

Dec,2022

Roman5:12-21

### The dominion of grace

Today we would like to think together about the influence of "one person". In the history of mankind, we all know that Hitler is one person who did evil and it happened during the Holocaust that more than 6 million Jews were killed. And by one person, President Lincoln of the United States, slaves in US were freed. We also sometimes suffer or rejoice because of one person in our lives, don't we? If there is even one family member who is a violent alcoholic, the whole family will suffer for many years. On the other hand, there are times when our lives are enriched by just one person. My brother-in-law is a dental technician with good skills, but he has something like a communication disorder that makes it difficult for him to build good relationships with others. He used to fight with the doctors and lost his job many times. However, amazingly this one dentist alone understood my brother-in-law's problem and gave him orders constantly for more than 20 years despite his troubles. It is no exaggeration to say that this one person provided for my sister's whole family.

In today's text of Romans, we can see one man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is concerned with "death and life." Look at verse 12. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people because all sinned." Here "one man" refers to Adam. In Genesis 3, the first man, Adam, broke God's promise and sinned by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. His sin brought death to all mankind. When I first read this part, I was frustrated, wondering why I was doomed to die because of Adam's own sin, not my own sin. I had always thought that what the Bible said was unjust. I could not understand this question until I studied the book of Romans. And, I was amazed that God had a great plan of salvation through Jesus Christ alone to save human beings who would eventually have to die because of the sin of one man, Adam.

Look at verses 13 and 14, "To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law(ver13). Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come(ver14). From Adam to the time of Moses, there was no law, but man had sinned and died all along. Although their sins were not the same as Adam's, they were all doomed to death and death ruled over them. In Genesis 4:8, Cain kills his brother Abel. It is shocking that the sin of murder was born as early as in the direct descendants of Adam and Eve. The sin escalated terribly (Genesis 4).

For over three years we have been experiencing the Covid - 19 disaster and it still has not ended. Doctors say that unhygienic conditions and germs that are harmful to humans spread very easily. On the contrary, it is very difficult to return to a hygienic and healthy conditions. It seems that sin also has these characteristics. We look at the persistent spread of sin throughout our history and even in our daily lives. And, we realize that it takes a powerful force to be able to save us from the influence and control of sin. How can we solve this problem of human death and sin?

Look at verse 15. "But the gift is not like trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!" Jesus Christ has solved the problem of death, the result of sin that entered from the one man, Adam. For God's totally sinless Son, Jesus Christ, shed His blood on the cross. We who believe in Jesus Christ have received great grace to be free from sin. This is the Christmas season, and our hearts are warmed at this time of year. This is because non-Christians are also rejoicing as they give gifts to each other. The gifts of grace and presents from Jesus Christ are abundant.

Even in his public life, Jesus gave the finest wine to a wedding in Cana that was out of wine, and fed 5,000 of the hungry crowd of men alone on the see of Galilee. He even raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins and freely shed His blood and water for us. The Bible says that this love and grace of Jesus Christ is abundant and far greater than the effects of dying to sin. We have learned this grace every week. Let me repeat it.

#### The abundant grace of being justified

Forgiveness of our sins: all our sins past, present, and future are forgiven.

Becoming God's children.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Live in holiness in the likeness of Jesus Christ in this life.

Acquitted at the final judgment and receive eternal life.

Resurrected into a glorified image at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Inheritance of the Kingdom of God like Abraham.

Be reconciled to God and receive peace.

You must be thinking, "Wow, that's a lot! It is truly a comprehensive gift set, like a Fukubukuro. We have already received these blessings abundantly. And this is so powerful that it cannot be compared to the "reign of death" that we now suffer from depression and

family problems and so on. John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Satan and his demons destroy us by placing us under the dominion of sin. But we who believe in Jesus Christ receive abundant grace.

Verses 16-19 contrast the difference between the one man Adam and the one man Jesus Christ. You may think it is difficult because of the repetition of the content, but it is easy to understand when we put today's entire text together.

