

# CHAPTER 6

## *Reigning Grace* AND THE THEOLOGY OF ROMANS



# ROMANS

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

Patrick J. Griffiths @ 2009

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

## CHAPTER 6

### REIGNING GRACE AND THE THEOLOGY OF ROMANS

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1).



# ROMANS

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS



#### REVIEW

The person and work of Jesus Christ is so vast and of such limitless quality that all He does is lavish in its ability to cancel out the nature of the crime against Him by His people.



#### INTRODUCTION

As one who is new to the relational truth of the Christian faith it is necessary to begin informing your mind so that you can enjoy all that you are in Him. The Bible makes a strong distinction between living under the Law and living under grace (Rom. 6:15), of being in bondage versus being set free (Gal. 5:1). The vast majority of people live quiet lives of desperation not knowing where they came from, why they are

here, or where they are going. The Christian is to learn to live in the freedom Christ has set them free. This moves us from “having to,” to “wanting to.” It moves us from the sphere of duty to that of desire. We are not to live in the arena of punishment, but of pardon. We are to cease our doing and begin to enjoy our resting.

One of the glaring tragedies of the Christian life is the pharisaical bondage in which most believers live. It is a subtle slavery that goes mostly undetected by the individual. The vast majority of believers have embraced a freedom from hell’s damnation, only to live in bondage to their daily sin and a performance-based acceptance before God. They have never tasted true freedom. They are like the inmate who has become institutionalized and upon gaining a complete pardon has no idea how to function in freedom and so goes back to finding safety in the routines of their imprisonment, or the slave who has been released only to remain as a slave. Neither knows how to act or behave. They are both free but still act as if they are in bondage. Consider the idea of “learned helplessness.”

Have you ever wondered why the elephants in the zoo or at a circus do not just pull the little stake in the ground, to which they are chained, out and go on their merry way? When the elephant was small, the chain was attached to something that they could not move. Day after day, the elephant would pull on the chain wanting to be free, but it never could break the chain or pull the stake free. After several weeks of training, the elephant will quite trying to get free; it has learned to be helpless.

I read of a man who won a state lottery of 62.4 million dollars. He took a one lump sum buy out and after taxes walked away with 24.5 million dollars. Most would be thrilled to have 24.5 million. Yet this is hardly to be the case when we consider all that we have “In Christ.” In Christ, we have 62.4 million blessings. Yet most Christians walk around with only 24.5 million. And they consider this “normal.” Why as a believer should I be content with 24.5 million blessings when I have 62.4 million by right of inheritance?

Perhaps one of our current tragedies is the failure of the church to live in the theology of Romans. Because of its neglect, we have failed to understand and thus embrace the fundamental doctrines of justification, imputation, redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation. To lack depth in these areas is to remove the believer’s foundation for living. Without understanding my position and identification in Christ before the Father, my walk before Him becomes tentative, fragile, and desperate. It will lack the confidence, assurance, and certainty that can and should be mine. We speak of obedience, service, and the

imperatives of Scripture and rightly so. Unfortunately, such speech is often in the absence of positional truth. We have made it sound as if God is absent from such activity. Our obedience has become markedly man-centered. Yet our acts of obedience as expressed through our free choices are the outworking of God's eternal purpose. If we can intellectually embrace the theology of Romans, then it will be possible to escape the roller coaster ride of uninformed emotionalism. Theology, properly understood, provides the fuel for a lifetime of obedience.

The Bible was given in order that we might know God. It was not given to be a rulebook or an end in itself. It was given so that we might see Him. Because of our self-centeredness, that manifests itself in our self-sufficiency, we have the constant battle to usurp authority over Christ. God gave us the Bible, not to tell us how to live, but that we might see what He is like. There is a world of difference between those two ideas.

