

Romans Chapter 5- John Karmelich

1. My title for this chapter is “breathing easy”.
 - a) There are moments in life that are very stressful. There usually comes a point where that stressful event is over and we can now “breathe easy”. A similar cliché is a “sigh of relief”. It is the idea that whatever was stressing us out, is now all over.
 - b) Chapter 5 is all about having a peace with God.
 - i) It is the idea that as long as we believe Jesus died for our sins, we can’t mess up our salvation. We can “breath easy” knowing that we can’t mess it up.
 - c) “Breathing easy” is my nickname for the Christian cliché of “joy”.
 - i) Joy is different from happiness.
 - ii) Happiness is based on the circumstance of the moment.
 - iii) When a positive event happens in our life, that event makes us happy.
 - iv) Joy should be present in Christians no matter what the circumstances. We can be sad and still have joy. Joy comes from the inner peace that no matter what happens to us in this “temporary” life, we are saved and we can’t mess it up. In other words, no matter what the situation, we can “breath easy”.
2. There is a subtle distinction between the peace “of” God and the peace “with” God.
 - a) The peace “of” God is the idea that God no longer holds us accountable for the payment for our sins as that was taken care of by the “cross”.
 - b) The peace “with” God is Him saying to us in effect, “Come on over to Me. Now that the price has been paid, I want you to come close to Me and be with Me.”
 - c) Imagine if Jesus died for your sins and then God the Father said, “OK, the price for your sins has been paid. You get to go to heaven. Now go be on your merry way.” ☺
 - i) The peace “of” God is about forgiveness. The peace “with” God is about developing a personal relationship with God.
 - d) Let me put it another way: Too many people view heaven as this wonderfully materialistic place that is beautiful and serene where they can relax by themselves or with friends and not bother about God himself when they get to heaven.
 - i) I am convinced that some people are going to enjoy heaven much more than others. In heaven, we sing praises to God and spend our time with Him. In other words, if you don’t enjoy that now, you won’t appreciate heaven as much.
 - e) Our future in heaven is with God: Here is a description of life in heaven: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.” (Revelation 21:3 NIV).
 - i) My point is God did not save us so we can now go about our life without Him.
 - ii) God saved us to be with Him in heaven forever.
 - f) In some ways, our lives on earth are a “preview” of what is to come. Right now, God desires we spend time with Him, talk to Him regularly, and make God part of our daily lives. The biggest difference is that in this life we still wrestle with our “sin-disease” as well as the same sin disease of others around us. God wants to show how rotten things are here on earth as to appreciate heaven all the more once that is taken away.
 - g) This leads us back to the peace “with” God. This is about our relationship. This is about God forgiving our sins and then, out of gratitude, we develop a daily relationship with God. We can “breath easy” knowing that whatever we are going through at the moment, it is temporary in comparison to eternity.
 - h) Let’s go to Verse 1 and I’ll come back to “breathing easy” throughout the lesson.

3. Chapter 5, Verse 1: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
- a) The first word of Chapter 5 is “therefore”. The classic teaching line is, “Whenever you see a “therefore”, you have to ask where is the “wherefore”.
 - i) In other words, the word “therefore” is a conclusion of an argument.
 - ii) You need to understand the argument itself before you can accept the “therefore”.
 - b) The conclusion of the “therefore” is the idea that we have been justified by faith.
 - i) To review some previous lessons, the word “justified” means “just-as-if-I-have-never-sinned”. It doesn’t mean we are innocent of our sins. It means that Jesus paid the price for them. If all of our sins could be listed on a chalkboard, it would be as if God completely erased all that chalk because the price as been paid. “Justified” can be thought of as that clean chalkboard.
 - ii) The “wherefore of the therefore” was Chapter 4 of Romans. The main point of Chapter 4 was that God said Abraham was “righteous” long before He actually performed any good deeds. Abraham was saved based on his faith alone.
 - iii) The word “righteous” has a similar conclusion to “justified”, but there the difference is in the perspective. The idea of “righteous” is that God sees as perfectly forgiven beings in our future state, and therefore God can call us “perfect right here and right now”.
 - iv) To use another illustration from the last lesson, imagine we are watching a rerun of a sports event on television. The players on the television don’t know who has won or lost the game. Only the people watching the television, who saw the “live” game and know who won and lost. Therefore, the “all-knowing TV-viewer” can call the winning team “the winner” before the game is over.
 - a) God called Abraham “righteous” as if God was watching a “rerun” of Abraham’s life. God knows all things and knows what will happen in the future. God calls us “righteous” because from His perspective, He already knows who has accepted Jesus for the payment of sins and chooses to follow Him no matter what the circumstances.
 - b) The point of Chapter 4 is that God calls Abraham righteous “before the game started”. Abraham was called righteous long before he was asked to perform the first Jewish ritual of circumcision. He is saved by faith.
 - c) The second word of Chapter 5 is “since”. (Don’t worry, the pace will pick up later. ☺)
 - i) What Paul is saying is that this “righteous” standing is a done deal.
 - ii) We no longer have to worry about it.
 - iii) It is not “if” we have peace with God. It is “since” we have peace. We don’t have to work for it. We don’t have to worry about it. It is a done deal.
 - iv) But what about our moments of doubt? It doesn’t matter. We all go through moments like that, especially when things get rough. Remember we’re not talking about life from our perspective, but from God’s perspective. He knows all things and He knows our future.
 - v) All Christians should have some moment in their lives where they remember making a commitment to serve God and realize that Jesus’ paid the penalty for their sins. I have found there is an initial period of peace and joy that comes with that commitment. There are usually some miracles that God puts in our life at that time as God responds to “our response” to His love.
 - a) Then comes the rough times. That is when the doubts kick in. During such times, it often helps to remember those past “joy” moments, just to remember that if God was “faithful once”, He is still there in a sense, asking us to “trust Him”.

