**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe**
**Romans 5:12–21 | Adult Bible Study – Week 8**

**From Separation to New Life** **November 4/5, 2026**

**Big Idea:**
Romans 5:12–21 helps us see salvation as more than forgiveness for individual sins. Paul describes two ways of life: one shaped by Adam, sin, and death, and the other shaped by Christ, grace, and life.

### 1. The Big Picture: Two Reigning Powers

Paul moves from how a person is made right with God to the larger conflict between sin and death and grace and life. Salvation gives both a new standing before God and a new way of living under Christ's rule.

**Listen for**: Which power is shaping the way I live—fear and self-protection, or the grace of Christ?

**My Notes**: _____

### 2. The Environment of Adam: A Broken Inheritance

The redlined-city illustration shows how people can inherit a damaged environment they did not create. Adam represents humanity's shared pattern of mistrust, rebellion, fear, exclusion, and self-interest. We are shaped by broken systems and also add our own choices to them.

**Key balance**: Inherited brokenness does not erase personal responsibility; it shows why we need rescue, forgiveness, and a new source of life.

**My Notes**: _____

### 3. The Environment of Christ: A New Community of Grace

Jesus begins rebuilding life within the old, damaged world. His obedience, welcome, compassion, truth, self-giving love, cross, and resurrection reveal a new pattern of human life. Christ forms a community that repairs harm, shares resources, crosses boundaries, and welcomes people into God's restored family.

**Example to remember**: One truthful, generous, accountable person can begin changing the culture of a fearful workplace.

**My Notes**: _____

### 4. Adam and Christ: Two Stories of Humanity

Romans 5:18–19 contrasts one man's trespass and disobedience with one man's righteousness and obedience. Adam represents humanity turned inward; Christ represents humanity turned toward God in trust. The two stories are not equal—Christ's gift outweighs Adam's trespass.

**Key idea**: Salvation changes where we belong and whom we follow: from the rule of sin and death into the rule of grace and life.

**My Notes**: _____

**5. The Law Reveals the Problem but Cannot Heal It**

Sin and death were already at work before the Law of Moses. The Law names wrongdoing and brings it into the light, like a building inspector identifying a cracked foundation or a speed-limit sign revealing that a driver is going too fast. A warning can reveal the problem, but it cannot repair the foundation or change the heart.

**Key distinction**: The Law is good and necessary, but it is not the cure.

**My Notes**: _____

**6. "Much More" Grace**

In Romans 5:15–17, grace does more than balance sin's damage or reset humanity to zero. God's grace exceeds, overcomes, and eclipses the reach of sin and death. Grace is not scarce; receiving it does not leave less for someone else.

**Consider:** Where do people fear there is "not enough"—time, money, patience, forgiveness, opportunity, or love?

**My Notes**: _____

**7. Justification: Welcomed Before We Perform**

Because of Christ, God declares sinners right with him, restores the relationship, and gives them a place in the family. This welcome is not a reward for finally becoming good enough; it is the starting point of a changed life. We do not obey to persuade God to love us—we learn obedience because we are already loved.

**Everyday meaning:** Our identity rests in God's welcome rather than career, success, control, church service, or other people's approval.

**My Notes:** _____

**8. Grace in Everyday Life**

Grace changes how we see ourselves, other people, and the world. It frees us to admit failure, receive forgiveness, show mercy, resist greed and exclusion, and build communities marked by generosity, courage, reconciliation, and love.

**Practice this week:** (1) Notice the old map—fear, pride, resentment, or the need to prove yourself. (2) Receive grace—remember that your worth rests in God's love. (3) Redraw one small part of the city—choose welcome, fairness, forgiveness, or hope.

**My Notes**: _____

**9. Closing Reflection: Which Rule Will Shape Me?**

Identify where you feel the pressure of Adam's old environment. Then ask what trusting the rule of grace would look like in that same place. Romans 5 announces that sin and death are real, but they will not win; in Jesus Christ, grace rules.

**Reflection prompts**: Where do I need to tell the truth, ask for help, release a grudge, welcome someone overlooked, or accept that I am loved before every problem is solved?

**My Notes**: _____

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Paul describes sin and death as reigning powers and grace as a greater power. Where do we see these powers at work in everyday life, and what helps us tell the difference between them?

2. What does Adam represent in Romans 5:12–21? How might our different experiences shape the way we understand inherited brokenness and personal responsibility?

3. What are some common ways fear, pride, or self-protection shape people's responses? What could living under Christ's rule of grace look like in those situations?

4. Why can God's Law reveal sin but not heal the human heart? What examples have you seen of rules helping people—and where do rules fall short without grace?

5. Paul says grace is "much more" powerful than sin. What makes that claim difficult to believe when we face deep failure, injustice, or damaged relationships? What gives you hope that grace can be greater than the harm?

6. How would members of the group explain justification in their own words? How might being welcomed by God before we perform change the way people handle success, failure, or comparison?

7. Where do we see a scarcity mindset—the belief that there is not enough time, money, patience, forgiveness, opportunity, or love? How could trust in God's abundant grace reshape a person's choices?

8. If Christ creates a community marked by welcome, truth, generosity, and reconciliation, what might that community look like in a family, church, neighborhood, or workplace? Which quality is most needed in your setting?

9. Romans 5 declares that grace, not sin and death, will have the final word. How does that hope speak differently to each of us, and what is one way our group could make that hope visible this week?

*Notes by The Rev. Janice Cook, Executive Associate Pastor at The Village Church, RSF*
*Primary Source: Romans, Interpretation Commentary, Paul Achtemeier*

*Other Sources: The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary: Fitzmyer, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Hermenia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*