There are two books that greatly assist the believer in their pursuit of Him. The first is Romans and the second is Galatians. Both sound the clarion call to follow Him. Through both letters, certain words are used to describe the movement of the believer from a position of disfavor to that of favor before God.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century . . . brought out from this fountain a new phase and type of Christianity, which had never as yet been fully understood and appreciated in the Church at large. **It was, in fact, a new proclamation of the free Gospel of St. Paul, as laid down in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians** [emphasis added].<sup>1</sup>

When one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their soul, ignorance abounds. The recipient of Christ is often completely ignorant of the tremendous theological truth that had transpired and is transpiring all around them. It is not necessary to know all of this to be saved. It is necessary, however, to know all of it in order to "know all you are in Him and He is for you." It is only when you learn the truth you can truly rest in His finished work.

What appears to be the Galatia problem? Apparently, the believers in Galatia were being "troubled" (5:12) by "false brethren" (2:4). The agitation created by them was real (4:17). They were "bewitched" (3:1) into leave their position of liberty to be once more entangled with the yoke of bondage (5:1). Paul saw such a move as shocking (1:6). Why would anyone abandon a position of liberty for one of bondage? They were running well (5:7), but now were being "hindered" and thus

"overtaken in a fault" (6:1). Such as those who turned back had "fallen from grace" (5:4) and needed to be "restored" (6:1).

Paul stood amazed (Gal. 1:6), afraid (4:11) and perplexed (4:20) that anyone would leave the yoke of Christ (Matt. 11:28-30) for the yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1). How does this happen? Drifting is almost inevitable if we do not anchor ourselves to the bedrock of positional truth. This study begins to lay the foundation for resting in His finished work.

We will use the book of Romans (which I believe is an expansion on the Galatia thought) to make possible the lesson.<sup>2</sup> There are several primary words found throughout the book of Romans that will facilitate our study. Justification is one of those words.

## I. The Significance of Justification (Rom. 3:22).

### A. Defining the Word

1. The word itself means "to declare righteous." The Reformation was fought over whether or not it meant "to declare" or "to make." Protestants believe it means, "To declare."

Consider the following explanation of justification by several printed theologians.

The doctrine of justification means then that in God's sight the ungodly man, now 'in Christ,' has perfectly kept the moral law of God, which also means in turn that 'in Christ' he has perfectly loved God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and his neighbor as himself." "The moment the sinner, through faith in Jesus Christ, turns away from every human resource and rests in Christ alone, the Father imputes his well-beloved Son's perceptive (active) obedience to him and accepts him as righteous in his sight."<sup>3</sup>

To justify means to declare righteous. The concept does not mean to make righteous, but to announce righteousness. Just as announcing condemnation does not make a person wicked, neither does justification make a person righteous. Nevertheless, condemning or justifying announces the true and actual state of the person.<sup>4</sup>

To be justified means more than to be declared 'not guilty.' It actually means to be declared *righteous* before God. It means God has *imputed* or charged the guilt of our sin to His Son, Jesus Christ, and has *imputed* or credited Christ's righteousness to us.<sup>5</sup>

It is a legal act wherein God pronounces that the believing sinner has been credited with all the virtues of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

By justification we mean that judicial act of God by which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith, he declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law, but to be restored to his favor.<sup>7</sup>

This means that this received justice is a gift of God. It is not acquired by individual effort, good 'works' are only its manifestation and its fruit. Everything depends on the connection with Christ, like the connection of members to the head or branches to a vine.<sup>8</sup>

Justification may be defined as that act by which unjust sinners are made right in the sight of a just and holy God.<sup>9</sup>

It becomes evident that one's justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

2. The word does not mean, "I have been made." Nothing has changed in me except that now as I stand before the Father I am declared to be right. I am made righteous in practical sanctification and in the doctrine of regeneration; but even then such righteousness is foreign to me.
3. Romans 1:18-3:20 declares me to be wrong whereas now (3:22) I am declared to be right. How or why can such a transaction be true, only because of my standing in Him by grace alone through faith alone.

What changed? My position changed. Being declared right before the Father was based on no personal merit. It was freely done by His grace.

