

# Romans 5:12-21- A New Humanity

Series: Un-Ashamed

**Purpose:** Have awe-inspired confidence in Christ's salvation – a new humanity!

## Introduction

Hello everyone...

If you are visiting us for the first time, a warm welcome to you! I hope that you feel welcome and that you will stay for tea and coffee after the service. My name is Justin and I'm the minister here at CCS.

You're joining us as we are getting back into the book of Romans. If you've not heard of it that's ok. In this letter the Apostle Paul makes known the good news of Jesus. And for us as Christians we need to be reminded of the Gospel, because we forget it and start to think that Jesus is not as wonderful as He really is!

Let us get into Romans 5 and see how wonderful our God is! Because our hearts can so easily become hardened to the Gospel and forget how gracious our God is, we need His Spirit to help us grasp the wonder of His work in Christ for us. Let us pray now and ask our God to help us grasp the wonder of His amazing grace! But first hear these words from Psalm 147...

Psalm 147:7-11 (ESV) says,

- <sup>7</sup> Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;  
make melody to our God on the lyre!
- <sup>8</sup> He covers the heavens with clouds;  
he prepares rain for the earth;  
he makes grass grow on the hills.
- <sup>9</sup> He gives to the beasts their food,  
and to the young ravens that cry.
- <sup>10</sup> His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,
- <sup>11</sup> but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,  
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Let's pray....

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your great mercy in your Son, the LORD Jesus Christ! We ask heavenly Father that you would unveil to us the great salvation you are accomplishing through your Son. Please help us to see the abundance of your grace for those who trust in your Son. Please help us to be in awe of how gracious you are, so we would have confidence in your salvation. We ask this in the precious name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

You might have heard of the newest eyewear that debuted this week – the Ray Ban Stories smart glasses. They've been developed by a partnership between Facebook and Ray Ban (smart thinking Mark!). We've heard of Google Glass and Apple's Smart Glasses, but Facebook and Ray Ban beat

everyone to the punch! They are smart glasses – creating augmented reality glasses that create and interact or overlap between augmented reality and the real world itself. You can record videos, take photos, make calls, listen to music all from your face! Nice!

In the debut video, Mark Zuckerberg says at one point – and I paraphrase – that these glasses are important step toward a future, where phones aren't a central feature to our lives and that you won't have to choose between interacting with a phone or the world around you.

Humanity moving toward embryonic cyborg! And with developments like this and artificial intelligence we might wonder what the next level of the human race might be? What is going to be the next big step up?

Technology has often been what has divided people groups from being seen as superior or inferior. And human history is full of examples of cultures and groups using different scales for deciding what divides us – the color of our skin, culture, religious beliefs, living standard etc.

The surprising thing about our passage is that we don't have to look into sci-fi novels or to the future to find the next epoch/age of humanity. We have to look back 2000 years to a man hanging on a cross.

That's because the big thing God is telling us through this passage that through His Son Jesus, he has inaugurated a new era in human history, with a new humanity!

And so, I want us to think about three points from this passage – 1<sup>st</sup> the big thing is a BIG Deal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam's human race and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Christ's Human Race.

Let's look at our first point...

### **1) v18-19: The Big Thing is a BIG DEAL**

The big thing in this passage, as I just said, is that Jesus inaugurates a new humanity – a new human race! And this is a big deal! It has huge implications for humanity!

The primary way Paul shows us that Jesus is the head of a new humanity is by drawing a comparison between Adam and Jesus.

In verse 12 Paul begins this comparison with Adam. It says,

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*

Paul then goes on a necessary tangent and returns to the comparison in v18-19. He continues,

*<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

In v14 we're told how to think about this comparison between Adam and Jesus. It says,

*<sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*

Adam is the 'type' and Christ is the 'anti-type'. If you know about sculpture, you can think of Adam as the 'mould', and Jesus as the 'cast'.

Paul is showing us in these verses that what is similar between Adam and Jesus is that they performed one action, that had huge implications and effects for others.

Because of this, we're to understand that Adam and Jesus are both representative heads of two distinct human races. They both stand as covenant heads/leaders who represent a group of people. Adam is the representative head of all humanity. But Christ is the representative head of a new humanity, who have come out from under Adam's rule into Christ's.

Some of us might understand this concept immediately. Others of us might find it a bit harder to accept that we're implicated because of someone else's actions. That's because we live in a individualistic society where we're told we're responsible for ourselves. But just think of the recent Olympics!

