

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

HAMARTIOLOGY

The Doctrine of Sin

The Catastrophe from Which the Gospel Rescues Us

UNIT 9: CONCLUSION — THE GRAVITY OF SIN AND THE GLORY OF GRACE THE DARK CANVAS AND THE MASTERPIECE OF GRACE

Lesson 24

Where Sin Increased, Grace Abounded All the More

The Doctrine of Sin as the Dark Canvas on Which the Gospel Shines

*Hamartiology Is Not the Final Word — It Is the Penultimate Word That Makes the Final Word
Unutterably Glorious*

“The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” — Romans 5:20

Key Texts: Romans 5:20; Ephesians 2:4–10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 6:1–2; Titus 2:11–14

“The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:20–21, NASB 1995

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Introduction

This is the final lesson of the Hamartiology series: twenty-four lessons, nine units, and the most comprehensive, most demanding, and most personally confronting study in the entire curriculum. The subject has been sin, not sin as the culture likes to discuss it (failure, dysfunction, mistake, brokenness) but sin as the Scripture relentlessly and precisely insists on describing it: rebellion against the infinitely holy Creator, the violation of the most fundamental obligation the creature bears to the God who made her, the catastrophe that has ruined the human nature, enslaved the human will, corrupted the human heart, fractured the human community, subjected the entire creation to futility and decay, and earned for every member of Adam's race nothing but spiritual death, physical death, and eternal condemnation.

Twenty-three lessons have traced this catastrophe in exhaustive detail. Unit 1 established why the doctrine of sin must be taught and why the modern church's avoidance of it produces the specific theological consequences of a diminished gospel and a diminished grace. Unit 2 examined the origin of sin in the Fall of Adam, the temptation, the transgression, and the immediate consequences that rippled outward from the garden to the entire created order. Unit 3 defined sin with theological precision, establishing the nature of sin as rebellion against divine law, the gravity of sin as measured by the infinite holiness of the God who is violated, and the universality of sin as the condition of every member of Adam's race without exception. Unit 4 addressed the transmission of original sin and its consequences for every person born into Adam's line. Unit 5 surveyed the total depravity of every human faculty in the unregenerate person, the spiritual effects of sin, the total inability of the corrupted nature, the radical corruption of the heart, and the bondage of the will. Unit 6 examined the bondage of the will in its full dimensions, from the Luther-Erasmus debate to Augustine's four states. Unit 7 surveyed the consequences of sin, spiritual death, physical death and suffering, and eternal death. Unit 8 addressed sin in the life of the believer, remaining sin, mortification, and the discipline of the Lord. And now Unit 9 brings the series to its doxological conclusion.

The governing text is Romans 5:20: "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." The verse is one of the most compressed and most theologically explosive sentences Paul ever wrote. The Greek *hyperperisseusen*, "abounded all the more", is a compound superlative of abundance that Paul reaches for nowhere else in quite this form: the grace does not merely equal the sin, does not merely cancel the sin, does not merely exceed the sin by a small margin. It superabounds. It hyperabounds. It exceeds the sin's increase by a measure that the ordinary grammar of abundance cannot contain and that only the grace of the infinite God can supply.

The structure of this final lesson mirrors the structure of the verse's theological movement: from the penultimate word (sin's devastating reality, summarized in its full weight from the preceding twenty-three lessons) to the ultimate word (the superabounding grace of God that answers it). Section I summarizes the full gravity of sin as the series has established it, everything that twenty-three lessons have demonstrated about how much worse sin is than any of us imagined when we began. Section II unfolds the glory of the grace that answers it, the "But God" of Ephesians 2:4, the double imputation of 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the cross as the specific meeting place where the full gravity of sin and the full glory of grace converge. Section III addresses the danger of antinomianism, the misuse of superabounding grace as a license for continued sinning, and the proper response to grace as motivation rather than license. Section IV looks forward from Hamartiology to Soteriology, from the disease to the cure, from the catastrophe to the rescue. Section V develops the specific form of doxology that a genuine encounter with the full doctrine of sin and the full doctrine of grace together produce. Section VI closes the series with the comprehensive, retrospective, wonder-producing recognition of what the series has accomplished and toward what the believer's entire life is now oriented.

The Hamartiology Series: A Complete Overview

Unit 1: Prolegomena, Why the Doctrine of Sin Matters

Lesson 1: The Unpopular Doctrine, Why the Church Must Teach About Sin
Lesson 2: Sin in the History of Doctrine, From the Garden to the Modern Denial

Unit 2: The Origin of Sin, The Fall of Adam

Lesson 3: The Temptation in the Garden, How Sin Entered the World
Lesson 4: The Fall and Its Immediate Consequences, Guilt, Shame, and the Broken Image
Lesson 5: The Covenant of Works, Adam as Federal Head and Representative
Lesson 6: The First Gospel, Genesis 3:15 and the Promise of a Redeemer

Unit 3: The Nature of Sin, What Sin Is

Lesson 7: Defining Sin, Transgression, Iniquity, and Missing the Mark
Lesson 8: The Gravity of Sin, Why Every Sin Is an Infinite Offense
Lesson 9: The Universality of Sin, All Have Sinned and Fall Short

Unit 4: Original Sin, Transmission and Federal Headship

Lesson 10: Original Sin, What Adam's Fall Did to the Human Race
Lesson 11: Theories of Transmission, Realism, Federalism, and the Reformed Position
Lesson 12: Total Depravity, What Sin Has Done to Every Human Faculty

Unit 5: Total Depravity, The Extent of the Fall

Lesson 13: The Spiritual Effects of Sin, Separation, Loss of Righteousness, and Guilt
Lesson 14: Total Inability, The Sinner's Utter Helplessness Before God
Lesson 15: The Radical Corruption of the Heart, Jeremiah 17:9 and Self-Deception

Unit 6: The Bondage of the Will

Lesson 16: Luther, Erasmus, and the Great Debate, The Bondage vs. the Freedom of the Will
Lesson 17: The Will in Each State of Humanity, Augustine's Four States

Unit 7: The Effects and Consequences of Sin

Lesson 18: Spiritual Death, Separation from God: The Gravest Consequence
Lesson 19: Physical Death, Suffering, and the Curse, The Visible Consequences
Lesson 20: Eternal Death, The Final Judgment and the Reality of Hell

Unit 8: Sin in the Life of the Believer

Lesson 21: Remaining Sin, Why Christians Still Struggle (Simul Justus et Peccator)
Lesson 22: The Mortification of Sin, Be Killing Sin, or It Will Be Killing You

Lesson 23: The Discipline of the Lord, The Loving Correction of a Faithful Father

Unit 9: Conclusion, The Gravity of Sin and the Glory of Grace

Lesson 24: Where Sin Increased, Grace Abounded All the More

I. The Full Gravity of Sin*Everything This Series Has Established About the Catastrophe*

Twenty-three lessons. The weight of what they have established is not a light burden to carry into this final lesson. Before the superabounding grace can be received at the depth it deserves, the full gravity of what it is answering must be held in its specific, comprehensive, undiminished weight. Lesson 1's opening proposition remains the doctrinal compass of the entire series: no one can understand the gospel who has not first understood the catastrophe. And so the final lesson begins, not with the grace, but with the full measure of the darkness against which the grace will shine.

