***The Integrity of God
RO56-02***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 5. The opening part of this book has dealt with the subject of justification by faith. That particular segment of discussion is being concluded by Paul with a summary statement in Romans 5:12-21. That's where we have arrived at this point.

**Physical and Spiritual Death**

This section has revealed to us that everyone dies spiritually and physically because of the sin of Adam in Eden. We do not die physically and spiritually, first of all, because of our personal sins, nor because we have an old sin nature. It's the result of something that Adam did in the Garden of Eden. By divine reckoning, Adam represented the human race, and the consequences of his sin is imputed to all mankind. Spiritual death is imputed. We say "mediately;" that is, it comes father-to-child, and father-to-child. But physical death comes to us directly from Adam. It comes "immediately." The consequences in either case were disastrous: physical and spiritual death.

This imputation of Adam's sin is based on the federal headship and the seminal relationship of Adam to us by divine reckoning. One thing we have found is that death always indicates a violation of a stated divine law. You cannot violate a rule of God unless it is stated as such. So, the spelling out of God's laws, we must observe, did not take place until the time of Moses. So, the people who lived up to that time could not be guilty of a violation.

As we said, it may be wrong to drive 100 miles an hour through the middle of a crowded street, but unless there's a law that says the speed limit is something less than 100 miles an hour, you cannot be arrested for violating a law. There has been no statement of a law, and thus there has been no guilt on your part.

**Death**

Yet we find that people died from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even though they were not breaking any stated laws, and therefore could have the penalty of death applied to them. They were, of course, sinning, but there was no stated law which would bring the guilt and the consequence of the penalty of death.

**Adam**

So, death was obviously the result of something that all of us were being held guilty for that someone else had done. And in this case, Paul makes it clear that that someone else was Adam. Adam's violation as our representative; as our federal head; and, as the one in whose loins we existed, and were to eventually be descended, and thus, his seminal headship of us accounts for the fact that everyone was dying from Adam to Moses even before people were breaking specific rules. This also accounts for the fact that infants today die who cannot sin, and mentally incompetent people die today who are incapable of exercising their will against God, and thus sinning.

There has to be a reason for death, and we know what the reason for death is. Death is the result of violating a stated law of God. If there are no stated laws, you cannot have death. If you're not capable of violating a stated law, you cannot be guilty of death. Yet everybody dies. The reason for that is because we are suffering the consequences of someone who acted in our behalf by God's reckoning, and that is Adam.

**Jesus Christ**

In this passage, Paul is comparing two men: Adam on one side; and, Christ on the other. The work of Jesus Christ in our justification is explained by comparing Him to Adam. Adam was a type of Jesus Christ, and that's where we ended up last time at the end of verse 14, speaking of Adam, who is a figure; who is a type; and, who is an image of Him that was to come; that is, of Jesus Christ. Man received death by the act of one man, Adam. Man received eternal life by the act of one man, Jesus Christ. The parallel, which is drawn between Adam and Jesus Christ shows that individual human doing is not involved in either our condemnation or our salvation. It is something we receive. I hope by now you have learned that. That is perhaps one of the most important things you should have learned. This comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ is God's way of trying to make it clear to you that human doing is not involved. You were not involved in what brought the consequences of Adam sin upon you. You just received it. And you were not involved in bringing the consequences of the death of Christ to pay for your sins. All you do is receive the benefits. You do not help Him save you, any more than you helped Adam make you a sinner. That is one of the primary comparisons, and the point that he's trying to make here.

The absence, therefore, of human effort in salvation stresses a very important fact about salvation. That is that it's irreversible. Salvation is given in perpetuity on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – not on the basis of the cooperation of the sinner. You had nothing to do with getting yourself into the jam of sin. Just being born in the human race has placed that upon you, because Adam has had his guilt imputed to you. And you have done nothing to reverse that consequence, which means eternal death in the lake of fire. You have done nothing to reverse that. Only God has done something to reverse that. Therefore, your salvation cannot be reversed once it is established. It is not a partial human element.

