

March 25, 2018

Romans 5.12-21

The Reign of Grace

Overview

Adam ushered in the reign of sin and death. It was a powerful reign that has dominated all of humanity since the very start. However, King Jesus ushered in a better and more powerful reign, his reign of grace.

1. The Reign of Sin and Death

Let's start at the beginning as we look at how we arrived at where we are...

See Genesis 2.15-17, Romans 1.18-32 and Romans 3.9-21

This, without being exhaustive, is the weight of the sledge as it comes crashing down in 5.12

Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

It's not just that sin entered into the world but even more that death reigned in the world. It owned us. And it brought terror

Reign of Sin and Death (Adam)

Sinfulness (vs 12, 19)

Condemnation (vs 16, 18)

Death (vs 12, 14, 15, 17, 21)

Commentators differ on exactly how that gets translated to us, but what is agreed upon is that this reign of sin and death was passed on to every single human being (except Jesus) from Adam to the present and beyond.

We are all born under the reign of sin and death. We come into the world fallen, spiritually dead, and ready to sin in our own right. This leaves us all condemned for our sin and under the penalty of death. Ten out of ten people die. We die because of Adam's sin and we die for our own sins.

Verse 14 – death reigned from Adam until Moses

Verse 17 – For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man

Verse 21 – so that, as sin reigned in death...

See Matthew 27.27-50

It is the surest sign of wickedness when King Death overtakes King Jesus, the one person in history who should have been spared its evil, unless, unless that was the plan all along. In his death, King Jesus overturned the power of King Death and left him collapsed on the ground.

Colossians 2.13-15

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

In the words of my friend, Vic Black, King Jesus shamed the shame. The King Death brought about shaming King Jesus, making him a spectacle on the cross, bleeding and dying. But King Jesus turned it

backward and shamed the shame, putting those powers to open humiliation and in his triumph King Jesus brought in a new reign.

2. The Reign of Grace

Reign of Grace
(Jesus)

Grace (vs 15-17, 20-21)

Righteousness (vs 16-19)

Life (vs 17-18, 21)

King Jesus doesn't only defeat the Reign of Sin and Death, he reverses its work.

Sinfulness → Grace
Condemnation → Righteousness
Death → Life

In his one act of righteousness, his death on the cross, he brought in a new reign, a new dominion, a new rule, a reign of grace that far exceeds the power of the Reign of Sin and Death. King Jesus and his Reign of Grace is a super power over the reign of sin and death. It's not even a competition. Jesus wins. In short, grace wins.

5.15 – much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

5.17 – much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

5.20 – but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more

Conclusion

I want to move toward a close by offering some specific encouragement to you. There are three results with that King Jesus brings in his rule: Grace, Righteousness, and Life. Two promises to hold on to:

II Corinthians 9.6

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (NIV).

II Corinthians 5.21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (NIV).

Reflection Questions

1. In the passage Paul repeats various words and arguments multiple times. What repetitions stand out to you? Why do you think Paul chose to emphasize those elements?
2. Paul uses the word "reign" to describe both sin/death and grace. What is meant by using that word? What does that tell you about both sides of the equation?
3. How does Satan relate to the reign of sin and death? Is his reign separate or the same?
4. All believers exit the reign of sin and death and enter the reign of grace. However, that doesn't mean the old reign doesn't attempt to discourage Christians. How has the old reign attempted to impact your life as a believer? Is there certain discouragement, grief, or pain you are walking through right now? How can Jesus' grace specifically encourage you in this season?
5. Where in your life do you need grace right now? How does this passage prompt you to pray as it relates to that need?