- vi) Which leads us back to the word “since”: If you have turned your life over to Jesus for payment of the sins, that peace of God is there. He is no longer wants you to pay your price for your sins. He has provided the payment for our sins and we have accepted that payment. The purpose of God providing that payment is so we can have peace “with” God. The point of “since” is that it’s a done deal.
Again, it’s breath-easy time! ☺
- d) Another phrase to talk about is “gained access by faith”.
 - i) If you read the early chapters of the bible, especially Leviticus, you get the impression that approaching God is like trying to walk through a deadly mine field. You have to step in just the right spots, or you get killed. For example, take the first high priest was Aaron. His direct descendants were to be high priest just like the oldest son of a king is to be the next king.
 - a) God killed two of Aarons’ on the spot because somehow, they did not perform the high priest ritual like God designed them to do so. (Reference Leviticus 10:2).
 - b) Now, if I was one of the remaining, living brothers of the two brothers who just got killed on the spot, I would be a nervous wreck about performing the rituals of the high priest. ☺ If I was that living next-high priest, I would be performing my duty like walking through a mine field.
 - ii) My whole point here is that God takes sin seriously and we don’t just casually approach the throne of God. It would be deadly.
 - iii) God wants us to understand how “deadly” sin is. He wants us to appreciate all-the-more how important the cross is.
 - iv) At the same time, we can approach the throne of God. Remember the “since” word. It’s a done deal. The path to God’s throne is no longer a mine field. God still wants us to come to Him humbly.
- e) An aspect of worshiping God is to balance “respect” with “boldness” in approaching the throne of God. When we pray, it helps to have a healthy balance of realizing we are approaching the most holy throne of God with the fact we can approach it “boldly”.
 - i) For example, when you enter most Roman Catholic churches, you see a statue of Jesus dying on the cross. Protestant churches usually have an empty cross. A statue of Jesus dying on the cross represents how “seriously” is the cost of our sins and the necessity of God Himself paying the price. The idea is you don’t approach the throne of God casually. One needs to have a deep sense of understanding and awe of how “expensive” sin is that has to be dealt with.
 - ii) The typical Protestant church “empty” cross is the emphasis that sin is now a “done deal”. We can approach God because the price for sins has been paid.
 - a) My point is that both sides are capable of over-emphasis. One can have such a sense of awe of who God is, that we are afraid to approach God as “our friend”. The other possible over-emphasis is to have such a casual relationship with God that we forgot how seriously God cares about sin.
 - b) I will occasionally ask a devout Catholic, “Why do you pray to Mary or someone else when you can pray to God the Father directly? It often never occurs to that person that one can pray directly to God for intercession.
 - c) I also have seen devout Evangelical Christians be guilty of being “overly-casual” with God. There has to be a respect for God in our relationship.
- f) Let’s look at the last sentence of Verse 2: “And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God”.
 - i) Let’s get back to “breath easy”. If we now know that we have the peace of God (forgiveness of sins) and peace with God (we can be with God), we should have joy over that fact. Getting to live “happily ever after” for eternity is something to be happy about. ☺

- ii) One has to see “rejoice” as both a command and a request by Paul. He is saying in effect, “Look folks, I know this life here on earth has its rough times. What is that in comparison to eternity? Look, God has forgiven us of whatever wrong we have done and God wants to be with us forever. The realization of that fact should make us want to be appreciative to God. It should make you want to have joy. It is a done deal. We can breath easy now. Learn to appreciate it”.

