***Grace Reigns through Righteousness
RO63-02***

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We're turning to Romans 5:12-21 in order to expand the basis of our ability to store treasures in heaven. There can be no doubt, certainly on the part of anybody who knows anything at all about the Bible, that Romans 5:12-21 is the major revelation in the Bible on the subject of human salvation. It is *the* major revelation.

It explains why people, simply by natural birth, are headed for the lake of fire apart from anything they personally may do. It explains the universality of death in the human race as being due to Adam's sin. It explains the inability of those who are spiritually dead to make themselves spiritually alive, and thus eligible for heaven. It explains the divine grace plan for saving the lost apart from human doing – apart from good works or religious rituals. It explains how the Mosaic Law defines sin, and thus caused it to abound, but was not a means unto salvation. It explains how divine grace was super-abundantly capable of saving a lost sinner. It explains how God deals with all mankind on the basis of being either in Adam or in Christ, not on the basis of their personal sins. It explains why once a person is saved by grace, he can never again be lost. It explains why God treats each person as a condemned sinner or a justified saint, apart from any doing on the part of that individual.

Verse 21, that we are currently looking at, concludes this classic portion of the Word of God. In this verse, Paul makes one final grand summary on the issue of justification. He has done this repeatedly in a variety of ways. And he has done this for the simple reason that it is no joke to spend eternity in hell. That is serious business. And the matter of salvation, I must remind you again, is a matter of God telling us how He's going to do it. It is not a matter of man reasoning his way to how he thinks God should do it.

**Medieval Theology**

This was the great mistake that theology in the Middle Ages made. Medieval theology decided that human reason was not entirely corrupt. Thomas Aquinas was the instigator of that notion. And medieval theology was then structured upon this idea that Aquinas had – that in the fall, man's mind had not been completely corrupted, and therefore man, by simple reasoning, could come up with the same conclusions that the Bible has. So, man, from simply his own capacity of thinking and from natural revelation, could arrive at the same essential factors for salvation that were in the Scripture.

Of course, that's what devastated the whole issue of Christianity in the Middle Ages, because it just put them into a tailspin, because as human reason came in, they got farther and farther away from the Word of God. The one thing that the human mind will not do is bring you to the concepts of the Word of God.

So, the issue of salvation has to be made very clear. You cannot reason your way. Millions of people have reasoned to themselves, in fact, into hell. You have to have it specifically set up before you. And the apostle Paul knows that God has a way of salvation that is summed up in the word "grace." And there are no deviations from this. So, many people are going to end up in the lake of fire, and that, as I say, is no joke.

So, the apostle Paul makes a monumental, enormous effort here in these verses (12-21) to try to summarize this whole issue of heaven and hell, and how to determine your destiny. Paul is now using in this final verse (21) an analogy to explain once more this issue of justification. He's using an analogy between two reigning monarchs. These two reigns, you must understand, as we learned from the Greek word "basileuo" ("to reign"), means to reign as king. It means to be an absolute monarch. It's to be an absolute potentate. It's to be in complete control. It was a time when mankind was totally under the dominating control of sin, and the terror upon all humanity was death.

Now grace has come into the picture, and it has completely wiped that out. Now grace reigns on the basis of the preservation of the integrity of God. His Holiness has been recognized; His justice fulfilled; and, His righteousness met through what Christ has done on the cross. So now, grace reigns on the basis of that absolute provision of Christ unto eternal life.

What Paul is again trying to do is to reduce the issues relative to heaven and hell to their basic factors. Throughout this final portion, he's just been trying to shake it down to (what we would say) the bottom line. What's the bottom line? And what Paul is trying to explain to us is that the bottom line is Adam and Jesus Christ. And he keeps presenting this in a variety of ways. And we've had that throughout these verses. His final presentation is in the analogy of two reigning monarchs.

**Heaven or Hell**

He sums up the determination of helpless sinners to a destiny either in heaven or hell. How is destiny determined? He begins, first of all, by speaking of the reign of sin. So, verse 21 begins: "That as sin has reigned until death." The word "that" looks like this in Greek: "hina." This is a conjunction, and it indicates that Paul is going to explain a purpose to us.

