

# Remember your union with Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] With your Bibles, turn to Romans chapter 5. My intention has always been to go through a New Testament book and an Old Testament book at different parts of the year. We're in Romans, and I know that it seems a while since we were in Romans 5 last time, but please turn to Romans 5 verse 12, and we'll read through to the end of the chapter.

Now hear God's word. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who sinned, was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass, for if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God, and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 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. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 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. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. So that as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness, leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Well, think of Romans 5, well, think of the whole of Romans, but especially the bit that you've just heard read as the things that God wants you to know. You know, this doesn't happen all the time when we read scripture, you know, we pick it up and we try to read, but, you know, these are the things that God wants you to know as a believer. Paul introduces us to the past, and it's true that many people understand that, you know, they live in sin. It's also true that many people have experienced the sin of other people, and sin does nothing but ruin everything. Nobody enjoys sin. It's horrible, and we thank God that he does something about it, but sin ruins everything.

Many people don't understand where sin comes from, or has come from. They understand that they do sinful actions, but they're not too sure where sin came from, and according to scripture, it came from the first ever man. He sinned, and then we like him sinned.

[ 3 : 48 ] In the same way a parent will hand down their DNA to a child, Adam handed down his sinful DNA to the rest of mankind. That's the origin of sin. That's where it come from. Here's the problem.

It seems somewhat unfair, doesn't it? That I have to take responsibility for something that someone else has done. Here's the shatter, here's the thing that should shatter any illusion then. God has created us in such a way that this is always to be the case. That our decisions, and our actions, and our beliefs, and our commitments are always going to affect the people around us. God has created a world where it is impossible to live an independent life. God didn't create a world so that we could be independent, so that we could be isolated. He created a world in which the union was so tight between people that what one person did would affect everybody else.

And that's exactly what you see in the life of Adam. Adam had full responsibility for the rest of the human race, and he abused the responsibility that he had in doing the very thing that God told him not to do, and because of that one action, he took us all into sin with him.

And just so that you can be sure of it, you know, think of the sins that you commit. It sort of affirms the reality that that actually happened. Think of it in terms of a baby being born into a family.

They don't get to choose their DNA. It's given to them. They don't even get to choose their name, though many can change it now that they're older if they choose to. And they don't get to choose the family that they're born into, and they don't even get to choose the circumstances of life that they're born into.

[ 5 : 47 ] Now, so just by a casual observation of family life, you begin to see that this has played out time and time again. The decision of one or the decision of two affects a whole host of people.

You know, I've heard these conversations recently over, you know, abortion. Abortion is a sin. 58 million children in America alone have been aborted since abortion was brought in.

And the question always starts in the wrong place. They always want to start the question as, where does life begin? That's not the question.

That's not the question that you should be asking. The question that you should be asking is, where does fatherhood begin? You see, something has to bring life into existence.

Okay, we're all a product of somebody else's decision. Good or bad or indifferent, whatever it may be. And this is the thing that Romans 5 is teaching us here. Sin came into the world through one man, Adam, and we all became sinful.

[ 6 : 54 ] But righteousness, salvation, has come into the world through one man, Jesus Christ. So it all depends now on who you belong to. Either you belong to Adam and you are taken that way, or you belong to Christ and you are taken that way.

Either you belong to the man of the earth that has taken you into sin, or you belong to the man from heaven, God's son, who takes you out of sin into life, love, resurrected, eternal life, righteousness, and all of that.

Union. Being tied to one or the other and the decisions that they make. Let me try and illustrate it a slightly different way. I've used this before, but back in the day I used to be a roofer, fit, I could climb a ladder.

Now I can just look at them. I just couldn't get up them carrying anything, let alone myself. And so nevertheless, one day a friend and I, a work colleague you could say, were working together on a very high roof.

Similar to the roofs out here in West of Hale. Very high. And now the foreman decided that he wanted to drop the scaffold in on the front of the building so that he could save a load of money.

[ 8 : 12 ] That made perfect sense to him, but it didn't make very much sense to us who were the roofers. So here we are climbing on top of this roof with only one side scaffolded and the other side had scaffolding about at the second level on like a four-story house.

It was very high. The foreman came up with a brilliant idea that he would tie both my friend Simon and myself together. One would stand on one side of the ridgeline and one would stand on the other.

Held together by a piece of blue rope. Now the principle is very simple. If he fell, I could stop him. If I fell, he could stop me.

We had to flip a coin to decide who would go on which side of the roof because neither of us wanted to go on the side with no scaffolding. So we flipped the coin and he went on the side where there was no scaffolding, although there was hardly any on my side as well, just to make him feel better.

And then it suddenly dawned on us that we were tied together and that if he went, what if I couldn't save him? I would go as well.