#### B. Looking at it Biblically

1. Justification is appropriated by means of faith and stands in direct contrast of being attained by works (Acts 13:38,39; Rom. 3:21, 22, 26, 28, 30; 4:2-6, 9, 11, 13; 9:30-33; 10:1-13; Gal. 2:16, 17, 21; 3:6, 8, 11, 21-26; Titus 3:5).
2. Justification is based on the sinless life and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:17, 3:25, 5:18, 19).

3. Justifying faith finds its object in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22; 4:22-24).
4. Justification is looked upon as a provision of grace and thus a gift (Rom. 3:24; 5:16, 17; Titus 3:5-7).
5. Justification makes me what Christ is, and He, what I am (1 Cor. 1:29-31; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18).

In a positional sense, I am what Christ is. The practical outworking of this is the putting on of the new and the putting off the old by the renewing of one's mind (Eph. 4:22-24). In so doing our Lord will be seen in our earthen vessels. It is, in this sense, that *we* are righteous. In truth, it is His righteousness being seen in and through us. This is what Ephesians 5:9 and Philippians 1:11 are referring. Our righteousness is actually the outworking of His righteousness in us. It is as I become aware of what He is that I am desirous of putting on those qualities that will reveal Christ to others through me (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:16).

6. Justification results in a yielded life to God (Rom. 6:13-19; James 2:14-26; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25; 1 John 2:29)

The book of James appears to fly right into the face of the initial point of justification by faith alone. James' primary point is simply this, "a faith that does not result in a practical display of God's righteousness through it is a dead faith." It is a faith that has not produced life. It is a seed that has yet to germinate (1 John 3:9, 10). A yielded life is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is not something we do, but rather is being done in us and through us to those around us. This is as true of this Spirit fruit as it is all of the other good works done in us and through us to those around us.

Justification by faith will always bring forth the fruit of righteousness (Rom. 2:13, 15). It is not the works of the Law that justify, but a justifying faith that produces adherence to the Law. Only the justified can "keep" Law. It is the enabling power of God quickening me that equips me to fulfill His demands upon me (Rom. 8:10). My conformity to the will of God is because of His conformity to the will of His Father. My conformity is a result of His conformity. **I am because He is.** It is only as we understand the nature of God's grace that we can live righteously (Titus 2:11-15).

7. Justification results in having peace with God, access to God, and boldness before God (Rom. 5:1, 2, 5, 9; 8:30, 33, and 34).

My justification results in me having peace with God. I am no longer in a state of fear. I no longer tremble at my inability to measure up to God's unattainable standard (1 John 4:16-18). As a Christian, my depravity might want to control you and "lord" it over you. I might wish for you to feel guilty and inadequate, but God who stands in my corner as my advocate (1 John 2:1, 2) asks those who would, "who shall lay anything to the charge of my elect whom I have declared righteous? Who is there among you that can condemn those whom I have freed?" The answer? NO ONE! I am free! Gloriously free! Jesus paid it all and now all to HIM I owe!

8. Justification frees me from sin and the wrath of God against it. (Rom. 5:9; 6:7 ["freed" = "justified"])

We have lived so long in bondage that we have to learn how to live as free men. We sin so naturally that we must learn how to live in righteousness just as we have lived in sin.

"If you belong to Christ, you are *100% justified* in Him; there is *zero* condemnation for you. Justification has no degrees!"<sup>10</sup>

C. What are the implications of such a thought?

1. Practically, nothing changed.

Justification is the sovereign act of God whereby He declares righteous the believing sinner - **while he is still in a sinning state.**<sup>11</sup>

- a. In my practice, I am still as wrong as I was in Romans 1:18-3:20. Now, however, even though my practice has not changed, my standing before God has. I am right with God. Whereas before (1:18-3:20) I was wrong, now (3:21-26) I am right. Nothing can affect this "rightness with God." **Nothing I did caused it and nothing I can do will cancel it. I can never through my actions undo what Christ alone has done.**
- b. If justification is seen in light of the context within Romans, then to be right with God is to be justified. To become non-right is to undermine the truth of justification by faith. To call Christians to get right with God is theologically inaccurate. Your "rightness" with God is not based on your ability to perform or obey but on your

position in Christ.

