

JUSTIFIED IN CHRIST ROMANS 5:15–19

INTRODUCTION

Your relationship with God is **determined by the one who represents you.**

Though the idea is perhaps strange to our Western minds that think with a rugged individualism in the wake of the Enlightenment and its philosophical influences upon our worldview,

the reality is that God relates to us on the basis of **corporate solidarity.**

Corporate solidarity describes how **personal identity is shaped corporately** rather than individualistically.

While God views you as a unique and distinct person responsible for your actions,

it is simply not possible to think of your Christian identity without reference to the corporate entities to which every believer belongs.

The central theme that establishes the idea of corporate solidarity in the New Testament is **union with Christ.**¹

¹ Constantine R. Campbell, "Corporate Solidarity," in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2023), 140.

This is clearly the view that Paul has as he **contrasts two corporate entities** and their **respective heads**.

As Paul explains, all of humanity is represented by **either Adam or Jesus Christ** as the Second Adam.

Your relationship with God is determined, then, by the one who represents you.

We learnt this past Sunday that everyone who is represented by Adam, who is **"in Adam,"** is condemned before God because Adam brought **sin and death to all his people**.

By contrast, as we'll learn today, everyone who is represented by Christ, who is **"in Christ,"** is justified before God because Christ brings **righteousness and life to all His people**.

For Paul, therefore, every blessing we receive from God is **through our union with Christ**.²

That is, you receive **every benefit promised in the gospel** through your union with Christ.

As Paul understands it, union with Christ is the **essential ingredient** that binds all other elements of the gospel together.

Since we have established through this sermon series that Paul views **justification by faith as the heart of the gospel** message, it should, then, not surprise us to see Paul **connect justification to our union with Christ**.

² Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 442.

We learn from **Romans 5** that **union with Christ** provides the **basis for our justification** and the assurance, furthermore, of our final salvation.

John Calvin recognised the essential link between our justification and our union with Christ—

*“We define justification as follows: the sinner, received into **communion with Christ**, is reconciled to God by his grace, while, cleansed by Christ’s blood, he obtains forgiveness of sins, and clothed with Christ’s righteousness as if it were his own, he stands confident before the heavenly judgment seat.”*³

He is not alone, for a **contemporary theologian** wrote—

*“Justification is that benefit of our union with Christ, in His life, death, and resurrection, in which God declares us to be righteous through the forgiveness of our sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.”*⁴

These concepts of **corporate solidarity** and **representative headship** are foundational to Paul’s argument in the second half of **Romans 5** as he explains that **the basis of our assurance of salvation** is our vital **union with Christ**.

To put Paul’s argument simply, if you are **“in Adam”** then you stand **condemned** before God,
but if you are **“in Christ”** then you stand **justified** before Him.

³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 & 2, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 811.

⁴ Marcus Peter Johnson, “Justification in Christ,” in *One with Christ: An Evangelical Theology of Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 88.

That is why your relationship with God is **determined by the one who represents you.**

Before we consider the text before us, however, we must ask **where Paul got these ideas from?**

Was Paul a **theological innovator** so that we can ascribe these ideas to his **theological genius?**

After all, I have argued, unashamedly, that Paul is **the greatest theologian who has ever lived.**

The answer is that Paul was no innovator, but that his genius came from his **studious devotion to the Scriptures.**

It was because Paul had **studied the Old Testament Scriptures** so earnestly that he was able to offer such profound insights.

So before we consider Paul's argument that **our assurance of salvation is based upon our union with Christ,** **let's take a few moments** to consider the text that was evidently the **biblical background** to this section of Romans.

Turn, then, to **Isaiah 53**, or more precisely, to where the **Song of the Suffering Servant** begins in **Isaiah 52:13.**

Notice that the "song" begins with a **declaration of the Servant's success** in the mission with which Yahweh sends Him.

As we read in **Isaiah 52:13**—

¹³ **Behold, My Servant will prosper; He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.**

This “**prosperity**” is otherwise translated as will “**act wisely**” or even, “**will succeed**.”

