

GRACE TO YOU

ROMANS 5:12-21

WHO IS YOUR REPRESENTATIVE?



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Suppose you were born without a sinful heart, lived a perfect life with no sins of omission or commission in thought, word, or action. Suppose your life was so good that you could go to the judgment seat and present a faultless life to God. Will God let you into heaven? He scans your life and finds nothing to criticize and everything to commend. You wait for the door to swing open but God brings down the barrier and says, "No entry!" "But why?" you ask in panic and desperation. The Lord points to Romans 5:19 inscribed on the barrier: "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." **"How can another man's sin keep me out of heaven?"** you protest. Let's answer that question with the help of Romans 5:12-21.

BACKGROUND

In general terms we can summarize the first four chapters of Romans as follows:

- Chapter 1. The Gentiles are guilty
- Chapter 2. The Jews are guilty
- Chapter 3:1-19. Everyone's guilty
- Chapter 3:20-31. Get from deadly guilt to healthy joy through faith in Jesus.
- Chapter 4. Follow Abraham's example of faith in the promises and you'll inherit the world.
- Chapter 5:1-5. God invites us into his love through trouble
- Chapter 5:6-11. God proves he loves us despite trouble (with substitution, propitiation, and reconciliation)
- Chapter 5:12-21. God loves us with representation.



Who is your representative?



1. ADAM IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF MANY

"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners..." (19).

Companies often appoint a person to represent them to others. The representative acts on behalf of the company. For example, a sales representative is given targets for his work and the future prosperity of the company depends on his performance. If the representative performs well, the company will benefit, but if he performs poorly, the company will suffer. At the end of the year, his performance is reviewed and he is rewarded and promoted or sacked depending upon how well or badly he has done for the company. In politics, we also appoint a representative to act for us and we vote depending on his performance.

Adam's Appointment

God appointed Adam to be the representative of all humanity. God decided that Adam would act on behalf of all people in all places at all times. God's appointment means we cannot sack him. God gave him a target to reach and warned him of a penalty if he failed. The destiny and prosperity of the whole human race rested upon Adam. If he performs well, he and all humanity will win and benefit. If he fails, all humanity fails and loses. When he acts, we are viewed as acting. When he fails, we fail.

Adam's Job Description

Adam was given a number of tasks (Gen. 1:28; 2:15). But there was one task that was above all the others. It was the supreme test of his obedience and loyalty to God. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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" (Gen. 2:16-17). Whatever else he did, he had to do this. Do it, and eternal life would be secured for all; fail, and eternal death would be suffered by all.

Adam's Performance

"By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (19). Adam's sin was all the worse because he knew the potential for good and all the multitudes he was responsible for. He had a clear target, an easy target, and he missed it. Through that one act, all humanity were made sinners. Death's reign began - physically, spiritually, and eternally (12, 17). As soon as we are conceived, we are sinners because this sin is counted as ours. We start with this on our record.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

We are coupled to Adam. Adam is the locomotive and we are the carriages pulled along in his train. We have no choice in the matter. We are born hitched and cannot be decoupled.

We are condemned with Adam. We are not on probation. We are already condemned. Even if we live perfectly all our lives, we are condemned.

ADAM REPRESENTED US
AND ADAM RUINED US



Can I change my representative?



2. JESUS IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF MANY

"As...so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

Christ's Appointment

God the Father appointed his Son to be the representative of his people. He acted on behalf of these people, not all people (John 17:9). "Many" and "all men" here means lots of people. The destiny and prosperity of his people depended on him alone. If he performs well, all his people benefit; if he fails, all his people will suffer too.

Christ's Job Description

Christ's job description was "perfect obedience" which included not only obedience to the moral law but also suffering the death-punishment incurred by Adam's disobedience. How would you like that as your job?

Christ's Performance

He obeyed perfectly from the beginning to the end of his life. It was one long act of obedience. Obedience in life and obedience unto death. Just as Adam's sin was credited to us, now Christ's righteousness can be credited to us. A court can only declare us guilty or not guilty, but God can declare us righteous. Christ's representation does not just place us back in probation but in a fixed state of righteousness that can never change. Adam's representation condemned us, but Christ's saves us. If you don't want Adam's representation, you cannot have Christ's because both operate in exactly the same principle.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Who is your representative? In God's eyes, there are only two people in the history of the world. Adam and his people stand before God's law as one single person (the one for the many). Christ and his people stand before God's law as one single person (the one for the many).

Uncouple from Adam. How do we disconnect from Adam and connect with Christ? How do we change our representative? Repentance decouples us from Adam and faith couples us with Christ. Jump off Adam's train which is heading to death and jump on Christ's which is heading to life.

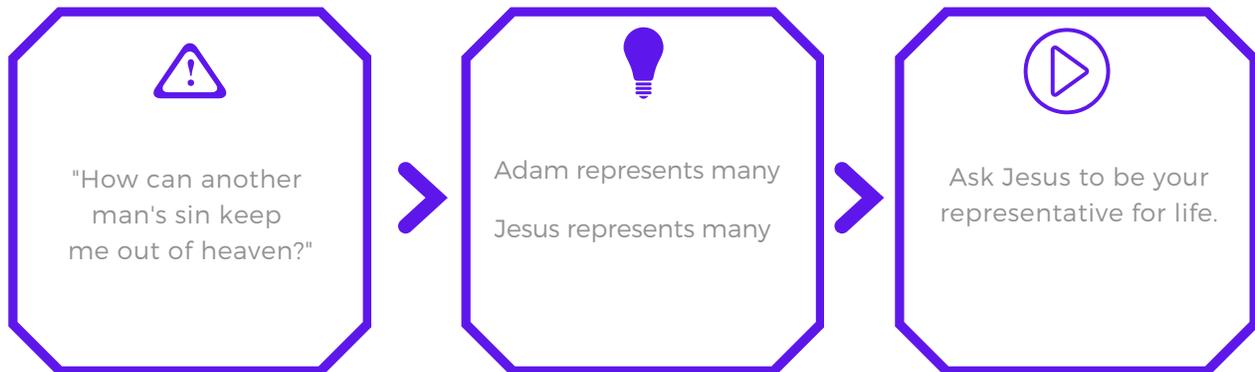
ABOUNDING SIN OR
SUPER-ABOUNDING GRACE



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

Get superabounding grace. If sin is abounding in your life and you despair that your sin is too much, too serious, too awful, too long, etc., do not despair because where sin abounds, there grace much more abounds. You can still connect to Christ and get all he has for you.

Grow in superabounding grace. Paul wanted the Romans and us to grow in our appreciation and praise for God's super-abounding grace. Christ's grace and life are far more powerful than Adam's sin and death. One person's righteousness can cover the sins of millions or billions.

Prayer. God of superabounding grace, help me to get and grow in your super-abounding grace by swapping out Adam for Jesus and turning from death to life by your Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some other examples of representation in every day life?
2. How would you answer someone who objected to Adam's sin condemning them to hell?
3. How would you persuade someone to change representatives?
4. What else can you learn about Christ's representation in verses 12-21.
5. How much better is Christ's representation than Adam's?
6. How has grace abounded over sin in your life?

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