- c. It is impossible not to be right with God. You did nothing to merit it and you can do nothing to maintain it. To think your sin makes you not right is to fail to see the scope of your sinful condition. To think your obedience makes you right is to fail to see the scope of your justification. How can God declare me righteous and treat me as such and now treat me as unrighteous?

It's no wonder so many believers walk around seeing themselves as 'sinners.' They are double-minded about their standing before God - especially when they visit church on Sunday and are reminded to '**get right with God.**' As James 1:8 says, 'A double-minded man [is] unstable in all he does,' and this lack of understanding about the finality of the cross is spiritual instability.<sup>12</sup>

- d. The question concerning sinful acts by the Christian will be addressed later. Yet such actions on your part cannot change your "rightness" with God. In the doctrine of justification by faith your rightness with God has been forever settled. It is as certain as His Son.
- e. Justification or being right with God is not based on how you feel. Too many believers live their daily lives based on their feelings. As such, they experience little of the joy of being justified. You might feel like a failure because of your inability to measure up to all the imperatives (i.e. commands) in the New Testament. You might feel distant and alienated from God because of your sin nature, but the FACT of the matter is, "You are right with God because you have been justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone." Nothing can alter this glorious truth.

Listen to this insightful comment by Alva J. McClain in his commentary on the book of Romans.

A good many people think of justification as the first or initial blessing of the Christian life, its value ending at that point. But while justification is the initial blessing, it is more than that in the Christian life. Justification is not only the first or initial blessing, but justification carries with it every other blessing of the Christian life, and when a man is justified, he has everything God has to give.

So, let us never think of justification as being a small thing. It is the greatest thing in the Christian life, because it carries with it everything else. There are a great many Christians who are not

enjoying every blessing. There may be some Christians who do not know what they received when God justified them and of course can't enjoy what they are ignorant of. But that does not change the fact that when God gives justification by faith, he gives with that justification everything that He has to give.<sup>13</sup>

Listen carefully to the statement by New Testament Scholar N. T. Wright.

What that doctrine provides is the assurance that, though Christian obedience is still imperfect, the believer is already a full member of God's people.<sup>14</sup>

Oh, what joy is ours as we consider the truth of this glorious consequence of our Lord's justifying activity.

## II. The Significance of Redemption (Romans 3:24)

### A. Defining the Word

1. The word "redemption" implies debt and bondage. Inherent within the word is the idea of buying back. As it relates to my sin debt, it speaks of its complete and full cancellation. When Christ redeemed me, He paid in full my sin debt before the Father.
2. Christ had to pay the debt because of my own inability to do so. When He paid the debt, He did so in full. He did not leave any behind. None was left for me to consider. Never can I be a debtor to God for my sin. As far as my sin relates to the Father, it has been paid in full.

### B. Looking at it Biblically

There are two primary words used for "redemption" in the New Testament. The first (**exagorazo and agorazo**) is found in Galatians 3:13, 4:5; Ephesians 5:16, and Colossians 4:5.

"Christ hath **redeemed** us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).

"To **redeem** them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5).

It is used of believers having been bought by the blood of Christ ([agorazo]1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, Rev. 5:9).

The second word for redemption (**lutroo**) is found in Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 1:18.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem** us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers” (1 Pet. 1:18).

Each of the three words (agorazo, exagorazo, and lutroo) emphasizes a different aspect of God’s redemptive work in our behalf.

- **Agorazo** speaks of “to purchase in the marketplace.” “This verb was used of men in the Roman world purchasing slaves in the market.”
- **Exagorazo** with the prefix “Ex,” “emphasizes separation of what has been purchased from the slave market altogether.” “This adds the idea of being taken *out of* the slave market.”
- **Lutroo** “carries the fullest meaning of redemption, namely, ‘to set free by the payment of a ransom.’”<sup>15</sup>

As can be seen from the context the idea is to buy back, to pay a purchase price.