The question with God is only this: When He looks at you after you die, God just wants to know, "Are you and Adam; or, are you in Christ?" That's all. There is nothing else. He doesn't ask anything else. He don't care how livid a sinner you were, or how saintly a saint you are. He only wants to know: "Are you in Adam; or, are you in Christ?" And on that basis, your eternal destiny will be determined.

You come into the human race in Adam. Until you receive Christ as personal Savior, that's exactly where you remain, and that's exactly the way you'll got out in eternity. But once you receive Christ as Savior, all that is reversed, and you are now placed in Christ, and His absolute righteousness is then imputed to you. As Adam sin was once imputed to you, now absolute righteousness is imputed to you. God looks at you, and He sees you. He sees that you're just as good as Jesus Christ. Therefore, He says, "I, as judge of the universe, declare you to be justified. That's what "justified" means – that God can declare you to be as good as His Son.

The believing sinner, however, is not only justified, but we also found that he is placed in Christ, and that position in Christ is what preserves him in his salvation, because that has united you to absolute righteousness. So, in effect, you can do no wrong again. You can do no wrong which will separate you again from God. Because you are in Christ, and you are joined to absolute righteousness, you can never do a wrong again which will separate you from Christ. You will sin, and you will be disciplined, and you will be dealt with by the Father, but you can never send again in such a way as Adam did, which separated him from the Father into the lake of fire.

So, now we begin, with that quick background, up to verse 15, the first part of which says, "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift." Here the comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ is being presented in a negative way. Here's the difference. There is a comparison. There is an analogy between these two. Paul says, "But they're not quite the same. There's a little difference here." And he's going to point out what that difference is. To fully appreciate this difference, we must pause for a moment to remind ourselves just exactly who it is that we are dealing with in this whole issue of sin – the character of God; that is, what kind of a person God is. Man's point of contact with God in life is the integrity of God. Your point of contact with God is not God's love. God could not love us in our sin. God hates sin. God loathes everything that there is about us. And the only place that God can touch us is with His justice – His personal integrity, and His Holiness.

The source of all blessing, therefore, for a human being, from salvation on, is the integrity of God. That is the point of blessing; that is the point of salvation; and, that's the point of all consequent blessing. There is no compromise on this. There is no conning God. God will not deal with us on any other basis except His integrity. He won't do it relative to salvation, and He won't do it relative to you and me as believers. We come into the Christian life as zeros. We have no capacity. The Word of God tells us that we have a great spiritual deficiency, and you do not con God into blessing, or work out a plan of blessing until you have corrected that zero spiritual deficiency with the intake of the Word of God. The source of all blessing is your ability to relate yourself to the integrity of God. And until you know doctrine, and until your human spirit is flooded over with divine viewpoint, you just don't know how to deal with God; you don't know how to deal with yourself; and, you don't know how to deal with other human beings. Therefore, most of the time, you are never in a position where God can bless you.

**God's Integrity**

God's integrity – what do we mean by that? We mean His perfect justice. We mean His absolute righteousness. We just call it God's holiness. That is the point of contact that every human being has, first of all, with God.

On one occasion, in Luke 18:19, a young man came up and called Jesus "good." Jesus said, "Why do you call Me good. There isn't anybody good but God." What was Jesus telling him? Jesus was telling him that God is good because God functions on absolute integrity. And human beings do not function on absolute integrity. They function on relative integrity with one another. But Jesus pointed out that only God is good, because only God functions on absolute integrity.

Yet you and I call people good. We say, "This is a good man. This is a good woman." And usually we mean that they're nice people to be around; they're good neighbors; they're kind; they're considerate; they're helpful; and, so on. But that kind of goodness has filled hell. It is good people, by human standards, that go to hell. But there is required a goodness that is compatible with the integrity of God if you are to escape that judgment.

So, our point of contact is the integrity of God. You must understand that. It's not the sovereignty of God; it's not the love of God; and, it's not these other things. Sometimes people say, "Well, sovereignty – that's the big thing, so God is glorified." No. Or they say, "Law – that's the big thing, so, God is glorified." Not at all. Where God glorifies Himself is by maintaining His holiness. That is His primary basis of glorifying Himself. When you understand that, then you're going to deal with God on an honest basis, and you'll get away from all this human viewpoint deception and conning that we do with one another, and with God, thinking that you're going to get someplace.

