

The True and Better Adam (Part 1)

Romans 5:12-21

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This morning we sang together some wonderful songs that rehearsed the substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hold those things as dear because we have come to know Him in that way. Sadly, there are those even who profess Christ who don't understand the value of these things.

At the Shepherds' Conference, I learned about comments made recently by a Christian musician, statements made on Twitter that attacked the penal substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, that Christ died for our sins to satisfy the justice of God and to bring us into right relationship with Him. I had to read them for myself and I did, and here's what this Christian musician who has, I think, won a Grammy or two for his Christian music, he and his wife. He began by rebuking those who sing about such things. This is what he wrote. "I would love to hear more artists who sing to God and fewer who include a father murdering his son." Obviously, he received a great deal of criticism for that comment and so he went on line then, defending himself. And in defending himself, he wrote this, "If you can't think of anything to sing to God other than gratitude for taking your shame away through bloodshed, stop singing and look around."

Now, when I read those, and, of course, he went on after taking a great deal of heat, and actually having his musical career threatened, that he went on to, sort of, back down from some of those comments a little bit. But as I read those original comments, I was struck by the fact that we who have come to know Jesus Christ through His substitutionary death, we find those comments repulsive and reprehensible.

But I think we, at the same time, need to admit that there is, at the heart of the gospel, at the heart of the Christian faith, a crucial question that, sort of, lies beneath the surface in his comments. And the question is this, and it is a legitimate question, how can one Person, by His obedience and death, stand in the place of others? Now we just, kind of, take that for granted. But let's admit that that very reality seems to contradict what God Himself has revealed. Think of passages like Ezekiel 18, where God says, "I will deal with the person based on his or her own actions." Ezekiel 18:4 says, "The soul who sins will die." Ezekiel 18:19, "The one who has practiced righteousness shall live."

In other words, in those passages, and frankly in many others throughout the Scripture, God makes it clear that He treats each person according to strict justice. That is, in keeping with his or her own actions. So, how then can a just God treat us as if we had lived Christ's life and treat

us as if we had died for our sins when Christ died for our sins? This is an absolutely fundamental question to the Christian faith. How can God do that when it seems to fly in the face of what God has revealed about Himself? Well, Paul has not yet addressed this key question in Romans, but he answers it definitively and profoundly in the paragraph that we come to in our study of Romans this morning.

Now, let me warn you, this is by far the most difficult paragraph in the entire letter. Paul's logic is incredibly condensed. It is profoundly theological. It will require serious mental sweat for us to draw out Paul's meaning, and that on the morning of the time change. But, I want you to know that it is absolutely crucial that we understand what Paul says in this paragraph because there is no truth more foundational to our redemption. In fact, it is not an overstatement to say that the entire gospel of Jesus Christ rests on, depends on, the truth that is uncovered in this passage.

Already in the book of Romans, Paul has explained to us the reality that Jesus' life and death, that it's credited to us and we receive the benefits of His actions. But here, for the first time in this letter, Paul explains not that the work of Jesus is credited to us, but how the work of Jesus can be credited to us. How can God accept the righteous life and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ in our place? It's explained in the passage that we come to this morning.

So, let's read together this paragraph that really stands at the epicenter, at the very heart of the gospel that is preached in the Christian faith. Romans 5, you follow along as I read beginning in verse 12.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned – for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For 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. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. 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.

Now, before we begin to work our way through this paragraph verse by verse, I think it's important that we step back to do two things. First of all, we need to make sure that we identify Paul's main point in this paragraph. And secondly, we need to understand the flow of his argument, the structure that he uses. And, I think if we get those two things, then this paragraph will begin to become clearer to us.

So, let's start then. Let me give you the theme and I'm going to give it to you, I think you saw this as we read it, but I'm going to articulate it, and then we'll obviously see this unfold as we work our way through the passage. But here's Paul's theme; I'll give it to you twice so if you're taking notes you can get it down.

