

Romans 5:12-21

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 September 2023

Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] Either in Adam or in Christ. There's not an option. We are all in Adam by physical birth, but we are only in Christ by new spiritual birth.

! Secondly, how are they similar? Really quickly, they're both inaugurators. They inaugurated, both of them opened or ushered in a different era of the human race.

Alright, so they both inaugurated. Question number two. How did Adam's fall affect mankind?

Alright, very clearly spelled out in verses 12 through 14. For sake of time, I might not read it all again, but we see this clearly how his fall into sin affected mankind.

Now remember, in the story, it was Eve who initially sinned. But who is held accountable for that sin? Adam. Because he was the covenantal head. He was the leader.

[1 : 03] He didn't look after his wife in this case. So he is held responsible. Right? So if we look at the first part of verse 12, we see the phrase that sin came into the world.

Alright? So that implies that there was a time in creation when all was as it should have been.

Before Genesis 3. Before Genesis 3. When death, destruction, hardship, disease, starvation, war, strife, conflict, disorder.

All those things were absent before sin entered the world. We cannot imagine what that is like.

Because we only have known a world that has been destroyed by sin.

Unimaginable. Unimaginable. But God created it all and it was good. So, the first part of that, sin came into the world through, so the agent of, that was Adam.

Through one man. So, very interesting note here. I mean, Paul in the first century is considering Adam a real person. He is not a mythological figure. Not a legend. He is like a real person.

[2 : 11] And Paul is referring to him and saying that he was absolutely, Genesis 1 and 2. He was absolutely the first man that God created in his image. He formed him from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Gave him dominion over all creation, over all other lower creatures. Placed in the garden of Eden to take care of it and to enjoy its fruits. Then, as an extra step of God's love for him and care for him, he gave him a wife, Eve, who is the mother of all life, to be with him as a helper.

Right? So, such wonderful gifts. They were to live, Adam and Eve and their descendants were to live in relationship with God, reflecting his glory in his character and all that we do.

We were to multiply his image throughout the earth, like sub-regions of God. All that's there in Genesis 1 and 2. But yet, despite the honor given to man to bear the image of God, we read, Ecclesiastes 7, 29, God made man upright.

But they have sought out many devices, many schemes. That's where the term sin comes in. It means missing the mark or the purpose for which God intended for us as his image bearers.

[3 : 34] We fall short of that. Massively short of that. If you look throughout our text, it says that Adam's offense is labeled a trespass. We all know what that is. It's a premeditated, deliberate crossing of the line.

He knew he shouldn't have, and he did anyway. So, it was a step against God's good authority over him. Verse 15, by the transgression of the one, many died.

Verse 16, judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation. Verse 17, by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one. Verse 18, through one transgression that resulted in condemnation to all men.

Verse 19, through one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So, you see that just repeated that it draws back to this first offense of Adam. So, sin entered the world through Adam.

Then it says, and death through sin. So, this clearly contradicts the idea that death would have never happened. Well, excuse me, that death would have happened anyway, even if sin hadn't

entered the world.

[4 : 43] They would have eventually just died of old age. But like, no, clearly, it is the sentence of death that's implied here as a consequence of sinning against God.

But in Eden, following God's great generosity, remember, he warned, he warned Adam, like, you can do all this. All this is yours. There's one thing that you cannot do.

It says that he commanded them, you may surely eat of any tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat, you will surely die.

All right? So, according to verse 16 here in Romans, death is God's judgment for and against our sin. Clearly, death is not an accident.

It's not just a natural thing. It wasn't meant to be this way. Physical death is called the first death in the scripture. We all will physically die. All of us, at some point or another, our bodies will pass away because of sin.

[5 : 44] Even if we are in Christ, even if we're Christians, we're going to face death. I would say, more importantly, is spiritual death. This is Ephesians 2. It talks about how we are dead in our trespasses, right?