4. Verse 3: Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

- a) Verse 3 is a “flow chart”. A “flow-chart” is where “A leads to B” and “B leads to C”, etc. In other words, you can’t get to “B” unless you’ve accomplished “A” first.
 - i) This “flow chart” says that 1) suffering produces 2) perseverance.
 - ii) This “flow chart” says 2) perseverance produces 3) character.
 - iii) This “flow chart” says 3) character produces 4) hope.
- b) It might help to look at the final word of “hope” and talk about that characteristic.
 - i) As I explained in the last lesson, biblical “hope” is about trusting in a fact.
 - ii) We think of “hope” as having doubts. For example, we might say, “I hope it doesn’t rain today.” We have doubts about the weather.
 - iii) Paul uses the word “hope” like it is a done deal. We have hope (i.e., trust) in the fact we are going to heaven and we can spend eternity with God.
 - iv) The problem is we do have those doubts. Those doubts make us turn from God. We have difficult times in our life and those times naturally make us pessimistic because we don’t know the future. We lose “hope”.
 - v) So, how do we develop better “hope”? We follow the “flow chart”.
- c) Let’s talk about perseverance. What Paul is saying is that God puts suffering in our life so we can learn to persevere by trusting Him.
 - i) A “veteran” Christian should say, “Well, God got me through that one situation. Hey look, God got me through another one. Hey, how about that, God got me through that one as well!” As we learn to trust God, we learn to persevere.
 - ii) It’s like the classic cliché, “what doesn’t kill you will make you stronger”.
 - iii) Suffering leads to perseverance. A classic joke here is “Don’t pray for better perseverance because God will send us “suffering” to help us.” ☺
- d) The next step on this flow chart is “character”.
 - i) Character is like being in “good shape” spiritually. It would be like realizing “Yes, things look bad. However, things have looked bad in the past and God got me through it. He will get me through this one as well”. That is growing in character.
- e) Finally, being in “good spiritual shape”, i.e., character, leads to “hope”.
 - i) If we have had enough life-experience of difficulties, at the same time, knowing that God is watching us and guiding us through such times, it does lead us to have the type of “hope” (i.e., trust without doubts) that God desires for us.
 - ii) Remember that God the Father wants us to trust Him more every day. With that, God is working through this “flow-chart” to get us to trust Him.
- f) Let me sum up this section with a prayer. When we go through rough times, we can say to God, “Lord, I don’t know why I am going through this right now. The only thing I know for sure is that You love me and want to spend eternity with me. Somehow, someway, this rotten situation is helping me prepare for that eternity with You. Help me to have joy through this situation and help me to learn what You want me to learn from it. Give me the strength to get through the next thirty seconds (or thirty years). Help me to realize that You are my strength during this time and my dependency is completely upon You. I don’t know the future, but you do. Let not this lesson be wasted.” Amen.
 - i) Remember Verse 3 opens with the word of “rejoicing in our sufferings”. That prayer is an example of how to rejoice during such times.

5. Verse 5: And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
- a) Remember I said we think of “hope” as “I hope it doesn’t rain”? Well, if it does rain, we get disappointed because we “hoped” it didn’t rain.
 - i) In God’s idea of “hope”, the bad weather never comes. ☺
 - ii) Go read the end of the bible. We win. ☺ We need to trust in that fact.
 - iii) We are not guaranteed prosperity and happiness in this lifetime. If that were the case, people would seek God for the “fringe benefits” and not to spend time with Him. What we are guaranteed is “internal and eternal joy” despite whatever is the situation of the moment, be it good or bad.
 - b) How do you know this is true? After all, you don’t know what I’m dealing with right now and I don’t “feel” so joyful. How do I know this “hope” is true? Great question! ☺
 - i) Verse 5 says, “His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us”.
 - ii) Jesus said, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” (John 14: 26-27a, NIV).
 - iii) What both Paul and Jesus said is the Holy Spirit is living inside all believers. Part of His job is to give us that peace no matter what the circumstance.
 - iv) What does that “peace” mean? It ties back to my opening theme of “breathing easy”. It is the idea that we understand that whatever we are going through, it is temporary. God put that peace inside of us so we can have the proper perspective about whatever we go through.
 - v) We grow through sufferings and perseverance with the goal of “doubting less”. We can have “better peace” after we have been through a bunch of trials knowing that God does get us through it.
 - vi) We don’t have to depend upon ourselves for this peace. It is God himself, through the Holy Spirit providing it for us. It is “there” for the believer.
 - c) Let’s look at the phrase, “God has poured out his love into our hearts.”
 - i) There is a great visual illustration one can use as a bible teacher. Take an empty glass and start filling it with water. Keep pouring slowly until the water starts spilling over the rim onto the ground. That is an illustration of how God wants to work in our life. He wants us to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit to a point where God’s love has to spill unto others around us because “there is no more room inside of us to hold it in”.
 - ii) For those who like to get emotional, this is the verse to get emotional over. God wants us so filled with joy, so that everyone around us notices how joyful we are.
 - iii) Again, it is not about being blind to suffering: “Whoopee, I stubbed my toe”, Praise the Lord, I will persevere from this!” ☺ Pain is real and God designed our bodies with “pain sensors” so we know we have to deal with injuries and other physical issues. God also gives us real emotional pain since we have the capacity to love other people and we truly suffer when others are hurting.
 - a) The point is that it is ok to grieve. At the same time, there can be an internal sense of “joy” through it all knowing we have this hope and knowing we can “breathe easy”.
 - iv) I should also add the dangerous times are usually the “good times”. It is when things are going well we start giving ourselves the credit and not God. We start spending less time with God as we get busy with other things. That is usually when God sends us some sort of “reminder” that He is still there!