**Grace Super-Abounded over Sin**

What he's doing is introducing an explanation of the last clause of verse 20. Verse 20 concluded with this statement: "But where sin abounded, grace super-abounded."

Now Paul is going to introduce the purpose of that situation – why it is that God established the condition that where sin abounded, grace would come in and super-abound. The Mosaic Law had cause to be clearly defined and thus to abound. But grace super-abounded in meeting the flood of defined sin. Now God gives the purpose for this condition of super-abounding grace that He has referred to in verse 20. And this purpose is marked by this Greek word "hina." We would translate it: "so that."

The next word is "as" which is this word "hosper." "Hosper is an adverb. It's a word introducing a comparison. This word marks the first part of the comparison. A little later, you're going to get the last part of the comparison with the word "even so." It begins with "Just as . . . even so." And we would translate this: "just as . . . so."

"So that just as" is a comparison between two reigns – between two kingly rules. The word indicates that grace is to be compared with sin, and that each is reigning as an absolute monarch. And we're going to find that his main point here is that grace is an infinitely superior monarch to the monarch (to the rule) of sin.

"So that just as sin." The word "sin" is "hamartia." "Hamartia" is the word for evil which describes evil in terms of missing the target of God's holiness. When a person is said to sin with this word, it means that you have been guilty of having bad aim. Your aim has been bad. You have missed God's standard.

Now the Greek Bible says "*the* sin" in order to specify a particular sin, namely the sin of Adam, which he transmitted to all mankind. So, what are you speaking about here is the old sin nature: "the sin" (the old sin nature).

**Sin Reigned**

"So that, just as the old sin nature has reigned." And the word "reigned" is the keyword: "basileuo." This means to rule as king. It means to be an absolute monarch. It means complete domination. This is in the aorist tense in the Greek, which means that it's telling us that God the Holy Spirit is looking at the rule of the old sin nature over mankind as a whole. This was a general condition which is true of humanity as a whole, and of every person individually. It is in the active voice in the grammar, which means that the sin nature actively rules. The old sin nature is actively (personally in control). Actually, what this word "basileuo" is doing is personifying sin. It is speaking of sin as if it were a person. Its indicative mood, which is a statement of a great spiritual fact – the sin nature viewed as a person, ruling over all humanity.

Now the reign of sin is a very real thing. We can't really understand the functioning of the grace of God until we have developed an appreciation for the rule of sin (for the reign of sin – for the control of sin over humanity). I think that Christians very often not prepared to praise God. They find it so difficult to sit in a service and say, "Now what can I thank God for? What can I be appreciative for?" The reason it's hard is because we don't realize how bad we are; how nothing we are; and, how fantastically God has made something of us. If we would get the contrast, it wouldn't be so hard for us to come up with a word of thanksgiving. We find it hard to praise God because we think we're so hot to begin with.

The reign of sin is a very grievous, serious thing, and it would be wise for you and me as believers to get an appreciation for that. You have one beautiful example of this. When the Lord Jesus was trying to teach this very fact – that the reason it is difficult for us to appreciate grace, and appreciate the work of God for us, is because we don't have the contrast. We don't appreciate the depths to which sin has taken us, and how far God has pulled us above all that. Jesus Christ taught this in Luke 7, and I'd like to read that section in Luke 7:36-47.

Jesus is in the home of a Pharisee: "And one of the Pharisees desired Him that he would eat with Him. And He went into the Pharisees house, and sat down to eat. And behold a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus was eating in the Pharisees house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him, weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

"Now when the Pharisee who had bidden him saw it, he spoke within himself, saying, 'This man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him, for she is a sinner.'

"And Jesus, answering, said unto him, 'Simon, I have something to say unto you.'

"And he said, 'Master, say on.'"

Now you have the picture. This woman is in tears, weeping. She washes the feet of Jesus with her tears. They are so profuse. She wipes them with her long hair, and then applies the ointment. And she even kisses the feet of the Lord. This was a complete expression of affection and of worship and of gratitude.