Indeed, this is a statement of the Servant’s success and since **we know that the Servant is Jesus Christ**,

the renowned commentator **Alec Motyer** is correct in arguing that the statement **matches the great cry, “It is finished”** (τετέλεσται) at Calvary (**John 19:30**).⁵

What follows, then, is one of the **most detailed and profound** descriptions in all of Scripture of the **atoning death of Christ**.

Notice, again, that Isaiah foresees that the death of the Servant will **accomplish salvation** for more than God’s elect within Israel.

As we read in **Isaiah 52:15**, “**He will sprinkle many nations**,” which is a reference to the **cleansing of their sins**.

This cleaning is accomplished by the atoning death of Christ on behalf of His people from both Israel and the Gentile nations, as we read in **Isaiah 53:4–5**—

⁵ J. Alec Motyer, “‘Stricken for the Transgression of My People’: The Atoning Work of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 251.

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our peace fell upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

This was not only **the purpose of the Son**, but **the pleasure of the Father** as we read in **verse 10**—

¹⁰ **Yahweh was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If You would place His soul as a guilt offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of Yahweh will succeed in His hand.**

This is certainly echoed by Paul **earlier in Romans 5** as he wrote in **verses 8–9**—

⁸ **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

⁹ **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**

But returning our attention to Isaiah 53, notice what is of particular relevance to our consideration of Christ as the representative head of His people, as we read **verses 11–12**—

¹¹ **As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.**

[PTO]

12 **Therefore, I will divide for Him a portion with the many, and He will divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.**

Who are “**the many**” that Isaiah is referring to in describing **the success of Christ’s saving work** in **His death on the cross?**

We already know that “**the many**” must include **both Jews and Gentiles** so that “**the many**” come **from all the nations**, as **Isaiah 52:15** indicated.

We also know that “**the many**” its **not a universal reference to everyone**, since **Isaiah 53:1** indicates that **not everyone will believe** the good news of His saving work.

There is an **undisclosed number** who **reject the Suffering Servant** because **God did not reveal** His salvation to them.

So “**the many**” of **verses 11–12** includes Jews and Gentiles, but is not a universal reference to everyone.

In context, it is clearly a reference to a specific, but numerous, group of people for whom the Servant **made atonement and to whom He applies the same atonement.**

As **Motyer** writes, “**the many**” refers to “an innumerable family from every nation, including Israel, which constitutes God’s elect people, for whom redemption is both accomplished and applied.”⁶

This theological concept of “**the many**” then becomes a **key concept in the mind of Paul** and the other apostles as they wrote about the work of Christ on the cross.

As we’ll see, **the Servant Song** of **Isaiah 53** is the **theological background** to Paul’s argument as he writes on the **ideas of corporate solidarity** and **representative headship**.

It will help us, then, to **keep it in mind** as we **now turn our attention** to **Romans 5**.

PROPOSITION

In **Romans 5:15–19**, Paul gets to the **core of his explanation** that our assurance of salvation is based upon our union with Christ.

He does that, broadly, with **two arguments**:

1. **The Contrast Between Adam and Christ (15–17)**
2. **The Comparison Between Adam and Christ (18–19)**

⁶ Ibid., 266.

1. THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST (15–17)

Picking up Paul's argument, we remember that he spent **verses 12–14** explaining that all who are “in Adam” are condemned because

his **representative headship brought sin and death** to all his descendants.

This introduced the **doctrine of original sin** to us, and we learnt that when Paul said that “**all sinned**,” he meant both that **Adam's guilt** for his one act of sin was imputed to us all, and that **Adam's corruption** of a sin nature was passed on to us all.

In other words, “**all sinned**” means “all people sinned **in and with** Adam.”⁷

Paul's purpose in conveying this bleak message of our condemnation in Adam was not to get into the finer details of original sin, but rather to **introduce the concept of representative headship**.

Adam's headship becomes the clearest and most compelling way he can **explain Christ's headship** which, again, **is the basis of our assurance**.