6. Verse 6: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.
- a) Let's start with the phrase, "right time". This is the moment in history, roughly 2,000 years ago, when God the Father choose to send His son. Why that time? Why not right after the Garden of Eden, or right before Noah? Why not today, when the world could watch the resurrection via satellite?
 - i) First of all, God choose the right time, not us. We have to respect His decision.
 - b) Here are some good reasons why God choose "that time":
 - i) Rome was at its peak of power. It was the largest single empire (by territory) in human history up to that date. It made spreading the Gospel message much easier because communication and travel was allowed.
 - ii) There were no prophets in Israel for nearly 400 hundred years. That made Israel spiritually "empty". Also remember Israel was in bondage for roughly 400 years before a redeemer (Moses) came along. I will argue that "pattern" was designed to keep the Nation of Israel on the lookout.
 - iii) Jesus needed to go to the Promised Land while the Jewish people were still a nation and collectively in one place. From 67AD to 1947, there was no such nation.
 - c) With all of that said, there is a more important idea being communicated in this verse. It is the question: When Jesus died on the cross, how many of your sins were yet future? The answer is all of them.
 - i) There is a false-concept that Jesus died for all the sins we committed up to the point where we first accepted Jesus as our payment. The rest is our problem. That is nonsense and non-biblical. Jesus paid the price for all the sins we commit in our lives, past, present and future.
 - a) Does that mean our behavior doesn't matter? No, it does matter a lot! That issue is for another lesson. The focus of this lesson is on peace with God. The fact we can "breath easy" knowing we can't mess it up our salvation if we're trusting in Jesus' payment for our sins.
 - ii) The verse says, "When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly".
 - a) We didn't have a whole lot of power before we were born. ☺
 - b) Further, our sins kept us from having good-standing with God.
 - c) The point is the price for sins was paid before we even asked for it.
 - d) It was a "done deal" even before we could realize it was a done deal.
 - e) What does that mean? We can't get any credit. We didn't do anything special to draw God to us. He did it all beforehand.
 - iii) This should help with the "breath-easy" part. If God took care of all it before I was born, then I should not have to worry about it.
7. Verse 7: Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- a) I remember getting into a discussion one time about the idea of who was to blame for killing Jesus. I responded with the classic Chuck Smith quote of "If you want to blame someone for Jesus' death, blame me. He died for my sins."
 - i) That person then asked me, "Are you telling me Jesus committed suicide? Suicide is a sin. It is a sin because "do not murder" includes suicide."
 - ii) I responded with, "Yes, he committed suicide like a soldier jumping on top of a grenade so as to save the lives of the soldiers around him. It may be suicide from our perspective, but it was done out of love. Jesus in a sense, committed "God-the-Father-ordained suicide so that we never have to do the same!