God's justice has been satisfied relative to sinners in such a way by his own work that he can never again become unsatisfied. God's integrity has been met toward our sin in such a way that he can never again become unsatisfied. All sin of all ages has been paid for by Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is no possible ground upon which the integrity of God could again be violated. Salvation, therefore, once received, can never be revoked. You can never be lost again. There's no basis by which you could reverse it. All sin has been covered.

Only someone who is as sinless as Adam originally was could satisfy the integrity of God and secure this kind of salvation. That is the problem. We are related to the integrity of God (to His holiness) so that it requires a special kind of person – an absolutely sinless person. For that reason, only the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to solve the problem of our sin. There is no one else – including you. So, the next time you are inclined to think that your good actions help get you saved, or that if you are a Christian, and you don't behave yourself, and you fall into sin, that you're going to be lost again, just remember that you couldn't save yourself to begin with, let alone to keep yourself saved. That is because only a sinless person can provide salvation.

That was the terrible thing that Adam did to us. Once he sinned, we were put not only in the position where we had a sin nature, and we were not only put in a position where we now had the quality of acting in personal sins, but we were absolutely incapable of doing a thing about it, and to escape the lake of fire. We were absolutely incapable. And that's still true of us.

So, anybody who comes along with this idea that somehow your works and your doing are involved with your salvation, you just don't understand your condition, and you don't appreciate the kind of God you're dealing with. You don't understand the character of God. You don't understand that your point of dealing with God is His integrity. You're not going to con Him; you're not going to kid Him; and, you're not going to get around it.

So, once this kind of salvation has been received on the basis of the only qualified person, Jesus Christ, to provide it, there's nothing more to be added, and there's nothing that can be taken from it.

**Adam and Eve's Sin**

Sin came into the stream of humanity through the deliberate, conscious violation of God's law by Adam. 1 Timothy 2:14 makes it very clear to us that Adam knew what he was doing. It also makes it clear to us that Eve thought she was doing a good thing, and that their lifestyle would be improved. And she, the Bible says, was very clearly deceived. But Adam, the Bible says, was not deceived.

**How do we Receive the Old Sin Nature?**

Now that's the condition that we must remember that causes the Father, in the generation of a child now, to become the transmitter of the old sin nature. This is why you receive your sin nature through your father – not through your mother. And for this reason, Jesus Christ, who had to be perfect humanity, and who had to be human as well as divine, had to be able to come into this world free of Adam's imputed sin, and free of an old sin nature. There was only one way He could do that. And that was by God stepping in and cutting off the line which transmitted those things, which is the Father's sperm seed in the generation of the child. So, Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, and having cut off the human father line, Jesus Christ came into the world as Adam was – perfectly sinless. There was no tarnish upon Him. He was in absolute perfection of relationship with the living God. The integrity of God finally was fully compatible with a human being. Since the fall of Adam, there had not been one person with whom the integrity of God was now compatible. Now, again, there was a human being in the world with whom that integrity was perfectly compatible. So, the Father becomes the channel for transmitting this sin nature. Jesus Christ bypassed that father. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 7:14 tells us about that, and Matthew 1:19-25 is the New Testament fulfillment.

Of course, Mary, his mother, had an old sin nature. The foolishness of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is just exactly that. It's gobbledygook foolishness. That's another idea that goes back to the Babylonian mystery cults that Romanism has so picked up. So, she had a sin nature, but it didn't affect Christ, because there was no human father to transmit it.

**The Last Adam**

So, the Bible calls Jesus "the last Adam," and therefore, the one who is qualified to pay for the sins of the world. The virgin birth enabled the holiness of God to be preserved. So, God glorified Himself in saving sinners by grace, apart from human doing.