One man Adam	vs.	One man Jesus Christ
The dominion of death through sin (vv.12-14,17,21)		The dominion of grace (vv.15,17,20,21)
Adam's one transgression (v.12)		One righteousness, eternal life (v.18)
The destruction of many (v.16)		The salvation of many, being justified (v.18)
Conviction of many (v.16)		Acquittal of many (vv.16,18)
Disobedience (v.19)		Obedience (v.19)

When we read all these truths, if they don't involve to our daily life positively, they are not powerful to us. So, now I would like to consider how the grace of this one man, Jesus Christ, actually relates to our daily lives. Look at verse 17. "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!" This word is very powerful. We have been delivered from the dominion of death, and we have the dominion of grace. But Christian life does not stop here. We ourselves are to rule by grace in this sinful world.

Talking about 'reign' in this text, I am referring to the reign of kings. As in Saudi Arabia's win over Argentina in the 2022 World Cup and the next day suddenly becoming a national holiday by the King of Saudi Arabia. The reign of the king is so powerful that the law changes depending on the king's will. In this way, our lives were ruled by the powerful rule of "death". That death was running our lives like a king. As we experienced the Covid-19 Pandemic, we realized that the whole world was ruled by death. That is not all. We are also being "ruled by death" when we look at our individual lives. Our lives are controlled by our own weaknesses, family's illnesses and problems and also by the sins of others like bullying in the school and power harassment in our work places, and by a national system that has little respect for human rights. For example, if there are children who are out of control, the parents are swept away by the children. The parents have lost their authority. At this time, the children's

problematic behavior become king and rules over everything at home. These problems are deeply involved in our daily life. These reigns of death were out of your control and we were just overwhelmed.

But the Bible says. "Whoever has received the grace of God and the gift of righteousness in abundance will live and reign in this world through the one Jesus Christ." We have already received God's gifts of grace and righteousness abundantly through the one Jesus Christ. Therefore, we live through Christ. Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

We who live with Jesus Christ reign in this world by grace. With this abundant grace we rule over ourselves, our families, our schools, our workplaces, our nation, and our world, which are under the dominion of death and the effects of death. But we may think that the problem is too serious to do anything about it. Look at verse 20, "The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more." Even though you are a Christian, we are facing many problems. Christianity does not aim for easy childbirth, traffic safety, disease-free longevity, or success in this world. 'Sin increased' refers to a time of serious despair, but it is in this time that Christians receive grace through deep communion with God. Therefore, we do not despair at the serious time. The more sin and despair increases, the more God's grace overflows.

Recently, brother Akira was able to get a job. Before this good thing happened to him, he had experienced unemployment and physical problems, had no support from his family, and was hurt even by the employment counselors and the people he interviewed with. Some church's members, who had been having weekly prayer meetings and study sessions, were concerned when we saw that his suffering was being piled on top of his own. There were times when we were so overwhelmed by the "reign of death" that we thought about giving up praying. However, as a result of our continued prayer and placing our hope in God, he was able to find a job. He was so blessed that he himself could confess, "God gave me this job! It was precisely because his situation was bad that he was able to confess the abundance of the blessings he now enjoys. God! Thank you!

Look at verse 21. "So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are reigned by the grace of Jesus Christ. If you look at Matthew 2, you see that the Magi who came to Jerusalem from

the east rejoiced at the birth of Jesus, saying that a king had come. Jesus Christ came to this world as the King of grace. Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, resurrected and won the world through the cross. And this grace is abundantly available to us. **1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Let us pray.

Beloved Heavenly Father. Thank you for ruling over us with the grace of Jesus Christ. We believe that through God's abundant grace we can resolve and fully triumph over all the "reign of death" that we now experience. Help us, Holy Spirit, to continue to pray, believing that you will save us from our illnesses, troubles, and various problems at home, school, work, and church. We pray that our fellowship with God will deepen day by day. Thank you, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.