Now, Simon is looking at this and he is thinking. He could have said it out loud, but the Lord is reading his mind. You notice the Scripture says, "And Jesus, answering, said unto him." Simon hasn't said a word. Jesus is answering his thinking. And you can almost see Simon being startled when the Lord says, "Simon, I have something to say to you," and he is startled out of his thoughts, and he says, "Oh yes, Lord, say on." He is a very gracious host.

So, the Lord gives him a little parable here: "He says, 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. The one owed 500 denari, and the other 50. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me, wherefore, which of them would love him the most?'

"Simon answered and said, 'I suppose that he to whom he forgave the most.'

"And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' And He turned to the woman, and He said unto Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' And He said unto her, 'Your sins are forgiven."

There's the principle: you, who are aware of having had very little forgiven to you, are going to be inclined to have very little praise and love for the Lord. This is one of the problems (one of the occupational hazards) of being reared in a Christian home. If you are reared in a Christian home, and you happen to be fortunate enough to have half a brain, and that Christian home had a flow of doctrine going through it, then you have been preserved from a lot of personal sin; a lot of personal evil; and, a lot of personal destruction upon your life.

The result is that when you did come to salvation, you are going to be tempted not to see the huge contrast between what you were before you were saved to what you were after you were saved. Now, some poor slob who is down on Skid Row: all boozed up; throwing up all over himself; and, who comes into salvation, who once was a man, perhaps, that was an executive in a corporation, and now he's sunk to that level – when he's saved, now man, he's got a contract between darkness and light. And that is the man that is going to be like this woman who has a lot of praise for the Lord, to the degree that it will almost become irritating to you who do not have this contrast.

However, just because you have been preserved from a lot of sinning, remember that the issue is not what you did, but the issue is what Adam did. And you are just as black and just as vile in the sight of God as the person who, in personal sins, goes all the way down to Skid Row. Now unless you grasp that difference, you're not going to be the grateful kind of person you should be toward the grace of God functioning in your life.

I want you to notice first 50: "Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'" Those who were sitting around questioned in their minds how Jesus could tell her that her sins were forgiven. And you notice that Jesus says that the thing that forgave her sin is her faith. It wasn't the kind deed she did. It wasn't the good work that she did to the Lord. It wasn't all this that Jesus appreciated. Her works meant nothing relative to salvation. "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

So, we have this problem of not being conscious of the old sin nature within us – of the quality of the old sin nature within us, and what a revolting, disgusting, loathsome thing it is. The reign of sin means that the sin nature has full control over mankind. The old sin nature is a tyrant over all the unsaved people so they have no freedom. The unsaved people think they have great freedom, but that's a delusion.

This is the problem that the Jews had on one occasion when they were speaking with the Lord Jesus. In John 8, the Lord is telling them how He will set them free. And in John 8:32, Jesus said, "I'm going to give you the truth. God's grace is going to bring you the truth, and then you'll be free.'

"Then these (religious) people looked at Him, and they answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How do You say, 'You shall be made free?'"

But then look at verse 44. Here was their true condition: "You are of your father the devil, and you will do the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning. He did not abide in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it." And the Lord indicates to them that the old sin nature that's operating within them has made them slaves to their father the devil.

**The Majority is Always Wrong**

So, it is no surprise that human society and the world are in the condition that they are today. There is complete spiritual disorientation. This is why you want to remember that the majority of mankind is always wrong. The majority is always wrong. The reason that that is true is because the majority, especially in spiritual things, operate on human viewpoint, and human viewpoint is wrong, and it leads to wrong conclusions. That's why the Bible repeatedly uses the word "remnant" – "my remnant." Throughout the history of humanity, you have demonstrated that is the minority that's right.

**Noah and the Flood**

Nowhere has that been better demonstrated than in the case of the day of Noah and the flood. Eight people of all of humanity were right. Now, how many people in that day could have possibly conceived that the minority was right, and that the majority was absolutely wrong? And it took a fabulous act of God to show how wrong the majority was.