Sin is deeper than we imagined. The casual cultural vocabulary of "mistake," "dysfunction," and "brokenness" does not approach the reality. Sin is the creature's fundamental act of rebellion against the Creator who made her, the violation of the most foundational obligation in the entire moral universe, the deliberate turning away from the infinite God whose face is the source of all good and toward the created world as the substitute object of the love and trust that belong to God alone. It is not a mistake (which implies inadequate information or skill); it is a transgression (which names the deliberate crossing of an established boundary). It is not dysfunction (which implies a system operating below its design capacity); it is depravity (which names the corruption of the system at its deepest level). It is not brokenness (which evokes the passive suffering of a creature subjected to forces beyond her control); it is guilt (which names the objective moral liability of a creature who has violated the law she knows and is accountable for).

Sin is more pervasive than we knew. Total depravity is not the claim that every person is as wicked as she could possibly be; it is the claim that sin has touched every faculty, corrupted every capacity, and redirected every affection of the fallen human person away from the God for whom she was made and toward the self and the world as substitute objects of the love and trust that God alone deserves. The mind is darkened (Ephesians 4:18); the heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9); the will is enslaved (John 8:34); the conscience is suppressed (Romans 1:18–20); and even the acts that appear most virtuous in the unregenerate person's life are tainted by the fundamental misdirection of the nature from which they flow. No faculty escaped; no dimension of the human constitution remained untouched; no corner of the person's existence was preserved from the corruption that the Fall introduced.

Sin is more deadly than we feared. The wages of sin is death, not merely physical death (though that too), but spiritual death first, then physical death as its consequence, and eternal death as its ultimate terminus. Every unregenerate person is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), not weakened, not struggling, not seeking, but dead. Unable to perceive spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:14), unable to please God (Romans 8:8), unable to come to Christ (John 6:44), and unable even to know the danger of the trajectory they are on (Proverbs 14:12). And beyond the spiritual death of the present age is the eternal death of Revelation 20:14–15: the lake of fire, the second death, the permanent, irrevocable, fully conscious separation from the presence and glory of the God against whom the sin was committed. Sin does not merely inconvenience the sinner; it destroys her. And it earns her nothing but the judgment she deserves.

This is the full weight of the penultimate word. Not a partial account, not a softened version, not a doctrine trimmed to cultural sensitivity. The full, devastating, comprehensively biblical account of sin's depth,

pervasiveness, and deadliness, held in its full weight, without minimization, without explanation away. This is what the series has established. And now: the grace that exceeds it.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:23–24, NASB 1995

II. The Full Glory of Grace

The ‘But God’ That Answers the Penultimate Word

A. Ephesians 2:4–5, The Pivot of Redemptive History

The specific theological pivot from the penultimate word of Hamartiology to the ultimate word of the gospel is the two-word declaration of Ephesians 2:4: “But God.” Verses 1–3 have laid out the full Hamartiological account with the precision of a master diagnostician: dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, by nature children of wrath. This is everything the series has established, the spiritual death, the enslaved will, the corrupt nature, the deserved condemnation, compressed into three verses of apostolic prose. And then: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.”

Every element of Ephesians 2:4–5’s provision is calibrated to the specific elements of the Hamartiological diagnosis it addresses. Dead in transgressions, made alive. Walking according to the world’s pattern, now walking according to the Spirit’s leading (Romans 8:4). Following the prince of the power of the air, now transferred to the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Colossians 1:13). By nature children of wrath, now adopted as children of the Father whose wrath has been propitiated by the Son (Romans 5:9–10; 1 John 4:10). The grace that answers the specific diagnoses of Hamartiology is not a generic divine benevolence but the specific, targeted, comprehensively adequate provision of the God who knows exactly what the disease is and who has provided exactly the cure it requires.

The “even when we were dead” of verse 5 is the specific temporal qualifier that locates the divine initiative on the Hamartiological side of the pivot: the making-alive did not occur after the first stirrings of spiritual life, after the first signs of human seeking, after some preliminary movement of the human will toward God. It occurred while the condition was death. The God of Ephesians 2:4–5 did not wait for the dead to show signs of life before He gave life; He acted unilaterally, sovereignly, and mercifully while the condition was exactly what the preceding three verses describe. This is the specific character of superabounding grace: it does not wait for the sinner to improve before it reaches down; it reaches down precisely into the depth of the sinner’s worst condition and produces the life that the death-condition could not produce from its own resources.

B. 2 Corinthians 5:21, The Double Imputation

The specific mechanism by which the superabounding grace addresses the full weight of sin is the double imputation that 2 Corinthians 5:21 announces with breathtaking compression: “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” The first half names the specific movement of the first imputation: our sin was laid upon the One who was entirely without it. The weight of every specific transgression documented in this series, every act of rebellion, every expression of total depravity, every manifestation of the enslaved will’s constitutive orientation away from God, was imputed, credited, reckoned to the account of the One who had no sin of His own to bear. The weight fell entirely on Him. The wages that the sin had earned were paid by the One who had not incurred them.

The second half names the equally breathtaking movement of the second imputation: we became the righteousness of God in Him. Not merely acquitted (the removal of the sin’s charge) but invested with the specific positive righteousness of the God in whose name the imputation is made. The person who stands before the divine tribunal after the double imputation stands not merely in a condition of moral neutrality (the sin’s charge

removed) but in the condition of the complete, permanent, wholly unearned righteousness of God Himself. The deepest pit of Hamartiology, the infinite debt incurred by the infinite offense against the infinite God, is answered by the highest height of Soteriology: the infinite righteousness of the infinite God credited to the account of the finite sinner. Where sin earned death, grace earns the righteousness of God. This is the gospel, and this is why Hamartiology is not the end of the story.

The cross is the specific meeting place where the full gravity of sin and the full glory of grace converge. At the cross, sin demanded death, and grace provided a Substitute who died. Justice demanded payment, and mercy provided a Payer who paid in full. The wrath of the infinite God against the infinite offense of infinite sin was poured out on the infinite Person whose infinite suffering was of infinite value, making the payment at once perfectly just and infinitely sufficient. And from the cross flows the superabounding grace of Romans 5:20: not because sin has been minimized or its gravity diminished, but because the penalty has been maximally and completely discharged by the One whose infinite worth makes His finite suffering of infinite value.