**Glory to God**

The motivation of everything that God does is to bring glory to Himself. The reason for this is that the character of God merits our honor and our praise. And it would be wrong (it would be sinful) of God not to recognize His perfection. It would be sin on God's part not to recognize His fantastic, absolute integrity. Therefore, everything that God created was designed to bring glory to Himself, and to bring honor to what He was. And that is the problem with human beings. They don't know what God is like. They don't know what this person is like that they're going to face someday as judge. Therefore, they come up with all kinds of wild notions of their own invention as to what this God is going to be like. However, God does all for His own glory. And he saves us, as believing sinners, with a salvation in perpetuity as a supreme act of bringing glory to Himself.

Now, as you get a feel for the character of God, and what He is like, and you get a sense of how terrible sin is, and how desperate and helpless is our condition, and how loathsome is our condition, and you get the loathsomeness of man and the integrity of God, compared one to another, you see that there is no solution for man, and God has no reason to want to make a solution. Yet he brings the two together, and brings sinners into heaven, you just have to speak in hushed tones, and you're awed, and you can appreciate the fact that God has brought glory to Himself in that respect alone. For that reason, Ephesians 1:6 says, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, through which He made us accepted in the beloved." You, of all things, are to be in His Beloved Son. And why does he do that? So, that you'll praise His work and bring glory to Him.

Verse 12 says, "That we should be the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ; trophies of His grace, to bring praise and honor to Him." Yet, what do sinners want to do? You've always got these people who are going around, who want to rob God of His glory, and who want to rob God of the fact that He has prepared a salvation that humanly could not have been produced. It was impossible. Instead of giving God the credit and the glory, and leaning back and relaxing, and saying, "I'm glad I've got a salvation like that, and it's secure," they're forever dabbling to bring in their little filthy rags of human righteousness.

Isaiah 42:8 very clearly says to us that God will not share His glory with another. Yet you have the folks who think they can be lost again, and what are they saying? "God, we want to tarnish Your glory. You came along and said that you solved this problem in an irreversible way, in perpetuity. But we're telling You that we have been bad enough to go to hell again, and Your work has been tarnished, but we're going to help you clean it up." Isn't that pitiful? For this reason, we say that it is the supreme duty of a human being to glorify God. That begins with accepting, with awe, His grace gift of a permanent salvation – one that meets His integrity fully, and one that can never be reversed.

**Accept God's Gift**

You don't glorify God by insulting Him with your filthy rags – your good works and your rituals. You don't glorify Him by trying to be saved that way, or to keep your salvation. So, don't come around to God and say, "I'm offering you my water baptism; I'm offering you my Lord's Supper; I'm offering you my circumcision; I'm offering you my good church membership; or, I'm offering you my good works." He's not interested. That's an insult and a tarnish upon the great thing that God has provided. God is immutable, so sinners are not going to change God's character. We're not going to change His dealings with us by certain demands. There are no alternate plans that we can offer. That's how we glorify God. We begin by taking a salvation simply, humbly, as a gift, and not trying to repay Him in any way.

**Bible Doctrine**

Secondly, we continue it with the daily intake of Bible doctrine into the mentality of the soul. Doctrine, as you know, is the mind of God shared with us to fill up our deficiency. It is a doctrine which enables men to relate properly to God and to His creation. It is doctrine stored in our human spirits that enable us to glorify God in our lives as 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 1 Corinthians 10:31 call upon us to do in all that we do – to glorify God.

A lot of folks think that they glorify God by their good Christian service. A lot of people think they're going to glorify God by their good living. They're going to glorify God by the money they give. They're going to glorify God by the words that they speak. They're not going to do any such thing. There's only one person that glorifies God, and that's God Himself. He brings glory to Himself. And He would sin were He not to do it.

If there is enough doctrine brought into your mentality; if you have been taught enough of the Word of God; you've been positive enough to store it into your human spirit; and, you are open to the leading of God the Holy Spirit, it just might be possible that the Lord can use you as a channel to bring glory to Himself. But if He does, it's not because you've gone out there and hustled. It's not going to be because some preacher got up and gave you a great inspirational talk, and told you to grab the flag, and to go storming out to do something wonderful for the Lord. Anytime you're told to go out and do something wonderful for the Lord, you're almost certain to respond with your sin nature. That's carnality, and God loathes it. It's human good, and He rejects it.