We don't have to read much further after Genesis 3. And there's this repeated phrase that didn't exist. It records that this man lived or this woman lived and they died.

And they died. It's a repetitive phrase for emphasizing. And you and I will also pass away. We will eventually die ourselves.

Right? But have you ever wondered, like, why death? Like, why is death God's chosen consequence for our sin? Don Carson, pastor, scholar.

He said, why death? Death is God's limit on creatures whose sin is they want to be God's. So it's God's way of telling us that we are mortal.

[6 : 50] We are not sovereign. We are not omnipotent. We will pass away. It's him putting a limit to the arrogance of man. So death is something that man has freely and willingly brought on himself.

Right? So some may think, some, like, that just seems so unfair. Like, why did Adam screw it up for the rest of us?

You've heard people say that. Like, why do I have to answer for that? For that disobedience? Well, the quick answer is, like, yeah, you will have to answer for it. But for starters, if God put every one of us in that same place, we probably would do the same thing he did.

And for us to kind of think otherwise is pretty arrogant. Adam was sinless, placed in the perfect situation. But even more importantly, by condemning the whole human race through one man, now Christ is able to save the whole human race through one man.

Right? Like, we have a representative. So if you want to be your own Adam, good luck. Because then you will have to be your own savior in return. And if I ask you the question, have you still sinned?

[8 : 01] Well, what are you going to do about that? Right? So Christ now can represent us. Even because Adam represented us in the disobedience.

So there's a lot there. But moving on to the next part of this section. Notice that he says, death spread to all men because all have sinned. He's already made a strong case for all of us being under the reign of sin.

Chapter one, chapter two, parts of chapter three. It's sin against all humanity. The great tragedy of creation is that you and I and everyone else that was created in God's image, we forfeited that right by rebelling against our creator and following our own ways.

Look at verse 12. It says, sadly, right, that Adam's action of sin set a pattern for the rest of humanity. Namely, that sin leads to death.

So this is not referring to a particular sin per se. It's really just aiming at all people now have a propensity, a predisposition, a pull towards sin.

[9 : 12] We all have that. We are sinners by nature, it says here. Tragically, Adam passed to all his descendants, both you and me, this inerrant, sinful nature that was initially brought into the world at the beginning.

So mankind is a single entity, right? Even though we may chop it up into subgroups, as a whole, we are one entity, right? So Adam represented the entire human race that descended from him, no matter how many subgroups there are.

And so therefore, when Adam sinned, all mankind sinned, because the first sin he committed transformed our inner nature. You can feel it every day, this propensity just to rebel against God. There's this, even if you don't want to admit it, there's this mysterious connection to us and to Adam. This propensity to be weak, to fail, to do harm to ourselves and to others around us. It's there. And then it says, sin entered the world, right? Not long after you read this in Genesis 3, in Genesis chapter 6, it talks about how we're all been defiled by this.

[10:29] It says, the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually. That's Genesis 6, 5.

So all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That's the reality of the world that we live in, the curse that we see and feel every day.

So are you aware of the realm of death? Is it heavy to you when you think about such things? And you may wonder how this even came about, right?

But one question that Paul anticipates and we're about to see is like, was this true even before the law of Moses came? Before mankind actually had a written law where God told us what was good and evil?

And the answer is, you know, yes. If you look in verses 13 through 14, there's one point that's clear. In the time between Adam and the Mosaic law, all people still suffered and died as a result of Adam's sin and disobedience.

[11:37] For sin, you see it? For sin indeed was in the world before the law. So the coming of the law didn't change that reality at all, right? Now, not because we had broken some specific law, right?

But because there's that same desire for us to sin against God. It always existed even before the law came. And the result of that was people died.

That's the evidence. People still passed away. Think about other parts in the scripture before Moses. The Tower of Babel, judgment. The Flood, judgment.

Sodom and Gomorrah, judgment. All that came before there was a written law. So it doesn't mean that people are guiltless without the law.

