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Romans

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 5:10

"For" again begins Paul's thought. He is reasserting and building on what was just noted. There was a time when we were enemies of God, but Christ came and reconciled us to Him. Reconciliation isn't something that God needs from us, it is something that we need from God. We were reconciled "to" God through the death of His son. The enmity was ended and the hostility ceased.

Imagine a battle-line where there is an overwhelming attacking power facing a weak and defenseless one. There is only the expectation of complete annihilation of the weak forces; their doom is assured and they will be utterly swept away. But when the crisis was at the moment of completion, the hostilities cease and the commander of the attacking forces steps forward and lays his weapons of destruction down in the presence of the astonished defenders. He calls out, "We are offering you peace."

This is the state we were in. There was absolutely no hope. We were on a one way avenue to destruction when God stepped in and offered us terms of peace; He offered Jesus. Now think it through... if we were enemies in this situation and He did this because of His own goodness and benevolence by offering His Son, then how "much more, having be reconciled" shall we be saved by His life.

In other words, and without muddying the waters with any other issue or verse - we are eternally saved. Why would God allow Christ to go through all of the torture of the cross, thus offering us peace and reconciliation, just to turn and condemn us after we accepted the terms? It is inconceivable and such a notion diminishes the glory, the majesty, and the reliability of the work of Christ. In Christ, there is the sure hope of eternal salvation, not eternal insecurity.

Life application: Take time today to read the theology of the church or denomination that you attend. If they teach that you can lose your salvation, you need to make new arrangements for your worship. The efficacy of the cross of Christ is complete and eternal. Why would you attend where such a glorious hope is traded for bondage and insecurity?

And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Romans 5:11

Paul, adding on to the previous verse says, "And not only that..." In addition to the amazing fact that we were reconciled to God through Jesus' death and saved by His life, we have the wondrous prospect of rejoicing in God through Him. In 5:2 we were told that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but in Christ we can also actually rejoice in God Himself. The reason why this can happen is because Jesus is the full expression of God. We see this in several verses in the New Testament. Two of them are cited below. The first is from Jesus' words and the second is from Paul's letter to the Colossians -

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" John 14:9

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." Colossians 1:15

If we rejoice in Christ Jesus, then we are rejoicing in God through Him as well. He is the point of reconciliation between God and man and therefore the focus of our rejoicing. In this particular verse, the older King James Version uses the word "atonement" instead of "reconciliation." This may lead the modern reader to a misunderstanding of what is meant.

The word atonement as used in the Old Testament is the means of reconciliation - the sacrifice which brings it about. This isn't what's intended here. Instead it is speaking about the reconciliation itself. The old English use of the word implied at-one-ment. It is the state in which we find ourselves. We are fully and completely reconciled to God because of Jesus. Great stuff.

Life application: The fact that we are reconciled to God is something that we should attempt to remember at all times. When we fall short and stumble in our walk, we should keep in mind that we are His and that we are united to Him. Therefore, it is good and proper to return our heart to Him with humility and acknowledge His presence. We are reconciled, it is a done deal, therefore let us not act in a manner which is unworthy of that state.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— Romans 5:12

The discourse of Romans 5:12-5:21 is extremely complicated, exceedingly delicate, and highly debated. It is given among other reasons to show the contrast between Adam and Christ and the nature of sin verses the nature of righteousness.

There are several prevalent views on the nature of man and His state before God. These go from the concept of man being totally depraved and incapable of choosing any good at all at one end, to man being born without inheriting Adam's sin but having the consequences of sin imputed to him when he first sins during his lifetime.

Great care needs to be taken here to understand our nature and our state before God. If our view of this is faulty, then pretty much everything else that we believe about our relationship with God will be affected as well.

The Bible, from its very first pages is clear, Adam fell and through him "sin entered the world." Adam, who was created outside of the Garden of Eden and then placed in the garden, sinned. When he did, he was cast back out of the Garden. However, before he sinned, God told him that "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but 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."

Adam did in fact eat of the fruit and was cast out, but he continued to live to the age of 930. This tells us that the death God was speaking of was not physical death, but spiritual - although our physical death is also a part of our fallen state. Paul notes that through Adam's disobedience, sin entered the world, "and death through sin." Adam's spiritual death was immediate and it was a consequence of his sin.

The moment that Adam spiritually died, there was a chasm placed between God and man which could not be traversed by man. In His spiritually dead state, there was nothing in his power that would allow him to become spiritually revived. Further, because Adam was in the stream of time, he couldn't go back and undo what he had done. Time moved on and the consequences of his sin continued.

Paul now moves to the thought which is so highly displeasing to the fallen sons of Adam and which is so divisive within theological circles. He notes that Adam's death (which was spiritual death) was a result of sin and "thus spread to all men, because all sinned." What the Genesis account clearly shows, and which follows throughout the rest of the Old Testament, and also which necessitated the coming of Christ, is that all humans have inherited Adam's sin. All humans are in Adam in three ways - legally, potentially, and seminally.

Legally - Adam is our federal head. He is the first man from whom all other men come. Just as the president of the United States represents its citizens, so Adam represents all who come from Adam. Paul deals with this in 1 Corinthians 15.

Potentially - It says in Genesis 5:3, 4, "When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters." We have no idea how many children Adam had. It could have been 10 or it could have been 150. All were potentially in him and all that were actually born actually came from him. In the same way, any normally functioning person could have any amount of children or no children. Every person who comes after them is potentially in them and a jillion other possible people could come from that same stream.

Seminally - Acts 17:26 says, "...and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth." Again, in Hebrews 7 Levi is said to be in the loins of Abraham and thus he paid tithes to Melchizedek even though he wasn't yet born, and wouldn't come for three more generations. He was seminally in his father before he ever existed.

All of us are in Adam in these three ways and thus we all bear his sin in these ways. We are born spiritually dead. This is demonstrated by the account of Cain and Abel and what occurred during their lives. There is a sentence of condemnation hanging over our heads from the moment of our conception and it is merely waiting to be executed. Something external needs to be introduced in order for the sentence to move us from condemnation to restoration.

What this is will be analyzed in the coming verses.

Life application: We are all in Adam from the moment we are conceived. We bear Adam's guilt. But God has sent a remedy to cure this fallen state. Are you going to trust in your own righteousness before God when you are already fallen? Or, will you trust in God's provision to bring about restoration? Choose wisely.