- b) This leads back to Verses 7 and 8. On rare occasions, you will hear about someone giving their lives so others can live. Usually it is a soldier dying for their fellow soldiers or someone giving their lives so their children can live on. In those cases, it is someone dying for someone else they are affection about.
 - i) Imagine giving up your life in order to save someone you can't stand. Think of the most repulsive, disgusting, low-life person you can imagine and then dying so that person can live another day. Personally, no thank you. Couldn't do it.
 - ii) But God did. That's the point. We are those disgusting people. We are the sinners. We are the ones Jesus died for.
 - iii) Suppose God spoke in a big booming voice the whole world could hear and say the words "I love all of you." Let's say the world was convinced it was the voice of God and not some sort of trick. The problem with that message is the world could then respond, "How do we know You really love us?"
 - a) I can't think of a better way of saying "I love you" by God saying in effect, "I want to resurrect you and spend eternity with you and I myself am willing to die to prove it. I myself am willing to give up "part of me" in order that you may live.
 - b) I remember speaking to a widow after a 40-year plus marriage. She said that when her husband died, part of her died as well. I am convinced that is true that after a long marriage, two become "one". When one dies, part of the other "one" also dies. In that sense, God agreed to be a "widow". He gave up part of Himself, for our sins. That is why Christianity teaches the trinity concept of "separate but equal".
- 8. Verse 9: Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!
 - a) Let's get back to "justified", or "just-as-if-I-never-sinned". The text says we are justified by his blood. This is a reference to the cross itself and Jesus' blood was spilled during the crucifixion process. We are justified by his blood.
 - i) In the Jewish sacrificial system as outlined in Leviticus, the blood of an animal must be shed for forgiveness. You can't find an exact Old Testament quote on this, but if you study all the sacrifices for sins required the killing of innocent animals. In some cases the blood itself must be put on the altar. (e.g., Leviticus 4:30).
 - b) Some bible scholars call Romans Chapter 5 the "much more than" chapter. That is because in the King James Version, the phrase, "much more than" is repeated 5 times.
 - i) The NIV translation used here, uses "much more" 4 times, but whatever. ☺
 - ii) The point is Paul liked this phrase and used it over and over again in Chapter 5.
 - iii) The phrase, "much more than" means "Point #2" is greater than "Point #1".
 - iv) In this verse the two points is that we are saved for eternity (Point #1) and we don't have to receive God's wrath (Point #2). I'll explain how Point #2 is greater.
 - c) Let's move to the question of what does God's wrath mean?
 - i) It means we are saved from going to hell. Reading it in context of Verse 10 ("saved through life") that is the more likely choice.
 - ii) I'm also speculating that Paul was a "pre-tribulation" kind of guy. ☺ That means Christians will be taken into heaven before all of the horrible stuff happens as described in the book of Revelation. Revelation 15:1, which is near the end of all of that destruction, has the phrase "God's wrath is completed" (NIV). Tying that to Romans 5:9 ("saved from God's wrath"), one can argue that Paul is also speaking of being saved from the tribulation period.
 - a) Again, I am speculating here. In context, Paul is talking about eternal salvation. My point is Revelation is pretty "wrathful" to me. ☺ I believe there is a double-meaning to the point of "saved from God's wrath".

9. Verse 10: For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!
 - a) In this verse, we have the second "how much more" phrase. Again, that means Paul's "Point #2" is a more significant statement than his "Point #1".
 - i) "Point #1" is that we were "reconciled" to God the Father through Jesus' death.
 - ii) "Point #2" is that we shall be "save(d) through his (Jesus') life."
 - b) OK, what's the difference between these two points? Reconciliation means "a change from enemy to friendship" (Easton's Bible Dictionary).
 - i) My point is just because we are God's friends, doesn't guarantee, on that point alone we get to spend eternity with Him. God could just say, "OK, you don't get to go hell, I'll just make you stop existing when you die."
 - ii) The "how much more" point here is that we get to spend eternity with Him.
 - iii) The "how much more" point is the fact we get resurrected. Paul says we are "saved through his (Jesus) life. That refers to the resurrected life. Paul is hinting at the fact that we get the same privilege that Jesus got of being resurrected.
10. Verse 11: Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
 - a) The key word of Verse 11 is the word "rejoice". If we are "reconciled" to God (i.e., we are no longer God's "enemies" due to our sins) and we get to spend eternity in heaven.
 - i) I don't know about you, but for me, that's something to rejoice about. ☺
 - b) This gets back to my "breath easy" theme. No matter what happens to us Christians, we are saved. No matter how bad the situation, we are saved. No matter how much pain we are in, we are saved. Having the eternal perspective should help us "breath easy".
 - i) Let me give you an illustration of "rejoicing" in that fact: "Heavenly Father, as You know, my life is really difficult right now. Despite that, I know this is only temporary and I get to live with You in peace forever. Forever is a whole lot longer than what I have to go through right now. I rejoice in the fact that You have saved me and continually thank You for that privilege, Amen."
 - ii) God wants us to have joy in our life. Part of the Holy Spirit's role is to help us have joy despite the situation-of-the-moment. Don't hesitate to pray for it too!
 - c) For some people, "rejoicing" is only an inward sense of peace that gives them a calm attitude through the day. Others like to jump and down in excitement and yell it out to others. Some Christians are introverts and some are extroverts. My point is the "style" of our joy reflects our personality. No matter how we express that joy, it should be there.
11. Verse 12: Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned –
 - a) Verse 12 has the second "therefore" of the chapter. The first one was in Verse 1.
 - i) The word, "therefore", is a connection from a previous thought.
 - ii) The "therefore" is a little hard to understand from just this passage.
 - iii) The previous verses deal with the fact we are saved by Jesus' death on the cross.
 - iv) The next set of verses deal with why we are saved. They deal with "why" Jesus' death was necessary and why we were "enemies" with God prior to the cross.
 - v) The "therefore" connects the necessity of the cross with the purpose of the cross.
 - b) Verse 12 says, "Sin entered the world through one man".
 - i) This refers to Adam. Verse 14, coming up makes that clear.
 - ii) This refers to the fact that sin began when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.
 - a) By the way, the bible never says it was an apple. We just assume that.
 - b) It starts with Adam, not Eve, in that God held Adam accountable as the head of that family. The point is the first man in existence sinned.
 - iii) Next, notice the fact that Paul believed Adam was a real person. Paul is implying that the story of Adam and Eve was a historical event.

