

The Greatness of Christ's Abounding Grace

01 February 2006

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Midweek Service

Romans 5:20

Discipleship: Let's review our discipleship questions...

Q. What is the first commandment of God's moral Law?

A. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3).*

Q. What is the second commandment?

A. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (Exodus 20:4).*

Q. What is the third commandment?

A. *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain (Exodus 20:7).*

And now this week's question...

Q. What is the fourth commandment?

A. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8).*

Introduction: Let's Bibles to the book of Romans. Our text tonight is found in Romans chapter 5 and verse 20.

This evening we will cover how God's grace superabounds over and above the sins we've committed against God, so the title of the message tonight is "The Greatness of Christ's Abounding Grace."

Romans 5 and verse 20—

Romans 5:20

"Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"

As we begin, I want to review what we have learned in the last few weeks regarding these verses. I am going to summarize these principles with what I call, the Laws of Salvation:

1. Man is totally and irreparably sinful. There is an offense committed against God. This text makes that crystal clear. This offense is what we all commonly refer to as sin. We are born with the original sin of our father Adam, and we also choose sin for our selves every day. I sin, you sin, all humanity is sinning against God. Sin is never pleasing to God. What we learned several weeks ago is that man is not just actively committing sin every day, but that the unregenerate man is in a state of sin. Every person on earth is aware that they have not lived perfectly. The problem is, though man has a general knowledge of his own sinfulness (what the Bible calls his conscience), yet he has no real sense of how offensive his sin is to God. He does not have a valid assessment of his sin. If he ever did, he would run to Christ immediately for salvation, but the one thing keeping him from doing so is that he is blind in many respects to the magnitude of his own sin.

Not only this, but the lost man has no desire to seek God (Romans 3:10-11). Therefore he cannot do what we will call the ultimate good. He is unable to

please God. As R.L Dabney said, man is by nature "entirely and decisively alienated from God." He went on to say that any good act that lost me do "is a contrivance to gratify human pride and self-righteousness and to escape that great humbling fact everywhere so prominent in the real gospel, that man's ruin of himself by sin is utter, and the whole credit of his redemption from it is God's."¹

So man is unable to please God in anything he does, because his heart is not converted to God. That's what it comes down to. And man of course, cannot convert himself. Conversion is a work of God's grace in the heart. So the first law we learned concerns man's sinfulness. Man is completely alienated from God and cannot do even one act that pleases God.

2. There can be no seeking after divine grace until there is an awakening sense of sin. We spoke of this last week. Remember you were driving along the freeway going 85 miles an hour? You knew it was wrong, but your sense of wrong was not awakened...until the Law turned on his flashing lights and pulled you over! In the same way, men will never turn to Jesus until the sense of their own sinfulness is magnified. The instrument that awakens our sin is the moral Law of God. Dear brethren, we need to know the Law well enough so that we can preach it to sinners! The Law leaves people with an awakened sense of their own sinfulness. They begin to see what a heinous life they have lived in opposition to God. They begin to fear at the weight of their guilt and the punishment they deserve! As you present the Gospel, a question that is helpful to ask that reinforces this weight of sin is this: if God judged you according to the Ten Commandments, would you be innocent or guilty? Of course you've just reviewed the Law with them, so the answer is obvious to both of you. They are guilty! Then you need to ask them, "Well, since you are guilty of breaking God's commandments, do you think God will send you to heaven or hell?" The answer is obviously that God will send us to hell.

So the majority of people on earth right now are not in a state of grace, but in a state of wickedness with God's wrath weighing down on them. Judgment Day is coming. God is angry with the wicked every day. Men are dying each minute, and they must stand before God when this life is over. There will be no excuses on that day for their lying, stealing, lusting, and blaspheming God. That Day of Judgment is coming for every one of us.

With this ugly backdrop of sin, wrath, and judgment, I want to preach to you the grace that is found only in Jesus tonight! Where the knowledge of your sin abounds, then grace much more abounds!

Let's look at our text again in Romans 5: 20—
Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound, But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"

Let's consider our first point:

¹ R L Dabney. *The Five Points of Calvinism*. Web document: <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/dabney/5points.htm#> accessed 01 February 2006.