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB 1995

III. Grace Is Not License

Romans 6:1–2 and the Proper Response to Superabounding Grace

The specific theological danger of Romans 5:20’s doctrine of superabounding grace is the antinomian conclusion that Paul himself anticipates in Romans 6:1: “Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase?” The question is not a straw man; it is the logical conclusion that a superficial reading of Romans 5:20 might seem to invite. If every increase in sin produces a corresponding superabundance of grace, and if the grace that abounds is the greater wonder, might not the most grace-magnifying life be the most sinning life? Paul’s response is the strongest possible Greek expression of horrified rejection: *mē genoito*, “May it never be!”, a phrase so emphatic that some translations render it “God forbid!” The suggestion is not merely theologically wrong; it is morally and spiritually monstrous.

The specific theological reason for Paul’s vehement rejection is the doctrine of union with Christ that Romans 6:3–8 develops: “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” The person who is in Christ has died to sin, not merely been forgiven of sin but co-crucified with the One who bore sin’s penalty on the cross. The new nature that the Spirit’s regenerating work has created genuinely desires God and genuinely opposes sin; the person who uses the doctrine of superabounding grace as an excuse for continued sinning has not understood the grace, because the grace that saves is simultaneously the grace that transforms. It is not merely an accounting adjustment (sin credited to Christ, righteousness credited back) with no effect on the nature of the person in whom the accounting has occurred; it is the specific, transforming power that produces the new creation of 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Titus 2:11–12 provides Paul’s positive formulation of grace’s character as motivation rather than license: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” The grace that has appeared is not the grace that indulges the continued expression of the ungodliness and worldly desires it has appeared to address; it is the grace that is actively instructing, forming, redirecting, and empowering the believer toward the specific denial of ungodliness and the specific cultivation of godliness that the new nature’s genuine desires now pursue. The proper response to superabounding grace is not the presumption that leverages it for continued sinning but the gratitude that is overwhelmed by what the grace has done and the love that responds to what the grace has revealed.

The Hamartiology series has established every reason why the believer who has genuinely received the full weight of both the penultimate word (the catastrophe of sin) and the ultimate word (the superabounding grace) will not

use the grace as license. The person who has genuinely understood what the double imputation cost, what the infinite suffering of the infinite Person bore so that the full weight of the sin's penalty could be discharged, is the person least likely to treat the grace that flows from that suffering as a convenient permission slip for the specific, named, devastating sins that the suffering was bearing. The cross seen in its full weight produces not complacency but the loving, wonder-driven, Spirit-empowered pursuit of holiness that Titus 2:14's "zealous for good deeds" describes.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age."

Titus 2:11–12, NASB 1995

IV. From Hamartiology to Soteriology

The Forward Look: From the Catastrophe to the Rescue

Hamartiology is not a self-contained doctrinal enterprise; it is the necessary prelude to Soteriology. The doctrine of sin is the diagnosis that makes the gospel the cure, the darkness that makes the light visible at its full intensity, the depth of the pit that makes the height of the rescue proportionally glorious. Every lesson in this series has been, in the deepest sense, a preparation for what comes next: the Soteriology that will unfold the specific, comprehensive, gloriously adequate provision of God's sovereign grace for the specific, comprehensive, devastatingly serious problem that Hamartiology has established.

The forward look of 1 Corinthians 15:22 provides the eschatological horizon toward which the entire movement from Hamartiology to Soteriology is oriented: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." The series has traced the full weight of "as in Adam all die", the covenantal transmission of sin and death, the total depravity of the fallen nature, the bondage of the enslaved will, the triple death (spiritual, physical, eternal) that sin has earned. The Soteriology that follows will unfold the full glory of "so also in Christ all will be made alive": the effectual calling that creates faith in the spiritually dead, the justification that credits the believer with the righteousness of God, the adoption that transfers the child of wrath into the family of the heavenly Father, the sanctification that progressively conforms the new nature to the image of Christ, the perseverance that ensures the arrival at the destination that Philippians 1:6's "until the day of Christ Jesus" names, and the glorification that completes the transformation that the Spirit began.

The Adam-Christ typology that grounds both the Hamartiology and the Soteriology is the specific structure of the biblical narrative that makes both doctrines intelligible in their full depth. The same covenantal logic that made Adam's transgression the source of universal death for all who were in him makes Christ's obedience and resurrection the source of universal life for all who are in Him. Romans 5:15–17's insistence that the gift is not like the transgression, "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" (NASB 1995), is the specific Pauline claim that the provision exceeds the problem by the specific measure of the infinite grace of the infinite God that the one Man's obedience has opened. The much more of verse 15 is the specific grammatical expression of the superabounding grace of Romans 5:20: the gift is greater than the transgression by the specific, immeasurable measure of the difference between the first Adam's guilty act and the Last Adam's perfectly righteous obedience.

The student who arrives at the end of this series and who turns to the Soteriology that follows does not turn to an unrelated subject; she turns to the specific provision for the specific problem she has been studying for twenty-four lessons. Every facet of the Soteriology, every doctrine of grace, every aspect of the Spirit's applying work, every dimension of the believer's inheritance in Christ, is the specific gospel answer to a specific Hamartiological problem. The effectual calling answers the total inability. The regeneration answers the spiritual death. The justification answers the guilt and condemnation. The adoption answers the status as children of wrath. The sanctification answers the remaining sin and the ongoing battle with the flesh. The glorification answers the body of death that Romans 7:24 mourns and that the new creation of Revelation 21 promises to replace. From the

diagnosis to the cure, from the catastrophe to the rescue, from the depths of human ruin to the heights of divine redemption, this is the movement that the study of Hamartiology has been preparing for throughout its entire length.

V. The Doxological Conclusion

To Know the Depth of Your Sin Is to Know the Height of God's Love

A. The Specific Doxology That Hamartiology Produces

The outline's closing statement is the most theologically and doxologically precise possible summary of what the entire series has been building toward: "To know the depth of your sin is to know the height of God's love, and to spend eternity marveling that the God against whom you sinned is the God who saved you, at the cost of His own Son, for the praise of His glorious grace." This is not a sentimental conclusion; it is a theologically calibrated one. The depth of the knowledge of sin is the specific measure of the height of the love's marvel. The person who has only a shallow understanding of her sin will have only a shallow appreciation of the grace that rescued her from it. The person who has gone deep into the Hamartiological account, who has genuinely confronted the full weight of total depravity, the bondage of the will, the three deaths, the gravity of the infinite offense against the infinite God, is the person whose encounter with the superabounding grace will produce the specific, proportional, overwhelming doxological wonder that the grace deserves.