- iv) This verse shows Paul didn't believe in evolution. Adam was not some "ape man" who was say, the first one to talk to God. Notice "death" began with Adam in Verse 12. Paul is saying before Adam, no human died. If Paul believed in the evolution of species, he wouldn't say Adam was the first to die.
 - c) The verse says that sin "causes" death. Because of Adam, all humans are "sinners".
 - i) The reference is that mankind is eternally damned due to his sin nature.
 - ii) Because Adam and Eve sinned, we all have this sin nature. We are born with it.
 - a) How can a baby have sin? For those who have children, did you have to teach them how to lie? Did you have to teach them how to be selfish and hurt other children? End of argument. ☺ I'm convinced that if a little baby was born with the strength of an adult, they would punch out their parents to get their bottle when they wanted it. ☺ We're born sinners.
 - iii) One can argue, "It's not fair that I am a sinner because of Adam". God's not giving me a chance." OK, I defy you to go a week without sinning, let alone a lifetime. Jesus taught that even being mentally angry is a sin (See Matthew 5:22). OK, let's see you go a week in bad traffic. ☺
 - iv) Think about Adam: He didn't grow up in a dysfunctional family. ☺ He didn't have any emotional baggage from his past. All Adam had to do was live in a paradise garden and not eat of one tree. If he couldn't do it, neither can we.
 - d) This verse gets back to the idea that Christianity teaches that humans are basically "bad people capable of doing good". It is the opposite of the "humanist" view.
 - i) Can an atheist do good things? Of course. God gave us the power of self-discipline and even the worst people can do some good at some time.
 - ii) The advantage of thinking of ourselves as "bad people who are capable of doing good" is designed to keep us humble. If we think we're good people who "slip up" than our egos make us out to be greater than we really are.
12. Verse 13a: for before the law was given, sin was in the world.
- a) Paul finishes the sentence he started in Verse 12 in the first part of Verse 13.
 - b) The main point here is that sin existed a long time before the "law" was formally given to Moses. There are some instinctive aspects of right and wrong (e.g., "do not steal") that existed long before the law was formally given. There was not a formal set of do's and don'ts for roughly 2,500 years from Adam to Moses.
13. Verse 13b: But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.
- a) From the time of Adam until the time of Noah, there was no "formal" law given. There was no written document containing, say, the 10 commandments. Without a formal law "on the books", there is no accountability for those laws.
 - b) Here's an illustration: Let's say one is speeding down the highway, over the speed limit. There are no signs posted as to the speed limit whatsoever. The speed limit was never discussed in driver's education classes or to get a license. If we are now arrested for speeding, we can argue innocence because there was such law posted anywhere.
 - c) Does that mean everyone who lived prior to Moses is in heaven? No. We had that flood-thing with Noah because the world was so bad. Before the time of Moses, individuals were held accountable based on what knowledge they did have of God. This gets back to Romans Chapter 1 where the naïve on God are judged based on one's instinctive knowledge of right and wrong and how they behaved on that knowledge.
 - d) The point of this sentence is that when the 10 Commandments came around, along with the rest of the bible laws, there is now a new set of accountability.
 - e) To the Christian, this means we have a higher sense of accountability. If we have read our bible, we are accountable to that knowledge. Even having that knowledge readily available to us means we are accountable for that knowledge.