Jesus Christ can secure our justification because God appointed Him as our representative, just as He did Adam in the garden. Let me say that again. Jesus Christ can secure our justification because God appointed Him as our representative, just as He did Adam in the garden. And folks, that is the only way God can accept the work of Christ in your place without violating His justice. In His wisdom, God appointed two men, and only two men, Adam and Christ, as the official representatives of those connected to them.

In the garden, God appointed Adam to represent all of Adam's descendants. And who are they? All humanity, all of us, every human being. And God then credited to every human being the consequences of their representative Adam's decisions. In His earthly ministry and in His death and life, God also appointed Jesus Christ as the representative of all of His descendants. And who are they? They're the ones who would ever believe in Him, all who would ever believe in Him. Those are His descendants. And God then credits to them all the benefits of their representative Jesus Christ's actions.

See, this uncovers a crucial spiritual point. God can only credit the guilt or righteousness of one person to another, and preserve His justice, when the one serves as the legal representative of the other. The principle of spiritual representation is foundational to God's plan of redemption. And that's the amazing truth that is explained here in Romans 5:12 and following.

Now, theologians have some labels for what we'll learn in this passage. Let me give you the labels and in the coming couple of weeks we'll unpack these labels together, but let me just give them to you this morning. They call this truth federal headship or representative headship, or some even call it vicarious representation. Don't be frightened by those expressions. Essentially, they all mean this, God legally appointed someone to serve as our representative,

and we receive either the guilt and consequences or the benefits and blessings of our representative's actions.

Now, as I say that, you may be sitting there saying to yourself, boy, that is completely unlike anything I have experienced, that's foreign to our modern world, and you would be entirely wrong. In fact, our world is built, in many cases, on this same basic principle of representational headship. Let me give you a couple of examples. Our government, for example, is based on representative leadership. We elect men and women as our representatives and once we elect them, they may take a look at the surveys, but largely they don't consult with us on every decision and action that they make. At least I haven't received any calls from President Trump or from Congress this week – and I doubt you have.

Because they are our representatives, however, we either suffer the consequences of their bad decisions or we reap the rewards of their good decisions. But the difference, there's a key difference between those elected officials and Adam and Christ, and that is, we elect our governmental representatives, God chose our spiritual representatives.

Now, there is another example. Think of, even in the financial world, this principle of legal representation is very common in the financial world. Many of us have decided, in the interest of being good stewards of what God has given us, to invest our money, and we invest it in things like mutual funds. We, instead of buying little parts of companies on our own, we go and we buy a mutual fund. Rather than doing our own research and selecting individual companies to invest in, we essentially have selected money managers as our representatives.

And every day, as we go about our lives, they make decisions about how to invest our money, and we make money if they make good investments with that money or we lose money if they make bad investments and poor investment decisions. Again, the key difference is that we select our financial representatives, but God selects our spiritual representatives. So, there is the theme of this passage, Jesus Christ is able to secure our justification because God has appointed Him as our representative, just as God appointed Adam as our representative in the garden.

One other thing we need to do before we look at the verses here, and that is, we need to make sure we understand the flow of Paul's argument. And let me just admit to you that this is a very difficult paragraph to follow Paul's chain of argument. You probably sensed that as I read it. Why is that? Because Paul interrupts himself. I never do that, you never do that, but Paul. No, of course we do that. Paul does that here.

Remember, Paul, for the most part, dictated his letters. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, he would dictate to an amanuensis, they would write down. And as Paul says something in verse 12, he realizes that that could create an issue, and so interrupts himself to explain it. And that's the reason this passage is hard to follow. You'll notice in verse 12 he begins with a conditional statement, but he doesn't include his conclusion. Notice verse 12, "Therefore just as through one

man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned,” and then there’s no completion. Usually, when Paul begins a sentence with the Greek word that is here translated “as” or sometimes “just as,” he completes the sentence with the Greek words, “even so,” “as,” “even so,” “just as,” “even so.” This is what Paul does.