Romans 11:33–36 is the model of this specific doxology. The passage comes immediately after Paul's most sustained treatment of the sovereignty of grace in salvation (Romans 9–11), and the doxology it produces is specifically proportional to the depth of the theological engagement that preceded it: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." The specific wonder of the passage is the wonder of one who has genuinely engaged the full depth of the question, of sin's devastation and grace's response, of human ruin and divine rescue, of the depths from which the gospel saves and the heights to which it brings, and who has arrived at the specific experiential recognition that the wisdom and knowledge and ways of the God who accomplishes this are not merely impressive but are unfathomable, unsearchable, and utterly beyond any human reckoning.

The specific form of the doxology that Hamartiology produces is the doxology of Ephesians 1:6: "to the praise of the glory of His grace." Grace needs the darkness of Hamartiology to display its full glory. The canvas of the painting is the darkness of sin's full devastation; the light that the Soteriology paints against that canvas is the grace that superabounds over the sin's increase. Without the dark canvas, the light is beautiful but not overwhelming. With the full darkness of the Hamartiological canvas, with the total depravity and the bondage of the will and the three deaths and the gravity of the infinite offense, the light of the superabounding grace is the most magnificent display of the divine character that the universe has ever witnessed. And the appropriate response to witnessing it is the specific, wonder-producing, eternity-filling praise of Ephesians 1:6: to the praise of the glory of His grace.

B. Revelation 5:9–13, The Eternal Doxology of the Redeemed

The eschatological destination of the doxology that Hamartiology and Soteriology together produce is Revelation 5:9–13's vision of the redeemed before the throne of the Lamb who was slain: "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'" The new song is new because its singers are new: they are the redeemed, the persons who were dead in trespasses and sins and who have been made alive together with Christ. They know what they were purchased from, the full weight of the Hamartiological account is the specific context of their song's wonder. And they know what they were purchased for, the specific, covenantal, blood-purchased relationship with the God who is their God and whose holiness they are being progressively conformed to.

The song is not merely grateful; it is doxologically precise. “Worthy are You” names the specific quality of the Lamb that makes the salvation glorious: not merely His willingness to save but His specific worthiness to accomplish it, His infinite dignity as the God-Man whose finite suffering was of infinite value, whose bearing of the sin’s penalty was both perfectly just and infinitely loving. And the “purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” is the specific, comprehensively inclusive scope of the redemption: the Hamartiological universality (“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23) is answered by the soteriological universality (“men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation”) of the Lamb’s blood-purchased redemption.

And then the crescendo of verses 12–13: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” This is the specific doxological terminus of the entire Hamartiology series and of the Soteriology that follows it: the eternal, all-encompassing, universe-filling worship of the God who created, the Lamb who redeemed, and the Spirit who applies, the triune God whose wisdom conceived the plan of redemption before the foundation of the world, whose love executed it at the cost of the Son’s life, and whose power applies it to the specific lives of specific people for the specific, eternal purpose of their participation in the divine holiness. The doctrine of sin, studied in its full depth and received in its full weight, produces, in the soul that has genuinely encountered the superabounding grace that answers it, this specific, Revelation-5-echoing, eternity-filling worship. To the depth of the sin and the height of the grace, to the darkness of the canvas and the brilliance of the light painted against it, to Him be the glory forever. Soli Deo Gloria.

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!... For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:33, 36, NASB 1995

VI. A Final Word to the Student of Hamartiology

What This Study Has Made You and Where It Is Sending You

You have spent twenty-four lessons in the company of one of the most uncomfortable, most confronting, most pastorally urgent doctrines in the entire Christian theological tradition. You have studied sin not as a theoretical exercise but as a personal confrontation with the specific condition of every human being who has ever lived, including yourself. You have encountered the full gravity of the offense, the full scope of the devastation, the full weight of the condemnation that the divine law pronounces on the sin of every member of Adam’s race. And you have arrived at the conclusion that the study was always pointing toward: the grace that superabounds over the sin’s full weight is the specific grace of the God who knew the full weight of the sin and bore it in the body of His Son at Calvary.

You are better equipped now for pastoral ministry than you were before this study. The person who comes to you in the grip of a besetting sin, overwhelmed by the weight of remaining corruption and wondering whether her ongoing struggle disproves her faith, you now have the doctrine of simul justus et peccator and the grief-as-evidence observation to offer her. The person who comes to you having minimized sin for years under the cultural vocabulary of dysfunction and brokenness, you now have the full Hamartiological account to offer him, delivered with the pastoral compassion of one who knows that the diagnosis is the necessary prelude to the prescription. The person who is suffering and wondering whether God has rejected her, you now have the discipline-punishment distinction and the “those whom I love I discipline” of Revelation 3:19. The unbeliever in your congregation who has never grasped the urgency of the gospel, you now have the full weight of total depravity, the bondage of the will, and the three deaths to lay before him, alongside the cross as the specific meeting place where the full weight of the sin and the full provision of the grace converge.

You have also been made more humble. The doctrine of sin, studied honestly and received personally, produces the specific humility of one who has confronted her own condition without the self-protective rationalizations that a more superficial engagement with the doctrine permits. You have seen total depravity not as a doctrine about other people but as a doctrine about the condition of the nature you inherited from Adam. You have seen the bondage of the will not as an abstract philosophical position but as the specific description of what your own pre-conversion condition was: dead, enslaved, blind, unable to come. You have seen the gravity of the infinite offense against the infinite God and have been confronted with the specific recognition that the sin the series has been describing is the sin that you have committed, not merely in some generic collective sense but specifically, personally, in your own life, with your own faculties, against the God who made you for Himself.

And you have been made more grateful. The specific wonder of Ephesians 2:4–5’s “But God... even when we were dead” is proportional to the depth of the “were dead” that the preceding verses have described. The specific wonder of Romans 8:1’s “there is now no condemnation” is proportional to the depth of the condemnation from which it declares the rescue. The specific wonder of the cross, the infinite Person bearing the infinite penalty of the infinite offense in the finite suffering of a mortal body, is proportional to the depth of the understanding of what the penalty was for and whose account it was discharging. Every lesson in this series has been, in the deepest sense, a preparation for the specific, proportional, wonder-producing gratitude of one who has genuinely understood what the grace has done.

Now go and preach the whole counsel of God, Hamartiology and Soteriology, the penultimate word and the ultimate word, the diagnosis and the cure, the catastrophe and the rescue. Preach sin in its full gravity, so that grace can be heard in its full glory. Preach the darkness of the canvas, so that the light can be seen at its full intensity. Preach the depth of the ruin, so that the height of the redemption can produce the specific, maximum, doxologically adequate wonder that the Revelation’s “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain” names as the redeemed’s eternal response to the God who, when sin increased, caused grace to abound all the more, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in the Beloved. Soli Deo Gloria.