Romans 2 verse 2 talks about how many people perished as judgment even before the law. So that's just an argument that Paul anticipates.

[12:36] Well, this happened. Was this true before the Ten Commandments? And the answer is yeah, it's still true. All right. So number three. Number three. What are the differences between Adam and Christ?

All right. And again, I think just for the sake of time, I might not read all this again. But this is verses 15 through 19. We're just going to pull out some threads just to look at this.

So one way is different. It is different in consequences. Very clearly. Verse 15. Adam's offense or his trespass is contrasted with Christ's free gift.

That word free gift means something that's given out of gracious favor towards somebody. It actually could be just translated grace gift. So because of Adam's one trespass and disobedience, there was a verdict of condemnation and a sentence of death to all mankind.

That's like terrifying. On the other hand, if you read Christ's obedience, obeying God perfectly, never sinning, even to the point of death on a cross, that all now reverses the effects of the fall.

[13:53] Christ brings grace and not judgment, justification and not condemnation, which comes as a result of God's free gift.

That's what we see here. When Paul has been explaining this since the beginning of his letter, note he repeats the phrase much more in that section twice. Saying that the grace of God not only brings temporal physical life, but brings us something much greater, eternal, new, spiritual, abundant life in Christ.

Life with God forever. Life with God forever. Reversing the effects of the fall. Sin separated us from God. Christ has brought us reconciled back into relationship with God.

So one is the difference in the consequences. Another difference between Adam and Christ is they had different starting points. Look at verse 16. Interesting. The verdict of judgment and condemnation that affected all mankind came after one single trespass.

But God's free gift of salvation by grace came, you see that, following many trespasses. So meaning after an unimaginable number of sins had been committed by all people, then God's grace came forward.

[15:14] That's astounding. It means that God is trying to highlight, put on display the beauty of his grace against this backdrop of so much sin after many trespasses.

So the one redemptive act of Christ was immeasurably greater than Adam's one act of condemnation. Jesus overcame the flood of sin destroying the world and brought us grace and justification right standing before God forever.

So here's in verse 17. He kind of pulls together a summary of these differences. Kind of like, again, when you're making a legal case, you keep anticipating arguments and then you sum it all up. And that's kind of what he does in verse 17. He draws the threads together of verses 15 and 16. He says, you know, whereas Adam's one trespass brought condemnation and death.

So if you think about that, that's the opposite of what Satan promised, right? In Genesis 3, he said, if you disobey, you'll be like God. So it brought the opposite. It brought death.

[16:20] God has brought through Jesus abundant grace, life and righteousness. The striking difference here, I think that Paul highlights, is that where death reigned from Adam, it's not now that life reigns.

All right. He says that people reign. Verse 17, those who receive God's saving grace, who will reign in life.

So death ruled the entire human race by virtue of Adam's one sin. But now Christians, those who have given their lives fully to Jesus, now we will be rulers alongside with Christ.

And death will not triumph over us. We will have eternal life. So that is a beautiful thing that Paul is giving us here. Another reason to enforce the hope that he just talked about earlier in the chapter. Like we can have hope of eternal life. Hope of reigning with Christ. And then in verses 18 through 19, again, you see this one man's actions affected all others as representatives.

[17:31] All right. All right. Simply put. Right. One trespass of Adam as the head of the human race brought condemnation and guilt to all. Similarly, Christ's one act of righteousness.

I think he's either referring to his death or his entire life of obedience, including his death. One or the other. It led to righteousness and life to all who belong to him.

You see the phrase, you know, all men. It's definitely not implying universalism because he's like gone against that pretty much the entire book and the rest of the New Testament. But again, those who receive God's gift belong to Christ.

Verse chapter five, verse 11. Only those who have faith in Christ will be justified and made right with God. So look at the wording he uses. As this happens, so now this will happen.