It’s true in verse 15 in the Greek text, you can’t really see it in the English. But you can see it in the English in verse 18. Notice what he says, “So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through the one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.” Verse 19, “as,” “even so.” Verse 21, “as,” “even so.” So when you go back to verse 12 it becomes very clear that Paul didn’t complete his thought after beginning his thought. That’s why, by the way, if you look at the NAS, the translators, at the end of the verse, put a dash. That dash tells you he didn’t finish this thought. Other versions do different things to indicate the same thing, Paul has interrupted himself

So, verses 13 to 17 are really a parenthesis in Paul’s thought. Now, why would Paul do that? Why would he interrupt himself? Well, look at the end of verse 12. At the end of verse 12, Paul made a highly controversial statement, and that is, in Adam we “all sinned.” If you’re a thinking person you immediately go, hand up, wait a minute, what do you mean, we all sinned in Adam? Paul realizes, as soon as he dictates this to the amanuensis, that he needs to clarify it and defend it. So, in verses 13 and 14 he launches into a parenthetical statement to make it clear that when he said “all sinned” he means “we all sin in Adam” and that is biblically defensible.

But Paul interrupts himself a second time. Having made that clarification, he interrupts himself with a second parenthesis, and this is necessary because of what he says at the end of verse 14. Notice what he says at the end of verse 14, “Adam is a type of Him who was to come.” And again, as soon as Paul dictates that, he realizes that this can be misunderstood. He doesn’t want people to think that Adam and Christ are somehow completely equal.

And so, while it is true that Adam is a type of Christ and there are points of similarity he’s going to bring out here, Paul also wanted to make it clear that what Christ has done as our representative far surpasses anything Adam has done. And that’s why, in verses 15 to 17, several times, as he contrasts Adam and Christ, he says “much more,” “much more,” “much more.” He wants us to understand that while Adam is a type of Christ, Christ is far superior.

So then, just to review, Paul begins to make his point in verse 12, but immediately interrupts himself in verses 13 to 17. And it’s only when we come to verse 18 that Paul comes back to what he began to say in verse 12. He rephrases and summarizes the “just as” statement that he started in verse 12 and then he completes it in verse 18 with the “even so” side of the statement.

Look at verse 18, “So then,” having dealt with the two issues in verses 13 to 17, “as,” there’s our as again, “through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,” that is his paraphrase of the statement he made back up in verse 12, and here it is, “even so,” finally he’s

going to complete it, “through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.” Then, in verse 19, Paul summarizes his whole argument, “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

In verses 20 and 21 there’s kind of another aside. Paul deals with a related question that Jewish Christians would have asked. Okay Paul, you’ve talked about Adam and you’ve talked about Christ, but there’s a lot between Adam and Christ. What about the law? How does the Mosaic Law function in this grand scheme of redemption? And so, he deals with that question in verses 20 and 21.

So, here’s the flow of Paul’s argument, to sort of recap it, and by the way, this isn’t my outline, I just want you to see the flow of Paul’s thought. In verse 12 you have the main argument started. In verses 13 to 17 you have two parenthetical issues addressed. In verses 13 and 14, what does “all sinned” mean? And in verses 15 to 17, how is Christ superior to, or different from, Adam the type. And then in verses 18 and 19 you have the main argument completed. And then in verses 20 and 21 he briefly addresses the function of the law. So that’s the flow of his thought through this paragraph.

Now, again, before we look at the verses themselves, let me put it back in the larger context of Romans. After his introduction, the first major section of the Roman letter is the gospel explained, justification by faith alone. He begins in the middle of chapter 1 and runs to the end of chapter 4. We are now in the second major section of the letter, and that is, the gospel experienced. He wants to give us the security that comes with our justification. This is chapters 5 through 8. Now, so far in this section we have looked at the immediate benefits of justification in chapter 5 verses 1 to 11, and there are incredible benefits that come immediately to the one who’s been justified. We’ve looked at that in detail.

Today, the paragraph that we come to we could call, the legal basis for justification. In other words, here’s how God can make Christ everything to you. The reason behind our redemption, the ultimate foundation of our redemption, I shouldn’t say the reason, the ultimate foundation for our redemption, is the fact that God has appointed Christ as your representative. That is the only way you can receive the benefit of His acting in your place. It’s the only way He can credit the righteousness of Christ to us and our sin to Christ. But is there any evidence that God has done this kind of thing before? And Paul says, oh yes, there is, because this is exactly the position in which God placed Adam.

