

1. Today we start a new series with the goal of defining who we are in Christ

- A. This is vital if we are going to live out that life we know we’ve been called to live
We all know we are supposed to be living like Christ

We know what Paul said in: Ro 8:29 (ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined *to be conformed to the image of his Son...*

1 Jn 2:6 (ESV) whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Point: So we understand – That God’s plan is for us to live our lives out on earth like Christ did.

- A. But that can be so frustrating. We want to live like that but we fall so short.
- 1). Why? One reason is, we don’t know who we are “in Christ”
We don’t understand the magnitude of what it means to be united to Him
- B. We don’t view ourselves as being crucified with Christ and therefore dead to sin
We don’t see ourselves as being resurrected with Christ to a new kind of life
We fail to rest in Christ’s performance – believing we really did obey the law “in Him”
- C. The result of not failing to see this: *We try to live out the new life while thinking we’re the old us*
- 1). We end up depressed and defeated
If that continues long enough, we may eventually wave the white flag in surrender to the flesh and accept mediocrity. Believing that nobody can live the life Scripture calls us too
- D. The solution is seeing what being “In Christ” really means
- 1). How our union with His life, death and resurrection are meant to affect us in our daily living
 - 2). When you understand these truths well enough to apply them to your life
You will be set free to live out your Christianity in the way God intended.

2. We’ll start our journey by looking at two representatives. Adam and Christ

- A. For you to understand who you are in Christ you must KNOW you are no longer in Adam
- 1). I want to show you how that happened – what theologians call “Federal headship”

Transition: To understand this we need to travel all the way back into the garden with Adam and Eve

- A. We need to see what happened in the fall – **Turn to Genesis 2:15**

I. THE FALL OF MAN

1. In the garden – Adam and Eve were blessed with incredible freedom and given one command

Ge 2:15–17 (ESV) The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ⁽¹⁷⁾ 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.”

- A. Simple enough – eat from any tree but one
- 1). Have you ever wondered why God isolated one tree and said “Leave that one alone?”
 - 2). Was a reminder that even though Adam and Eve were given dominion over all of creation
They were still under authority
 - a). IOW as they ruled, they were to keep in mind they were also being ruled by God.

Transition: Everything is going great until the serpent shows up to tempt them

- A. He uses the same strategy he uses today – get them to doubt God’s character and God’s Word

Turn: Ge 3:1 (ESV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

- A. Did you see the exaggeration there?

God graciously says “Every one of these beautiful trees are here to bless you. Eat from any, but one.”

- 1). Listen to what the devil turns this into
“Did God actually say, ‘You can’t eat of *any tree* in the garden?’”

Question: What is he doing here? What he always does.

- A. He is suggesting that God is miserly, harsh, unloving, a cosmic killjoy
 - 1). The God of a million rules and they all say “No!” “Thou shalt not”
- B. He paints the Christian life in dull, gray colors – drab and unappealing
 - 1). Therefore following Him would be the worst kind of life anybody could imagine
- C. “Did He actually say you can’t have any fun! You can’t do anything you would enjoy!”
 - 1). No Satan! What He did say is! He richly provides us with everything to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17)
 - a). I’ve found the Christian life to be exciting – adventurous - enjoyable

Eve reponds: Ge 3:2–3 (ESV) And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ⁽³⁾ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

- A. He never said you can’t touch it. Eve added that. First legalist!
 - 1). A fuzzy understanding of God’s Word always leads to a lack of assurance and trouble

Transition: Notice how the devil uses her response to question God’s integrity.

Ge 3:4 (ESV) But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”

“Did you say die Eve! God’s not so brutal that He’d kill you for tasting fruit... No! He didn’t mean that! He couldn’t have. Nobody is that unreasonable!”

- A. That suggestion has sent multitudes into hell
“Did He really say the fornicator, the drunkard, the homosexual, the idolater wouldn’t inherit the kingdom of God? Really! He’s going to shut you out of heaven for that! Listen! You won’t die! God didn’t mean that!”
- B. How dangerous to read the word and re-interpret it to make it comfortable for your flesh
 - 1). To take the warnings about sin and distort it so we can continue in sin

Transition: The devil has questioned God’s love by exaggerating that one rule – He always says NO! Killjoy

- A. He has questioned His Word, suggesting He is a liar. “He said you’ll die. You won’t. He lied.”
- B. Next, he questions God’s motives.