Tatjana Schoenmaker represented SA (a whole nation) in Japan. And she made us proud winning the 200m breaststroke and setting a new world record. Her actions had implications for us as a country. Her victory and honour is our victory and our honour as a whole group of people!

We're also to understand Adam as a prototype of Jesus. In saying this I don't mean that Adam was God's Plan A for humanity, and that because "Project Adam" failed, God was on the back foot and introduced "Project Jesus". Jesus coming as the head of a new humanity was always God's Plan A. Listen to Ephesians 1:3-4,

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.*

What I mean in saying that Adam is the prototype, is that Jesus is SO much greater and better than Adam. We're going to explore this more in our next two points.

Seeing that Jesus is so much better than Adam is meant to create in us an awe-inspired confidence in the salvation God is achieving through Jesus for us. Did you notice the 'Therefore' in v12? Last week we heard of the great blessings we have through faith in Christ – peace with God now and a certain future hope. This passage is showing us how much greater and better Jesus is than Adam, to bolster our confidence in the certainty of these blessings.

And so, let's look more at the comparison between Adam and Jesus. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> point...

## **2) Adam's Human Race**

The human race under Adam is marked by the reign of death and condemnation through sin.

It was Adam's one sinful act that altered the world and brought about these disastrous and devastating implications for all of humanity!

This is the point of v12. Here Paul takes us back to the beginning and, in particular, to that fateful day in Genesis 3 when Adam sinned and broke God's law.

Whatever our view of the creation account, we cannot deny the existence of the real individual Adam whom God created in His image to exercise loving rule over this creation and be the head of the human race. Denying the existence of Adam would undermine the salvation we have in Christ. Paul's comparison between Adam and Jesus and the implications for us only stands if Adam was an historical figure, whose sinful actions led to humanity's Fall.

Notice also that it is Adam whose sin is responsible for bringing condemnation and death into the world, not Eve. So guys, when we read Genesis please don't say that the Fall is woman's fault. If you do that you're just acting as Adam did, blaming Eve, proving that you are a son of Adam!

He was responsible for guarding and protecting the garden and he is the one who sinned and trespassed. To say that Adam sinned means that he acted to eat the fruit because he wanted to *"be like God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5)"*. He didn't want to break the rules, he wanted to make the rules. He wanted to decide for himself what was right and wrong, good and evil, instead of listening to God who is the only one with the prerogative to say what is good and evil. Nevertheless, Adam did also break the law – this is what it means that he transgressed. Because God did say to him and Eve, *"of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die (Genesis 2:17)"*.

And Adam's action of taking the fruit and eating had cataclysmic implications on a cosmic scale! We read in v12,

*"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."*

Adam's sinful action meant that sin entered the world, and through his sinful action, death. Adam sinned and so became a slave of sin and continued to sin. The result of this was his own death – spiritually and eventually physically.

But we also read in v12, *"and so death spread to all men because all sinned."*

The implication for all of humanity is clear. All people face the consequence of Adam's actions – we are guilty and face the condemnation of that judgement – death. This is because in Adam, our covenant head, when he sinned, we sinned. This is what Theologians call Original Sin. It's as if when Adam took the fruit we too were reaching out our hands.

Another implication is that we inherit from Adam a sinful nature, and commit sin ourselves that we too face judgement for. This is what is called Total Depravity. Listen to v19, *"by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."* It means that every aspect of our humanity is tainted with the sinful nature we inherit from Adam. And so, even the most righteous things we do are tainted with sin.

This is why Paul talks about the time between Adam and Moses in v13-14. The point is that even though the law hadn't been given, which showed sin was sinful and deserving of death, people still died, indicating they were sinners.

Adam is our ancestor who brought us down. It's like we had an ancestor who was royalty and wealthy. But they gambled all their wealth away, and lost everything so that their descendants were born into poverty, and also learned to gamble. This is not quite the same but helps to make the point to some degree.

Adam our ancestor has left us in a horrible situation. It is the same situation for all humanity. People divide themselves over so many things, but this reality puts us all in the same boat. And it means we can't have any real hope for progress in humanity.

But there is hope. In Christ. And it is Him who divides humanity, by bringing about a new human race.

Let's look at our last point...

### 3) Christ's Human Race

Those in Christ are marked by God's infinite grace, having been justified to reign in eternal life!