- I. If you are sharply aware of your Sin, then abounding grace is near! Repentance comes when God brings a deep sense of guilt and sin upon people. This sense of sin is so heightened that the human spirit cannot bear it. This heightened sense of sin makes people desperate, distraught, frantic, anxious, and ready to find a remedy for their condition. Only when a person is brought to this level of humility and brokenness can he find salvation.
- A. Grace abounds when our Heart is broken. So when you are sharply and acutely aware of your sin, grace is there waiting to bind your wounds and forgive your sins. This well established as the way of salvation from the beginning.
 - o Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
 - o Psalm 34:18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
 - o James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.
 - B. Grace abounds when we Own our sin. The Lord comes with His grace when you have pleaded guilty to the indictment which the Law presents against you. Only when we fully own our sin is their any grace at all from God. Why would God give grace to anyone who was trying to pull one over on Him?

Luke 18:10 tells us how justification by God's grace actually functions—

Luke 18:10-14

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 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. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The sinner was not making excuses and platitudes. He was telling it like it was—he had a heightened awareness of his sin. Why should God give grace to those who do not want it? The one who is near to God's abounding grace is the one who says "I must have it!" He doesn't try to paint his sin differently. He no longer says, "I made a mistake" or "I am a sinner just like everyone else." No, he *owns* his sin. He names it specifically, "I have lied. I did so on this day to so and so. God forgive me!" "I've been a wicked husband. I've not treated my wife right. God forgive me!" "I've not lived for you God. I've lived for myself! God forgive me!" Those who have an overwhelming sense of shame and guilt are near to God's forgiving grace. You feel your sins. You know your

need of forgiveness! It is only when your heart is broken and you own your sin that you are in any condition to receive the abounding, free, sovereignly given grace of the Lamb of God who erases the sins of the world.

You cannot experience God's grace in your life unless you realize you have no where else to turn. Your mouth is has been shut by the clear indictment of God's Law and you realize that you deserve only God's infinite displeasure. Do you understand that at this moment Hell is gawking at your feet? Like a vulture circling around a dead animal, hell is waiting for the day to swallow you up. We cannot say to God, but... I just need more time! Time for what? To show that you are a good person? If you are a good person you do not need God's grace! Grace only abounds to sinners, and sinner who have no where else to turn. The Law shows us that we are imprisoned! I'm a liar, I'm an adulterer! Help, I'm in the prison house of sin! You cannot be set free until you know you are incarcerated.

C. Grace abounds when we realize the Greatness of our sins.

1. The magnitude of Original Sin. Very few people understand the Biblical teaching of *original sin*. That is, you were born deserving hell! You did not have to commit one act of sin—you were already condemned in Adam. Look how terribly Adam's sin abounded. Our context makes it clear:

- Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Look at all that the human race has committed against God. See the consequences of sin on every side, and you will see how Adam's one sin abounded! He was told not to eat of the tree of the awareness of good and evil. To this point, he was innocent, and only aware of his Creator, walking God each day in the Garden.

- Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Nothing was denied Adam except that which would destroy him. God gave Adam all but one of the trees of the garden, and all was for Adam's good. But Adam, like Satan before him, enthroned himself above God and gambled not only with his own life, but with all those who would be born from him. Think of the consequences of Adam's sin. All the sins of the entire world came because of his one sin. Sin like a flame on a piece of paper has consumed all of humanity. Like a contagious disease, it has infected every single person you see. All are guilty because of Adam's choice. You say, "Well I would never have chosen to sin, so it is not fair!" Ok, then all we must do is look at you. You are

not only guilty in Adam, you are personally guilty. It is established by the Law. We are guilty of lying, stealing, lusting, coveting, and having our way, dishonoring our parents, and dishonoring God.

2. But, look at the magnitude of Personal sin. The person who is being drawn by God's Spirit is no longer speaking of sin in the second or third person. He no longer speaks of our sin or his sin or their sins. But he not only owns his sin, he realizes that from sun up to sun down for his life up until this point, he has dishonored and ignored his Omnipotent Creator and Judge.