Ge 3:5 (ESV) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

“Want to know the truth about that tree Eve? God won’t let you have it because He’s selfish. He doesn’t really want what’s best for you. He says He does, but if that were true, wouldn’t He allow you to eat from that tree, so you could be smart like Him?”

NOW HERE IS THE LIE: What He is holding back won’t harm you, it will enhance your life. There’s nothing negative about eating from that tree Eve. It’s all positive. Eat it!”

- A. What a deception! How many are in hell because they listened to it
 - 1). Following God will not enhance your life it will reduce it
 - 2). Doing what God said you shouldn’t do won’t reduce your life it will enhance it

Transition: In verse 6 we get the tragic result of listening to him

Ge 3:6 (ESV) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

- A. So, here is man’s first sin and the repercussions are devastating

2. The effect of the fall

- A. God has said, eat of this tree and you will die. That happened in two different ways
- 1). **Physical death** entered into mankind - Adam and Eve were created to live forever
But when they sinned the process of physical death began
 - 2). But far more significant was what happened to them spiritually
 - a). When they chose sin – they **died spiritually**
 - b). That relationship with God they were created to enjoy was ruined – alienation
- B. There were at least three disastrous results from the fall.
- First:** Man was created in God’s image. That image was now shattered.
- Second:** When they were created, they were perfect in holiness. Now they were enslaved to sin.
- Third:** Their nature was changed from a holy nature to a sinful nature. That is huge.

Question: What do we mean when we say nature?

- A. Our nature is that part of us that directs our will, desires, choices and actions.
- 1). Before the fall - Adam and Eve’s nature was holy
 - a). Their whole being was God oriented.
 - b). They desired God, responded to God and delighted in doing His will.
 - 1a). **This is a great definition of being spiritually alive**
- B. But after the fall, everything changed. Their nature was now set against God
- 1). Rather than being God oriented their nature was sin oriented
 - 2). Rather than responding to God and delighting in doing His will
Now they responded to the flesh and delighted in fulfilling its desires
 - a). **That is a great definition of being dead spiritually**

Thought: If you ever wondered what spiritual death is – just look at Adam and Eve after the fall

- A. They no longer desire God and His ways
- B. They no longer want intimacy with their creator, rather than running to Him they run from Him
- C. They no longer respond to Him as Lord, now they will determine how they will live.
- D. And now, there is an inbred, innate hostility towards the one who made them.

Ro 8:7 (ESV) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.

Transition: That is what happened to Adam, but how does that affect me

- A. To understand the beauty of what it means to be “In Christ,”
We must understand the horror of what it means to be in Adam and how his sin affected us

II. ADAM: THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE OF MAN (FEDERAL HEADSHIP)

1. God appointed Adam to be the representative of the whole human race

- A. This meant that Adam’s actions – good or bad – would affect every one of us
- B. If Adam obeyed – we’d all be blessed – if he fell we would be affected by that

2. When Adam rebelled against God we were affected in at least 3 ways

- A. **First:** His sin polluted the whole human race – all those he represented
- TURN: Ro 5:12 (ESV)** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through **one man**, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men **because all sinned**—
- Ro 5:19 (ESV)** For as by the **one man’s** disobedience the **many (that is us)** were made sinners...
- B. **Second:** His guilt was transferred to the whole human race. All those he represented
This is what we call “Original sin” or “Ancestral sin”

- 1). When Adam fell, we all fell in him – therefore we are all born in a guilty state before God
Ro 5:18 (ESV) Therefore, as *one trespass led to condemnation for all men...*
Jn 3:18 (ESV) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, *but whoever does not believe is condemned already...*

Point: I wasn't condemned by God because I sinned. I was born in a state of guilt because Adam sinned!

Transition: What do we have so far?

- 1). My relationship with Adam resulted in my being a sinner like he was.
 - 2). It also resulted in my being guilty because of his guilt
- C. **Third:** His fallen nature would flow down the family tree to all his descendants.
- 1). This is where his sin affects us at the very essence of who we are as people
 - 2). Everyone he represented would inherit that nature that loved sin and was hostile towards God.
 - a). Holy things don't interest the natural man – he is attracted to the world
 - b). He has no desire to please God – he wants to fulfill the lusts of the flesh
 - 3). This is the evidence that we are “in Adam” = Paul calls us children of wrath
- Transition:** What a place to find ourselves in! Guilty of sin and hostile towards God
- A. Linked to the actions of our first representative and because of that we're lost
 - B. Is there any hope for somebody like this?
 - 1). Fortunately, God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love for us
 Has good news! He would send a second representative – Jesus Christ

III. CHRIST: OUR NEW REPRESENTATIVE

Intro: While Adam represented all of mankind and his actions would affect everyone.