The word choice is telling. It means, “To buy out of or to buy back.” Relating this to salvation gives us a tremendous picture as we see Christ’s words on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). “It is finished” is the translation of one word and receipts during Christ’s time often had this word written on them to indicate, “PAID or PAID IN FULL.” When Christ said, “It is finished” (paid in full) our redemption (to buy back from/out of sin) was complete.

Consider with me Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us?” Matthew 20:28 tells us that He gave His life a “ransom” for many. 1 Timothy 2:6 stresses this same truth. Revelation 5:9 tells me that the ransom price is His blood. It is for this reason 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 says, “For you were bought with a price.” **Christ, by being the infinite God-man, exhausted the penalty of the broken Law by being our substitute. Christ born under the law met the demands of the law that He might free us from the law.**

- C. What are the implications of such a thought?
1. The Father will never bring up the sin issue again. Why? Because He has dealt with it in full, to bring it up would be to minimize the redemptive act of Christ.
  2. I now can live in a “debt-free relationship” with the Father as it relates to the sin issue. If the debt has been canceled in full, can I now once more become a debtor?
  3. There is no possibility of going into debt again. We do not have to start all over again and try to keep the slate clean. There is no more slate. God is not keeping score, granting or withholding blessings on the basis of our performance.<sup>16</sup>

*My Redeemer*

*Written by Philip P. Bliss Music by James McGranahan*

*I will sing of my Redeemer  
And His wondrous love to me;  
On the cruel cross He suffered,  
From the curse to set me free.*

*Sing, O sing of my Redeemer,  
With His blood He purchased me;  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free.*

III. The Significance of Propitiation (Rom. 3:25)

A. Defining the Word

1. The word “propitiation” has to do with anger and wrath. Only God is propitiated. He is wrathful against the sinner’s sin. To propitiate means, “to placate, satisfy, or appease.”
2. God is angry with the sinner. The sinner is the object of God’s wrath (John 3:36). The death of Jesus Christ placates the wrath of God against the sinner. The sufficiency of His death satisfies the justice of God against sin.

3. Whereas redemption is God's work on the cross in reference to sin, propitiation is His work on the cross in relation to Himself. Christ's death propitiated (satisfied, appeased) the righteous wrath of God.<sup>17</sup>

B. Looking at the word Biblically

The root word has three expressions (**hilaskomai, hilasmos, and hilasterion**).

“And he is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

“Whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:25).

“And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the **mercy-seat**; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Heb. 9:5).

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be **merciful** to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation** (KJV - reconciliation) for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

C. What are the implications of such truth?

1. If the death of Christ sufficiently and effectually removes the object of God's wrath thus placating His anger and satisfying His justice, then God can never be angry with me again.

Where did we pick up the idea that God is mad or irritated? Knowing that *all* of God's wrath was poured out on His Son at His death on the cross, how can we think like that? As a matter of fact, the reason He brought Jesus back from the grave is that He was satisfied with His Son. Ponder this: If the Father is satisfied with His Son's full payment for sin, and we are in His Son, by grace through faith, then *He is satisfied with*

*you and me.* How long must Christians live before we finally believe that? <sup>18</sup>

2. I will never face God's anger. God will never be angry with those who participate in the propitiating work of Christ before the Father.

It isn't possible for a Christian to cause God to become angry. "There is nothing you can do that will make Him mad - nothing!"<sup>19</sup>

The truth was that she was pleasing to God already, and she was to work not for His favor, but because she already had it.<sup>20</sup>

#### IV. The Significance of Guilt (3:19)

##### A. Defining the Word

1. The word means "liable to punishment." Because of my sin, I am responsible to pay the penalty against it.

This word needs some careful explication, for in today's world the usual meaning of the term is guilt feelings, or the subjective aspect of guilt. What we are referring to here, however, is the objective state of having violated God's intention for man and thus being liable to punishment. <sup>21</sup>

That quality which renders criminal and liable to punishment; or it is that disposition to violate the law, which has manifested itself by some act already done. The opposite of innocence. Vide Rutherf. Inst. B. 1, c. 18, s. 10. <sup>22</sup>

2. Without Christ, I am responsible to pay my sin debt before God. Without Christ's propitiatory work, I am the object of His wrath. Such a sentence against my sin is just and inescapable. I am guilty of my crimes against God, and I will pay for my sins.
3. Christ's substitutionary death received the sentence against my sin. He took my place. The punishment I was to receive was laid on Him. Because of His sufficiency, there is no longer any penalty against it.