It is not only that man is constantly sinning, but that he is *sinful*, that is he is totally Depraved. Sin has had its way in every corner of our lives.

- i. Sin has ruined the Earth. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you." "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread." So not only our bodies, but this planet that we live on opposes us. We have to till the land before it will yield the harvest. When Adam sinned, then out of the earth came "Stinging nettles" and poison ivy! Insects became aggressive, Red ants and wasps and yellow jackets! Instead of calm, the earth began to produce earth quakes and hurricanes on the sea and land. Volcanoes and disasters of all kinds are now constant occurrences on this planet!!
- ii. Sin has ruined our Bodies. By the sweat of our brow the man labors, and the woman travails in birth always in horrible pain. We are all sentenced to death. Ten out of ten of us will die. It is inevitable. "Dust you are and unto dust you shall return." We are all slowly dying because of our sin. We are all slowly and painfully falling apart. Look at a picture of yourself ten years ago. Your face was fuller. Your body was stronger. Your mind was sharper. What is happening? You are on death row. You have a death sentence in your body. You are returning to dust.
- iii. Sin has ruined man's Soul. Man can no longer rule himself without the help of God. He is out of control! "All our faculties are out of gear."² Our mind is corrupted. All the tendencies of our heart are perverted. We have turned egocentric instead of theocentric. We have become our own god—we say what we should do.

² Charles Spurgeon. *Grace Abounding Over Abounding Sin*. Delivered on March 4, 1888, Lord's Day Morning at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

- I saiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way

- iv. Sin has ruined man's Destiny. Adam was destined to walk with God and commune with Him for all eternity, but now all the sons of Adam can look forward to is terror and judgment and pain in an eternal lake of molten lava—where they cannot even see the light of the lava, for there is nothing but blackness—where the only emotions they will know are fear and terror and regret and worry and horrible sickness and pain.

Revelation 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 20:12 tells us that the dead small and great will stand before God, and the books will be opened, and "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Sin abounds, and the consequences for sin abound! But the grace found in Christ abounds more!! So we are aware of the greatness of our sin, but even more we are even more aware of the greatness of Christ!!

II. If you are sharply aware of the greatness of Christ, then grace will abound.

- A. Look at the greatness of Christ's Cross. Do you see how sin has abounded? Look at sin all around us. Take all the sins that believers have committed in this congregation. If we were each to unburden our soul tonight and speak from our conscience of all the sins that we can remember—what a mountain of sin there would be! Then let God take not only your sins, but the sins of all believers of all times. Let him not only pile up the sins we know, but all sins from our birth until our death. Look at Adam's sins, and Abraham's sins, and Jacob's sins, and Moses' sins! Look down and see David's sins and Manasseh's sins, and look at all the believers of all times. Look at the massive heap of those sins! The world can hardly contain it! And the Scripture says,

I saiah 53:6

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"

On Him, on Jesus is the mountain of all your sins! There is no sin too great, and there is no sinner who has sinned too much for Christ's sacrifice! He bore your sins! He carried your sorrows! As Peter says,

1 Peter 2:24

"His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"

Look at the greatness of the cross. It will forgive any sin—even the centurion soldiers who crucified the Lord were extended forgiveness! Is there any crime greater than butchering the Son of God? And yet we read that...

Matthew 27:54

“...when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.”

Christ substituted Himself for even the greatest crime committed in all of humanity! What do those who crucified the Lord deserve? They deserve to be forsaken of the Lord for every in the Lake of fire, where *“the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night”* (Revelation 14:11).

But Christ’s Cross is so great, that He can bare any sin!

Matthew 27:46

Christ, when He was on the cross “...cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Why did God forsake Christ? Because *you* deserve to be forsaken! You deserve God’s wrath! He was forsaken to bare your sin. Is your sin too great that Christ’s cross cannot bear it! Look at the greatness of Christ’s cross! What greater place to see where grace abounds than in the Cross of Christ! “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!” (John 3:16). Grace abounds when we look to the Cross of Christ!