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Revelation 5:12–13, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Hyperabounding Grace (Romans 5:20)	Paul's description in Romans 5:20 of the specific relationship between sin's increase and grace's response: "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." The word translated "abounded all the more" is the Greek <i>hyperperisseusen</i> (from <i>hyperperisseuō</i> , to superabound, to overflow beyond measure), a term Paul uses nowhere else in this form, suggesting a grammatical reaching for the superlative. The grace does not merely match the sin's increase; it exceeds it. Where sin measures depth in fathoms, grace measures height in immeasurable heavens. The theological significance is the specific claim that no accumulation of human sin can exhaust or exceed the grace of God that is available in Christ Jesus, not because sin is insignificant (the entire Hamartiology series has established that it is devastating) but because the infinite God's infinite grace is the specific match for and infinite exceeding of the infinite moral debt that sin has incurred.
The Double Imputation	The theological description of the specific mechanism of the atonement and justification: the double movement by which the believer's sin is imputed (credited, reckoned) to Christ on the cross and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:21 provides the most concentrated biblical statement: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (NASB 1995). The first imputation (our sin to Christ: "made Him... to be sin") is the specific mechanism by which God can be both just (the sin's full penalty was borne) and the justifier of those who believe (the penalty was borne by the Representative). The second imputation (Christ's righteousness to us: "we might become the righteousness of God in Him") is the specific mechanism by which the believer stands before the divine tribunal in a condition of complete, permanent, and wholly unearned righteousness. The double imputation is the specific meeting point of Hamartiology and Soteriology: it is the answer to the specific problem that the full doctrine of sin has established.
Hamartiology as Prelude to Soteriology	The specific pedagogical and theological relationship between the doctrine of sin (Hamartiology) and the doctrine of salvation (Soteriology): Hamartiology is not an end in itself but the necessary, indispensable prelude to Soteriology, the doctrinal preparation that makes the gospel's provision intelligible at its full depth. The person who does not understand the catastrophe cannot understand the rescue. The person who does not know that she is in Ephesians 2:1's condition ("dead in your trespasses and sins") cannot receive Ephesians 2:4–5's provision ("But God... made us alive") with the specific wonder and gratitude it deserves. The person who has not been confronted with Romans 3:10–18's indictment cannot fully receive Romans 8:1's acquittal as the specifically glorious word it is. Every lesson in the Hamartiology series has been, in this sense, a preparation for the Soteriology that follows: deepening the understanding of the problem precisely in order to magnify the glory of the provision.
Grace as License vs. Grace as Motivation	The specific antinomian error that Romans 6:1–2 anticipates and corrects: the misuse of the doctrine of grace's superabundance to justify continued or intensified sinning. Paul's anticipation of the objection ("Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase?", Romans 6:1) and his rhetorical recoil from it ("May it never be!", <i>mē genoito</i> , the strongest possible Greek expression of horrified rejection) establishes that the correct response to superabounding grace is not license (more sinning to produce more grace) but love (the godly sorrow over sin that the receipt of grace generates). The grace that abounds over sin is not the grace that indulges sin; it is the grace that transforms the believer so profoundly that the new nature's genuine desires oppose the sin with increasing vigor. Titus 2:11–12 provides the positive formulation: the grace of God that has appeared does not excuse the denial of ungodliness; it teaches the denial of ungodliness, "that... we should live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age."

Term	Definition
Penultimate and Ultimate	The specific theological relationship between Hamartiology and the gospel that the lesson's subtitle captures: Hamartiology is the penultimate word (the second-to-last) that makes the ultimate word (the last and final) unutterably glorious. The penultimate word is the full, comprehensive, devastating account of sin's depth, pervasiveness, and consequences that the Hamartiology series has traced across twenty-four lessons. It is genuinely the penultimate, not the final, word because it is not God's last word about the human situation. God's last word is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the gospel's glory is specifically proportional to the depth of the penultimate account it answers. The darker the canvas of sin, the more brilliantly the light of grace shines against it; the deeper the ruin of Hamartiology, the more glorious the rescue of Soteriology. The relationship is not incidental but essential: the gospel's full glory requires the full weight of the penultimate word that it is answering.
The "But God" of Ephesians 2:4	The two-word theological pivot of Ephesians 2:1–10 and, by extension, of the entire Hamartiology series: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ." Verses 1–3 are the penultimate word, the comprehensive account of the human condition in its Hamartiological fullness: dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, by nature children of wrath. And then: "But God." The two words are the specific pivot from Hamartiology to Soteriology, from the penultimate to the ultimate, from the diagnosis to the cure. Everything that the Hamartiology series has established about the depth of sin's devastation stands on one side of this pivot; everything that the Soteriology will unfold about the glory of the divine provision stands on the other. "But God" is the specific theological expression of the gospel's superabounding grace: the God who could simply have left the dead in their death has instead, in the specific, unilateral, sovereign, merciful initiative of infinite love, made the dead alive.
Grace Reigning Through Righteousness (Romans 5:21)	Paul's description of the ultimate end toward which the superabounding grace of Romans 5:20 is directed: "so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (NASB 1995). The parallel is between two reigns: sin reigned in death (the specific Hamartiological reality that the series has traced in exhaustive detail, the dominion of sin, the wages of death, the bondage of the will, the total depravity of the fallen nature); and grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life. The reign of grace is the soteriology that the series is moving toward: grace that is not merely a pardon but a power, not merely a cancellation of the death-sentence but a reign, an active, dynamic, transforming, eternal-life-producing sovereignty of God's grace in and through the lives of those whom Christ has redeemed. The grace that answers the reign of sin is not a passive alternative but an active counter-reign, prevailing over sin through the specific instrument of the righteousness that Christ has provided and that the Spirit is progressively applying.
For as in Adam, So Also in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22)	Paul's summary statement of the entire Adam-Christ typology in 1 Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." The verse is the most concentrated expression in the entire New Testament of the relationship between the Fall (Hamartiology) and the Redemption (Soteriology): the same covenantal structure that made Adam's transgression the source of universal death makes Christ's resurrection the source of universal life for all who are in Him. The "all die" is the scope of Hamartiology: every member of Adam's covenant community inherits the death that Adam's sin introduced. The "all will be made alive" is the scope of Soteriology: every member of Christ's covenant community receives the life that Christ's resurrection inaugurates. The series has traced the full weight of "as in Adam all die" across twenty-four lessons; the Soteriology series that follows will unfold the full glory of "so also in Christ all will be made alive."
Titus 2:11–14 and Grace's	Paul's description in Titus 2:11–14 of the specific character of the grace of God that the gospel announces: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us

