

Romans (Strengthened by the Gospel) (Week 8/18) A New Humanity in Christ

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *What opportunity this week, in all you are facing, to boast in the Lord?*

Warm-Up

1. What do you think are the common ‘visions for humanity’ that are promoted today?
2. What does every vision for humanity (outside of God’s) ultimately fail to address?

Read Romans 5:12-14

3. According to Paul, how did sin enter the world? How do other parts of the Bible support this view?
4. What is the ultimate consequence for sin? How is this plainly evident in the world today (including on your frontlines)?
5. What is our relationship with Adam? Is it fair that we share in the consequences for his sin?
6. In what ways are we actually *just like Adam* in our approach to God and God’s world?
7. What was at the heart of the first sin that caused the fall? Do we ever struggle with something similar?
8. How is it possible that sin was prevalent even without the law? What then is the role of the law?
9. If Adam is a pattern of the one to come, *who is the one who is to come?*

Read Romans 5:15-17

10. What is the parallel between what Adam did and caused *with what* Jesus did and caused?
11. In what ways is Jesus the new Adam? How does Jesus surpass Adam in every way?
12. What does Paul say *is not like the trespass?* Work through how the gift of God’s grace is different.
13. How did Jesus set a new course for humanity? Was this a small nudge or a complete turn around?
14. Can we in any way contribute to salvation? What then is the point of doing good works?
15. How have you known the superabounding nature of God’s grace in your own life?

Read Romans 5:18-21

16. What is the difference between the reign of death and the reign of grace?
17. How was the power of sin and death dethroned? When will it be destroyed?
18. What are the transformations that Jesus has won for us through his death and resurrection?
19. What are the three chapters of history that Paul outlines in this section? What eras do we live between? How should that reality change how you live today?
20. Do you count yourself ‘in Adam’ or ‘in Christ’? *How can we be sure that we’ve received the gift of grace?*
21. How as Christians can we live in a way that points to the reign of grace that will come in full?

Apply *Try to identify one practical outworking of what it means for you this week to be in Christ.*

Pray *Gracious Father, thank you that Jesus has triumphed over sin and death, and that it is in him by grace we might become a new humanity. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

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Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

On ordinary days, what reminds you that you belong to Jesus?






For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* “A New Humanity” by Pete Wilkinson:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/a-new-humanity-2/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermon):* “Life Through One Man” by Aneirin Glyn:
<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/57965/>
- *Listen (sermon):* “The Gift is Not Like the Trespass” by Rico Tice:
https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=51330&show_file=54535
- *Read (article):* “Paul on Sin in Romans 5-6” by Michael Bird:
<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/euangelion/2014/02/paul-on-sin-in-romans-5-6/>

Series Resources

- *Read:* “Strengthened by the Gospel” by Brian Rosner. 
- *Read:* “The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans” by Michael Bird.
- *Read:* “Into the Heart of Romans” by N. T. Wright. 
- *Read:* “Epistle of Paul to the Romans” by F. F. Bruce. 
- *Read:* “The Message of Romans” by John Stott. 
- *Read:* “The Epistle to the Romans” by Leon Morris. 
- *Watch:* “Romans” by the Bible Project:
<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans/>

 Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

ROMANS (STRENGTHENED BY THE GOSPEL)

Week 08/18 “A New Humanity in Christ”
by the Rev’d Adam Lowe (14/06/2026)

그리스도 안에서 새로운 인류 | Rään Jöt nē Kritho yic |
在基督里的新人类 | கிறிஸ்துவில் ஒரு புதிய மனுக்குலம்

Bible Passage: Romans 5:12-21

Heart of Sermon: *The first Adam dragged humanity down (sin and death),
the second Adam (Jesus) raises humanity up and makes us new (redemption and life).*

*Gracious Father, thank you that Jesus has triumphed over sin and death,
and that it is in him by grace we might become a new humanity. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

Over time, *almost every generation has had some **longing** and **vision** for a better humanity.*