##### B. Looking at the word Biblically

The word is used within the New Testament (Rom. 3:19).

“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable (guilty) to God” (Rom. 3:19).

Prior to the cross we stand guilty. After the cross such is no longer the case.

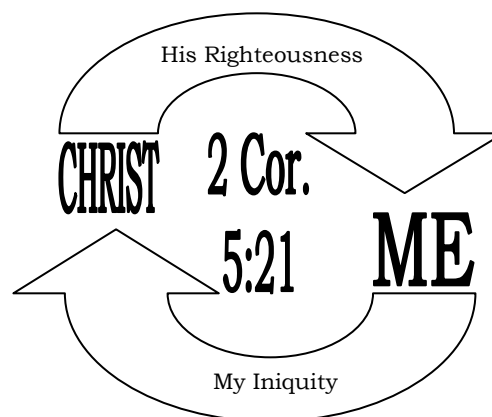
C. What are the implications of such truth?

1. I will never be punished by the Father for my sin.
2. For the Father to punish me is to declare the inadequacy of our Lord’s punishment.

V. The Significance of Imputation (4:6-8)

A. Defining the Word

1. Imputation means, “To credit to one’s account.”
2. Positively considered, it means that I have the righteousness of Christ credited to my account (4:6). I am, because of Him, as righteous as Jesus Christ is. It is an alien righteousness. It is not indigenious to me. Because of the doctrine of imputation, I have all the necessary resources to meet any charge brought against me.
3. Negatively considered, God will never credit to my account sin (4:8). Romans 4:6-8 is a quotation from Psalm 32:1, 2. David longed to be this man though such an experience was foreign to him. He still felt God’s heavy hand against him. Truly, the man who was not credited with sin would be a blessed man.



- B. What are the implications of such truth?
  1. New Testament believers are blessed. Though omniscience sees sin, God will never credit it to their account. God will never count or consider sin against the New Testament believer.
  2. God will always deal with me as righteous and He will never deal with me according to my sin.
  3. Charles Leiter calls these realities, “The very heart of the gospel.”<sup>23</sup>

VI. The Significance of being “in Christ.”

- A. Though the treatment of such a topic will be examined in further detail, it is necessary to note the idea of being in Christ.
- B. The New Testament believer is described as being in Christ. The term in synonymous with being saved (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 1:20). No one in Christ can be lost. The preposition “in” is a locative of sphere. To be in Christ is to be in the realm of His ownership, identification, association, fellowship, and presence.

“In Christ” is an expression of intimate interrelatedness, analogous to the air that is breathed: it is in the person, yet at the same time, the person is in it.<sup>24</sup>

- C. The opposite is equally true. Not to be in Christ is to be lost. No one can be in Him and out of Him at the same time. Such a statement raises the question as to whether or not the Father ever sees us apart from His Son. The answer must be no. For Him to see us apart from His Son assures us of our lost estate. Our heavenly Father never sees us apart from being “in Christ.”
- D. Being in Christ is a consequence of being saved. Several terms come into play as we consider the idea of being “in Christ.”

The heart of Pauline theology is union with Christ (Rom. 8:1, 1 Cor. 6:17, Gal. 2:20). Although often overlooked in favor of an emphasis on justification by faith, Paul’s treatment of the spiritual life in Christ is central to the apostle’s understanding

of religious experience. Communion with Christ is presented as synonymous with salvation, achieved by faith and consummated in love. Christ 'for us' must be kept together with Christ 'in us'.<sup>25</sup>

- E. I am in Christ through Spirit Baptism (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). At salvation, the Holy Spirit places me into the body of Christ. Such an action on His part guarantees my placement into His body. For me to fall outside of Him would be to negate and reverse the action of the Holy Spirit in my behalf.
- F. To be in Christ is to partake of all that He has provided through His perfect life and sacrificial death. The book of Romans provides for us the benefits of His life and death in our behalf.