So, do not comfort yourself because somebody says, "Most of us believe this." If that "most" group happens to be a group of doctrinally oriented Christians, then that carries some weight. Then the thinking of people like that is going to be directed toward the truth and toward what is right. But if the people who are the majority happen to either carnal believers or disoriented unbelievers, then you can count on the majority being wrong.

This is what was happening in Jesus day. The majority of the people in His day were so spiritually disoriented, they were wrong. And there was no comfort in being with the majority. Consequently, human society is run by the opinions of the majority. So, we are in the moral, loathsome condition that we're in today. It is always the remnant that is right, and that God uses. Only they are capable of right decisions.

So, the unsaved loudly proclaim their freedom when, in fact, they're slaves to the old sin nature.

John 8:31-34: "Then said Jesus, to those Jews who believed on Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

"They answered unto Him, 'We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How do you say, 'You shall be made free?''

"Jesus answered them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin."

The unsaved person just does not understand that he does not have freedom. He thinks that if he quits sinning, or quits doing something wrong, that then he'll be free. He's only a slave as long as he does that. But that slave to a particular sin only demonstrates his greater enslavement to the sin nature.

All around us, in the media that form our opinions today: the television; the newspapers; the radio; the movies; and, the entertainment world – all of them are shot-through with the same human viewpoint set of values, and therefore all of society is being degraded. It is very difficult to watch a television program today and not be degraded at some point in it. The absolute degradation of the human mind is often demonstrated in television programs where some act of evil is interjected at some point of the plot, which is totally unrelated to the plot. It doesn't carry the plot; it doesn't help the plot; and, it isn't needed. It just had to stop and have a little dirt in here, so they shove it in, in order to prove that they have a quality program that people should watch; that it is mature; and, that it is realistic.

People who are already under the enslavement of the old sin nature, where are they going to go when everything that is put out toward them as being acceptable says just what the old sin nature says. That's a terrible condition. Only a few salty Christians can stand around and say, "Hey, that's wrong; that's degrading; that's coarse; that's crude; that's vulgar; or, that's unnecessary for that to be portrayed publicly. Only a few Christians bring orientation. But everything else that the poor person in the world, who is already a slave to the old sin nature, has given to him is to make him a worse slave than he was before. Yet the unsaved loudly proclaim their freedom.

The reign of sin on the mind prevents our being able to receive divine viewpoint understanding. 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for their foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost, in whom the God of this age has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine onto them."

Spiritual understanding requires a spiritual mind. We just are incapable of receiving divine viewpoint understanding because of the reign of sin. The reign of sin particularly expresses itself in evil desires in the mind and evil desires of the body (Ephesians 2-3). And these are the things that are most widely proclaimed through the information media that we have – sins that promote sins of the mind, and sins that are promoted for sins of the body.

**Coarseness**

The result is that people under the reign of the old sin nature are made coarse. Life has become very dirty and very ugly in twentieth century United States. It has become very coarse. And if you have any sensitivity at all, it almost wants to make you weep. And one of the sad things is that you discover in young people that they will use certain words. When you were their age, in junior high and senior high, you never would have used words like that. They say things that you never would have said. They discuss crude and ugly and coarse things that you never would have wanted to discuss. And they do it because they're acclimated to it. This is the swing of things. And if the child is in the public school, God help him. If he's in the public school, then coarseness swirls around him from the day he walks into that school till the day he leaves. Coarseness swirls around him. Why? Because sin reigns. Sin reigns in all the institutions of our society, including the educational institutions.

**Jaded**

So, there is an ugliness upon life in our day as never before. And this ugliness (this reigning of sin) shows upon a person's face, and upon his physical structure. There is a dissipation that is true that comes from sin. And you can just see people who do not know the Lord, and sin rules them. Their old sin nature reigns over them, and they are jaded. We often use that word. We look at a person and say, "That lady looks very jaded." There's a hardness. What you're describing is the appearance externally that sin creates, and you cannot hide it. It's fantastic. You cannot hide it.