14. Verse 14: Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.
- a) Paul finishes his point in this sentence. The point is sin was “around” prior to Moses. Because of Adam, we all have this “incurable sin disease” even before the law was given.
 - b) OK John, I get all of this. Where is Paul going with his argument?
 - i) Notice the last phrase, “Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come”.
 - ii) Paul is about to get into a comparison and contrast of Adam and Jesus.
 - iii) To summarize what is about to come up: “All the world has a sin disease because of one guy. Another “guy” comes to remove the sin disease. Just as Adam is our figurehead to have this disease, Jesus is our figurehead to remove this disease”.
 - c) Whether or not we like it, we all have sin within us because of what Adam did. We have no control over that fact. Those who choose to ignore that fact are those who don’t want to be accountable to God. In the same sense that we are all “Sons of Adam” and have this genetic defect, those who choose to be “Sons of God” can be cured of the defect by accepting Jesus payment of sins.
 - i) In that sense, the next set of verses is the “tale of two men”: Adam and Jesus.
 - ii) Remember that Jesus is “fully human and fully God”. The next set of verses focus on Jesus humanity.
15. Verse 15: But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!
- a) We now have the next “how much more” statement of Chapter 5.
 - i) “Point 1” is that many people “die” because of the sin of one person, Adam.
 - a) The word “die” here refers to eternal condemnation.
 - b) Notice it says “many” and not all. There is still individual accountability.
 - c) It refers to the fact we are eternally separated from God because of sin.
 - ii) “Point 2” is God’s grace through Jesus gives us eternal life.
 - iii) “Point 2” is a whole lot better than “Point 1”. That’s Paul’s point. ☺
 - b) It’s time to learn a classic acronym to describe God’s grace. It is:
 - i) (G)od’s (R)iches (A)t (C)hrist’s (E)xpense. The English word “grace” is not that acronym. However, that acronym is a very good description of what grace means.
 - ii) It is the idea that God loved us despite our sinful nature enough for Jesus himself to pay the penalty for our sins. It is about love we don’t deserve. It is about God showing us love despite our sins. It is about God “doing this” prior to the fact we even realized we wanted Jesus to do this on our behalf.
 - c) The point here is God’s grace is a greater “thing” than sin. If grace was not greater than sin, then grace could not overcome sin, and we couldn’t be saved.
 - d) In Verse 15, Paul is starting a series of “parallels” between Adam and Jesus.
 - i) This is a style of Hebrew poetry. When we think of poetry, we think of phrases where the last words rhyme with each other.
 - ii) In Hebrew poetry, the words don’t rhyme, but two thoughts connect.
 - iii) For example, “spare the rod, spoil the child” (based on Proverbs 22:15) does not rhyme in the original Hebrew or in English. “Hebrew poetry” is two separate phrases or two separate ideas that “connect”. The two thoughts in this example are 1) “spare the rod” and 2) “spoil the child”. They are connected by thought.
 - iv) The connecting thoughts here is the idea that 1) One man (Adam) sinned and caused all of us to be deadly sinners and 2) God’s grace through Jesus saved us from that sinful state.

16. Verse 16: Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.
- a) Paul's point here is to contrast the words "judgment" and "gift".
 - i) We are "judged" because of Adam's "genetic sin nature" being past on to us.
 - ii) We have a "gift" because God decided to pour His grace upon us despite having this sinful nature. Paul's point is the gift is greater in power than the judgment.
 - b) Again, we are working in a style of Hebrew poetry where one thought is designed to contrast and compare with another thought. Here it is the "judgment" of God versus the "gift" of God's forgiveness.
 - c) If something is a "gift", it is not earned. The realization of that concept should lead us to a life of gratitude to God for that gift.
17. Verse 17: For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.
- a) Ok, it's time for another "how much more". Paul has two contrasting points:
 - i) Point #1: Death (through our sin disease) came from one man, Adam.
 - ii) Point #2: Everlasting life came from another man, Jesus.
 - iii) Personally, I think Point #2 is much more impressive than Point #1. ☺
 - b) Let me give another illustration: If we have a bad headache, we need some medicine that is stronger than the headache itself, or it won't go away. Humans have been "poisoned" by sin. The antidote has to be stronger than the poison, or it won't be cured.
 - i) The "how much more" point here is that God's grace is greater than sin. The antidote for sin (the cross) is more powerful than the sin itself.
 - c) OK, let's get practical for a moment: Some Christians might argue, "Yeah, but you don't know how bad I've messed up since I've been a Christian." Or, "I was so bad, I can't imagine God forgiving me of that action." This is our ego creeping in and thinking that we "should" be better people. We can accept God forgiving us, but we our egos won't let us forgive ourselves. To put it another way, "If God is willing to forgive you, why won't you be willing to forgive yourself?"
 - i) Sometimes the pain of being hurt is so powerful that we don't want to let go of it. We're "used" to that pain. Anger "medicates" the internal pain we feel. We need to let go of the pain, if for no other reason, because the pain blocks our relationship with God. God demands we forgive others and ourselves so it no longer blocks that relationship. (Putting up boundaries with those who hurt us is a different issue. I'm only talking about forgiveness to let go of the pain.)
18. Verse 18: Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.
- a) Now we're back to Paul's "Hebrew style poetry" of comparing two thoughts:
 - i) "Thought #1": One action (Adam eating the forbidden fruit) brought condemnation to all people. We all suffered because of that one incident.
 - ii) "Thought #2": One action (Jesus dying on the cross) brought life to all men.
 - b) The verse does not mean that everyone gets to go to heaven because the price for sin has to be paid. There is still individual judgment. This verse taken out of context can make us "think" there is no hell. That idea is contradictory to the rest of the New Testament.
 - i) This is Paul's style of "contrast and compare" in that the sin of one man, Adam, caused us all to be sinners. The saving grace of God can cause "anyone and everyone" who accepts Jesus' payment to be saved.
 - ii) The word means "all" in that this free gift of salvation is available to anyone and everyone who is willing to accept it. It would be like saying, "All are welcome to my house". It doesn't mean "all" are going to come, but "all" are invited.

