

When the Law Comes In

Romans 5:12-20, part 3

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OPENING PRAYER:

We pray in the power of your Holy Spirit, open your word to us by His grace and our hearts to that word. Grant that as we study it together, our minds may be arrested by its truth. As we read of the grace of Jesus Christ, our affections may be drawn out to him and our hearts wonderfully warmed. And as we listen to the Word of our Lord Jesus as he preaches into our hearts, we pray that all of our wills may be bowed before you, in joy and in submissiveness. Desiring, in this coming week to serve you for your glory, to live in the matchless grace that you display to us in the teaching of your most holy word. So come to us, Lord, in the diversity of our needs and our different situations and circumstances. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Hear us as we pray, speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. And this we pray, for Jesus our Savior's sake. Amen. Please be seated.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Now, we are reading these Sunday evenings in Paul's letter to the Romans. And this evening, we come once again to Romans chapter five, and verses 12 through 21. And this, as we've been discovering, is certainly a passage in which we need our bibles opened if we are to follow the apostle's teaching. And you'll find the passage in the pew Bible in the rack in front of you. On page 942. And we are reading in Romans 5:12 through 21, for, I think, the third Sunday evening, and I imagine indeed, I am confident, well, fairly confident that this will be our final study in Romans 5:12 through 21.

Therefore", says Paul, "...just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned -- for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, 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. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 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. Now, the law came in to increase the trespass, but

where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON:

We are seven and a half months through an 18 month series of studies on Paul's letter to the Romans. In the middle of August last year we began the study. I promised that it would take 18 months. Those of you who are able to work in the calendar, realize that we are more than seven and a half months away from the middle of August of last year. And I think I have explained by way of self justification, on one or two occasions, I meant 18 months. I didn't mean the period from August through to whatever the corresponding period in the calendar is 18 months later. And by my calculation, which is a very casual calculation, we're probably roughly where we should be. There is a long way to go. But just as I said, at the beginning of this series of studies, when you begin to study Paul's letter to the Romans, you feel as though you're gazing up into the Himalayas. Or, as the people who know about these things tend to call them the Himalayas. But when you climb Everest, you do a very interesting thing, as those of you who have climbed Everest obviously know. You don't simply begin at the bottom, and then steadily make your way to the top. You make your way up. And then you create a basecamp, and you make your way up further, you come back to basecamp, you make your way further up, you provide another basecamp. And eventually, by this unusual motion, you acclimate yourself to the extraordinary experiences of being at that height above sea level. And you're able to go further. And eventually, you are able, in the providence of God, as many have, although many have lost their lives in the attempt, you stand on the top of Mount Everest.

That's not a bad metaphor for studying Romans, because the Apostle Paul himself proceeds in that direction. He takes us so far forwards. And then he says, let's just take a look further up, and then we'll come back to basecamp. And then as we climb through his teaching, he takes us a little bit further forward. He says, Let's look up a little higher. And then we come back to basecamp as he builds up his thinking, builds up his reasoning, as he expounds the riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so it's not surprising, as he does this, that on occasion, he will throw out a thought that he doesn't develop at that point. But then he will pick it up, and he will develop it a little further. And there are points when he says, as apparently in Romans 5:12, through 21, let us go back to basecamp and consider how it is that we can enjoy the riches of God's grace in Jesus Christ. How can it possibly be, in the light of what he said in chapter five, that we who were dead in our sins who were enemies of God, who were without hope in this world, whose mouths were shut, who had no room for boasting -- are now standing and boasting in our hope of glory? Are now even able to boast and exalt and rejoice in our experience of suffering? Because we know that God is creating glory through that suffering. How is it that we who are enemies of God, as he says in chapter five, verse 11, are now actually those ones who glory and boast and rejoice and exult in God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ? And how is it that what one person has done, our Lord Jesus Christ can bring justification and life and eventually glory? For an untold multitude of men and women throughout history? How can it possibly be that the action of one man can have such an amazing impact on so many? How is it that what the Lord Jesus did in His incarnation, his death and resurrection can save more than one person in this congregation tonight? How is that possible? These are the things that the apostle is explaining to us here in chapter five verses 12 to 21, where, where he takes us back to help us to see the big picture in history. And we've been trying to grapple with these amazing versus -- complex and profound -- and yet, as we've seen with a rather beautiful simplicity.