[ 9 : 26 ] You see, it all depends on the other person. And here's what that means, just as an illustration. We decided to actually untie ourselves in love and faith and hope that neither of us would fall, but we did make the decision that if one of us was going to go, it would be better one than two of us.

Here's the point. When God created the world, he created Adam, and when he created Adam, he created a tie to everybody else who would come after Adam. And when Adam fell, we all went with him.

When Adam fell, we all went with him. Whether you like it or not, the very fact that God created the first man to be the leader, to be the head, and to be united to every man and woman, boy and girl that would follow him, meant that whatever he did, we could not help but follow.

And Adam fell into sin. And we went with him. Now, why is that important? Well, it's important for this reason. Because then Christ comes, according to Paul here in Romans 5, and he does.

And he breaks the union. He breaks the bond that people have with Adam. He basically unties the rope. And he decides to tie it to himself in his life, in his death, and in his resurrection.

[10:51] And so when Christ rises from the dead to eternal life, as it were, you rise with him. Not because you can get out of the fool, not because you can get out of sin, but because of the one who can.

In the same way Adam took you down, Christ takes you up into righteousness, into salvation, into justification, into eternal life.

The point is this. It all depends on the one that you are united to. You know, we see this over and over again.

Paul, in Romans 8, which we've not got to yet, makes it very, very clear that the sufficiency of Christ is a wonderful thing to grasp. And that now that we are united with Christ, we may stumble and fall in our Christian life.

We may find our Christian life very difficult to live at times. But here's the thing, that we may fall, but we can never take Christ with us. He's too strong. He's just too powerful.

[11:57] We may slip, we may stumble, but our union with Christ means that we have united with someone who can never trip or stumble. Can always hold on to us, never lose us.

You know, we often call this eternal salvation. We often call this the very truth that you cannot lose yourself. But that's why. Because of the very union that you now have with Christ means that Christ doesn't let go of the rope.

He's too strong for you to be a weight in which he has to give up on. No, once he's got you, he has always got you. And this is the point that Paul's making here in Romans 5.

Either a person is in union with Adam and so they live a life of sin and eventually death. Spiritual deaths will really happen, but physical death is about to. Or, we live a life in union with Christ where we get to enjoy everything that is true of Jesus.

All the blessings and the benefits that come with belonging to Jesus, being able to pray to the Father, being able to have our prayers answered, having eternal life, having righteousness, being saved, being justified in God's presence.

[13:08] So, Paul says, verse 15, that the free gift is not like the trespass. It's much, much better. And then he says, verse 16, that the free gift is not like the result of one man's sin.

In other words, Adam sinned and you were all condemned. Jesus Christ lived a perfect, righteous life and you were saved, justified, made right with God because of him.

He's done it all for you. Yeah, we live a Christian life. Yeah, we love, listen and obey as we said in the dedication earlier. But Christ has done all the work that is necessary in order to unbind us from Adam.

And to put us in union with himself. So, this is how the world works. You're united to either one or the other person.

Either Adam or Christ. And we see this played out time and time again in human relationships.

Think about it this way. In the book of Ruth, you have a husband that was not a very wise husband at all.

[14:22] Not a very good husband. He decided, Elimelech, to take his wife, Naomi, and his two children out of Bethlehem. Now, Bethlehem had no food. There was a famine.

But Bethlehem did have God. So, he didn't trust God either. And he decided that instead of his family dying in the famine in Bethlehem, that he would take them out to Moab.

The only thing was is that when he got down to Moab, he died and his two sons died, leaving Naomi all alone. Now, how many of you as married couples or as single people in work relationships have been left with the consequences of somebody else's decision?

How many times has somebody else made a decision and has just taken us with them? Whether we like it or not, we can do nothing about it.

Why? Because that's the way God's created the world. We're always to be mindful of our union. Elimelech did not make the best decision before God.

[15:29] He definitely didn't make the best decision before his family. He lost his life. His son's life were gone. We know how the story ends. Ruth comes along and comes to Naomi.

You know, your people will be my people. You know, the union is reestablished in a different kind of way. But we get to see the picture of how one person's decision can affect everybody else's.

Even now, in family relationships and work relationships. Well, that's what Paul's saying here in Romans 5. The decision that Adam made takes you into sin. But the decision that Christ made in his very actions has taken you out of sin into salvation and righteousness.

That's important. Here's the next thing that Paul has to say and that is your life gets changed because of it. You know, too often we think in independent terms.

you know, that what I do won't affect another person. Or even in the church we see something going on and we say, well, it's really none of my business. These sort of anti-Christian views are the very things that sort of unwind the family in the church and in the home.

[16:48] Because too often that the person in the middle can often carry the stress of two other people. You've got one person over here who's not getting on with this person over here.