- It’s kind of like the ultimate DIY or self-improvement project.
Perhaps you’ve got a few of those on the go, but this one is for everyone!
- It involves a diagnosis: seeking to identify the **root cause of our problems**;
And *then* a proposed solution: having a conviction **on how we go about fixing it.**
- *The ancients thought lawlessness was our biggest problem, therefore LAW was the answer.
The Greeks thought ignorance was the issue, so EDUCATION was the antidote.
In the 16th century some thought nature was misunderstood, so SCIENCE provided the solution.
Later people were convinced that it was unjust structures that hold us back,
so distributing RIGHTS was the way forward.
And then as we get to the 18th century, people thought scarcity (or even toil) was the curse,
so TECHNOLOGY could be our saviour.*
- The threads of these convictions are still alive and well today!
- Whenever something bad hits the headlines, you can just about guarantee that as people grasp for a solution *so that we can fix the issue* or *in the hope that it never happens again*, someone will want to address it by dialling up or dialling down, some combination of legislation, education, liberation, or innovation.
- There have been *some* good gifts given to humanity through these convictions.
- But the limitation is that on their own they are not enough.

- Or at least they're not enough if you're willing to:
grapple with what truly is the root cause of our problem — *sin and death*; and
embrace a truly magnificent vision for humanity — *perfected and able to live forever*.
- Christianity proposes that our problems are actually worse than you think, but our future in Christ is more glorious than you can imagine.
- We're not just in need of improvement, we're in need of salvation.

Right now, just about every tech CEO and their robotic dog will tell you that we're on the cusp of something really big. That AI — Artificial Intelligence — is going to transform humanity.

- One of those CEO's, Sam Altman said that he envisions a merger between humans and AI.
- He said that might mean our lives are:
intertwined with a chatbot,
inserting electrodes into our brains, *OR* — *what he thinks is best-case-scenario*,
uploading our minds to the cloud. / That's where we're at.
Or at least *that's* the trajectory that some genuinely want us to be on. /
- I wonder if that's the kind of vision for humanity that excites you? /
- The Bible doesn't only offer a more honest assessment of our situation, but also *points* to the most beautiful vision for humanity that has already been made possible in Christ.
- While we're playing around the edges, God has made sin and death a solved problem. /
- If only we look to him. /

- In many ways that's what Paul is inviting us to see in chapter 5 of Romans.
- To help us see God's vision for humanity, on a cosmic scale,
by looking at three chapters in human history:
the Origin of Sin,
the Advent of Christ, *and the*
Reign of Grace.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN | VERSES 12-14

죄의 시작 | Bëën dë Rëëc | 罪的起源 | பாவத்தின் தோற்றம்

First, Paul gets to the root cause of humanity's problem with **the origin of sin and death**.

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

The “*therefore*” in the opening of v.12 *is doing some serious heavy-lifting at this point in Romans!*

- Paul is drawing all of the threads together in his case for justification-by-faith which began in c.3.
- And now, having established what Jesus accomplished for believers: *that we are justified, have peace with God, access to grace, can rejoice in hope, are reconciled through Christ's death, and saved by his life* — Paul steps back and explains **why it had to be this way**.
- Why *one man's act (Jesus) could undo what one man's act (Adam) caused*.
- It turns out that the current problems we face, *of sin and death*, are not new, but find their origin story with the first Adam (the OG). //
- Without too much of a rehash the story goes like this:
- God created the world, made humanity in his image, gave them everything they needed, empowered them to rule, with only one prohibition.
- Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's it!

- It's not because God was keeping the really special stuff for himself.
It's not because God was withholding from us. But because he knows what is good for us. /
- But they SAW the fruit, DESIRED it for themselves, and TOOK it. SAW, DESIRED, TOOK.
That pattern has echoed on through the ages *ever since*. //
- *That's often the pattern of the genesis of sin.* // This is a tragedy.
- We get a glimpse of the depth of that by what happens shortly after their disobedience.

[when] the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8) //

- When they disobediently and defiantly took the fruit and ate from the tree, they weren't just caving into the desires of evil, or expressing some misplaced aspiration to be like God. It reflects a desire to take the place of God.
- The tree is not *just about knowing what is good and what is evil*, but claiming the right to decide what is good and what is evil.
- That desire of course is alive and well today *in each and everyone of us*. //
- The consequence was catastrophic: God evicts them from the garden. They are no longer able to eat from the tree of life. Death enters the world.
- The corruptive force of sin didn't *just* enter the world, but infected the whole.

- We see the effects of that everywhere. If you're a farmer, you see how it has affected the land. If you're a doctor you're wrestling with it everyday. If you're a parent you experience the battle.
- It's a great privilege as we serve in all sorts of spaces in the world, pointing to Christ, pouring out his love, reflecting his will — but we still come up short.
- And without applying too much scrutiny, we see the fruit of sin in our own hearts.
- Adam's story of sin not only has an *impact*, but leaves an *imprint* on us. //

Maybe when you hear that you think, well that was a poor choice *by Adam*, but it's not fair!