And you notice, as we've done that, in many ways, the key statement is at the end of verse 14, "Adam was a type of the One who was to come." And he's explaining to us that when God created Adam, he made him not simply as an isolated individual, but as the representative head of all mankind. So that what Adam did in his disobedience against God's commandment, brought the whole human race into catastrophe, and disaster. Constituted as he says here, the whole human race as alienated from God, and as sinners.

But then came Jesus Christ. And he says, think about it this way. Think about it, that Adam, as a representative man who brought disaster on the whole human race is a model or type or pattern of what the Lord Jesus Christ came to do. Yes, he's interested in Adam, but the focus of this passage is not so much on Adam but as on what we can learn about our Lord Jesus Christ from Adam who was a pattern of the One who was to come. That's the language that Paul uses in verse 14, to describe the Lord Jesus Christ. And here is how it is that our Lord Jesus Christ who'd come into the world, could live and die as a single individual and bring salvation to the large numbers of people who are in this room tonight. And we are just a fraction of those for whom he has brought salvation. Because our Lord Jesus Christ came as the second man and as the last Adam. He came not simply to do things, as it were as an individual, but to represent his people. Like the high priest, you know, wearing those, those jewels on which were engraven and the names of all God's chosen Israel, and that breast plate on which were engraven the names of the tribes of Israel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in coming into the world and everything he did, especially in dying on the cross and rising from the grave and ascending to his Father's right hand, did that for all whom he represented. So that as Paul will come on to say later on, in this passage, just as Adam brought calamity and tragedy, and death and destruction and alienation on all whom he represented. Our Lord Jesus Christ, brings righteousness and salvation, and grace and glory to all those whom he represented.

And so there are two men. And they stand in one sense parallel to one another. Adam, verse 14 is a type of pattern of the one who was to come. But their actions differ radically. Adam's one sin brought condemnation. Paul has been teaching us. Jesus Christ's life of perfect obedience to God, where Adam had failed, and then his cruel sacrificial death on the cross to pay the penalty for our failure. Those are radically different actions says the apostle. And they have radically different consequences. So that as sin reigned in death, through Adam, he is going to say in verse 21, grace reigns through righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and leads not just to life, but leads to eternal life.

Let me try and illustrate it one more time. I was in an airport during the course of this week. One airport is much the same as another airport, as you know, they're all under reconstruction. And people look the same. But in this particular airport, I noticed that there were people they were all wearing what I would call blue T shirts. Shirts without collars. Call them T shirts? They were while wearing blue T shirts. I eventually worked out that the two women I noticed who were in, I thought their 30s were not late graduates from this high school, they were probably teachers in the high school. And I saw these crowds of youngsters, and they're all wearing these T shirts, saying class of 2009. Now what Paul is saying here is that before the face of God every single person descended from Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ apart, wears a t-shirt that says, Fallen in Adam, Class of Sinners. But then Jesus Christ comes. And Jesus Christ, as it were, places (well our hymns have a better name than T shirt, don't they?). He places over us a robe of righteousness, that says: Justified in Jesus Christ. Grace Reigns. Glory is promised. Heaven is certain. The new heavens and the new earth are the destiny of this one. Why?

