

March 13, 2011  
Lent 1

*"Death through Adam and Life through Christ"*

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**ROMANS 5:12-19**

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**T**herefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— <sup>13</sup> for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! <sup>16</sup> Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Is it possible for one event in history to dramatically affect the lives of people all over the world? In 1945 a United States airplane took off into the skies over the Pacific, headed for the densely populated city of Hiroshima, Japan. Inside of the plane was a bomb, an atom bomb, the first of its kind. The pilot flew over the city and released the bomb. The very small amount of uranium exploded 1500 feet above the city with a huge ball of fire that flattened the city for several miles and killed over 200,000 people. Because of this one bomb, this atom bomb, our world has been changed. We dread the thought of rogue nations getting a hold of such a bomb and threatening other nations, even our own country.

I am not here this morning to talk to you about the ATOM bomb. But we are here today to take a closer look at what these words from Romans 5 tell us about the ADAM bomb, spelled A-D-A-M. You see, dear Christians, the one disobedient act of Adam was not confined to him. He passed that sin and death down to his descendants. Because of Adam's disobedience we have a problem, a huge problem. We cannot get rid of sin and we cannot get rid of death. We are hopelessly lost.

God had mercy on us. Our heavenly Father sent Jesus to do the job for us. Just as one sinful act of Adam brought sin and death to this world, one loving act of Jesus brings life and hope to people. Adam was the source or fountain head of sin and death. Jesus is the source or fountain head of rescue from sin and death. We cannot find this hope in ourselves.

## **Adam brought death**

Everyone must die because of Adam's sin. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned." Did you read the results of the 2010 census? The census did not report on the death rate in our country, state or city. because the death rate is always the same, 100%. Adam and Eve opened their lives to sin. Sin completely changed their lives and brought death into the world. They passed that sin down to their children.

The first descendants of Adam lived for a long time. Adam lived 930 years. Methuselah lived 969 years. He set the record. Susan has an uncle living in Nebraska who will be 105. After every person it says, "and then he died." What are the chances that you will die? It is not 50% or 75% or 90% but 100%. The sin that killed Adam has been passed down to each of us. We will eventually die, unless Jesus comes in glory before our last hour comes.

Do you want even more evidence that sin has corrupted all people? Paul presents this argument. "For before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command as Adam did." Adam had a specific command from God. God gave specific commands on Mount Sinai in the form of the Ten Commandments. What about all those people who came after Adam and lived before Moses who may not have known the specifics of God's laws as we know them in great specificity? Their deaths provide the forensic evidence that sin was passed down to them through Adam. What about Charlie Sheen who seems to be totally ignorant and defiant of what the Lord says about committing adultery? He is sinful not just because he broke God's law which he ignores, but also because Adam's sin was passed down to him through his father Martin Sheen. The same is true of the so called innocent child.

Notice Paul says that death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. Even though Adam lived for 930 years death still reigned in his life. There are different levels of death that reign in our lives because of Adam's sin. It has been said that life is the enjoyment of God's blessings, and death is a separation from God's blessings. When someone dies physically they are separated from the blessings of hearing, seeing, loving and being close to other people. When they die spiritually, they are dead in trespasses and sin, separated from the God who loves them and cares about them. When people die eternally, they suffer forever in the torments of hell. Death is separation from God and the enjoyment of his blessings.

You don't have to go very far to see the evidence of Adam's sin in the lives of people today. Open up the newspaper and check the news on the internet. I don't think it would be proper to even mention in this sermon some of the horrific things that were reported. And then if we do a reality check in our own lives we quickly come face to face to a certain level of corruption and rot that makes us ashamed even to think that we could ever have such evil thoughts in our hearts.