- Just because one guy roaming around a garden made a dopey decision, why should *I* — why should *we* — why should the *entire world* suffer?
- Aren't we just future innocent people, bearing the brunt and reaping the curse, of *one person* who couldn't obey a *simple instruction*?!
- If only that were true!
- Yes, we do suffer *because of him*. / We're not as independent as we think!
There's much in our lives — some bad and good — resulting from other people's decisions. It might feel like the whole class being punished when one person does something wrong, but when a sports team represents us on the field we're happy for it to be our win!
- Just think about the series of decisions that people have made down your family tree, that has resulted in how your life has shaped up to be and even you being born.
- Our ancestry that profoundly shapes and defines who we are and who we will be.

- Like pollution entering into the head of a river and flowing downstream, as descendants in the line of Adam — *born outside of that garden* — the effects flow down the generations.
- But we experience the effects, not just because of him, but because Adam is prototypical — *sets the pattern* — for us all. We're like him.
- *Perhaps because my parents gave me the name of Adam, it's just easier for me to see!*
Adam acted as humanity's representative. He's not just my namesake, he's everyone's namesake.
- *It's not just some hypothetical of whether or not you would have eaten the fruit if you were there.*
- *But it's a reality that ALL daily disobey God and rail against the limits of our being.*
- It's not simply that we stand *in the line of Adam* but that all stand *with Adam*.
We share a universal solidarity but in the worst possible way. / We can't just blame him.

[Hear again verse 12 of Romans 5...] Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, **because ALL SINNED...**

- Paul goes on to explain that there's something *sadly deeply human about this*.
- It's not only that Adam represents us but we repeat him. /
- Some thought that sin couldn't exist until the law was introduced.
But Paul excludes that possibility pointing out that whilst the Law brings judgement as it convicts of wrong, sin and rebellion against God has *almost* always been there.
- I say *almost* because there's a slot between when humans were created and when they fell!

- *There's been endless dissection of Genesis to figure out how long it took Adam and Eve to fall.*
- *Of how long it was between letting them loose and stopping the clock to see if it was a decade, a year, a month, or an hour!* The short answer is: the Bible just doesn't tell us.
- In Jewish tradition it's often put that Adam and Eve fell on the day they were created.
- But what should really bear weight on us is not how long it took them to sin, but the amount of sin that has been wracked up in human history ever since.
- What Paul describes simply in verse 16 as *many trespasses*.
- Behind every real problem is the *root problem* of sin which drags us down.
- And without *outside* intervention, we're powerless to break the cycle of sin or change our trajectory.

THE ADVENT OF CHRIST | VERSES 15-17

그리스도의 오심 | Tiim dë Kritho | 基督的降临 | கிறிஸ்துவின் வருகை

Which would all be rather hopeless, except the **advent of Christ** brings a twist in the story.

[Verse 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!

Note the clarity of Paul's logic here: THAT:

- Whilst through one man — Adam — sin was brought into the world bringing death; through another man — Jesus — grace overflowed into the world bringing life.
- Note *back in verse 14*, when Adam is described as a “pattern of the one to come”, Paul does not *simply mean* that Jesus was in the pattern of Adam because he was human.
- Jesus was *fully God and—YES—also fully human*. He was the perfect human. He's the new Adam. He's everything we should be. He's everything humanity ought to be.
- But there's also something else extraordinary here. It means that as Adam was made in the pattern of the one who was to come, God was already anticipating our redemption back in the garden.
- There was one to come to do what Adam — nor me, nor you, nor anyone else could do.
- *Whilst Adam's disobedience would lead us to death, Jesus' perfect obedience leads us to life.*

- God didn't set us up for failure. He did everything possible to bring us forgiveness.
 - The effect of one man is similar, but it's also different.
The gift, Paul says, is not like the trespass.
 - That's obvious right? The trespass brought death, whilst God's gift of grace brings life. It's better. Of course. But its greatness is also way beyond our grasp.
 - Condemnation was triggered by one man's sin,
Jesus' death and resurrection have conquered every sin that has followed or will ever be.
-

Nine years after the New Horizons Space probe was launched by NASA, mission controllers had to make the decision in 2015 to make a course correction else the mission to measure the properties of Pluto's atmosphere would fail. The probe had covered 4.8 billion kilometers, travelling at a rate of over 50,000km per hour, but there was a problem: its velocity was off by 27 cm centimetres per second. The deviation in its trajectory looked imperceptively miniscule but the outcome would be catastrophic. // So they fired the thrusters for just 23 seconds and it bumped the space probe back on course.