Term	Definition
Transforming Power	to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Four specific dimensions of the grace are theologically significant: it appeared (the historical, incarnational specificity of the gospel event); it is instructing (the transforming, teaching, redirecting work of grace in the believer’s character); it is oriented toward the blessed hope (the eschatological horizon that gives present holiness its direction); and it is aimed at a purified people zealous for good deeds (the specific positive goal of the redemption that the Hamartiology has established the need for). The grace that answers sin’s devastation is not merely pardon; it is power, transformation, and the production of the very character that sin had corrupted.
The Doxological Terminus of Hamartiology	The specific form of doxology that a complete, honest, theologically rigorous study of the doctrine of sin produces in the soul that has genuinely received it: the specific wonder of one who has understood the full depth of what she was rescued from and the full height of the love that accomplished the rescue. Romans 11:33–36’s eruption of praise, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!... For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen”, is the model of the specifically Hamartiological doxology: the praise of a person who has confronted the specific depth and the specific breadth and the specific devastation of sin, and who has found that the wisdom and the knowledge and the grace of God are specifically, personally, inexhaustibly greater than all of it. The deeper the student of Hamartiology has gone into the darkness of sin’s reality, the higher the doxological eruption that a genuine encounter with the superabounding grace will produce.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that the superabounding grace of Romans 5:20 is specifically and personally addressed to the specific depth of sin that this series has established in our own lives. Not merely the generic sin of humanity but the specific, named, personally confronted corruption of the specific nature we have been studying, the depravity that has touched every faculty, the bondage that characterized the will before the Spirit's effectual work, the three deaths that sin has earned. Every one of these specific, personal, individually applicable dimensions of the Hamartiological account is the specific object of the superabounding grace that the gospel announces. The deeper the engagement with the Hamartiological account, the more specific and more personal the receipt of the grace becomes.

We must also believe that the grace is not license but motivation: that the correct response to the superabounding grace of Romans 5:20 is not the antinomian misuse of Romans 6:1 ("shall we continue in sin?") but the love-driven, Spirit-empowered, holiness-pursuing gratitude of one who has understood what the grace has done and who responds to the understanding with the specific pursuit of the Christlikeness that the grace has both made possible and is producing. Titus 2:11–12's "instructing us to deny ungodliness" is the specific description of the grace's operation in the life of the person who has received it in its full weight: not a passive permission slip but an active, forming, holiness-producing instruction.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

The conclusion of the Hamartiology series should produce in the believing heart the specific form of doxological wonder that the outline names: the marvel of one who has understood that the God against whom she sinned is the God who saved her, at the cost of His own Son, for the praise of His glorious grace. This wonder is not the sentimental warmth of a generally positive religious experience; it is the specific, calibrated, darkness-and-light-measuring wonder of one who has seen both the full weight of the darkness and the full brilliance of the light together, and who cannot contain the doxological overflow that the specific proportion of the two produces.

Desire, above all, the specific posture of Romans 11:33–36 in response to the full doctrine of Hamartiology and Soteriology together: the eruption of praise from one who has been to the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God in the specific engagement with the unsearchable judgments and the unfathomable ways of the God who turned the catastrophe of sin into the occasion for the supreme display of the glory of grace. Let the doctrine of sin produce not despair but doxology: the specific, proportional, darkness-measuring, grace-marveling, Lamb-worshiping praise of the redeemed who know exactly what the Lamb's worthiness cost and what it has accomplished for them.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Write a personal theological autobiography of the form that the "But God" of Ephesians 2:4 suggests: a brief account that honestly and specifically describes the "verses 1–3" of your own pre-conversion condition (what you were in the full Hamartiological sense: dead in which trespasses, walking according to which pattern of worldly conformity, and subject to which forms of the old nature's dominance) and then the "verses 4–10" of the grace that addressed it ("But God... even when I was... made me alive"). The autobiography is not for public performance but for personal theological formation: the specific, honest, grace-measuring account of what the gospel has done in your specific life, read against the specific Hamartiological diagnosis that makes its provision maximally glorious.
- Develop a one-paragraph summary of the Hamartiology series that you could use as the specific theological foundation for a gospel presentation to an unbeliever. The summary should include: (a) the specific character of sin as rebellion against the infinite God rather than merely as mistake or dysfunction; (b) the specific scope of sin's devastation (total depravity, the three deaths); (c) the specific gravity of sin's consequence (infinite offense against infinite God); and (d) the specific provision of the gospel (the double imputation of 2 Corinthians 5:21) that addresses the specific problem the summary has established. The

summary is the diagnostic half of a complete gospel presentation whose provision half will emerge from the Soteriology series.

- Identify the three specific lessons from the twenty-three that preceded this one that have most deeply changed your pastoral theology and your personal engagement with your own spiritual life. For each: (a) what was the specific doctrine or observation that most challenged, deepened, or corrected your prior understanding? (b) how has the specific lesson changed the way you think about a specific dimension of the Christian life or pastoral ministry? (c) what specific pastoral situation, a conversation you have had, a person you are currently counseling, a sermon you are planning, has been or will be directly addressed by the specific theological content of that specific lesson? The reflection is the specific application of the series' full content to the specific life and ministry for which it was undertaken.
- Write a one-paragraph doxological response to the full Hamartiology series in the register of Romans 11:33–36, a personal, specific, darkness-and-light-measuring eruption of praise that names the specific depth of sin that the series has established and the specific height of the grace that answers it. The paragraph should be written not for a public audience but for the God who is its specific object: the specific, personal, wonder-producing praise of one who has gone to the depth of the Hamartiological account and who has found, at the depth, the specific grace that superabounds over the sin's full weight. It should close with the words that the entire series has been building toward: *Soli Deo Gloria*.
- Pray Romans 5:20–21 as a benediction over the twenty-four lessons and over the people in your congregation who have studied them alongside you: "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let the superabounding grace of the verse's declaration be the specific, eschatological, eternally sufficient word of God over the specific, comprehensive, devastatingly serious problem that the series has traced. And then let the benediction be the forward look: from the diagnosis to the cure, from the catastrophe to the rescue, from the full weight of sin's darkness to the full brilliance of grace's light.