## VII. The Significance of peace and access (Rom. 5:1, 2)

Because of Justification, I have peace with God and an unconditional access into His presence. Such peace and access are the result of Christ's work in my behalf. Tied into this great truth is that of our reconciliation. Whereas once I was alienated from God, I now have access to God. Because the gulf has been spanned and I am now reconciled to God, I have fellowship with Him.

There was nothing I could do to merit it and there is nothing I can do to maintain it. To have peace and access is a result of grace. I could never have gained it through self-effort. Why do I believe that my actions will bar my access and rob my peace? Listen carefully to the following advertisement blurb.

Have you ever needed a 'that night'? Or a 'that day'? A point in time before which things were going wrong, but after which things began to go right? What are the ingredients for a 'that night'? What is mixed into the recipe? Understanding what goes into creating that moment of divine favor was Esther's ultimate secret. Ester learned how to find favor with the King! Bestselling author and internationally renowned speaker and pastor . . . reveals how intimate access to God is available to all. Finding Favor with the King is critical to preparing for your own moment in His presence.<sup>26</sup>

Do you ever believe you have been barred from finding favor with God? Do you believe your access before the Father is maintained by what you do or fail to do? Friend, it is time for us to once more embrace the theology of Romans.

## VIII. The Significance of Romans 6, 7, and 8

The fact of the matter is that the doctrine of Romans 6:6 is not only the most important in the Bible concerning the Christian life, but it is also the most difficult. The key to its interpretation is that it must be considered as positional truth.

The doctrine, considered to be positional, will place the believer under grace, and will result in correct experience. The doctrine considered to be experiential, will place the believer under law, and lead to erroneous experience. <sup>27</sup>

- A. The whole argumentation of Romans 6 is built on the aforementioned theological truths. Because of justification, redemption, propitiation, guilt, imputation, and peace and access; I am now dead to sin (6:2), no longer a slave to sin (6:6), freed from sin (6:7), it shall not reign over me (6:12), and it is no longer my master (6:14).
- B. The battle formed in chapter 7 between the old nature and the new is a persistent though temporary battle. No one can escape it, yet no one should live there. Victory over sin is to be gained in the three words of chapter 6: know, reckons, and yield. Yet despite the struggle against sin and unfortunate failures, never once is the believer exhorted to “get right” and “restore fellowship.” Never is the believer viewed as incurring debt. Never is God viewed as being displeased, angry, or wrathful. Never does God credit to the individual in chapter 7 sin. God sees the individual as righteous. The weight of his sin and disobedience is great and no amount of effort on his part can save him. What and where is his deliverance to be found? It is in Christ and in Christ alone.
- C. It is against the backdrop of chapters 3-7 we find ourselves walking into chapter 8. What are the facts contained in chapter 8?
  1. No believer will ever face condemnation for any sin. God will never deal with us according to our sin (8:6). Why? Because Jesus Christ has set me free from sin and death (8:2).
  2. Christ has met the righteous demand of the law for me (8:4).

3. I live according to the Spirit (8:4). He controls me (8:9) and I am pleasing to the Father (8:8, 9).
4. I am a joint-heir with Christ (v.17).
5. I, like Christ, can call God my Father (vv.15, 16).
6. God will complete His work in me (8:30).
7. God will never be against me (8:31)
8. God will never withhold from me anything I need (8:32). Everything I need I already have in Him and He will graciously supply.
9. Because I am justified, no charge can ever be raised against me before the Father (8:33).
10. I can never be condemned before the Father (8:34).
11. God's love for me is unconditional (8:35-39). There is nothing I can do that will ever change God's opinion of me.
12. Miles J. Stanford, "Let The Facts Of Your Position OVERWHELM The Feelings Of Your Condition."<sup>28</sup>

This is the truth I am being called upon to believe. We have drawn too sharp of a distinction between what I am in Christ and the continuing battle I have with the old nature. **We have allowed ourselves to make our failed experiences and submission to the old nature as our defining points.** This is woefully catastrophic. Such bottom feeding robs us of all He is for us and we are in Him.