So, this is where Paul begins. Paul first reminds us of Adam our representative, how sin, condemnation, and death came to all men. This is verses 12 to 14, Adam our representative, how sin, condemnation, and death, came to all men. Let’s look now at the passage together. In verses 12 to 14 this is what we learn. Verse 12 begins, “Therefore.” Now, that word shows us

how this paragraph connects to its immediate context. “Therefore” is literally, because of this. Because of what? Well, because of our connection to or our union with Jesus Christ.

I want you to notice how often our connection to Christ is mentioned in the previous paragraph. Go back to chapter 5 verse 1, he says, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 2, “we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand through Jesus Christ.” Verse 6 says that “Christ died for us, the ungodly.” Verse 8, “Christ died for us.” Verse 9,

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved [*literally*] in His life [*by our connection to the life of Christ*]. And not only this, [*verse 11*] but we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and it’s through Christ we have received the reconciliation.

Then, in light of all of that, verse 12 begins, “Therefore.” Paul says, because all the blessings of your salvation flow to you from Christ, you need to understand how God can legally, justly do that, God makes Christ your representative in the same way he made Adam your representative in the garden. And so, in verse 12 he explains Adam’s representation of us.

Look at verse 12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” I think you understand that that is the most profound, far reaching statement on human sinfulness in all of the Bible. It describes to us how Adam’s sin has affected you and me. Most theologians call the enduring effects of Adam’s sin on us, original sin. Maybe you’ve heard that term, original sin. That’s the enduring effects of Adam’s sin on us.

What is original sin? Well, I like Lewis Berkoff’s definition in his systematic theology. He says, “It is the central state and condition in which men are born.” That’s original sin, the sinful state and condition in which all men are born, which you were born, which I was born. I’m not talking about our actions, those actions come from this reality, but the real issue is the state or condition in which we were born. Hodge, Charles Hodge, calls it, “The corruption of our whole nature,” original sin.

Now, why the term “original”? Well, again, I think Berkoff explains it well. We use that term original sin for a couple reasons. We use it because it’s from the original root of the human race, Adam. So, it’s original in that sense, it comes from Adam himself. Also, it’s original because it starts at the very moment of conception and displays itself in birth. So, it’s original in that sense. And it’s original in the sense that it is the origin of all of the actual sins we commit, it comes from this state or condition of the heart with which we’re born. That’s original, original sin.

Now, in this one verse, verse 12, Paul lays down for us four foundational propositions about original sin. Let's look at them together. First of all, number one, sin entered the world through Adam, sin entered the world through Adam. Look at verse 12, "just as through one man sin entered into the world." Now, obviously, by one man here Paul means the historical man Adam. If there's any doubt in your mind, look at verse 14, twice he calls him by name, Adam, Adam.

By the way, this underscores the importance of the current debate that is raging, among even those who profess to be evangelicals, about whether or not Adam was a historical person. You may not even know this is happening, but there's a huge debate raging about whether or not Adam was truly the first human being. There are professing Christians who argue that he was not, rather Adam in Scripture merely represents the starting of humanity, but he wasn't a real person, he wasn't a historical person who actually lived and existed.

Now, why would they come to that conclusion? Well, that is simply the logical conclusion of not taking a literal view of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. If the days and events of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 are not historical, and not historically accurate, then why should we think that Adam and Eve, who were at the very center of the Creation account, are historical persons? But make no mistake folks, the reality of a historical Adam is foundational to the Christian faith. Christ believed in a historical Adam. For example, Luke 3 records Adam in the human genealogy of Jesus Christ through Mary. In Mark 10 Jesus quotes from Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 and He quotes from them as historical. In John 8:44 Jesus alludes to the serpent and to Satan and to the fall.

But I think the definitive passage where Jesus affirms the historicity of Adam is Matthew 23:35. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus directly affirms a historical Adam by referring to the historical son of Adam, Abel. Listen to what He says, in Matthew 23:35, "upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on Earth, from the blood of righteous Abel," Adam's son, "to the blood of Zachariah."