Key Texts: *Romans 5:20–21; Ephesians 2:1–10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 6:1–2; Titus 2:11–14; Romans 11:33–36; Revelation 5:9–13; Romans 3:10–23*

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. At the conclusion of this twenty-four-lesson series, what is the one theological conviction about sin that has been most deeply formed, most significantly challenged, or most profoundly enriched by the study? What is the one pastoral application that you are most eager to bring from the series into your specific ministry context? And in what specific way has the study changed how you preach the gospel, counsel the struggling, or understand your own continuing need for the superabounding grace that Romans 5:20 announces?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

2. Read Romans 5:12–21 as the Pauline text that most comprehensively captures the relationship between Hamartiology and Soteriology. Identify: (a) the specific Hamartiological content of verses 12–14 (sin entered through one man; death through sin; death spread to all); (b) the specific way the “much more” of verses 15–17 quantifies the grace’s exceeding of the sin (how does Paul establish that the gift is greater than the transgression?); (c) the specific declaration of verse 20 (where sin increased, grace superabounded); and (d) the specific eschatological direction of verse 21 (grace reigning through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord). What specific connection between the full weight of the Hamartiological account and the full glory of the grace does the passage establish?
3. Read Ephesians 2:1–10 and identify the complete Hamartiological account of verses 1–3 alongside the complete Soteriological provision of verses 4–10. For each specific element of the Hamartiological diagnosis (dead in trespasses, walking according to the world, following the prince of the air, by nature children of wrath), identify the specific Soteriological provision that addresses it. Then focus on the “But God” of verse 4: what specific grammatical function does the “But” perform in the argument, and what does the “God” specify about the source of the provision? And what does the “even when we were dead” of verse 5 establish about the specific timing of the divine initiative, does God wait for signs of spiritual life before providing life, or does the provision precede and produce the response?
4. Read Romans 6:1–14 in its full context and identify Paul’s specific response to the antinomian objection of verse 1. What is the specific theological argument Paul deploys in verses 3–8 to refute the antinomian conclusion (union with Christ in His death and resurrection as the ground of the impossibility of continuing in sin)? What is the specific present-tense command of verses 11–13 (consider, do not let sin reign, present your members)? And what does verse 14’s “sin shall not be master over you; for you are not under law but under grace” establish about the specific relationship between grace and the dominion of sin?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 and identify the specific Soteriological content that the passage develops in response to the Hamartiological problem. What does verse 17’s “new creation” establish about the character of the grace’s transformation (is it merely a forensic adjustment or does it produce a genuine ontological change in the person in Christ)? What does verse 21’s double imputation establish about the specific mechanism of the justification (both what moves from the believer to Christ and what moves from Christ to the believer)? And what does the “we have been reconciled to God” of verse 18 establish about the specific relational dimension of the Soteriology that the Hamartiology’s “separation from God” has made necessary?
6. Read Revelation 5:1–14 and identify the specific doxological response of the redeemed to the Lamb who was slain. What is the specific content of the “new song” of verses 9–10 (what makes it new, and what does it say about the ground of the Lamb’s worthiness)? What is the specific relationship between the “worthy” of verse 12 and the content of verses 12b–13 (the seven-fold ascription of power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing)? And what does the universality of the worship in verses 13–14 (“every created thing... and the four living creatures... saying, ‘Amen’”) establish about the ultimate scope of the doxological response to the Lamb’s redemption?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

7. The lesson argues that the glory of the grace is specifically proportional to the depth of the Hamartiological account it answers: the darker the canvas, the more brilliantly the light shines. Evaluate this claim. Is the depth of the student's appreciation for the grace genuinely dependent on the depth of her understanding of the sin from which she has been rescued? Are there forms of gratitude for grace that do not require the full Hamartiological account, that are genuine without being maximally deep? And what specific theological or pastoral risks does the doctrine of superabounding grace carry if the full Hamartiological account has not first been received in its full weight?
8. The lesson presents the double imputation of 2 Corinthians 5:21 as the specific mechanism by which the full weight of the Hamartiological problem is addressed. Evaluate whether the double imputation adequately addresses every dimension of the Hamartiological account that the series has established. Does it address not only the guilt (the forensic dimension) but also the corruption (the moral dimension, the total depravity) and the bondage (the volitional dimension, the enslaved will)? If the double imputation addresses primarily the forensic dimension, what additional aspects of the Soteriology are required to address the full scope of the Hamartiological problem?
9. Romans 6:1–2's refutation of the antinomian objection rests on the doctrine of union with Christ as the ground of the impossibility of continuing in sin. Evaluate whether this argument actually refutes the antinomian position or merely establishes that genuine believers will not use grace as a license to sin, that is, whether Paul is arguing that it is impossible for a genuine believer to continue in sin or that it is inconsistent for a genuine believer to continue in sin. What is the difference between these two claims, and does the distinction matter for the pastoral application of the passage?
10. The lesson identifies the forward look from Hamartiology to Soteriology as the specific pedagogical movement that the doctrine of sin is designed to produce: Hamartiology is the necessary prelude that makes the Soteriology maximally glorious. Evaluate whether this pedagogical claim is reflected in the structure of the New Testament's own presentation of the gospel. Does the New Testament consistently present the full Hamartiological account as the preparation for the Soteriological provision, or does it sometimes lead with the provision and work backward to the diagnosis? What are the implications of the order for both systematic theology and pastoral proclamation?
11. The lesson closes with the claim that the study of Hamartiology produces three specific spiritual outcomes in the student who has received it honestly: better equipping for pastoral ministry, deeper humility, and more specific gratitude. Evaluate each claim. Is it theologically defensible to say that the depth of pastoral equipping is proportional to the depth of engagement with the doctrine of sin? Is the humility that Hamartiology produces the specifically Christian humility of one who knows her own condition from the inside, or might it produce a paralyzing self-condemnation that is not the humble posture of faith? And is the gratitude that Hamartiology produces genuinely proportional to the depth of the Hamartiological engagement, or might the deepest engagement with the doctrine of sin produce something closer to despair than to gratitude until the full weight of the superabounding grace has been received?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

12. The lesson argues that the student of Hamartiology who has received the full weight of the doctrine is better equipped for pastoral ministry than she was before. Identify the three most specific and most immediate improvements in your pastoral equipping that the series has produced. For each: (a) what specific doctrine or observation from the series has most directly improved a specific dimension of your pastoral capability? (b) what specific pastoral situation will you handle differently as a result? (c) what specific Scripture passage from the series will you be most likely to deploy in the specific pastoral context you have identified?
13. The lesson identifies Romans 11:33–36 as the model of the specific doxology that Hamartiology and Soteriology together produce, the eruption of praise from one who has been to the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. Assess the current depth of your own doxological engagement with the doctrine of sin and grace. Is the study of Hamartiology producing in you the specific wonder of verse 33's "Oh, the depth!", the overflow of a soul that has been genuinely overwhelmed by the unsearchable

judgments and the unfathomable ways of the God who turns catastrophe into the occasion for the supreme display of grace? Or has the engagement with the doctrine been primarily intellectual without producing the specific doxological eruption that the full engagement with both the darkness and the light is designed to generate?