We might think the problem of sin is small—and that we're just a little of course. But actually without intervention we're set on a catastrophic trajectory.

- But unlike *New Horizon*, a little bump in the right direction simply won't do. Sometimes we think that we can achieve it ourselves, incrementally, bit-by-bit. *But we can't.*
- *The course correction needed for humanity was nothing less than God sending his own Son. In fact, he doesn't just correct our course he sets us on a whole new path.*

- When Paul says *in v.15 that God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of Jesus overflows, that word—OVERFLOWS—in English is wildly understated. God made abundant provision.*
-

Whenever I think about abundance, my memory is immediately transported back to when as a child I would visit my grandmother and she would feed us spaghetti bolognese. She would serve us bowl after bowl from a pot with seemingly inexhaustible supply!

- God didn't just precisely calculate what was needed but gave it all. His own life.
- This is like the rain after the drought that doesn't just fill the dams, but quenches the earth and brings life out of the dust.
- God's abundant gift of grace is why we can go:
From cursed to graced.
From condemned to justified;
From guilty to righteous; From death to life.
- And not just for us — but a grace that spills out into the entirety of creation.
- It's no wonder, when Paul says that where *sin increased — grace — superabounded!*
- *Paul doesn't mean that we should sin all the more in order that there would be more grace. He means that the law exposed sin so that we could more clearly see the beauty of grace for what it is.*
- Ready to be received.
- *God's superabounding grace through his Son is what awaits anyone who wants to receive the gift.*

THE REIGN OF GRACE | VERSES 18-21

은혜의 통치 | Tuol dë Athiëi | 恩典的掌权 | கிருபையின் ஆட்சி

Because Jesus came into the world, the reign of sin and death has been put on notice, and the **reign of grace** has begun. Back to *verse 20*...

20 The law was brought in 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.**

Three times so far in this chapter, Paul has made the point that up to Jesus, death reigned.

- Verse 14: death reigned from Adam to Moses.
Verse 17: death reigned through Adam's trespass.
And here, verse 21: sin reigned in death.
- We know that painfully to be true.
Try as we might and as we do, there's nothing that we can do to change that.
- But when Paul says 'death reigned', he does not simply mean that it is present or prevalent.
- We're meant to understand it in political terms. Like a ruling power. A king.
- Sin and death have been in charge.
But because of Jesus there is a new king.
And when Jesus returns he'll not only share that reign with us.

- *But the old powers that have been dethroned will finally be destroyed. //*
 - *The era of sin and death has been put on notice.
Jesus crushed sin and death through his death and resurrection.
And when he returns we'll experience the fruit of his reign in full.*
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Just in the last two days the world has witnessed the biggest initial public offering of shares in human history. SpaceX launched on the markets with a valuation of around \$3 trillion Australian dollars. The stock raise is based on a bet that Artificial Intelligence and getting to Mars is the big answer to all of humanity's problems. And that one man, one leader, can build a team to make it a reality. /

There's no shortage of ideas on how to fix the problems in our world.

- *But in one way or another, they centre around a vision for humanity built by human ingenuity.*
- *Musk wants to take us to mars.
Altman wants us uploaded to the cloud.
God's vision is resurrection into eternal life under a new King. /*
- We don't need another founder with a great idea. That's been roadtested in the garden.
We need a saviour, whose perfect obedience even unto death undid all of our damage.
- It's not simply that Jesus extinguishes a fire that Adam started and we fuelled.
Jesus will do away with those destructive forces and make everything new.

- God's vision for humanity is not only better than anything we can create, it's the only vision that truly deals with the root cause of our problems.
- It's available to all and sufficient for all.
- That's the countdown that has begun.
That's the trajectory we're really on in Christ.
That's the future for humanity that will truly win out.

- *But you've got to choose to which Adam you belong. Of which Adam you're IN.*
- *You can stay with the OLD ADAM — whose reign ends in death. /
Or you can be by faith in the NEW ADAM — Jesus — who leads us to grace and life.*
- **One Adam drags us down.
The other has raised us up.**