Paul too believed in the historical Adam. Here in this passage, look at verse 14, he says, "death reigned from Adam until Moses." In the mind of the Apostle Paul, Adam was every bit as much a real historical person as Moses was and, in fact, throughout this passage he keeps referring to Adam as "one man," "one man," "one man." In addition, Paul even defends the gospel on the basis of the choices the historical Adam made versus the choices the historical Jesus made. If Adam didn't exist, if he didn't commit the first personal sin, then logically there is reason to doubt that Jesus existed and that He has personal righteousness. But that's certainly not what Paul believed. Paul says, "through one man," Adam, "sin entered the world."

Now, we need to define sin. What is sin? My own personal favorite illustration of this comes from my wife's background. Her dad taught her the catechism, as we have taught our own children the catechism when they were younger. And so one day, when I think she was in the first grade, her teacher asked her, so kids, what is sin? And you know, the hands shot up

everywhere and my wife's hand went up, she knew the answer to this question. And, of course, the teacher is anticipating, sort of, a simple first grade answer. And my wife's hand goes up and she called on her. My wife stood up and proudly said, "Sin is any lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God." That's exactly right, that's what sin is, sin is any lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God.

What lies behind sin? What is at the very root of sin? What is of the essence of sin? Again, theologians debate this all the time, some say pride, others say selfishness. I think the best explanation, those are included I think, but I think the best explanation, the very root of sin, is autonomy. It's to say, God doesn't rule, I rule. I like the way Tozer puts it in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, where he describes man in the face of the fact that God has said, "I am, I am the only solely self-existent one." Tozer says, "Man climbs to the throne of his own selfhood and from that exalted position exclaims, 'I am.'" That's the essence of sin. But it displays itself in a lack of conformity to and a transgression of God's law. That is a condition of the heart and it is displayed in real acts.

Now, Paul says, notice what he says, "through one man," Adam, "sin," as we've just defined it, "entered the world." Now, did you notice what Paul didn't say? He didn't say that sin originated with Adam. He says, it entered the world through Adam, because Scripture teaches that sin originated by spontaneous generation in the heart of Satan. First John 3:8 says, "the devil has sinned from the beginning." He's the source of sin.

Well, how in the world did it start? There's only one passage in Scripture that I think helps us understand that. Go back to Ezekiel, Ezekiel 28. In this paragraph, in this chapter, Ezekiel is writing about a human king, the King of Tyre, and he's pronouncing God's judgment on him. But in the middle of this paragraph he seems to turn and stop talking about the king, the human king, and start talking about the spiritual being that energized the evil of this human king. Look at verse 14, it's pretty clear this is not talking about the King of Tyre,

"You were the anointed cherub who covers,
And I placed you there.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.
You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
[and here we go]
Until unrighteousness was found in you."

The origin of sin came in the heart of Satan, but how? Verse 17, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor." And therefore, God pronounces judgment on both Satan, the one who energized the King of Tyre, and on the King of Tyre himself.

So understand then, Scripture teaches that evil spontaneously erupted in the heart of the covering cherub, likely the prime minister of heaven, second only to God Himself, because his heart was lifted up in pride and autonomy, because of his beauty, because of his splendor. So, sin entered the universe through Satan. But Paul says, back in Romans 5, “sin entered the world through Adam.” Adam was the door through which sin entered into our world. Moses, in recording it, just makes a passing statement. In Genesis 3:6 we read this, “and Eve gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” There it is, sin entered into the world.

Now, this raises an interesting question. Why does Paul say that, “sin entered the world through one man,” Adam, and not through Eve, who was the first to listen to the serpent and the first to eat the fruit? Well, I won’t take you there, but you can jot it in your notes, in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, I think Paul answers that question. Because in that text he makes two basic points, one, Adam was created first and placed by God in the role of headship, and secondly, Adam was not deceived in his eating like Eve was. In other words, Adam made a conscious choice to disobey God, and therefore, Paul says, here in Romans 5, “through one man,” Adam, “sin entered the world.” So, the first proposition is that sin entered the world through Adam.

