind.

## IV. The Ten Commandments Fulfilled!

- A. Jesus fulfilled each of the Ten Commandments for us.
1. First: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3).
    - a. Jesus’ life was consumed with the single-minded love of the Lord.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the First Commandment becomes ours.
  2. Second: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Ex 20:4).
    - a. Jesus did not make any carved images of God. His worship of God and idea of God was fully formed by and conformed to the Word of God.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Second Commandment becomes ours.
  3. Third: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain” (Ex 20:7).
    - a. Jesus’ entire life and teaching and doing was an accurate and infallible reflection of the will of God for all human beings. His whole life was a sanctification of the Name of God.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Third Commandment becomes ours.
  4. Fourth: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8).
    - a. Jesus kept the Sabbath by doing what observant Jews did. He attended the synagogue services. But Jesus also kept the Sabbath by giving rest to the tired and broken souls who came to him for healing. He set them free from sin and the effects of sin.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Fourth Commandment becomes ours.
  5. Fifth: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Ex 20:12).
    - a. The Lord Jesus honored his parents by obeying their clear instructions, and by giving them the best honor any parent could ever want: fulfilling God’s commandments in his life, so becoming the Source of salvation to the world.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, Jesus’ fulfilment of the Fifth Commandment becomes ours.
  6. Sixth: “You shall not murder” (Ex 20:13).
    - a. Jesus did not murder. He forgave his enemies and gave them life.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Sixth Commandment becomes ours.
  7. Seventh: “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex 20:14).
    - a. Jesus was free from adultery, because his soul was completely aligned with God the Father.
    - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Seventh Commandment becomes ours.
  8. Eighth: “You shall not steal” (Ex 20:15).

- a. Jesus did not steal. Instead, he re-paid all our thefts by giving his own life as a propitiation for our sins.
  - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Eighth Commandment becomes ours.
9. Ninth: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Ex 20:16)
- a. Jesus did not lie. His life was the embodiment of the Word of God.
  - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Ninth Commandment becomes ours.
10. Tenth: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s” (Ex 20:17).
- a. Jesus did not commit the sin of covetousness. Instead, he gave of himself that we might each have a share in the everlasting life of God.
  - b. When we receive Jesus, his fulfilment of the Tenth Commandment becomes ours.
- B. By his entire life—“one act of righteousness”—Jesus fulfilled these Ten Laws perfectly for us as our federal head.
- Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 97. What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate? Ans. Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

## V. Made Righteous By One (Rom 5:19)

- A. If the righteousness of Christ Jesus has earned us justification and life, the following statement makes sense: “For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (v 19).
- B. Paul completes the comparison he started in verse 12: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin...,” righteousness and life come through Christ’s obedience.
- C. How should we understand “made righteous”? Is Paul talking about the once-for-all declaration of justification or the moral transformation of the believer into a righteous being (progressive sanctification)?
1. John Murray (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 1997)
    - a. “[M]ade righteous” must be understood in light of “justification” in verse 16, “the free gift of righteousness” in verse 17, and the “justification” in verse 18 (p. 205). Those have legal/forensic meanings.
    - b. In verse 19, Paul is not addressing our personal growth in righteousness.
    - c. He is focusing on the legal basis of our relationship with God, i.e., our justification on the basis of the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
  2. Douglas Moo (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 1996): “To be ‘righteous’ does not mean to be morally upright, but to be judged acquitted, cleared of all charges, in the

heavenly judgment. Through Christ's obedient act, people become *really* righteous; but 'righteous' itself is a legal, not a moral, term in this context." (p. 345)

3. Conclusion: Paul has in view justification, not progressive sanctification, in verse 19.
- D. Just as people were *condemned* (pronounced sinful) because of our union with Adam, those who believe in Christ will be *justified* (pronounced righteous) when they are united with the righteous Jesus Christ through faith.

## VI. Jesus Our Righteousness

**The perfect righteousness that is needed by every human being is in Jesus Christ alone. We believers do not live because of our own adherence to principles of conduct or good values. We live—in the fullest sense of that word!—because God has graciously given Jesus Christ to be our perfect righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). Through Jesus, God gives us “the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness” (v 17). Jesus’ life was “the one act of righteousness” that leads to justification and life for all humankind (v 18). And by his flawless obedience to the Father, Jesus makes many righteous (v 19). In Jesus Christ, you and I have fulfilled the Law of God. Let us receive God’s free gift of righteousness in him. Let us live boldly and joyfully before the Father knowing that we are perfectly righteous before him.**

### Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Christians don't just live by principles of conduct. We live in light of a historical event—the Gospel—that took place. How do you see the Gospel shaping or conditioning what you value, what you believe, how you behave?
4. How is the gift described in vv 15-16?
5. In v 17, how are Christians described? How do we come to possess the grace and righteousness that God gives?
6. What does “reign in life” tell us about the status of Christians before God?
7. What is Jesus' “one act of righteousness”?
8. How does Jesus' righteousness relate to the Ten Commandments?
9. How should we understand “made righteous” in v 19?
10. Have you received God's gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ?
11. What effect does Christ's fulfilling the Law on our behalf have on us?