**Capacity to Serve the Lord**

You don't have to worry about bringing glory to Him, providing you've done the one thing that God lets you take your next breath for on this earth. There's only one reason you're taking your next breath, and that's to take more doctrine into your human spirit. Once you have done that, you've developed capacity, and that's what we're talking about. Only that gives you capacity to serve the Lord in a way that glorifies him. It is impossible for a human being to glorify God without having a great reservoir of doctrine in his human spirit to guide his soul.

So, don't be concentrating on what you can do in service to glorify God. But you be concentrating on what you can do to get your human spirit filled up with His viewpoint, and your deficiency in divine viewpoint corrected. We do nothing that glorifies God. He brings all glory to Himself. We can only hope to be His channels.

Then there is what you are outside (your human personality). We talk about each other's personalities. That human personality is one of the most painful things we deal with, because our personality, which reflects our mind; our intellect; and, our will, is a reflection of the status of our reservoir. That's one of the things you cannot hide. You can put on fronts for a while. Company is over, and you're pleasant. You're on your best behavior, but eventually it all breaks down, and you become the real you. And what you are (the personality you project, and how you act) is revealing to all the world how far you have gone in establishing compatibility with the integrity of God. And that compatibility with the integrity of God comes with the taking in of doctrine, and saying. "Yes, Lord" to it, and acting upon it.

**Reconciliation**

It is a God with that kind of integrity, and Who is that exacting, Who has taken us in our sin and our helplessness, and He has reconciled us forever to what He is. And remember what reconciliation means. It means that you have been perfectly adjusted to the integrity of God. You have been perfectly adjusted to His Holiness. You are perfectly acceptable to Him. Now that takes some doing.

So, lean back; relax; and, accept it, and don't try to get involved in the game. He has devised a plan for saving sinners which is so compatible with His character that it's beyond human comprehension. For this reason, men reject the provision that God has made. They don't think that that's the way to go to heaven. So, they come up with their human viewpoint substitutes.

**Hell**

Or they have the attitude that hell is sort of a myth. We were listening to a discussion on the radio while we were traveling along in Florida last week, and it was on the matter of sexual morality. One lawyer who represented himself as an atheist was taking one side, and he made some glib remark about, "Well, you might as well go ahead and be immoral. You're going to burn in hell for it anyhow." Well, just the very way he said it indicated that he sort of thought hell was a myth, and that it was not going to be a place of great burning. Many people think that. Many people also think that they'll have their friends there, and, therefore, it won't be so bad to be in that place after all.

However, the truth of the matter is that a God of integrity, who rejects your sin and your substitutes, is a God who is going to punish sin like you wouldn't believe it. And He's going to punish sin in a place that is not going to be pleasant at all. It's not going to be a friendly meeting of people sharing mutual miseries. It is going to be the most intolerable; the most horrifying; and, the most nightmarish experience a person can imagine. Yet people are constantly trying to pass hell off as a myth or some kind of a tolerable place.

I was thinking recently about Rudyard Kipling's poem, "Gunga Din." Rudyard Kipling wrote many military types of poems. I just want to read you the last part of "Gunga Din," where this very quality here is expressed by Kipling that hell somehow is a place where some comfort can come. He does not understand that the integrity of God would not permit any comfort in hell, but only that which rejection of God's provision through Christ deserves. And that is complete punishment.

"Gunga Din" takes place in India. The poem has to do with a military situation, and a dark skinned servant who supplied water and supplied ammunition, who was there to take care of the wounded. The speaker has just been shot, and is wounded. And Gunga Din rushes over to him:

"He carried me away
to where a dooli lay,
and a bullet came and drilled the beggar clean.
He put me safe inside,
and just before he died,
'I hope you like your drink,' says Gunga Din.

He had just given him a drink of water, and he described that it was crawling with bugs and it was slimy. But in his pain and his wound, it was the finest thing he had ever drunk. And Gunga Din had brought it for him.