He shows that the focus is not on the size of that group, but on the method of either sin or righteousness being passed from Christ and Adam to their descendants.

[18:37] Each representative. Each representative. First Corinthians 15 verse 21 says this, drawing all this together. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection from the dead.

For just as Adam all died, so also in Christ all may be made alive. All right. So again, one man's actions affecting the other.

And then lastly, last question. Looking at the last two verses of this passage. How does the law magnify Christ's reign of grace?

Verse 20 says, Now the law came to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

So that as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[19:38] So what Paul has done here is he's taken all mankind and placed us in two different camps. Like, not a third camp. Either we are under the reign of Adam or we are under the reign of Christ.

The point here, he makes a point of the law. Law did not change man standing under sin. But it did help identify more activities and attitudes that were sinful.

Here's three. We've kind of gone over this some in the past, but here's just three quick things that the law did. The law defined what sin was. It told us what sin was. So, I mean, many years ago, my diagnosis of the lung disease I had, you know, it got named.

It got called, oh yeah, this is that disease. Cystic fibrosis. I still suffer from it before I knew what it was. Right? So it's like an example of we still suffered from sin, even though we didn't know it was, quote, called sin.

Number two, the law asserts that sin is wrong and dangerous, making the breaking of it all the more willful and shameful. Right? Number three, the law provokes sin.

[20 : 50] It causes us to increase in the trespass. But what he's saying here is that's true. It also magnifies the grace of Christ. It shows us that Christ is greater.

What he brought through his reign is much more. Right? Much more. Far better than what Adam brought us. All right? So, if we magnify sin, we can magnify the grace of God.

That's what he's saying here. The law came to do that. So, in conclusion, I just thought I would wrap it up with this. In conclusion, you know, the scripture has a story of twos.

To give credit where credit is due. The first time I ever heard this, it was a guy named Sinclair Ferguson. I won't take credit for this, but it ministered to me.

And I hope it does to you as well. Well, this is a story of two men, two gardens, two trees, two tests, and two outcomes.

[21 : 56] Right? The two men are Adam and Christ, both representatives. The two gardens are Eden and Gethsemane.

The two trees. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And Eden. Everything about it was pleasing to the eyes. Everything about it drew you in.

It was attractive. Which is why Adam and Eve eventually went for it. And then there's also the tree of Calvary, the cross.

And to Jesus, there was nothing attractive to it at all. Like repulsed. Gross. Everything about his holy nature did not want to go to that tree.

Very different from the tree that Adam faced. Right? Then each man faced two great tests. Adam was tempted to disobey God and throw off his authority and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[22 : 56] Jesus was tempted to flee the cross in Gethsemane. If you remember, he prayed humbly like, Lord, Father, if there's any other way, let this cup pass from me.

And very clearly, there was not another way. Adam disobeyed God and ate of the tree, thus saying, my will be done, God, and not yours.

Christ obeyed God, denied his own desire, went to the tree and drank the full cup of God's wrath. And his prayer was, not my will, Father, but yours be done.

So he went sacrificially. He went and died on the tree of Calvary. And then there's two outcomes. Adam's sin and disobedience.

As we've said over and over in this passage, it brought condemnation, a reign of death into the world. And many were made sinners and many died. Christ, by his perfect obedience and love for God, brought the grace of God to man.

[24 : 07] And righteousness that we can now have to stand justified before God. He brought a reign of eternal life and salvation to all people who look to him for their sins to be forgiven.

So in Christ, we can have hope. Whenever you're going to be exposed to death by yourself, a friend, a family member, in your line of work.

I know we have first responders in here. We have soldiers in here. You've seen it. It's ugly. What has Christ done to reverse the effects of such terrible things?

He has given us great hope. So which man do we identify with today? Adam or Christ? Where do you stand? Living in the reign of death under Adam or the reign of life under Christ?

So we have reason to hope. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together.

[25 : 14] Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together.

Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together. Let's join in prayer together.