Because Jesus Christ has come and taken our place, and obeyed where we have sinned, and died the death that we deserve to die under the judgment of God. And he has broken through, as it were, into a new world order in the power of his resurrection. And now that he has broken that gaping hole in death, all those who belong to Jesus will follow Him through into what the Apostle Paul here calls eternal life. Our position by nature is this, we are born in a debtors prison. And the problem with being in a debtors prison is not only the hopelessness of the situation you are presently in but the despair it causes, because there is nothing you can do in the debtors prison to earn your way out. But in his saving mercy, our Lord Jesus Christ has come into the world to save us from the helplessness and hopelessness of the debtors prison by paying our debt for us. And it's this, you see, this big picture that the apostle wants to paint. That he's really saying, don't you, don't you feel this? I feel this after I think 50 however many years I've been a Christian 40 I've lost count 48, 47 -- 47 years. And I still think the night in which I came to believe in Jesus Christ, when I was a youngster -- although I'd studied the Bible on my own for several years, and I'd read it faithfully. I had no idea what I was letting myself in for. And it's been so ever since. You thought you were coming into a little room and you discovered you're coming into a castle full of unimaginable treasures. And the guide was taking into dark rooms and explaining to you the treasures of darkness to use the bible language. And you are learning so much more about the gospel. And that's what Paul is doing here. That's why these words at first reading, at second reading, at third reading -- it's why we're only going to do three studies in Romans 5:12 to 21, because you can't possibly take this in and three studies. You need to go home and puzzle it out and think it through on your own until you begin to see what it is that the apostle is saying. That you have been brought into something cosmic if you become a Christian. Yes, little you and little me. That's why Paul says our true lives are hidden with Christ in God. People around you they don't know what's happened to you. It doesn't yet appear, says the apostle John, what we shall be. But you are somebody if you're a Christian who has been taken out of that old family, that old stock of Adam in sin and under condemnation and judgment and bound for the outer darkness and you've been brought into the glorious kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. And new powers are released into your life. That's what he's wanting us to understand as he explains to us the marvel of the gospel.

And as he moves towards an end, he puts it so beautifully. He says, verse 17, "If because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more".... Oh he's saying don't you see it? God is, God is not a grudging savior. He doesn't, he doesn't sit there saying, Well, what was involved in their sin, I'm going to save them and no more Unfortunately, some Christians think that's the case. He's a grudging, Savior. And he saves us and no more. But look at what Paul says, "If because of one man's trespass, death reign through the one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man." Jesus says, you see what he's saying? It's not just that sin reigned, and now grace reigned. You could easily, you could easily if you didn't pay attention to what he's saying, you could easily think that's what he's saying. Once sin reigned and now grace reigned. Now that's true. But he says more than that. Where sin reigned through that one man 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. That's the Christian life? Yes, the troubles. Yes, the struggles. Yes, the battle against indwelling sin. Yes, the battle against Satan. Yes, the temptations of the world on the flesh and the devil. But yes, in the midst of this, reigning in life through the one man Jesus Christ. There's nothing grudging about this salvation. It is both free, and royal.

Paul, is not slow in this passage, complex though it may well be, to keep saying to you remember he's given you much more, much more, much more, much more, much more, much more! Now grasp it.

Drink it in. Drink it in, he's saying until it's pouring, as it were, from the spigot down your throat. And you say, Lord, give me a break, I can't take any more of this. There's too much more for me. And he says, okay, we'll go back to basecamp just for a little. And then you'll be ready for more as we go on.

Now, as Paul works through all this, a question arises. Obviously, it had arisen in his mind. And clearly he thought it would arise in the minds of others, particularly those in Rome with a Jewish rather than a Gentile background. Now, what's the question? Here it is. He's saying, here is the big picture. There's Adam and there's Christ. You were by nature and Adam and now by grace you're in Jesus Christ. That's the whole story. That's everything. That's a whole of salvation. It's almost as though he's saying, that is the foundation of everything. And somebody at the back of the church stands up and says, Excuse me, sir, Do you realize what you've done? You have just got rid of everything from the end of the book of Genesis to the beginning of the book of Matthew. That's what you've done. You've given me Adam, and you've given me Christ, and you have completely ignored everything between. Now that's why the question arises.