So I'll meet him later on,
at the place where he is gone –
where it's always double-drill and no canteen.
He'll be squatting on the coals,
given drink to poor damned souls,
and I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din.
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the living God that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

Now, Kipling has made a great mistake. To begin with, Luke 16:23-26 will describe the rich man who died, and who looked across and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and asked that he would come and give him a drink of water. He was in hell. Kipling thinks that Gunga Din will be there to give him a drink of water. You know from Scripture that the rich man was told, "No, we cannot even give you a drop of cool water. That is not permitted. The integrity of God has brought judgment upon you – not partial comfort.

Rudyard Kipling was at least correct that it would be a place of coals. And he was conveying the fact, again, that people have that Gunga Din was a better man than he. What was he doing? He was saying, "You're a good man, but he at least was right in recognizing that that was not good enough for heaven, and that here a good man who had done many human good things was going to be in hell. But it's not going to be a place of pleasantness and comfort.

**The Integrity of God**

I hope you appreciate the integrity of God, because that's what's behind everything here in Romans 5 that Paul is trying to describe to us. Adam completely shattered and devastated the integrity of God in human relationships. And nobody could repair that until Jesus Christ came along. And unless you get it repaired through Him, you'll never have it repaired.

**The Rich Man and Lazarus**

So, the rich man, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man, knows the reality that hell is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. He knows the reality of Hebrews 10:31, which talks about the fearfulness of falling into the hands of a living God.

God has provided a set of unbelievable blessings for us. Yet He has not compromised His Holiness, and He has glorified Himself in it all – from salvation through all the blessings of life. Now, once you are saved, our problem is the spiritual capacity to receive God's blessings so that you can enjoy them. Many blessings are withheld from us because God knows that if you had them, they would be miseries to you.

Some people are withheld blessings of marriage because God knows that if he permitted it to them, it would be a misery. Some people insist on having marriage when they have no capacity for it. And then it is misery. They have no spiritual capacity for marriage. So, they make all the wrong choices, and all the wrong moves. And the result is pain and agony.

If God were to give you money before you had the capacity to be able to use it, you'd bring misery upon yourself. If He gave you fame before you had the capacity to take it in stride, you would destroy yourself with it. If He gave you an ability to use, and gave you an opportunity to use it – a skill, and you used it before you had capacity spiritually to use it, you would bring grief into your life.

So, how do you get this capacity? Only through the intake of the Word of God. That's where it's all that. And where do you get the Word of God? Reading books? No. Taking correspondence courses? Not very much. There's only one place that God says you're going to get it – sitting here, eyeball-to-eyeball, with the pastor-teacher gift and the local church assembly being taught on the authority of the Word of God. This is not what the man thinks, but clearly what God has said, and what He thinks. That is the only way you're going to develop spiritual capacity. And that is the only source of blessing for you.

You'll have blessing; you'll let prospering; you'll have happiness; you'll have joy; and, you'll have your life going in the right direction, but only when you develop the ability to handle it. If you have found yourself with blessings slipping out of your hand (sometimes when you think you really had them), you better consider whether God is telling you: "You're not ready to handle it, and I'm taking it away from you. I'm not permitting you to have it, because you are not compatible with My integrity. You have not developed through the Word of God (through doctrine in your human spirit), the capacity to be functioning under My blessing. Therefore, I cannot give it to you. You need doctrine in your life. God provides opportunity for ample Christian service once that capacity is there – prepared believers to do a prepared job. So, God keeps you and me alive in this world, with the hope that He'll be able to give you maximum blessings.

This analogy between Adam and Christ is on the basis of a God like that, and of a God who functions in that way. We began, in verse 12, with this comparison, which was an incomplete statement of a comparison. He started to compare Adam to Jesus Christ, and then he cut it off, and he stopped to interrupt, between verses 13-17, to give an explanation. And verses 13-14 explain Paul's doctrinal statement in verse 12: "But all sin." He no sooner said in verse 12, "For all have sinned," and then he started to close the comparison. And he thought, "Well, somebody might not understand what I meant by "All sinned." So, he stops in verses 13-14, and he explains what he meant – what Adam did to us, and the consequences of that: the application of the death penalty, and so on.