And what about those little children who appear to be so innocent some of the time? Here is what one pastor said about his two year old grandson. "My two year old grandson

comes over to our house frequently and tears up the place. It takes us two days to get in back in shape after a visit from him. His mother was telling us the other day that if she says to him, 'Now eat your food,' that's the one thing he doesn't want to do. So she has learned how to make him eat his food: She says, 'Now don't eat your carrots.' And he gobbles them up. Anything that is prohibited, that's what he wants to do." We don't have to send the little ones to a special naughty school to teach how to be naughty. It is true that they can pick up bad habits from others. But the truth is that their sinful nature they inherited from Adam is already manifesting itself when they scream to get their parents attention instead of gently crying for help.

And what are the results of this sin that Adam has passed down to us? Paul tells us that judgment follows this one sin. He says that this judgment brings forth condemnation. The sin that Adam passed down to me through my parents demands that a holy and perfect God pronounce judgment on me and proclaim me guilty. It also demands that a perfect and holy God condemn me to eternal death and punishment. Paul writes, "the result of the one was condemnation for all men" and he also writes, "through the disobedience of one man, the many were made sinners." The word "the many" means all of humanity.

One of the dangers of an atom bomb is the spread of radioactive particles that bring on a slow and painful death. Over 100,000 people died after the bomb hit Hiroshima because of radiation poisoning. The ADAM BOMB that struck the whole human race passed sin down to every person. It destroyed our lives with sinful behavior, and leads to eternal death, eternal judgment and eternal condemnation. There is nothing that any one person can do to reverse the effects of the sin and put themselves in a position for God to accept them and love them. God did this for us in one person, one man, His Son, Lord and God from all eternity.

### **Jesus brings life**

Paul says in verse 14 that Adam is a type or pattern of Christ. There is a similarity between Adam and Jesus. Adam's one act of disobedience brought sin and death. Jesus' one act of obedience brings forgiveness and life. We are told, "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by grace of the one man Jesus, overflow to the many!" Grace has been defined with the acronym, "God's riches at Christ's expense." Adam brought sin into the whole world. Jesus gives his life on the cross and pays for the sin of the whole world.

Let me try to show what Jesus has done for us with a comparison. Last year a broken oil well in the Gulf of Mexico spilled millions of gallons of crude oil into the Gulf region. This one act of carelessness spread oil everywhere. British Petroleum spent billions of dollars trying to keep the oil from damaging the coast line and polluting the water. Imagine for a moment that there would be one tiny pill about the size of this Bayer aspirin that could be dropped into the water and totally remove every drop, even every molecule of oil from the water. Of course this is just foolishness and nonsense. What Jesus did at the cross is even more amazing. He took the sin of the world upon himself. There was not a sin that was overlooked. This gift of God's grace overflowed to the many. Later in Romans 5:20 it says, "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more." In 1 Corinthians 2 we are told this preaching about what Jesus did at the cross is considered total foolishness and nonsense to those who do not believe in it.

Adam's sin brought judgment into this world and with judgment came condemnation. In contrast it says in verse 16 that the gift of Jesus dying for us brought justification. God's gift of Jesus provides us with the pronouncement of not guilty. He did this for the whole world when he cried this one time in history from the cross, "It is finished." Through Adam's sin death reigned in the lives of people. It says here that through God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness that we have in Jesus we reign in life. Remember the definition of death is separation from God's blessings. Life is the enjoyment of God's blessing. Think of all the blessings you enjoy here this morning because God has seen fit to remove every sin from your account including the sin passed down from Adam, and covered you with Jesus' righteousness.

Oh, how we love these words in verse 18 and 19. It says that through Jesus one act of righteousness we receive justification that brings life for all. Jesus' one life of dying for us and living for us provides that righteous decree we could never find by what we try to do. By my best acts of kindness and love, I cannot even remove the tiniest molecule of sin. Through Adam's one act of disobedience, I was made disobedient. Through the obedience of Christ I am declared to be righteous and perfect.

Today we send you home rejoicing that one person, Jesus, God's Son who has totally reversed and done away with the damage caused in your life and mine by what Adam did to us. Amen