- A. Jesus would represent a limited number of mankind – only those who believed in Him
 - 1). They would be united to Him and would be affected by His actions – what He did for them

Question: As our representative. What did He do in our place?

- A. What does it mean to say we are united to Him? In Him? United to what? In what?
 - 1). I just want to mention this now. We will look at all this in more detail in the coming weeks

We Are United to His Perfect Obedience

1. Why is this important? Because nobody will be saved without keeping the law

- A. I know some of you are thinking
 “But that's Old Testament. We aren't saved by keeping the law now. Did you forget these are New Testament times Bill? Remember there was a cross!”
- B. While it is true, these are New Testament times
 Even so what does the Bible say will be used, to determine if one gets into heaven or not?

TURN: Ro 3:19 (ESV) Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and *the whole world may be held accountable to God.*

- A. Not just speaking about the Jew, says whole world will be held accountable to God through the law.
 - 1). The law is the standard of righteousness – and only the righteous will be in heaven
 Those who break the law – lawbreakers will be sent to hell
- B. We all know what righteousness means by now – 100% compliance to the law
 - 1). So the law will be used – if you've kept it perfectly – you're in – fail and you're out
- C. When we say law – what are we talking about? What are we supposed to keep?
 - 1). So important to see, especially for those of you who witness.

- a). Unbeliever wants to reduce God’s demands down to being sincere, not hurting people on purpose and trying to be honest, nice etc.
- 2). But, Jesus tells us what the law is. It is summed up in two succinct commands.
Mt 22:37–40 (ESV) And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ⁽³⁸⁾ This is the great and first commandment. ⁽³⁹⁾ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
- a). There it is. If you want to make it into heaven just keep those two commands perfectly.
 - 1a). Love God with all you are and love your neighbors as yourself.
 - 2a). Fail at any point, at any time in your life, and you’re a lawbreaker.
- b). Break the law once and you’re through
Jas 2:10 (ESV) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

Thought: Here is our problem – Adam our first representative didn’t do that

- A. He didn’t love God with all his heart, soul and mind.
 - 1). He only had one law but showed disdain for God by breaking it.
 - 2). The moment he ate of that fruit, he became a law breaker.
 - a). Because he represented us, “In Adam” we became law breakers too.
- B. Because of this, God who is holy and just cannot allow us into heaven
 - 1). *Please get this! There will be no one in heaven who hasn’t kept the law perfectly*

Thought: That would leave us all out – right – unless God has a plan – Thankfully He did!

- A. He sent Jesus Christ as that second representative whose actions would affect all who believed in Him.
 - 1). What did this new representative do? He came to earth and He obeyed the law perfectly.

Transition: Let’s work this out

2. Jesus kept the law for us

- A. Galatians 4:19 says He was born under the law.
 - 1). Even though His story is told in the New Testament, until the cross it was still Old Testament times and Israel was still under the law.
 - 2). So, Jesus was born under the dispensation of the law
- B. From His very first breath until His last, He kept that law perfectly. There was no failure.
 - 1). Every “thou shalt” was done, every “thou shalt not” was shunned.
1 Pe 2:22 (ESV) *He committed no sin...*
Heb 4:15 (ESV) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, *yet without sin.*
- C. What this means is breathtaking!
 - 1). We see the majesty of grace when we think of these two representatives.
 - a). We have the bad news of being in Adam: When he sinned, I sinned in him. = Lawbreaker
 - b). But now for those “In Christ” when our new representative obeyed perfectly
We obeyed perfectly in Him – we kept the law without failure in Him
Turn: Ro 5:19 (ESV) For as by the one man’s disobedience (**Adam**) the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience (**Christ**) the many will be made righteous.
- D. Don’t miss that! That is amazing truth = The many will be made righteous!
 - 1). Remember righteousness in a legal sense is keeping the law without fail.
 - a). That is what it takes to satisfy the holy law of God and get into heaven.
 - 2). And that is what you receive when you place your faith in Christ.
 - a). His perfect obedience becomes yours – therefore Roman’s 8:1 becomes true of you

Ro 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- 3). Law of God can scan attitudes and actions of your life and find nothing to hold against you.