That brings us to a second proposition about original sin found here in verse 12, it’s that death entered the world through Adam’s sin, death entered the world through Adam’s sin. Look at verse 12 again, “just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin.” Death only entered the world because of Adam’s sin. Now, hit the pause button for a moment because I think this is a strong biblical argument for biblical creation and against evolution, because Paul argues here that all death follows the sin of Adam.

There was no death prior to Adam’s sin, but evolution postulates that most of the fossil record predates man and the fossil record is clearly a story of death, that’s why there are fossils. So, evolution teaches that there was death on a massive scale before there was human sin. But the biblical order is there was creation that was all good, then there was man, a part of that creation, there was sin, and then death; death only comes after human sin. Paul says, death entered the world through Adam’s sin.

Now, this is a great corrective to our thinking because we live in a pagan world and it’s easy for us to be influenced by paganism. If you had children growing up in the era when this animated movie came along you have probably found yourself humming, whistling, or singing, The Circle of Life. I won’t sing it for you, but you’re familiar with the song, The Circle of Life. What’s the point? Death is just as natural to life as living is. Folks that is not biblical, that’s paganism. The biblical truth is that death is alien to humanity as God originally made us. In fact, Paul calls it, in 1 Corinthians 15, “the last enemy to be abolished or destroyed.” Death was God’s judgment on Adam’s sin. The reason every person you know who has died, died, the reason every person here will eventually die if the Lord doesn’t return, is because death is a judgement of God on the human race because of our representative Adam’s sin.

God warned Adam and Eve that death would follow their disobedience. Genesis 2:16-17, “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will,’” what? “‘Surely die.’” God says, you’re going to “‘surely die.’” So, death entered the world through Adam’s sin.

But, in what way? What kind of death? You see, when you find the word death in Scripture, it is used in three distinct ways or senses, or we could say even, manifestations. And all three of these manifestations of death are the result of Adam’s sin and God’s judgment on Adam’s sin.

First of all, there is physical death. On the day that Adam sinned, God told Adam and Eve they would die. Genesis 3:19, as He delivers His curse to Adam, He says, “‘By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’” I can’t read that verse without thinking about the little boy who was trying to get his mind around this truth, that “‘from dust we’re made and to dust we shall return,’” and he went and said to his mom, he said, “‘Mom, you know, the Bible says, ‘from dust we’re made and to dust we shall return.’ I looked under my bed and somebody is either coming or going.’” That’s right, he got it in principle.

Adam would eventually die physically, God said, because of his sin, and His death is recorded for us. Go back to Genesis 5, just in case you missed it, Genesis 5:3, “‘When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.’” This is son number three. Remember, there was Cain, there was Able, and now at 130 there is Seth. And

Then the days of Adam after he became the father Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, [*underline this*] and he died.

He died. Death came into the world through Adam’s sin, but Adam and Eve clearly did not die physically the day that they ate. In fact, as we just read, Adam lived at least 800 years after that day. So how then did they die on the day they ate like God promised they would?

Well, that brings us to a second sense of the word death and that is, spiritual death, spiritual death. Spiritual death, at its heart, is alienation from God. It is to be cut off from God your creator. It is to distance yourself from God, not to have a relationship with God, and this began immediately on the first human sin. In fact, I think one of the saddest verses in the Bible is Genesis 3:8. Now remember, Adam and Eve have communed with the Second Person of the Trinity on a regular basis; He performed their wedding. And this is what we read, “‘They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,’” this is after their sin, “‘and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of

the garden.” The very first response that came after their sin was a desire to run away from God. This is spiritual death. This is alienation from God your Creator.

And the alienation went both ways because, remember, later in that chapter, in Genesis 3:23, the Lord God banished them from the garden of Eden. And it gets worse, because sin and alienation eventually spawn a further commitment to rebellion, so that later in Genesis 3:22 it says, “The LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.’” This is God’s grace, not wanting man to live in that state forever. But nevertheless, He says, man’s rebellion is only going to get worse, he might very well eat of this tree as well. So, Adam’s sin brought physical death into the world and spiritual death as well.