Every time you think about Scrooge, well he always looks like an old wilted prune-shaped type of character. And this is what you think of as a miser. Well, you know what I've discovered? I've discovered that people who are stingy do look like prunes. It's amazing. People who are stingy do begin to have a shrunken (kind of a beady-eyed) look. And the thing that bothers me is that I have seen this in people that I once knew who weren't beady-eyed. But as they became more greedy and more possessive of things, they became exactly what you see portrayed as a Scrooge.

**The Old Sin Nature Affects your Appearance**

What's happening? There's a truth to that. The old sin nature affects your appearance. This is why the Word of God goes so extensively in books like 1 and 2 Peter in describing what is the beauty of a woman, and that a woman's beauty begins not with the quality of her cosmetics, but it begins with the quality of her soul as it is produced by the Word of God. And I don't care how much cosmetics a woman uses, you can see that she is hollow; that she is shallow; that she is hard; that she is insensitive; and, that she is jaded quite readily. No matter what she puts on the outside to help her to be classy-looking, she can't hide the quality of ugliness and coarseness in her soul.

That's what the domination of sin does. You can't hide it. Certainly it brings physical and mental breakdowns; disease; sickness; and, death. To be under the reign of sin is simply to be without God.

**Death**

The consequence of this is very bad: "That even as the old sin nature has completely dominated as a tyrant unto death." The word "unto" is the Greek word "en." This is a preposition indicating a location. It means "in the sphere of," where sin has triumphed and exercised its tyranny over mankind. It is death "thanatos." This refers to both physical and spiritual death. It is the total judgment of God upon the sin that Adam committed, which was imputed then to us – the guilt imputed to us. Sin produced then a reign of terror in the form of death.

The Greek has "*the* death" to specify the one imposed upon mankind through Adam, again apart from personal sins: "That even as the old sin nature has ruled with complete domination in the sphere of death" (physical and spiritual). Anyone who is facing the end of his physical life while he is in Adam is in a condition of terror. A person very often can be a smug agnostic. He can sometimes even be a militant atheist. But it is strange how very often, when a person realizes he is about to die physically, then what is over on the other side becomes a terror to him. And he becomes very, very fearful after all. And that's what Paul the saying.

The old sin nature rules over the unbeliever, and there is nothing ahead for him but eternal death and separation from God in hell. And if he has never been told that, his conscience tells him that. His conscience makes it clear to him that even by his own standards of what is right and wrong, he has not matched up. Even what he says this is what a person should do and should not do, he knows that he himself has failed. Therefore, it gives him a very uneasy feeling to think about going over there to the other side through death, and discovering that there is indeed a holy and absolute righteous God.

So, here on the one side of the comparison, the apostle Paul has presented the reign of sin, and that reign of sin expressing itself in death. The reign of the old sin nature is expressing itself in death.

**The Reign of Grace**

Now, the opposite side is the control of grace: "Even so." The word "even so" looks like this: "houtos." This is an adverb, and it means "in this way." This is the word to indicate the conclusion of the comparison between the rule of sin and the rule of grace. The Greek has the word "kai," so we would say, "Even so also."

So, on the one hand, we had at the beginning of verse 21, "Just as." Now we have the other side: "Even so, also." It means as the one happened, so also the other happened. The one is in order to bring about the other. So, what is the other? "Even so also," and here comes into the picture grace "charis." The Greek has "*the* grace" to specifically identify the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world – that act of divine grace. It refers to what God did for sinners who were under the reign of death to release them from that terror. God is justifying sinners who do not deserve it; who cannot earn it; and, who otherwise, without this help, would be doomed to hell forever.