You're called in the middle. You can say, I don't want anything to do with it. Be very anti-Christian. You're not meant to carry the stress of a situation that's not yours but you are to recognize that you can't get away from it because of the union, because of the way God has created the church and has created people.

So think of what your union with Christ means. Think of what your union with Adam meant. It meant that you only had sin to look forward to and the judgment of sin afterwards.

But now that you belong to Christ, think of everything that you have to look forward to. You're saved. You're justified.

Righteousness. Eternal life. You know, all of these saving benefits and blessings that come from being united with Christ.

[18:01] You know, what's the danger? The danger is to say as a Christian, you know, I'm independent. I come and go as I please. You know, I'm not, you know, I live my own Christian life in my own Christian circle.

Not really, you don't. Paul makes it very clear that as one man took many, the same as with Christ, he takes many. And if we're all united with Christ, we're all united with each other.

And so Paul is saying this in a kind of way. That your life will reflect the person that you belong to. That your life will reflect the person that you belong to.

You know, if the qualities of Christ are coming out in your life, it's because you belong to him.

There's no other reason for it. But if the qualities of Adam, not that their qualities is such, are coming out in your life, well, that's an indication of something, isn't it?

We all have to wrestle with sin and the old man in our life. The point is, is living in union. Or rather, living life, recognizing the union that we have with Jesus Christ.

[19:11] Here then, there's a few considerations as we sort of wrap this up. Here's the first consideration. Division. Now, how many divisions are there in the world? Only one.

You know, we make things that aren't divisions as divisions. Race, that's a division. No, it isn't. Culture, that's a division. No, it's different, but it's not a division.

Language, well, they're different. It's not a division. They're things that separate countries and separate groups, but they're not real divisions because Christians from different countries can get along and of different races can get along.

The Bible's very clear that there is only one division between two sides, Adam or Christ. You know, too often, we focus on solving these other things that can never be solved unless you first solve the one division that really matters.

That is, who do you belong to? Adam or Christ? To a life of sin and death or to a life of grace and faith?

[20:26] Here's the second consideration of Romans 5. Jesus saves. Yeah, that may sound like a shocking statement to some who believe that Jesus only gives the opportunity to be saved.

That's a terrible lie. Jesus saves. And he saves by living for us, by dying for us, by uniting himself with us and taking us out of this life of sin and death and bringing us to himself.

Jesus does it all. Jesus saves. He doesn't give the opportunity like throwing out a life ring into the sea. That's not what Jesus does.

Jesus dives in and gets us. Very different. You know, too often, you know, we think of Jesus coming like a, like to a crossroads and that you either choose Adam or you choose Jesus.

But that's not what Romans 5 teaches. Romans 5 teaches very, very clearly that everyone is on a very narrow road of sin and death and destruction and Christ comes to that single track road.

[ 21 : 44 ] People don't get to make a choice whether or not they belong to Adam or Christ. By, by their very nature they belong to Adam. Christ comes and breaks that union and brings us to himself.

What does that mean? Well, this is what it means. That people are not saved by a message. You need to remember that. It's not about getting the gospel message right.

It's about getting Jesus right because we're saved by a person not by a message. You know, it wasn't a message that took us into sin and damnation. It was a person, Adam.

And it's not a message that saves us, it's a person, Jesus Christ. So think about that as you think about the gospel. The gospel is knowing Jesus. The gospel is belonging to Jesus.

Salvation is belonging to Jesus. Here's another consideration or a distinctive. Grace reigns through righteousness that Jesus Christ has saved you.

[ 22 : 52 ] salvation. So here's a final thought. Remember your union with Jesus. Remember your union. Conversion, salvation, is not about converting to a set of beliefs.

It's about belonging to a certain person. You know, too often we want to reduce our faith to a set of beliefs that we either struggle to believe or hope to believe. That's not what salvation is.

Salvation is belonging to a person and that person is Jesus Christ. Salvation is a relationship with a man, the God-man, Jesus Christ, not a relationship with a set of beliefs or truths.

That's true. Certainly true. But don't reduce your union with Christ to a set of beliefs. and don't proclaim a message without really remembering that the thing that you're actually proclaiming is the person.

So remember your union. Don't think of it as a set of beliefs. Think of it as a person. Don't think of salvation as an action that, you know, it's all over and done with, but rather we are being saved, as the scripture says, continually by Christ.

[ 24 : 09 ] Yes, what he did on the cross seals it forever. But the fact is is that Christ is still with us daily. Now this may have woken some of you up spiritually.

Especially if you've defined your Christian life just as believing a certain set of beliefs. Now think of it as Paul does in Romans 5. As separation from one person so that we can marry another.

a separation from a horrible man so that we could be in union with a glorious man. Think of your salvation not as something that you hold on to, but as someone that holds on to you.

Think of salvation as Paul does here. As union with Christ. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 25 : 23 ] Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.