Then, in verses 15-17, he illustrates another statement. He made a statement in verse 14. He said that Adam is a type (an image, a picture, a symbol, or a figure) of Him, Jesus Christ to come. Then he goes on and he says, "Wait a minute, somebody may not understand what I mean by that." So, in verses 15-17, he explains that. We're going to start at verse 15, and when we get to verses 18-19, he goes back to what he started to say at verse 12, and says the whole thing.

So verse 15 begins, "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift." Here you have a complete comparison. This is the kind of thing he started up in verse 12 but didn't finish. You have the word "as:" "but not as the offense." Then you have the word "so," indicating the conclusion (the closing) of the comparison. So, the word "but" is the Greek word "alla." That's a conjunction which is going to introduce a contrast of actions between Adam and Jesus Christ. It refers back to this last phrase in verse 14: "Is a figure of Him that was to come, but," and he picks up that phrase in order to explain that a little more. He is introducing the fact that Adam and Jesus Christ, while parallel, are not quite the same: "But not as the offense."

What kind of word is "not?" It's the word "ou" in the Greek. That's the strong negative. That's the strongest negative in the Greek language. That means "absolutely no." It points out how the two do not compare. This is to stress the difference between the two. In verse 18-19, he's going to stress the similarities, but here, Paul's negative approach has a purpose to it, because, in verse15, Paul is making his first move to try to explode over our heads (like a Disneyland nighttime fireworks display) the brilliant, glorious, marvelous grace of God, in all of its full glory and beauty.

**Sin**

So, he's approaching it negatively here, because he's going to say, "Now there is something that is a difference between them, and what is the difference? Boom! The grace of God." Then he dives into it full-blown. So, that's this little keyword setting the scene for that: "not as." And here begins the negative comparison, which is going to be concluded with the word "so:" "Not as the offense" – "paraptoma." This word comes from a verb which means "to fall in one's way," or "to fall away." So, it's the word for "sin" that indicates "not walking on the path." This is a "paraptoma." You stepped over the line. Every time you step over the line, you have stepped out of the path. That is a "paraptoma." That's the idea of not walking God's standard of absolute righteousness (the "+R" road).

This word, therefore, suggests a false step. It connotes a deviation from a path of uprightness and truth. It's a blunder, and there's something important: "ma." Notice that ending: "ma." In the Greek, when you have an "ma" ending on a noun, it generally indicates an accomplished act – not merely an action. An action in the Greek has this ending: "sis." Sure enough, up in verse 14, we had the similitude of Adam's transgression. That was this same word "paraptoma," but "paraptosis," meaning just the action. There was no suggestion about it. It was just this sin. But when he gets here, he has the word with the "ma," indicating the result of the action.

In other words, he's talking here about the fall. That's specifically what he means – that thing that Adam did, not as the fall – that particular act of the offense. It has, even in the Greek, "*the* fall," indicating that it's that specific fall of Adam. This word "paraptoma," furthermore, is a strong word in the Greek language. When the Greeks read this, they recognized that this was a word that carried a judgment upon it. It had a critical quality to it that is without excuse. The idea was that you have done something, and you've done something wrong, and there are no extenuating circumstances. What God is telling us is that Adam didn't just kind of stumble into sin. He called what Adam did a paraptoma" with that "ma" ending, indicating an accomplished act. And the whole word itself means that Adam did it deliberately. He just decided, "There's God's law, and I'm going to smash it. I'm going to shatter it. I'm going to break it. I don't care what." And he grabbed the fruit from his wife's hand, and he ate it. It was not a mild, inadvertent slip.

The reason Paul uses this word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to show how terrible and inexcusable Adam's fall was, which makes it possible, therefore, to show how the consequences of resolving this by Jesus Christ were even more astounding. To use this word stresses to us how terrible the thing that Adam did was. But it gives us the frame of reference of comparison – how amazing that God could come up with a solution. How in the world is God to take sinners who are guilty of the consequences of that kind of a deliberate, calculated violation of His laws, on the part of Adam? How is he going to take people guilty of that with all the consequences of the dirt of sin upon them, and take them into His heaven, where you have to be as good as His Son?