19. Verse 19: For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
- a) Paul is continuing his “contrast and compare” poetic theme here.
 - b) The key words in this verse are “disobedience” versus “obedience”.
 - i) Adam was disobedient in that he willfully ate the fruit.
 - ii) Jesus was obedient in that He agreed to go to the cross.
 - iii) Remember Jesus prayed not to go to the cross. He prayed three times if there was “any other way” other than the cross, for God the Father to provide that way. (Reference Matthew 26:44, et.al.) If there was some other way for people to be saved other than the Cross, then God failed to grant Jesus’ prayer request.
 - c) A point were getting at here is “one person’s actions affect everybody else’s life”.
 - i) Whether we like it or not, whether we think it’s fair or not, Adam sinning caused us to be sinners. We have to deal with that fact.
 - ii) The greater fact whether we think it is fair or not, is that Jesus is the only solution to get into heaven (again, for those who have heard that message).
 - iii) To tell God, “I want to go heaven based on my good deeds” is insulting. Imagine God saying, “I gave my own son for your life. That’s not good enough for you?”
 - d) Notice the final phrase: We are “made righteous”. When we accept Christ we become physically changed into a new being. We are made in right standing before God.
 - i) This ties back to Chapter 4 of Romans. That chapter talked about how Abraham was “made righteous” because he believed in God, prior to any good deeds.
 - ii) Here, it says we as Christians are “made righteous” simply because we believed in God’s provision for our salvation, not based on anything we do or say.
20. Verse 20: The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- a) We have here a purpose of God formally giving the laws through Moses and written down in the first five books of the Bible.
 - i) Verse 20 (above) says, “The law was added so that the trespass might increase.”
 - ii) What that means is that God’s laws cause people to sin even more than if the laws were never given in the first place.
 - iii) There is something about our human nature that makes us want to rebel against God’s laws. Like I said in an earlier lesson, there is something about a sign that reads “Do not push this button” that makes us want all the more to push the button, even though we may understand it is wrong.
 - b) Why do we want to defy God’s laws? When we do, we’re putting ourselves in greater power than God. It is subconsciously telling God, “Who are you to tell me what is right and wrong? I’ll decide for myself. I’ll just defy your rules.” I also believe the adrenaline rush of doing things we know are wrong is a “high” that people enjoy.
 - c) Now let’s get back to these verses. This is another of Paul’s compare/contrast points.
 - i) Point #1 is the law makes us sin more and more.
 - ii) Point #2 is that God’s grace is greater than the fact we sin more and more.
 - iii) Another “Point #1” is that sin leads us to death.
 - iv) Another “Point #2” is that we get to spend eternity in heaven because the power of God’s grace is greater than the power of sin and death.
 - d) To put these verses another way, “Is God’s grace big enough to cover the sins you’ve committed this week or next week or thirty years ago? Of course it is. If it isn’t our concept of God is too small or our ego won’t let us forgive ourselves. We won’t forgive ourselves because we think we “should” have done better.

- e) To summarize Verses 12 through 21, the main point of these verses is to contrast what Adam did with what Jesus did. It is written in a style of Hebrew Poetry to contrast that God's grace for us is a greater action than the sins we have committed in our lives.
21. Now let's tie the whole chapter together:
- a) The first set of verses deal with how to have peace with God.
 - b) The main issue of those early verses is how to have hope without doubts.
 - c) The last set, contrasting Adam with Jesus is designed to give us more hope.
 - d) These last set of verses are designed to say in effect, "We can have hope in our salvation. Do you have doubts about this? Remember that what God is doing is greater than what Adam did. Last time I checked, God is bigger than Adam. ☺ God is bigger than us. God's forgiveness is greater than our sins and our actions. If we can just remember how "big" God is, we can overcome our doubts.
 - e) This leads me back to "breathing easy". We are saved for eternity as long as we trust that Jesus died for all of our sins, past, present and future. There is still the issue of our behavior, but that is another lesson. This lesson is about eternal salvation based on what Jesus did, and not based on our actions. We can breathe easy that "God's forgiveness is greater than Adam's sins and God's forgiveness is greater than our sins.
 - f) The secret to the "joy" of the Christian life to realize and think about those facts. We can't "mess it up". That should bring us joy. Whatever the pain-of-the-moment should be overshadowed by the joy of realizing it is only temporary. The pain-of-the-moment is real and I'm not discounting it. I'm here to remind you and me to have "perspective" of whatever we are going through. Let's go breath-easy! ☺
22. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, Help us to exhale! Help us to rejoice in our lives that whatever the situation of the moment, we can have joy. We know that You are using these situations to mature us, give us undoubting hope and draw us closer to you. We are sinners, but Your power is greater than all our faults. Help us to become dependant upon You to grow, mature and be Your witnesses to the world around us. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.