⁷ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 182.

This line of reasoning becomes apparent when, at the end of **verse 14**, Paul writes that Adam “**is a type of Him who was to come.**”

By “**type**,” Paul means that there is a **pattern of correspondence** between Adam and Christ.

That is, there is a **similarity** between Adam and Christ.

But before he explains the similarity between these two, **Paul notes some of the differences.**

He points out the **contrasts between Adam and Christ.**

These differences boil down to **one big idea**—
“In Christ,” **God deals with people on the basis of grace.**

But Paul elaborates on that big idea by drawing out **three contrasts** between the **two representative heads.**

a. Adam brings judgement but Christ brings grace

The contrast is evident as Paul writes in **verse 15**—

¹⁵ But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Here there is a **clear emphasis on grace** which comes through the headship of Christ.

You can see the repetition of ideas like “**the gracious gift**,” “**the grace of God**,” and “**the gift by the grace of the one Man**.”

Paul sets us up, however, to see the emphasis **shining even brighter against the dark backdrop** of Adam’s disastrous headship.

That contrast is what he establishes by his opening sentence, “**But the gracious gift is not like the transgression**.”

The “**gracious gift**” is the righteousness we receive through Christ’s obedience, which is the basis of justification.

The “**transgression**” is the first act of sin that Adam committed as he disregarded God’s prohibition and ate the fruit of the tree.

These two acts of the **respective heads** are very much **not alike**.

They are **contrasted by their effects**—Adam’s act brings **judgement** and Christ’s act brings **grace**.

We see, first, that Adam’s “**transgression**” brings death to those he represents.

But does this mean physical death or spiritual death?

We **shouldn’t try to drive a wedge** between the two, since they are inseparably linked.

Physical death is the **consequence of spiritual death**, and Adam is the one through whom his descendants experience both.

Spiritual death is fundamentally **a state of separation from God**, caused by sin.⁸

To be spiritually dead is to be **alienated from God**, to have no vital relationship with Him.⁹

It is an act of God's judgement, as God Himself warned in **Genesis 2:17**—

¹⁷ **“But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

It foreshadows the final act of judgement which is final, endless separation from God, as **Revelation 21:8** says—

⁸ **But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**

But the good news of the gospel about which Paul is so enthusiastic is that the effect of Christ's act **reverses and surpasses** the effect of Adam's act.

Christ is a greater Adam because He is a greater representative who brings grace to all His people.

⁸ See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 559–560.

⁹ John W. Mahoney, “Why an Historical Adam Matters for a Biblical Doctrine of Sin,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* Volume 15, no. 1 (2011): 68.

The work of Christ is **much more significant**, since the good that He brings also **involves the undoing of the evil** brought by Adam.

We see Paul exult in the superiority of Christ's headship as he writes the emphatic words, "**much more.**"

So it is that Christ saves us from the judgement of God and brings us into the grace of God.

It is important that you notice Paul's use of the **concept established in Isaiah.**

The grace of God and the gift by the grace Christ "**abound to the many.**"

"In Christ," there is now grace for "an innumerable family from every nation, including Israel, which constitutes God's elect people."

In short, Jesus accomplishes salvation from God's judgement and secures the abundance of God's grace **for all who are united to Him.**

Now, this "**grace**" is not merely undeserved favour.

It is also a **power that reverses** the consequences of Adam's sin.

It abounds and overflows to such an extent that it **triumphs over what Adam introduced** into the world.

As a result, all who are united to Christ can be certain that **sin and death will never triumph over them.**

The two great enemies of sin and death have been **decisively defeated** by Jesus Christ so that we can enjoy **assurance of salvation**.¹⁰

b. Adam brings condemnation but Christ brings justification

Paul continues with a **second contrast** between Adam and Christ, as he writes in **verse 16**—

16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the gracious gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Here Paul **focusses on the results** of the actions of these two representative heads.