Adam's fall brought death to all – a condition which made reconciliation to God absolutely humanly impossible. And this word "paraptoma" stresses the fact that reconciliation was just absolutely impossible because the act was so bad. It was such a heinous act on Adam's part.

"But, not as the heinous fall of Adam, so also." Here's the closing of the comparison. "So also the free gift." And this is the "charisma." Notice the "ma" ending again. This is the word for favor which is not earned or deserved. It means a gratuitous favor. Again, the "me" ending shows that it's talking about an accomplished, gratuitous favor, indicating that he's talking about what Jesus Christ did. On the one hand, the accomplished destruction of the race by Adam is not quite the same as the accomplished solving of that problem for us by Jesus Christ on the cross. The result of this "ma" ending means that this is a free grace gift to those who receive it. So, a transgression is the result of disobedience to a divine command, while a gratuitous gift is the result of the obedience of Jesus Christ to God.

Here's immediately one difference that we see, and that's what he's trying to show us. It's not quite the same. One of the differences is that Adam destroyed himself and all others, while Jesus Christ provided a grace gift that everyone needed except Himself. What Adam did affected himself and everyone else. What Jesus Christ did only affected others. He did not need what He provided for others.

"But not as the offense, so also is the free gift." Then, in the rest of the verse, which we'll look at next time, He goes on to explain to us the result of the fact that Jesus Christ did something that was so fantastically greater in its results over what Adam did as to be unbelievable. Along comes the Lord Jesus Christ, and He takes Adam and all of humanity, and He pulls us up, but He did not just pull us back up to where again we were perfect, because we're going to see that Jesus Christ pulled us all the way up to where He was. And where was He? He was a person who could not sin; a person who could never do evil; a person who could never be subject to the lake of fire; and, a person who was 100% compatible with the integrity of God.

We have more than Adam had. Adam was on a trial basis, and Adam could, and did, fall. We are no longer on a trial basis. Those of you who are in Christ, you're not on trial. You can never fall back down below the line of God's standard of absolute righteousness. You're always above it. No matter what you do, you can never fall again. You're perfect. You're secure. And it's hard for you to believe that. It's hard for you to look at the person sitting next to you and say, "That's a perfect person next to me." Don't look – that might discourage you, but that's the truth of it. It is a perfect person who can never again fall below.

So, that's what the rest of the verse is going to say: "Man, the grace of God not only resolved all of this mess that Adam created, but it put us in a position so much more that it's almost hard to describe it. You just want to stand there shouting, "Glory, hallelujah" to the God who made it all possible. That's the kind of a god you must face – a God of full integrity, and a God who, therefore, is fully capable of resolving this problem that Adam created for people who are fully incapable of doing anything about it. You'd be a very foolish person to try to get involved in that process rather than simply accepting what He has done. Do not insult God with your filthy righteousness good works. Accept that which He has provided. You weren't involved in the problem to begin with. You just received it. And you're not involved in the solution in the second place except to receive it.

But the solution, because it is God's solution, can never be reversed. You are without Christ, we would encourage you to receive Him as your Savior. If you've been a Christian who's been careless and sloppy about the recognition that you need to develop capacity in order to be compatible with this God, then we encourage you to respond to the conviction that God the Holy Spirit may place upon your life and your heart, or the time will come when we will look around this auditorium, and you will be gone, because you have become a spiritual casualty. Nobody is immune to that in this warfare. And unless you maintain that capacity within your soul, you're going to get shot down.

Well, I want you to have a respect for God in His integrity. I certainly want you to have a respect for Satan in his capacity to cause you to fall, and in his capacity to deny the blessings that God has for you. You can insist on following your human viewpoint, and the time will come when you will discover that you've paid a price that not only goes for this life, but carries on in many respects in eternity.

**Capacity**

Capacity is the keyword – capacity to be able to function with a God of integrity. He is a God who knows no other basis to deal with us on, and a God with whom you have no other point of contact except His integrity. Once you've related to His integrity; then His love; then His grace; and, then everything else is ready to pour upon you. Move toward that goal.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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