Do you notice the question? Verse 20. What then is the place of the law? He means the law of Moses. Interestingly, the same question arose in his earlier letter to the Galatians, when he had been talking about the way in which God brings salvation through the promise that was given to Abraham. And the person at the back of the congregation in the church and Galatia stood up and say, Excuse me, but now you've moved from Abraham to the New Testament and and you've missed out the law. What was the purpose of the law? Now that's what he wants to explain to us in these closing verses. Verse 20. Now he says, now that you've got that in place, you're asking the question, you are asking the question, aren't you? You were coming to church this evening saying, I hope Ferguson is going to answer the question, what's the purpose of the law? What's the place of the law in all this? And he's going to take us up a little higher. And when we find it difficult to breathe, he's gonna say, let's come back to basecamp, and we'll get up there again. And he does that, doesn't he? -- In Romans chapter seven.

But here's the answer just for the moment. We've touched on this question, actually, with Paul before. After he had expounded the gospel in Romans, chapter three, he says, or at least somebody says to him, that sounds as though you're overthrowing the law. It sounds as though there's no place for the law here. And he's just thrown out an answer, not a bit of it, he said. Rather than overthrow the law, we uphold the law. And then he shoots off into chapter four. And we're left thinking, Well, what about the law? Well, he's going to give us a clue here about the law. He says, the law came in, "in order to increase the trespass. But where sin increased grace abounded all the more."

I want us to notice two things here. First of all, what Paul says about God's law and its impact. This isn't everything Paul has to say about the law. But it's important. God's law, the Mosaic Law, and its impact. And then what he says about God's grace, and it's far greater impact. God's law and its impact, and God's grace and it's far greater impact. And he says, the law came in. That's the language he uses, isn't it? Verse 20 at the beginning. The law came in. He's clearly speaking here about the law that was given through Moses. But the language he uses is kind of interesting. It sounds as though he's saying that in this big picture between Adam and Christ, the law is, is slotted in. Maybe if we were giving our vernacular translation -- a cool translation for the 21st century. That's the way we would put it. The law was, was slipped in. The way you might, the way you might slip something into a place in order that you might be able to slip it out of that place again. And he's saying, You need to understand that the law of Moses was put in place by God, for very particular reasons.

Now, to help us understand this, let me say just a few things in passing. First of all, we've already seen in Paul's teaching in Romans chapter two, in verses 12 through 15, that Paul believes essentially, that when God made this first man, Adam, he made him as it were, with his - his desires, God's desires for his life, actually, natively functioning in his being. So that it was natural for Adam to love God. It was natural for Adam not to steal. It was natural for Adam to speak the truth. It was natural for Adam to be faithful to his wife. And Paul is saying, you know, what happened to Adam when he fell, was that the clarity of that and the the power of those instincts in his being -- the clarity, was rendered opaque and the power of those instincts was despoiled. He no longer had affections and desires to please God in terms of the way in which God had created him to be. But, says the apostle he didn't cease to be the image of God and so you find throughout the world that even when Gentiles who have not received the law of Moses, do things that to a certain extent, are consistent with God's law, they show that, as it were, elements, despoiled, but real elements of that law are still written in their hearts. They're like ruined castles you can -- you get hints of a former glory. But now they're ruined and they're not functioning the way they were originally intended to function. And so even Gentiles who don't have the law of Moses have a, still have a sense of the difference between right and wrong. They can't agree on the details, they're not clear in their thinking. They're certainly not clear in their desiring. That's why part of the promise of the Gospel is that God would come and write his law into our hearts all over again. Now, one of the purposes Paul, therefore clearly sees in Moses giving the law is to make it clear as God writes it on tablets of stone to make his will clear. And yet, you see, even in the way he gives the law, there's something different here. This law is given largely in negative terms. Why? Because those to whom that law is given are sinners, and God needs to say "no" to them. Remember how in the Garden of Eden God said "yes" to Adam? Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes. Follow your instincts, follow your desires, follow your thinking. There's only one thing I'm saying no to. But now, there are many things God is saying no to because He's like a father. And he's saying that's going to harm you, that's going to damage you. But it's your instinct to do that. And so they are given that law cast in negative form. And because God is choosing them as the people in whom the promise of salvation will be enshrined God gives them some rather strange particular commandments that will make them different from all the other nations that will keep them apart from all the other nations, in order that in this little ethnic community the promise of God may be kept until the Savior comes. That's why there are some laws in the Old Testament that don't seem to make a great deal of sense to us, because we don't practice them today. Why did God give them because he wanted to keep this people different from others. That's why there were times in the Old Testament scriptures as God had promised in Genesis 3:15, when the seed of the serpent sought to destroy the seed of the woman. And then, of course, because they were sinners, and they would fail. Even although the Commandments were given for sinners, they failed to keep them again and again, as we have failed to keep them again and again. God gave in his law, these ceremonies. These sacrifices, in which he was saying, I am a God who pardons but my pardoning is costly. And I provide you with this way of sacrifice that is so costly, because the real salvation that will come to you will be infinitely costly to me. It will cost me my own dear son. But until he comes, keep on using these pictures. Keep on making these sacrifices. But look through them and beyond them. You understand that the sacrifice of an animal could never ever, ever, ever take away the sins of a man. And you understand that if the man who is making that sacrifice has to get up again tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow, and every tomorrow, and repeat that sacrifice, then these cannot be the sacrifices that take away sin. And so the law, the moral law, and the ceremonial law, and the civil law, they were all -- they were all -- they all came in. They came into position. Now why?