Charles Leiter correctly notes,

"Christian have both a new identity and a new power. These are *facts*, whether we believe them or not. Believing them does not make them true, and not believing them does not make them false. Reality is not changed by our faulty perception of it. What *is* changed is our *experience* of that reality."<sup>29</sup>

The purpose of this short study was to see that Jesus Christ is enough in this life and in the life that is to come. There is nothing and no one who can be for us what we are in Him. May the Holy Spirit of God be pleased to reveal this truth to us and may He than cause us to understand.

Christ Jesus has done it all. Yet we forget to rest in His provision. We forget and we fall back into self-effort. Our habit of asking for more forgiveness, more redemption, more righteousness, and more sanctification must be replaced with a habit of trusting Him. He has done everything for us. And living by faith in what He has done for us is what pleases Him.<sup>30</sup>

My Passion is to Know . . .

All that He is for me	I am in Him
He is my justification	I am righteous
He is my redemption	I am debt-free
He is my propitiation	I am pleasing
He is my sacrificial substitute	I am guilt-free
	I am forgiven
	I am free to be who I am in Him
He is my imputation	I receive what He has and He receives what I was
He is my reconciliation	I am at peace w/ God

Who I am in Him is not determined by my activity or ability. There is nothing more that must be done for me to acquire what is already mine. Nothing can alter His opinion of me or dealings with me. Why, because He deals with me according to the merit of His Son and on the basis of grace alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 1:204.

<sup>2</sup> "In Romans, the most theological of Paul's Epistles, we find the most systematic development of the doctrine of grace. this is to be expected, since the heart of Paul's message was the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, and since grace is used as a synonym for gospel and salvation." Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Grace of God* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963). 37.

<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 742, 747

<sup>4</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago:Moody Press, 1999), 298

<sup>5</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace* (NavPress:Colorado Springs, 1991), 36.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 638.

<sup>7</sup> A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 849.

<sup>8</sup> Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1:325

<sup>9</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian life*, (Wheaton:Tyndale House, 1998), 189

<sup>10</sup> Charles Leiter, *Justification and Regeneration* (Heart Cry Resources - [www.heartcrymissionary.com](http://www.heartcrymissionary.com), 2007), 37.

<sup>11</sup> Swindoll, *Grace Awakening*, (Word Publishing:Dallas, 1991), 24.

<sup>12</sup> Bob George, *Faith That Pleases God*, (Harvest House Publishers:Eugene, 2001), 178.

<sup>13</sup> Alva J. McClain, *Romans*, 121.

<sup>14</sup> *New Dictionary of Theology*, Edited by Ferguson, Wright, Packer, "Justification," N.T. Wright, 360.

<sup>15</sup> *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Editors, 834, 835.

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- <sup>16</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace*, 21.
- <sup>17</sup> *Understanding Christian Theology*, Swindoll and Zuck, General Editors, 835.
- <sup>18</sup> Swindoll, *Grace Awakening*, 61, 62.
- <sup>19</sup> Steve McVey, *Grace Rules*, (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1998), 148.
- <sup>20</sup> Michael Wells, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 82.
- <sup>21</sup> Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 605
- <sup>22</sup> [www.new-york-lawyer.ws/law-dictionary/gratis.htm](http://www.new-york-lawyer.ws/law-dictionary/gratis.htm)
- <sup>23</sup> Leiter, *Justification and Regeneration*, 28.
- <sup>24</sup> R. David Rightmire, "Union with Christ," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 789.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 789.
- <sup>26</sup> Source Unknown
- <sup>27</sup> Emphasis his, <http://withchrist.org/MJS/menus.htm>
- <sup>28</sup> <http://withchrist.org/MJS/menus.htm>
- <sup>29</sup> Leiter, *Justification and Regeneration*, 87.
- <sup>30</sup> George, *Faith That Pleases God*, 96, 97.