

“Christ, Our New Adam”

Romans 5:12-19

First Sunday in Lent + February 26, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning we will discuss, part one, the first Adam and what he has done to us, and, part two, the second Adam and what He has done for us.

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Consider the following. What do these examples have in common?

- A larger country invades its smaller neighbor, leveling villages, killing thousands, and leaving nearly 18 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance, with 14 million people displaced from their homes and thousands of civilians killed.**
- An earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale kills more than 50,000 people, affecting almost 30 million people and proving especially devastating in a country already ruined by years of civil war.**
- A husband and the father of two grade-school children, seemingly in good health, unexpectedly dies in his sleep.**
- A worldwide viral pandemic infects almost 800 million people over the course of three years, contributing toward almost seven million deaths.**
- A teenage volleyball player from another state has both of her legs amputated after an accident caused by a speeding motorist who more than 50 times violated the condition of his bond on earlier charges.**
- Multiple heartaches and tragedies seem to follow one after another in the same family—often a family of great faithfulness to the Lord.**
- We all either die young or face continuing and gradual deterioration of our body and mind as we grow old.**

What do all these things have in common? None of these things was intended by the Creator to be a part of His perfect world, but all these things have come as result of the disobedience of one man. Who is that one man? Adam. When tragedies strike we often ask the question “Why?” Well, here is the answer: all of these things happen because of the curse of sin that our first father brought into the world. To be sure, we cannot answer why it comes in this way or at that time to this or that person, but each one of us is under the

curse of death. Genesis chapter Three is carried out each day in our community: just look at the newspaper and read the obituaries. Has there ever been a day when no one in the area died? “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). From where did this thing called death come? It came from sin: “Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (v.12). When Adam sinned, we all sinned. It was a done deal. Death is now part and parcel of the fabric of this life. It says: “Many died through one man’s trespass” (v.15). To trespass is to go over the boundary line. God had laid down one simple prohibition to Adam and Eve: “You may surely eat of every 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 of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17). God sets the boundary lines because He is God. He is the Creator and we are the creatures. When this line was crossed, Adam and Eve experienced death--spiritual death, that is. They separated themselves from God, running and hiding from Him in the Garden. They had turned their backs on the loving fellowship and support that God offered them. Physical death would one day follow, and, if God had not intervened, eternal death in hell would also have come upon them. In this one sin we all sinned. In order to demonstrate this point, the apostle speaks of people from Adam until Moses (v.14). “Sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam” (vv.13-14). Even though the Commandments of God had not yet come down from Mt. Sinai, even though the sins of people could not be marked down as transgressions against this or that commandment, yet death still reigned during this time. They all died. Why? Because when Adam sinned, they all sinned. So we read: “Many died through one man’s trespass (v.15) and “The judgment following one trespass brought condemnation” (v.16) and “death reigned through that one man” (v.17) and “one trespass led to condemnation for all men” (v.18) and “By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners” (v.19).

Let's face it: Adam ruined it for us all. What we need is a new Adam--a second Adam--someone who could come along and fix what our first father has ruined. The First Adam brought a curse to all the human race. We need a new

Adam to come and bring a blessing to the whole human race.

- II -

Friends, guess what! God has given us a new Adam, and second Adam, One who came to fix what Adam broke: God has sent His only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Welcome to Part Two of the Sermon! In the technical language of the text, Adam is called a “type,” that is a template or pattern, “of the One who was to come” (v.14). Thus Jesus is the “antitype.” Adam was the shadow, Christ is the real thing. Adam is the picture in the mirror, Christ is the real thing.

How can we dare put our dear Lord Jesus Christ in the same category as Adam? Both of them have accomplished something that is effective for the entire human race: Adam brought a curse, Christ has brought a blessing. If we think it is unfair that the sin of one person has brought death to us all, think how unfair it is that by the obedience of One person the Lord has brought life to us all! Indeed, “the free gift is not like the trespass” (v.15). There is a similarity between Adam and Christ, but Christ is infinitely greater. His gift overflows and abounds: “And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification” (v.16). Think of it: One man sinned and brought the sentence of death to us all. Logically, in God's plan, what should happen when many people sinned? Logically, something even worse should come upon us all. For Adam is not the only one who sinned. We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God--the glory intended for His creatures. We have each added immeasurably to the pile of guilt started by Adam. One sin was followed by the death sentence for all (condemnation). Many sins ought to have been followed by something even more horrible than this condemnation. But the free gift is not like the trespass! Grace is not like condemnation! Christ is greater than Adam! And so, in the plan of God, the many sins have been followed by the free gift of God's grace abounding for “the many”--in other words, there is enough for everyone.

“By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous” (v.19). From our readings today, compare how Christ and Adam handled themselves when tempted by the devil: Adam disobeyed; Christ obeyed. Adam fell; Christ stood

firm. Adam sinned; Christ remained sinless. Adam was deceived by the lies; Christ used the truth of the word of God to prevail. In this battle Christ came out victorious and the devil had to leave Him. The obedience of Christ extended throughout His time on earth. Here, at last, was a child of God who got it right, Who passed the test, who was everything that the Creator intended His children to be! Here is the One who was obedient in our place to cover our disobedience. His obedience even led Him to the cross, where He paid in full the debt that the world owed Him. Where is the fairness in that? One man takes on Himself the full wrath of the curse of God against all sinners of all times! And yet this is the gracious gift of God for us. When Christ rose on the third day, it was the guarantee from heaven that the Father was pleased with all that Christ did, that He accepted Christ's suffering for the world's guilt, and that in Christ the world was forgiven all its sin. It was really the “justification” of the world--the world being declared “not guilty” in Christ. This is the free gift that overflows and abounds to all of sinful humanity. This is the offer available to every human being: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

The result is the life of the world! “If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ” (v.17). Under the old Adam, by reason of our birth, death reigned. But under the new Adam, Christ Himself, WE REIGN in life. We who have received the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through Jesus Christ.

In First Corinthians Chapter 15 the Apostle picks up this theme again. There we are told: “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor 15:49). Now we bear the image of the first Adam, the man of dust, and death reigns in our mortal bodies. But when our Savior returns at the end of all things, He shall raise us or change us so that we will have bodies like His glorious body. Then there will be no more cancer or accidents or pain or suffering, but perfect people living in God's perfect world. God keep us with Christ for that day! Amen

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