He uses the same word. This gracious act of God, of coming into the picture, was again in order to enable, as sin once reigned, for grace to reign. We have this same word "basileuo" once more. This word again means to rule as king, and to be in full domination. Its again aorist tense – the rule of grace over saved humanity viewed as a whole. It's again active voice. This time grace, instead of sin, is being in supreme command. And this time, instead of being just a statement of fact with the indicative mood, it has what we call the subjunctive mood, which is a potential mood. Here it is a potential ruling of grace because it is dependent upon the positive volition of the individual toward the gospel. All of this possibility of grace reigning over your life can be undone by you and your negative toward the gospel, or with you saying, "Yes, it's the death of Christ plus what I can add in some respect or another. So, it’s potential.

The alternative to the reign of sin in death is not the Mosaic Law, you will notice. He didn't say that the opposite is for the Mosaic Law and all those good rules being kept to reign. No, it's the grace of God, not the Mosaic Law. The reign of sin began in Eden, but the reign of grace was immediately promised in Genesis 3:15, where a Savior was to come. The grace of God is the only power capable of breaking the reign of sin over a person. And there is no triumph possible over the reign of sin just on our own.

So, as mankind had no choice in the suffering (the consequences of Adam's sin), so it has no choice about being saved by grace through Jesus Christ. There is no other way with God. And that's the point here. You have again this comparison of two sides of a picture. You're either under the reign of sin, and the end is going to be death; or, you're under the reign of grace, and the end is going to be eternal life. There are no alternatives.

You wonder how a Roman Catholic bishop, cardinal, or pope could read Romans 5:21, if ever they do read it, and talk about a place like Purgatory. Romans 5:21 says that there's a reign of sin unto death, and there's a reign of grace unto life. And that is all. There is nothing in between. I mean, you really have to have some kind of mental gymnastics for them to come up with the nonsense of purgatory. This is one of the places that makes it so clear that Roman Catholicism took its basic theology from Nimrod's Babylonian mystery cult system.

As sin was the controlling power in our lives as unbelievers, grace rules us as believers. And since grace reigns in salvation, there's no ground for earning it.

The thing about this is that grace not only begins our salvation, but it carries you right on through to your entrance into heaven. And that's what Ephesians 2:8-9 means. Grace does not start you on the way to heaven (another Roman Catholic idea), and then say, "Now you take it from there." This is how you often do with your children if you want to teach them something. So, they're going to get a project. You get them started, and you say, "OK, now you take it from there." Grace never says, "Here, I'll get you started to heaven. Now you take it from there."

Anybody, dear friend, can come along and says, "It is what I give my church in service or money. It is my participating in the Lord's Supper. It is my water baptism. It is my good life. It is my confessing my sins. It is anything else that carries me on all the way to heaven." However, that person is wrong. The minute you say that, you can be very sure that you are not going to heaven.

So, don't try to put anything else on the throne with grace. That's what we're talking about. We're actually talking today about the fact that there are two thrones. On the one hand, under Adam, sin is on the phone. On the other hand, there is a second throne under Jesus Christ where grace is on the throne. The Christians can understand this, but the problem is that Christians are forever trying to put something else on the throne with grace. They're coming in and they're putting their church on the throne. That's what Roman Catholics do: "My church takes me into heaven." This is, in effect, what Mormonism does. To be excommunicated from the Mormon Church is the kiss of death. Some people are putting a priest on there – all of these systems that say I must approach God through a priestly caste of some kind. They're trying to put a priest on the throne of grace. Or you add some saint. Roman Catholics love to appeal to all kinds of saints to help them make it to heaven. Or the best of all, to appeal to the virgin Mary; the Lord's Supper; water baptism; good works; or, the Mosaic Law. That's one of the favorites is to put the Mosaic Law on the throne of grace.

Well, I'll tell you something. There is no room on this throne for anything but grace. Grace takes it all. So, if you can put your priest; your saint; your church; your virgin Mary; your good works; or, your Mosaic Law on the throne, you have shoved grace off, and grace is gone. Consequently, you have nothing but a works system left. The reign of grace does not permit anybody else or anything else to share with it. If we do try to add anything to grace, we will ruin salvation (Romans 4:4-5, Romans 11:6).

This reign of grace, interestingly enough, began for you a long, long time ago. 1 Peter 1:20 tells us exactly when it began for you: "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." So, far, far back, before the foundation of the world, this great system was set up for you.

