

# United with Jesus for New Life

Thomas Robinson, *Gospel of God's Grace for All of Us* 15, April 12, 2015

## Romans 5:15 - 6:8 (ESV adapted)

**5:**<sup>15</sup> But it's not – 'just like the trespass, so is the **gift of grace;**' for if many died through one human's trespass, much more have **the grace of God** and **the gift in grace** from **the one human Jesus Messiah** **abounded for many.**

<sup>16</sup> Also **the gift** is not like the result of that one's **sin.** For the judgment following one trespass was for condemnation, but the **gift of grace** following many trespasses was **for a verdict of being in the right.** <sup>17</sup> For if, because of the trespass of one, **death reigned** through that one, much more will those who receive **the abundance of grace** and **the gift of being declared right reign in life through the one Jesus Messiah.**

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as a **trespass** of one affected all people leading to condemnation, so **an act of faithful righteousness** of one affects all people leading to **justification** that belongs to **life.**

<sup>19</sup> For as by the one human's **disobedience** the many were counted **sinner**s, so by the **obedience** of the one, the many will be counted as **in the right.**

<sup>20</sup> Now **law** came in to fill up the **trespass**, but where **sin** was filled up, **grace** **abounded** all the more, <sup>21</sup> in order that, as **sin reigned in death**, **grace** also **may reign** through God's faithful righteousness leading to the **life of the age to come** through **Jesus Messiah** our **Lord.**

**6:**<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to **remain in sin's realm** that **grace** may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can **we who died to sin** still live in it?

<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Messiah Jesus** were **baptized into his death?** <sup>4</sup> We therefore were **buried with him** through **baptism** into **death**, in order that, just as the **Messiah was raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been **planted with him** in a **death like his**, we shall certainly be in a **resurrection like his.** <sup>6</sup> We know that **our old humanity** was **crucified with him** in order that the body belonging to sin might be rendered powerless, so that we would **no longer be enslaved to sin.** <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been declared free from all charges of sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if **we have died with the Messiah, we believe that we will also live with him.**

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## 1 Corinthians 10:1-2

<sup>1</sup> For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea....

## Romans 8:15-16

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption as children, in whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God....

## Galatians 2:19-20

<sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with the Messiah. I no longer live, but Messiah lives in me. But the life I now live in flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

## Colossians 2:12

<sup>12</sup> You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through the faith/trust that belongs to the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

## And Death Shall have No Dominion

Paul is unfolding the meaning of what God has done in Jesus – what happened in his death and resurrection. The event is there. The God of the universe has intervened. For us the challenge is to grasp what he has done and experience its full effect. We understand the event through the great biblical narrative from creation to Abraham, Moses, David...

Also our experience of our human situation – suffering, brokenness, alienation, violence.

Paul has been taking us through Abraham (Israel's story) and Adam (all humanity's story) to help us re-imagine who we (Romans, New Yorkers) are in the light of what God has done.

The picture is not pretty. Humans are not essentially bad, but we are limited, self-centered, weak, broken, trapped. From the first human (*anthropos/adam*) we choose things that hurt, destroy and enslave us. '*Death reigned*' (17). '*Sin reigned in death*' (21). Death, not as simply a physical reality, but as a focus of fear, oppression, meaninglessness, control.

Even the Law/Torah plays an ambiguous role. It comes into the midst of human brokenness and marks it out with clear lines. Look at the story in scripture! The law does its job well. It defines trespass; lays the basis for the prophets' challenge. Still rebellion, exile, Herod ....

In the event of Jesus, God has acted in a way that reaches beyond both Adam and the law.

Out of love, in faithfulness to his promises, he has acted in Grace, a free Gift, giving an abundance of Grace, life now, life of the age to come, freedom from the enslaving power of sin and the oppressive fear of death. A new realm/reign is created. The reign of Grace!

## How the Events of Jesus Change My Life

Wow! God's done a good job. We're in Egypt (slaves to sin), cheering him on as he brings destruction on the Egyptians. Why not stay here? The irony of Exodus: Israel's desire to return to Egypt. We know our fear, brokenness, and sin. We're not sure how to live in the realm of Grace. Paul says, that's not how it works. You can't stay in slavery and be free.

It's like the Exodus but more so. It's death and resurrection, the profoundest changes we can imagine. God takes my sin and death on himself in Jesus and gives me his own life/Spirit!

When I respond to God's faithfulness in Jesus with my faith/trust (never forced) – new life, power is created. The sign of that faith that Jesus has given us is baptism, plunging '*into Messiah Jesus*'! It is the sign of the astonishing miracle God participates in in my life. It breaks the barrier between God and humanity, between persons, across time, past, present, future. It takes me back into the very event that is the Good News, the death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus. We express/enact our faith/trust. God brings us into his faithful righteousness. We are in the Messiah, crucified with him, united/planted, dying with him, sin's slavery broken, rising with him, transforming now, living in hope.

## Who is this Jesus? Who am I?

Isn't this impossible? I can't be united with another person. And across time?! I wasn't there.

It's a common modern cliché that the first Christians knew Jesus as an ordinary man, and that later Constantine made him a god. But we're here at the beginning. Every phrase that Paul uses, articulating this faith and experience of the earliest believers, depends on Jesus' unique place as Messiah, God, and human. As Messiah he unites the whole story of scripture. Only as human can he suffer and die like us. Only as God can he create life, make us part of him, give his Spirit to us. He is the Good News, the abounding Grace.

We're astonished, wooed by his love, learn to trust, are plunged into him, experience his Life.