But there’s a third kind of death in Scripture, it’s called the second death. Now, let me be clear, Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death and physical death, but they never experienced the second death, because in an amazing display of God’s grace, it appears on the very day of their sin, the first human sin, God redeemed them, you read about it in Genesis 3. And so, they never had to experience the second death, but their sin ushered this form, this manifestation of death, into the world.

It’s described in Revelation 20:14-15, it’s at the great white throne of judgment, that’s the scene. Jesus Christ sits on the throne, all unbelieving humanity stands before Him, and we read this, “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” What is the second death? The lake of fire. “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” So, the second death is eternal death in the suffering of the lake of fire, and that entered the world through Adam’s sin. Death entered the world through Adam’s sin, physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death.

Now, Paul has structured this passage around a deliberate contrast between Adam and Christ. It’s like what he says in 1 Corinthians 15:45, “it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.’ The last Adam,” that is Christ, “became a life-giving spirit.” You know what he’s saying, he’s saying Christ is the true and better Adam. Why would he say that? Because all men, all men and women, you and I, every single one of us, we’re in Adam.

You say, wait a minute, how did I get in Adam? You were born, you were born in Adam, you were born with Adam as your representative, officially appointed by God, and you got all the consequences of his actions. You say, that doesn’t seem fair. It’s absolutely fair because God did it. But secondly, it’s fair because you would have done the same thing. In fact, you and I have done the same thing throughout our lives, we’ve made the same choice to rebel against God. But you were born in Adam. But now we who have repented and believe in Christ, we are in Christ.

Now remember, this paragraph, it's in a section intended to bring us confidence and security in our relationship to God. You say, how can this, how can this truth bring me confidence and security? It's because the ultimate certainty of your salvation comes from the fact that you are no longer in Adam, that he no longer represents you, you no longer suffer the consequences of his choice, but you are now in Christ. You are secure because Jesus Christ is your official representative and you get the credit for everything He has done. You are no longer in Adam, you are in Christ.

If you're here this morning and you're not a believer, you are still in Adam. God still sees you as guilty before Him. In fact, in this very paragraph it says that those who are in Adam, they have sin, they have condemnation, they're guilty before God, and they experience death, not only physical death, but spiritual death, and eventually the second death or eternal death.

But if you will turn from your sin and turn to Christ, if you will repent and you will put your faith in the simple truth of the gospel, that God sent His only Son into the world to become like us, to take on full humanity in addition to His full deity, and that He lived a perfect life, the life you should have lived, and then He died for sins, He died to satisfy the justice of God for every person who would ever believe in Him, and then God raised Him from the dead as God's own testimony that He had accepted that sacrifice, if you will turn from your sin, put your faith in that gospel, commit to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, that's the essence of faith, then you will no longer be in Adam as your official representative, you will be in Christ. And instead of sin you will get righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Instead of condemnation you will get justification, you will be declared right with God. And instead of death, spiritual death and eternal death, you will get eternal life. And that can all be yours today, if you're willing to repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Instead of Adam, it will be Christ. Listen, understand this, every person here, you, are either in Adam or you are in Christ. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we are stunned by Your wisdom. Lord, only You could have created such a plan to preserve Your perfect justice and yet be able to treat us as if we had lived Jesus' life, and to be able to treat us as if we had died for the sins as we deserve to die. Lord, we thank You that You officially have appointed Him as our representative and because of that we get the credit for everything He has done. Lord, we bless You and we thank You. Help us, help us to grasp this. Help us to understand it. As we work through this passage, Lord, help us to sweat our brains, to grasp the truth, and as we understand the truth more deeply and more profoundly, may it change our thinking about ourselves and our sin, about You, about Christ, about salvation. Father, change us as a result of our study of this paragraph together.

And Father, I pray for those who are here this morning who are still in Adam. They sit here this morning enslaved to sin, under Your condemnation, Your guilty verdict, in spiritual death, not knowing You their Creator, and facing not only physical death, but eternal death in the lake of

fire. Father, may this be the day that You draw them to Yourself through the gospel, the simple truth of what You have done in Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.