Well, Paul tells us "the law came in to increase the trespass." What does he mean? Do you remember how he said earlier on in the passage, "sin was in the world", verse 13, "between Adam and Christ, but

sin isn't counted where there is no law." He is saying that sure was sin. But you see, it's difficult to count it when you don't have a clear idea of what it is. It's part of the reason why the patriarchs was such a messy group of people. Because they didn't see things clearly. And so you see, the very giving of law reveals that something is sinful. You wander around with your desires to have what other people have. And your mind is clouded. And you think I deserve that. I think I should take it. But then when God's law comes in and says, "Thou shalt not covet and thou shalt not steal", it becomes clear that what's in my heart is not neutral. It's not. It's not. It's not as it were something that God turns his face away from and says, Well, if you want to do that, I'm not sure it's very good for you. But if you really want to do it, it's fine as far as I'm concerned. No, the law comes in to increase the trespass. In a way, it's like a magnifying glass. It enables you to see clearly what was always there, but you didn't see clearly.

And yes, perhaps Paul also means, he certainly goes on to say this in chapter seven, perhaps he also means that the very existence of God's law somehow or another stirs me up. Because God's law is saying, I am your master. Do as I say. I am the one who decides what is good for you. And in my native condition, I say, how dare you decide what is good for me. I will decide what is good for me. Out of my face, God. It stirs me up.

I can't think of that without remembering my childhood days in the city of Glasgow, which means the dear green place. And the city has got many parks in it. And we used to play in the parks. And they had parking wardens all over the place. Not for your automobile, but for your naughtiness. And they had notices on all the grass that they had taken great care of which said, "Keep off the grass." What does that do to a little boy of seven? Oh, everything in you wants to run on the grass. And we delighted to do it. Do you know one of the reasons we delighted to do it was that it told us we weren't to do it. But there was another reason. And that was because the park keepers, we called them the parkies, the parkies were our enemies because they were the ones who wanted the rules of the park to be kept. And that's how it is, isn't it? The Law of God has that amazing ability to stand before us and say, let me show you my friend who you really are and what's really in your heart. And so this is what Paul says, "the law came in to increase the trespass". I imagine he's also thinking about what happened in Israel. I mean what's the Old Testament about, it's about the law coming in. And it is an almost endless catalogue of the people increasing the trespass -- right from the very beginning, right when Moses comes down the mountain. With these tablets! With the law of God written on them! What are they doing at the bottom of the mountain?! The best Aaron can do is to say, well, I was just throwing all this stuff into the fire and, and this, this golden calf came out. No, no, no, no, says Moses. Let's call that idolatry. That's what it is. That's why the law came. And it had a tremendous impact because it exposed sin for what it really is.