14. The lesson presents Titus 2:11–12’s “instructing us to deny ungodliness” as the positive, holiness-pursuing response to the superabounding grace, the specific antidote to the antinomian misuse of grace as license. Evaluate the degree to which your own practical response to the doctrine of superabounding grace is closer to the antinomian “shall we continue in sin?” or to the Titus 2 “zealous for good deeds.” What specific patterns of behavior in your own life are most at risk of the antinomian rationalization (“Where sin increased, grace abounds” being used, consciously or unconsciously, as an excuse for continued sinning)? And what specific dimension of the Hamartiological account, the gravity of the offense, the cost of the double imputation, the specific weight of what the cross bore, would most effectively address the antinomian impulse in that specific area?
15. The forward look from Hamartiology to Soteriology is the specific theological movement that the series has been preparing for throughout its entire length. As you complete the Hamartiology series and turn toward the Soteriology that follows, identify the three specific Hamartiological problems whose Soteriological solutions you are most eager to explore. For each: (a) what is the specific Hamartiological problem (the specific dimension of sin’s devastation that the series has established)? (b) what is your current anticipation of the specific Soteriological provision that addresses it? (c) and what specific questions about the Soteriological provision does the depth of your Hamartiological engagement generate that you will bring into the Soteriology series with the expectation of specific theological answers?
16. The series has ended with Romans 5:20’s claim that where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. Reflect on the specific personal biography of your own relationship with God in light of this verse. Where has sin been most devastatingly present in your own spiritual history? And where has the grace been most specifically and most personally superabounding in the same location? Write a brief personal testimony, three to five sentences, in the form of “where sin increased... grace abounded all the more” that names the specific darkness and the specific corresponding grace in your own life. This testimony is not for public performance but for the specific, personal, darkness-measuring doxological recognition that the verse is designed to produce: the specific, proportional wonder of one who has been to the depth of the specific sin and who has found the grace specifically, personally, superaboundingly present in that specific depth.

Prayer Focus

Open this final lesson's prayer with a reading of Romans 5:20–21 as the text that summarizes the entire movement of the series in two verses: "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Receive the first clause, "the Law came in so that the transgression would increase", as the Hamartiological word that the series has been establishing: the full, devastatingly honest, comprehensively documented account of what the transgression is, how pervasive it is, how deep it goes, how completely it has corrupted and enslaved and condemned the human race. Not the softened account, not the culturally sensitive paraphrase, but the full apostolic declaration of the transgression's increase. And then receive the second clause, "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more", as the Soteriological word that the series has been preparing for: not in spite of the sin's increase but precisely in the location of it, not after the darkness has been somewhat reduced but in the full presence of the darkness at its full depth, the grace of the infinite God hyperabounds. Let both words settle with their full weight before moving on to prayer.

Pray in the structure of the Ephesians 2:1–10 movement from Hamartiology to Soteriology, but now as a personal, specific, doxologically charged prayer of the person who has completed twenty-four lessons and who knows the full weight of both the penultimate and the ultimate words. Begin with the penultimate: bring before God the full, honest, personally confronted account of the specific Hamartiological realities that the series has made most personally real to you, the specific dimensions of total depravity that you have recognized in your own nature, the specific aspects of the bondage of the will that you have identified in your own pre-conversion condition or in the patterns of remaining sin that the subsequent lessons have addressed, the specific weight of the spiritual death and the grave peril it represents for those in your congregation who are not yet in Christ. Receive this as the "verses 1–3" of your own spiritual biography: not a pleasant account, not an easy thing to hold before the God who knows it better than you do, but the honest, Spirit-illuminated, full-weight account that makes the grace glorious in the proportion it deserves. Then turn the prayer to the "But God" of verse 4: pray with the specific, personal, wonder-producing gratitude of one who knows that she was dead, in the full, Hamartologically established sense of the word, and that the God who is rich in mercy made her alive together with Christ. Not because she stirred toward Him, not because she showed signs of life, not because she contributed some preliminary movement of her enslaved will in His direction. He acted first, and He acted while the condition was exactly what the preceding three verses describe. Let this specific recognition produce the specific, proportional wonder that the superabounding grace deserves: the "Oh, the depth!" of Romans 11:33 offered in the full personal weight of one who has been to the depth of both the sin and the grace.

Pray in three specific directions as the conclusion of the series and the preparation for the Soteriology that follows. First, for the members of your congregation who are still on the "verses 1–3" side of the "But God", who are still dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, constitutionally unable to perceive spiritual truth, unable to please God, unable to come to Christ, and entirely unaware of the danger of their trajectory. Pray with the specific urgency that the full Hamartiological account generates for the unregenerate: naming specific persons, identifying the specific form of the spiritual death and the total depravity that you have observed in each specific life, and asking the God who was rich in mercy to those you have described as "even when we were dead" to be rich in mercy to these specific persons in the same unilateral, sovereign, effectual way. Ask Him to do for them what He did for the Ephesian Christians, to make them alive while they are still dead, because that is what He does, because that is who He is. Second, for the members of your congregation who are in the battle of remaining sin, fighting the war of mortification, receiving the discipline of the Lord, and pressing toward the goal that Philippians 3:14 names, pray for the specific, superabounding grace of Romans 5:20 to be their specific, daily, personally experienced provision in the specific battles they are fighting. That where sin is most persistent, grace would be most present; that where the flesh is most resistant, the Spirit would be most empowering; and that the eschatological horizon of the glory that is to be revealed (Romans 8:18) would sustain the endurance of the present battle with the specific, proportional, forward-moving hope that the certain arrival at State 4 provides. Third, for the study of Soteriology that follows: that the full weight of the Hamartiological

foundation laid in this series would be the specific theological ground from which the Soteriological superstructure rises; that every doctrine of grace in the Soteriology series will be received with the specific, darkness-measuring, maximum-wonder doxology that only the full prior engagement with the darkness makes possible; and that the result of both series together will be the specific, Romans-11:33-echoing, Revelation-5:12-anticipating, eternity-filling worship of the God who turned the catastrophe of sin into the occasion for the supreme display of the glory of grace.

Close with Revelation 5:12–13 as the eschatological doxological destination of the entire Hamartiology series and of the Soteriology it is preparing for: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing... To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” This is where the doctrine of sin ends. Not in despair, not in condemnation, not in the hopeless assessment of a fallen nature that has ruined everything it has touched, but in the specific, blood-purchased, resurrection-guaranteed, eternity-filling worship of the Lamb who was slain precisely to address the full weight of what the twenty-three preceding lessons have established. The lamb was slain because the sin was real and the penalty was infinite and the Substitute was the only One who could adequately bear what the sin had earned. And He was found worthy to bear it. And the redeemed will be worshiping the worthiness of that bearing forever and ever, because the depth of the sin that the bearing addressed is the specific measure of the height of the praise that the bearing deserves. To the Lamb who was slain: worthy. To the God who is making all things new: worthy. To the Spirit who applies the blood-purchased redemption to the spiritually dead: worthy. From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Key Texts: Romans 5:12–21; 6:1–14; 11:33–36; Ephesians 2:1–10; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Titus 2:11–14; Revelation 5:9–13; Romans 3:10–24; Romans 8:1; Philippians 1:6; 3:14

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

From the depths of human ruin to the heights of divine redemption, all glory to the God who saves.

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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*“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”, Romans 11:33, 36*