- B. Look at the greatness of Christ’s Forgiveness. Think of the woman who came and wept at Jesus’ feet in Luke chapter 7. She brought an alabaster box of ointment—expensive fragrance and anointed Jesus’ feet with her tears and the ointment! She knew she was not good. The Bible says in Luke 7:37 that she was a known sinner. Perhaps you think that you are not like this woman. You don’t think you are a known sinner. You’ve hidden it from your friends. The world doesn’t know you are a sinner, and they could care less if you were anyway. Your parents don’t know. This church does not know. But you are a known sinner whether you admit it or not. Job said *“There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves”* (Job 34:22). You can try to hide it, but your face tells a different story. God sees the shame on your face!

Isaiah 3:9

The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide *it* not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

Turn over to Luke 7:44. You’ll never experience the great forgiveness of Christ unless you come as a known sinner—coming to Him as this

woman with a broken heart and a broken alabaster box. She poured out her tears on the Saviour's feet and then anointed those soon to be nail-pierced feet with the priceless fragrance. And what did Jesus say to those standing around?

Luke 7:44

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Oh, the great forgiveness that is in Christ! When grace abounds, forgiveness abounds! This woman is a picture of Christ's great forgiveness. Her sin abounded to her. Not only did the whole town know she was a sinner, but *she* knew she was a sinner. Oh that we could all be like that woman with her broken heart! Then we would hear as she did "Thy sins are forgiven." We would hear as David did,

Psalm 103:12

As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Those who crucified the Lord heard the Lord Himself pronounce that they would be forgiven!

Luke 23:34

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

This point didn't make it onto your sheet, but it is an amazing point!

C. Look at the Greatness of Christ's Heaven!

Do you think hell will be greater than heaven? In no way! Look at Revelation:

Revelation 7:9

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which *no man could number*, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

We will see more in heaven than the devil will see in hell! No man can number God's elect. You might say, but it is obvious that the gate is straight, and the path is narrow. Yes, how true. But do you think all these children that are killed by the abortionists—millions every year! More children are born than die in many cities! These are not silent voices. They praise God even today. You mothers who have seen children die, you have lost them before they were even born. Don't you know in heaven you will praise God with these precious souls? David said of his infant son who died in his arms:

2 Samuel 12:23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

And do you know also that the bliss of heaven will far outweigh the tortures and torments of hell! Sin abounds, but grace much more abounds!!

And this brings me to the final point.

- III. If sin has been seen to abound, it is nothing compared to Grace which superabounds!

Look at our text:

“...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”

As we close think how grace abounds. How I wish we could have a testimony time tonight. God can take the most reprehensible among us and make us a noble servant of the Lord. NO ONE is beyond the grace of God! Do you hear me? No one is beyond the shadow of Christ's cross. Look at how horrible your sin was and is. Look at it in all its disgusting shades. Think of the filthy and rebellious words you have uttered in your life. Think of the way you have wasted your resources—your time, your money, even the body that God has given you. We've wasted our eyes and our ears, our heart and our mind. We had not only dwelled on wickedness, but we have *done* wickedness! Sin abounds to us.

But it doesn't hold a candle to God's grace! Think of how God has humbled your heart. You love much because you've been forgiven much. You wasted your heart and affections on the world, but God has given you a love for Him that makes your previous love for the world look like nothing. You have forsaken all and followed Christ!

Think of how God is making you holy as He is holy. You used to sin big, but now your love for God is much greater than your love for sin. In fact your hatred for sin is much great than the love you had for the world!

Think of the people you influence for the wrong when you were lost. But now, Christ makes you an ambassador! He calls you to intercede for the lost!

Before all you lived for was this world; you wanted the world; the world was you life. Now Christ is your life, and your inheritance is in Him! Now you are a king and a priest for God's Kingdom. He says you will rule and reign with Him—you are a joint heir with His Son! You are a child of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords! The world, sin, and our own way seemed so magnificent, and we abounded in them. But now compared to God's grace they are show to be nothing. As Paul says,

Philippians 3:7-8

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound!!!!!! Glory to God for
His abounding grace!!

Closing Hymn: 355 Jesus Paid it All