Now just in parenthesis here we need to remember that in our society. We have been In blinded, I think, by, perhaps by lawyers, I mean lawyers of jurisprudence, certainly by educators, certainly by social opinion, that said, what we need is more law to stop people doing things. Actually, education sometimes is the same thing. I remember when I was a relative youngster, they were beginning to say, what we need in the high schools of our country is more sex education because things are getting out of control. Oh by comparison with those days, they're in a state of total riot. Why? Because law and education doesn't transform the heart. Both have their place, but they are powerless. They simply give us the, as it were, the information to sin all the more. And we see that abounding. Need to remember that. But Paul's point is, when the law comes in and says "Thou shalt not" it stimulates something within us. It exposes sin for what it really is. And you see, I don't know about you. I am an expert vocabulary dodger of sin. My wife would tell you that. I can weave and dodge and hide. It's not really that. It's really

something else. God's law comes in and we are exposed for what we really are. And it has this awful impact of saying, "You are the man" or the woman, and you are condemned.

And you see, it's when we begin to appreciate that, that grace seems to be so large and so free, and so gracious. And that's what Paul says, notice, this second thing he emphasizes. God's law and its impact upon us. "The law came in to increase the trespass", God's grace, and it's far greater impact "where sin increased grace abounded all the more". So "that as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, let me say it to you. I wish I could say this to you every single Sunday, because you need to hear it every single Sunday and Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday. You need to live in this if you're a Christian. There is more grace in Jesus Christ than there is sin in you. You can never out sin the grace of Jesus if you'll come to him. "Oh Jesus full of pardoning grace, more full of grace, than I have of sin".

That's dangerous teaching. That's very dangerous teaching. But if you don't believe that dangerous teaching, you don't understand the gospel. And you'll never know what it means to reign in life. You'll totter in life, you'll stumble in life, you'll doubt in life, but you'll never reign in life through the one man Christ Jesus, until it dawns not just upon your brain, but upon your affections, and upon your will. And upon your whole being until it suffuses the very way you live. Lord Jesus Christ where my sin has abounded, your grace superabounds.

I'm awash with grace, says Jesus, come and swim. But Jesus that's dangerous. You can't make it as free as that you can't make it as full as that there must be something I need to do Jesus. There must be some level of sanctification I need before you will be gracious to me. No, no, no, no, NO! "Where sin abounds grace abounds all the more". Now listen. Why is that dangerous teaching? Because somebody will think If where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more, then I've got this man Paul. I will go on sinning in order that grace may abound. That thought crossed your mind? That's why this is dangerous teaching.

Now, this is my last word. Turn your eyes from Romans 5:21 to Romans six, verse one, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" You see, that's the strongest possible proof we could ever have that it's that dangerous teaching that the apostle Paul has been giving to us. Free grace, full grace, more grace, grace abounding over overall my sin. Ahh, but if I were to believe that I would go, and I would sin to my heart's content, and this is why you need to come back God willing, next Sunday night. Because if that's the conclusion you draw, you have no understanding whatsoever of how grace work. But you see, don't minimize the grace because it sounds so dangerous. That would be a sign that you weren't prepared to run into the grace. Because you might sink and drown in the grace. But you see, you can't be resurrected in grace unless you're first drowned in it. And that's what Paul in all these complex sentences wants me to know. Jesus is bigger than Adam. Grace is greater than sin. That's the gospel. Now dive into it beloved! Let us dive into it. And taste for some of us a freedom and a joy and a sense of reining in life that perhaps we've never known in years of Christian living. Because all these years, we've had a God, who rather carefully measured out grace to those who met the standard

Jesus let me do something to get it. Child, you can't get it by doing. Only by coming. So come. Taste His grace. Drink deeply, and live royally, in Christ Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, as we struggle, together with passages like this, that seem at first sight so complicated and complex with ideas that are not our daily way of thinking, help us, Lord, to see the big picture here and to have a sense of the majesty of your grace. We confess, Lord, that while you're holiness can be terrifying to us, your grace kills us, because we know that to reach out our empty hands and receive that grace would mean that we have nothing in our hands and yielded control over our lives and embraced Jesus Christ alone. Oh help us to do that. To live that way for his namesake. Amen