**The Point of Grace**

Let's conclude this little section with the point of grace: "Even so, that grace might reign (might be in complete charge) through." This is the word "dia," indicating the means: "through righteousness" ("dikaiosune"). Here's an old favorite word. We haven't had it for a while. This, of course, refers to absolute righteousness (the "+R" of Almighty God). This is the only basis upon which grace reigns. It reigns in absolute righteousness, and that's the key. God does not permit grace to reign in a way that violates His integrity. Grace reigns by preserving the integrity of God in saving a lost sinner.

So, when God says, "I can treat you as a justified saint," it is because He can so reckon you to be on the basis of what Christ has done. He treats you as a justified saint because He has placed you in the category (Paul has taught us) of a justified saint. Absolute righteousness is imputed to the believer.

So, Satan comes along in many ways, and he tries to discourage you by telling you that you're not worthy. He tries to come up to you when you have some problem. You have got some great distress in your life. So, you want to go to the Lord for help. Satan comes along and says, "You're not worthy. You're not worthy. Just look at the things you do. Just look how you live."

Now by this time, you should have been able to very clearly distinguish the fact that you have a position which is in Christ, and you have a practice over here which is in the world. This worldly side can be very, very bad indeed, with all kinds of failure. But this Christ side is absolute ("+R") perfect righteousness. And Satan comes along and says to you, "You're sick, and you want God to heal you? And you are going to pray to Him after the kind of a character you have been, and the things that you have done?" And you turn around and say, "Satan, I am just as good as Jesus Christ. Now get lost. Beat it."

Now that's what the Bible means, that if you will resist the devil, he will flee from you. And that's exactly what the devil will do. He'll go scooting right out. You won't have to command him to leave. You won't have to shoot off firecrackers the way the Chinese do to try to scare him off. You won't have to paint your face up, which is, I think, what a lot of ladies do. They're just trying to scare the demons away by the way they think their faces, and all that junk. You don't have to do any of that. All you have to do is say, "Satan, beat it."

I heard of a man one time who was a Bible teacher who really taught people how to handle the devil of: "Resist him, and he will flee from you." He would say, "Get up in front of a mirror, and look in that mirror, and realize that the old sin nature is there, and that that's the devil being reflected. And you tell yourself, "Devil, beat it. I won't have you around." Well, you can be dramatic like that. I wouldn't do that with someone else in the room around you at the time, talking to yourself in a mirror like that, but that's OK to do, and he had the right idea anyhow. That's exactly what you do. You don't plead for the devil to leave. You don't cringe before him. You don't take any of this foolishness. He's not worthy.

**Grace Reigns through Righteousness**

Grace reigns through righteousness. Grace is absolute supreme tyrant now, as sin once was supreme tyrant through death, and brought terror to you. Now grace is absolute tyrant through absolute righteousness. Grace is your tyrant. Grace rules you through absolute righteousness. Therefore, you couldn't be better. You just could not be better. In this respect, you can certainly get up and say, "Every day, I'm as perfect as perfect can be."

So, that when the devil comes along and says, "God should not do this thing for you that you need done because you're not worthy," you just remember how worthy you are. You are as worthy as Jesus Christ. And He would hold nothing back from His Son that His Son would ask Him for. So, if you ask for the same things that Jesus would have asked for in a particular situation (which is what the Bible means by asking in His name) the Father will not restrict what you ask from you either. You are perfectly deserving.

We need to talk about how deserving grace is. We have to stop. Our time is up. But this is kind of a bad place to stop, so, we're going to go on with this in the next session. Just how deserving grace is, is a fantastic study in itself. We're going to start way back there with the foreknowledge of God, and we're going to start carrying you next time, step-by-step, to show how grace has reigned to make out of you and me what absolutely could not have been done any other way. And the end product from the foreknowledge of God to your glorification is going to catch your breath, and it will be hard to believe. But that's the reign of grace unto your absolute righteousness, and eventually until your eternal life.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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