Question: But aren't we saved by Faith? Yes! **Faith alone, in Christ alone, apart from works**

A. But we have to see what saving faith does

- 1). It links us to Christ and His obedience becomes ours – so that you HAVE kept the law
- 2). Now God can let us into heaven without playing any games with His justice
 - a). Without finding some shady loophole with the law
- 3). We go to heaven because we are righteous – because we have kept the law
 - a). And we have kept the law because our representative Christ kept the law
- 4). He lived the life I was supposed to live to merit heaven.

I will go into glory because I am represented by Him – I am "In Christ"

Transition: That is great. I'm accepted because of Christ's obedience, but there is still a legal problem.

A. What does God do with my sin? I've broken the law = those sins are recorded in the books of heaven?

- 1). That is what's going to be brought out to determine the unbeliever's punishment.

Re 20:11–12 (ESV) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ⁽¹²⁾ And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. *And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.*

B. How can God let me into heaven when I know those books are filled with my sin?

Again, we have the good news of a new representative.

We Are United to His Sufficient Death

We must see how that death affected us

1. He suffered intense physical death in my place

- A. Nails driven through bone.
- B. Dying that slow death of suffocation.
- C. Then the wrath of God must be poured out on Him – Isaiah refers to it as a crushing

Thought: He suffered physically on the cross so we wouldn't have to suffer eternally in hell

2. He suffered an intense psychological pain on the cross for the sins of man.

- A. Jesus being perfectly holy, loathed sin with a holy hatred.
 - 1). How His holy soul must have recoiled in shock when the filth of man was poured out upon Him.
 - 2). How dirty sin must have felt to the one who had never sinned before

C.S. Lewis said: "At that moment Jesus became the most grotesque, ugly and hideous thing in the history of all creation."

 - a). Nobody, no matter how evil had ever had such a catalog of sin attached to them.

Point: In this great exchange, this sinless one took on the worst evil man had ever done.

- A. Rape, murder, incest, child molestation, lying, deceiving, adultery, homosexuality, perversion, idolatry and so much more. All was poured out on that sinless one.

Thought: He took my sin upon Himself so I wouldn't stand before God with a clean record

3. He suffered the pain of abandonment on the cross

- A. Even before the cross, He was abandoned by his friends. Time of greatest need – they all fled
- B. Then He was abandoned by His Father while on the cross.

Point: He suffered abandonment from the Father so I could not be abandoned for all of eternity

4. Here is what we must see – what happened at the cross to my record of sin

- A. When our sin was placed upon Him – God the Father responded with a righteous anger.

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- 1). Wave after wave of wrath pours over Christ without mercy or compassion.
 - 2). There could be no mercy – if He's shown mercy I'm still lost
 - B. Jesus remained under that wrath – until every sin was paid for
 - 1). Finally, when the wrath of God against our sin. Against my sin is exhausted
 - 2). He cries out in Triumph. "It is finished." What is finished? The payment for sin!
 - Point:** My new representative not only lived the life I had to live, but also died the death I deserved to die.
 - A. As that blood was being shed my record was being cleansed – sin after sin after sin
Until that page was blank – until there was nothing left on it against me
 - 1). The law can find nothing in my records to condemn me over
 - Summary:** This is what it means to be united to Christ. This is what it means to be in Christ.
 - A. I am linked to His life and to His death.
 - 1). I am viewed by God as one who has lived the life He required to get into heaven – Why?
 - a). Because Jesus lived that life for me – obeying the law without failure
 - 2). I am viewed by God as one who has never sinned – Why?
 - a). Because Jesus cleansed my record at the cross – not one blemish remains
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CONCLUSION

1. How do I enter into the blessings of this union – By faith

- A. When I embrace Christ by faith – I am released from Adam being my representative
God now views me through the actions of Christ
- Thought:** So faith links you to Christ and His actions
- A. AND faith in these truths will enable you to apply this to your life in a daily manner
- B. I want you to practice this thinking all week – I am no longer in Adam – I am in Christ
 - 1). I have obeyed in Him – I have died and risen with Him – His blood has cleansed my sin
 - 2). No matter what you feel like – that is the truth! Practice it
- C. I know it may seem a little complicated – but we're going to look at how to do this as we move on
 - 1). How to apply these objective truths – when we feel like they are true and when we don't
 - 2). But right now – just start seeing yourself in Christ – that is the way God sees you