The result of Adam's transgression was judgement, leading to **"condemnation."**

The result of Christ's obedience was grace, leading to **"justification."**

As we understand the terms, **"condemnation"** refers to the **guilty verdict** which God pronounces over those "in Adam."

¹⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, Second Edition, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 289–290.

The condemnation thus leads to the **ultimate end of damnation**.

Paul clearly understands “**condemnation**” and “**justification**” to be opposites, and so we understand that “**justification**” refers to the **verdict of “not guilty,” or “righteous”** which God pronounces over those “in Christ.”

One theologian put it succinctly when he wrote that,
“*the foundation for the doctrine of justification... lies in the corporate unity of Christ and His own.*”¹¹

As we heard earlier, we **understand it more fully** to be—
“*that benefit of our union with Christ, in His life, death, and resurrection, in which God declares us to be righteous through the forgiveness of our sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.*”

Paul, however, has by this time in his epistle already introduced both concepts, and especially that of “**justification**,” so his point is **not to elaborate on the details** of the concepts,
but to **contrast them as the results** of Adam and Christ’s works.

The contrast is especially pronounced because, as Paul writes, Adam’s work involved “**one transgression**,” but Christ’s gracious work overcame “**many transgressions**.”

¹¹ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 169, in Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ*, 396.

So Christ's work is greater because He delivers His chosen people from the condemnation of their many offences.

In this context, Paul is not referring to the “**many transgressions**” of Adam, but those that are produced by our corrupted sin natures as we sin personally as individuals.

While we might wonder if the number of transgressions that God's elect are guilty of **might hinder His grace**, we see the glorious superiority of grace as it **triumphs over a flood of sin**.

As **one commentator** wrote—

“That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable:

that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension.”¹²

And so the **contrast highlights the superiority** of Christ as our representative head.

Adam made a mess, and **Christ not only cleaned up the mess** but gives believing sinners a **righteous status** before God.

¹² C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 286.

c. Adam brings death but Christ brings life

Paul continues in his argument and **provides the ground** upon which he can make his previous claim.

At the same time, he provides us with a **third contrast** between Adam and Christ, as he writes in **verse 17**—

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

How can Paul say that all who are **represented by Adam** are condemned and all who are **represented by Christ** are justified?

The evidence for **universal condemnation** is the **reign of death** over all people “in Adam,”

and the evidence for the **gift of righteousness** is the **reigning in life** that becomes a reality through Jesus Christ.¹³

In other words, **Christ more than cancels the effects** of Adam’s sin—

He enables those who have received the “**abundance of grace**” and “**the gift of righteousness**” not just to experience life but to “**reign in life**.”

How are we to understand what Paul means by “**reigning in life**”?

We find the answer in the contrast with death’s reign.

¹³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 291.

Just as Adam's sin brought **universal spiritual death** to all his descendants, we understand that Christ's obedience brings **spiritual life** to all those He is united to as their Head.

As Paul writes in **Ephesians 2:5**—

⁵ **even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved**

So it is that Paul will write shortly after this section, in **Romans 6:4**—

⁴ **Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Furthermore, as spiritual death leads to physical death and, finally, eternal death, so too **those who are united to Christ reign in life now and will reign fully** in the eschatological future.

But that means that **believers already reign in life**, as they are united with Christ, who has **defeated sin and death**.

So when Paul speaks of “**reigning in life**” thought Jesus Christ, he isn't primarily referring to our rule over the world but to our dominion over sin, which is precisely what he elaborates on in **chapter six**.¹⁴

¹⁴ See Ardel B. Caneday, “Already Reigning in Life through One Man: Recovery of Adam's Abandoned Dominion (Romans 5:12–21),” in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles: Essays in Honor of Douglas J. Moo*, ed. Matthew S. Harmon and Jay E. Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 27–43.

Therefore, **both in a present sense and a future, ultimate sense**, Adam brings death to his people whereas **Christ gloriously brings life to His people.**

These three contrasts between Adam and Christ highlight the reality that your **relationship with God is determined** by the one who represents you.