Just as Adam's one act of sin changed world history, so Christ's one act changed history, introducing a new era, altering everything forever.

Jesus' one act is that He died in our place taking the penalty of death on our behalf. It is in complete contrast to Adam. Adam's act/sin was selfish, self-glorifying, proud and arrogant in an effort to grab at God's glory. It led to our death. But Jesus' death brings us life.

Paul speaks about Jesus' death in a number of ways in this passage. It is described as a free gift (v15, 16) and one act of righteousness (v18) and his obedience (v19).

Jesus, in obedience to his Father, died on the Cross in our place. His death was a righteous act. He did not die for his sins. As it says in 2 Corinthians 5:21,

*"For our sake he (God) made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God".*

And so His death was a willing free gift. He did not die for us out of pressure or not having a choice. So great is his love and humility and grace!

Paul is describing Jesus' death. Have a look at what this gift/act of righteousness/obedience achieves: justification and life. Listen to Romans 4:23-5:1,

*"But the words 'it was counted to him' were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

There are three things that Jesus' death on the cross achieves for Christians. The first is justification (v18). His righteous act leads to our justification – being legally declared just or being in the right before God now. It is just as if I had never sinned. And it is for all – not everyone without distinction, but everyone, anyone who has faith in Christ.

The second is that we will be made righteous in the future (v19). This means that in the future we will be made perfect and perfectly obey God. This is the hope that we have. In Adam we inherit a sinful nature. In Christ we are given a new nature. God has begun to make us righteous, and in the future God will complete this.

Thirdly, we will reign in life. In Adam death reigns over us so we all die. But in Christ we will reign with Him forever. If you are in Christ you are not just saved to float around on a cloud, playing a harp, being bored. We will rule with Jesus Christ in a new world. This is Christ's new humanity: we are right with God, righteous and ruling forever!

In Christ we also have abundant grace! This is Paul's point in v15-17. Here he takes a purposeful tangent to show how Adam and Jesus are different. It's almost crazy to compare them because Jesus is SO MUCH better than Adam.

Jesus is better than Adam in two ways:

1. The nature of their actions - one leads to death the other to grace. The context (v16): Adam's one sin led to many sins and condemnation. Therefore we would expect that more sins would lead to more condemnation, but in the context of more sin Jesus brings more grace.
2. They are also different in consequence (v17): In Adam is the reign of death; in Jesus we will reign in life.

Paul highlights these differences to show God's abundant grace! In Romans 5:1-12 we are in the room of grace! In verses 20-21 Paul talks about the time from Moses when the law was added. This too is to show Jesus brings God's abundant grace. The law shows that sin is clearly sinful. To say that sin increased means that sin is exposed. For example, if we see more reports of a similar crime, we say that that crime is on the rise. But what is actually happening is that we are just more aware of it, not that there is necessarily more of it. Therefore the law shows how great God's grace in Jesus is!

There are a number of ways this passage applies to us. Let's work through some of them.

- a) The magnitude of Christ's salvation. The next level of humanity is not being a cyborg. Christ's new humanity is bigger than anything else. Being a Christian is not a small deal. Being a Christian might feel insignificant, but in Christ we are a new humanity and this is of cosmic significance!
- b) The all-encompassing nature of Christ's salvation. If you are in Christ you have a new status and a new nature. Being a Christian involves every part of who you are. It does not involve just a small part of your life – being in Christ is your whole identity, and involves every part of your life.
- c) An overlap of humanities. What divides humanity is not our skin colour, our technology, our history, our geography, skills, or gender. What divides humanity is who your head is, Adam or Christ. It is God's grace that divides humanity. This means that we are not to look down on those who are non-Christians because of God's grace. We are to rather graciously move toward and share the Gospel with those who are not in Christ. There is no place for pride in how we relate to those not in Christ.
- d) The last application for us is that in Christ we have confidence. As surely as you will die, if you have faith in Christ, you can be certain that you are righteous in Christ, will be made righteous and have eternal life.

If you are a Christian you are part of a new humanity, you are righteous and you will reign with Christ. We are to be in awe of and have confidence in God's grace to us in Christ.

There might, however, still be a niggling question. The fact is that we do still sin. And so, if we are in Christ, does it not matter that we sin? Well, I hope you will come back next week, because this is what Paul will begin to address in Romans 6.