Since the contrasts establish the **superiority of Christ's representation**, it is already clear that those who are united to Him should have **full assurance of their salvation.**

But Paul has not yet explained **THE COMPARISON BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST**—

2. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST (18–19)

As Paul continues, he certainly **does not let up on the contrasts** between Adam and Christ.

If anything, the contrasts are **heightened and intensified** as Paul draws out the inference of all that he has explained thus far.

But Paul does now finally come to elaborating on the pattern of correspondence between Adam and Christ when he called Adam “**a type of Him who was to come**” in **verse 14.**

This positive comparison between the two representative heads is found in the **single acts that each performed** and the **results** that flowed from each act—

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

We have already considered what Paul means by “**condemnation**” and “**justification**,” so we can focus on the point Paul is making.

Those who are “in Adam” receive the **divine sentence of judgement** and those who are “in Christ” receive the **divine declaration of righteousness**.

But what do these heads do so that all those they represent experience these results?

The “**type**” that Paul referred to is the **correspondence** between each head performing a **single, decisive act**.

For Adam, the single act that would impact his people was, as Paul says, his “**one transgression**.”

We understand well by now that Paul has been laser focussed on **Adam’s first sin**—

his wilful act of defiance and disobedience to the one command that Yahweh had given him.

Adam would have, like all of us, continued to sin in various ways because he too received a **corrupted sin nature**.

But it was that one sin, that **single transgression**, in which Adam represented us all so that his **guilt is imputed to us**.

Imputation refers to the **reckoning or placing to a person's account** the **merit or guilt** that belongs to him on the basis of either his personal performance or of that of his representative head.¹⁵

The result of Adam's single act, as Paul states, is "**condemnation to all men**" because his guilt is imputed to all those he represented.

Paul then explicitly points to the positive comparison, or pattern of correspondence, as he says, "**even so**."

Similarly to Adam, for Christ the single act that would impact His people was, as Paul writes, his "**one act of righteousness**."

What was this "**one act of righteousness**"?

It is critical to note that Paul does not refer to Christ's perfect life of righteousness, though He certainly did live a life of sinless perfection.

Rather, Paul refers to a singular "act of righteousness" by which he is clearly thinking of a **single manifestation of Christ's obedience to His Father**.

¹⁵ Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Belfast; Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002), 225.

Simply, Paul is referring to **Christ's obedience to the Father's will** to **die on a Roman cross**.¹⁶

As Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:8**—

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

It was this single act of obedience that was the basis of our justification.

This is affirmed, again, by what Paul wrote earlier in **verses 8–9**—

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Paul actually uses a more **elaborate description** of the **result of Christ's single act**—“**justification of life**.”

Here Paul is referring to “**life**” as a **consequence of being justified**.

That is, Paul is referring to Christ's obedience on the cross that results in “**justification**” for all those He represents, which then **further results** in “**life**.”

So Paul highlights the **glorious superiority of Christ's representation** by explaining that the work of the Christ

¹⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 184. See also, Schreiner, *Romans*, 292.

does not merely return human beings to the state of Adam prior to his sin.

Those “in Christ” now enjoy a legal standing before God of righteousness—**not their own, but that of their Head.**

Because of our union with Christ, we are counted righteous before God **and** enjoy the life of the age to come.

But as Paul describes this benefit coming “**all men**,”
does this not imply universalism?

In other words, is Paul teaching that “**all men**” are **justified and will enjoy a final salvation** because of Christ’s work on the cross?

The answer is a resounding, “No!”

Paul is not teaching universalism, for at least **three simple and clear reasons**:

First, the context of Romans is clear that not all will be saved.

In **chapter two**, Paul has already referred to those who reject the gospel and will, therefore, be judged by God to receive “**wrath and anger**” as he says in **verse 8**.

Second, the context of the previous verse, **Romans 5:17**, makes it clear that grace and righteousness belong only to those who “**receive**” them.

That is, God only justifies those who receive the gracious gift through faith, as even **verse 1** affirms that we are **“justified by faith.”**

Third, the context of the following verse which explains what Paul means in this verse makes it clear that **“all men”** is synonymous with **“the many.”**

Here we see the **critical importance** of the **theological background we find in Isaiah.**

As Paul **follows the ideas he found in Isaiah**, he did not intend to communicate universalism, but rather “all men” are **all those whom Christ represents.**

Mike Riccardi explains—

“It is this concept of corporate solidarity, or representative headship, by means of union between the head and the body, that explains Paul’s use of universalistic language...

The one-for-all motif does not indicate absolute universality, but corporate solidarity between the one and the many, signalling that the actions of a single ‘one’ affect the ‘all’ whom he represents.”¹⁷

Once more, this is the *“innumerable family from every nation, including Israel, which constitutes God’s elect people, for whom redemption is both accomplished and applied.”*

¹⁷ Michael Riccardi, *To Save Sinners: A Critical Evaluation of the Multiple Intentions View of the Atonement* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2023), 185.

This is clarified and confirmed, as we've just noted, by the **next verse**—

¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were appointed sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be appointed righteous.

Here we see, clearly, the doctrine of imputation as the work of the representative **results in the changed status** of those he represents.

For those “in Adam,” his “**disobedience**” results in their being “**appointed sinners**.”

For those “in Christ,” His “**obedience**” results in their being “**appointed righteous**.”

So as Paul has now comprehensively argued, **sinner**s **can have the status of being righteous** because they are **united to Christ as their representative**—
it is “a representative union.”

As **one author** puts it, “*It is clear that being righteous before God is intrinsically related to union with Christ.... It is primarily a representative union, with a believer being incorporated into Christ and identified as such by God and so partaking of all Christ's benefits.*”¹⁸

Verse 19 is the **clearest allusion** to the **Isaiah's Song of the Suffering Servant**.¹⁹

¹⁸ Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 195.

¹⁹ Affirmed by Schreiner, *Romans*, 293.

We can clearly see the impact of **Isaiah 53:11** on Paul's thinking—

¹¹ **As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.**

We have noted a number of times already that your **relationship with God is determined** by the one who represents you.

When that representative head is Jesus Christ, then **His glorious superiority as the representative** of His people is seen in all that He accomplishes on their behalf.

Christ not only reverses all that Adam did by bringing condemnation to all people, **but He surpasses Adam** as He defeated sin and death to bring righteousness and life to all those who are united to Him.

This becomes the **basis of our assurance of salvation**, for surely we can see that with Christ as our representative, **He could never fail to complete His saving work** of making us right with God in order to reconcile us to Him.

He has triumphed over our enemies of sin and death so they have no power over us in the final judgement.

CONCLUSION

While it is true that this section of Romans is **the most difficult in all his writings**, it also **richly rewards us with a deeper understanding of the gospel**.

As Paul has both **contrasted** Adam and Christ, as well as **compared** the two representative heads, we learn to **base our assurance of salvation** upon our union with Christ.

The superiority of Christ as our representative should fill us with **hope and confidence** as we look forward to the final judgement.

We can now understand why Paul would give up everything, as he writes in **Philippians 3:9**, to—

⁹ be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith.

So friend, as Paul would say to you, **cling to Christ** and **find your assurance, like your righteousness**, “in Him.”

Let your heart resonate with the words of
Charles Wesley’s hymn—

*Jesus, Thou art my Righteousness,
For all my sins were Thine:
Thy death hath bought of God my peace,
Thy life hath made Him mine.*

[PTO]

*Forever here my rest shall be,
Close to Thy bleeding side;
This all my hope, and all my plea:
For me the Saviour died.²⁰*

²⁰ https://hymnary.org/text/jesus_thou_art_my_righteousness

BENEDICTION

*Now may God be your exceeding joy,
Christ your unfailing hope,
and the Spirit your unfailing comforter,
in all your worship and work and troubles
until Jesus comes.
Amen.²¹*

²¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *Grace Be with You: Benedictions from Dale Ralph Davis*, New Edition (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2019), 41.