

## Where Adam failed, Christ prevailed.

Text: Romans 5:12-19 for 3/1/2020 by Pastor Bolwerk

*<sup>12</sup>So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, so also death spread to all people because all sinned. <sup>13</sup>For even before the law was given, sin was in the world. Now, sin is not charged to one's account if there is no law, <sup>14</sup>and yet death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those whose sin was not like the transgression of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come. <sup>15</sup>But the gracious gift is not like Adam's trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of this one man, it is even more certain that God's grace, and the gift given by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many! <sup>16</sup>And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin, for the judgment that followed the one trespass resulted in a verdict of condemnation, but the gracious gift that followed many trespasses resulted in a verdict of justification. <sup>17</sup>Indeed, if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through the one man, it is even more certain that those who receive the overflowing grace of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ! <sup>18</sup>So then, just as one trespass led to a verdict of condemnation for all people, so also one righteous verdict led to life-giving justification for all people. <sup>19</sup>For just as through the disobedience of one man the many became sinners, so also through the obedience of one man the many will become righteous.*

Why did Adam do it? Adam was there with Eve as Satan the spoke his lies to her. Adam heard what the devil had to say, but instead of speaking up for God and his command, Adam said nothing. Instead of reminding Eve of God's commandment and the consequence that came with it, Adam did nothing. Instead, Adam allowed his wife to pick the fruit and eat it. And he ate it too.

Why would Adam listen to Satan instead of listening to God? It seems Satan's lie may have started some greed in Adam's heart. You see, if Adam listened to God and did not eat of the fruit of that tree he would have remained as he was. But according to the devil if Adam ate the fruit of the tree he would be like God. Wouldn't you want to be like God? So in a greedy desire for more Adam took the fruit and ate it. And we are still dealing with the fallout of that one, sinful act.

Satan tempted God's perfect creation. And in that temptation Adam thought he could handle things without God. Adam thought he could things his own way and come out with something better. Isn't that how all sin starts? But Adam quickly realized what he had was far worse. Adam was now faced with the reality of death. And Adam's reality has become the reality of everyone.

But the Apostle Paul reminds us in the book of Romans that God did not allow his greatest creation to face that death alone. God made a promise to fix what Adam had destroyed. God promised to send someone to destroy the work of Satan so the people of this world could be united again with their holy, loving God. Paul words in his letter to the Romans remind us that ...

Theme: Where Adam failed, Christ prevailed.

I. Jesus destroyed the rule of death.

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### II. Jesus removed our condemnation.

The world needed someone to remove the curse of death, because Adam brought death to the world. Adam failed in his fight against Satan's temptation. Adam had a choice: he could either trust God when he said, "don't eat from that tree or you will die," or he could trust Satan who said, "You won't die. If you eat from that tree you will be just like God!" Satan's words made it sound like God was holding out on Adam. But the devil's words were just a lie. They were a temptation, a test to see if Adam would keep trusting God. And Adam failed the test.

We call Adam's failure original sin, and that sin was passed on to all people. We know that original sin exists because even when there was no command of God to break people still died. Paul wrote, "**Death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those whose sin was not like the transgression of Adam**" (v. 14). Adam died because he disobeyed God's direct command. But the people who lived from the time of Adam to the time of Moses never broke any specific command of God, because God had not given them a command like he gave to Adam. But all those people still died. They died because they had inherited sin from Adam. Because of original sin, death 'rules' over all people: physical death and eternal death. That original sin is a part of us.

We may not like to admit that truth, though. Sure, we confess in church that, "I am by nature sinful, and deserve God's wrath and punishment," but are we really admitting, to God and to ourselves, how thoroughly evil that original sin in us is? Our sinful nature makes us evil! And that evil, sinful self gets us to do sinful things. If you don't think that the sinful nature in you is "that bad" just had someone point out one of your sins. When others point out our sins, we start to act an awful lot like Adam. We try to cover up our sin, make excuses for our sin, or point the finger at someone else. Satan tempts us to deny our sin, or act like it is no big deal. But denying sin is a dangerous game. To deny sin is to call God a liar. To call God a liar is a sin, a sin that brings the judgment of eternal death. We are no better than Adam. Just like Adam, we often fail in the battles against the devil's temptations. And when we fail death rules over us.

But thanks be to God for his grace and mercy. We thank God for following through on his promises. The Apostle Paul says, "**But the gracious gift is not like Adam's trespass.**" (v. 15a). Where Adam failed, Christ prevailed by destroying the rule of death. Paul wrote, "**For if the many died by the trespass of this one man, it is even more certain that God's grace, and the gift given by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many!**" (v. 15). Jesus battled Satan's temptations and won! Having defeated every temptation Jesus then went to the cross and battled death itself. Christ sacrificed his holy life to defeat death, and in his victory we now have forgiveness. For the times we have denied our sins, and in doing so have called God a liar, Jesus has won for us forgiveness, and in his forgiveness we have life. As Paul said, "**Indeed, if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through the one man, it is even more certain that those who receive the overflowing grace of the**

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**gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ!"** (v. 17). God's gracious gift of Christ's righteousness is greater than Adam's failure. Through faith in Jesus we stand as victors over the death that once ruled over us. Jesus destroyed the rule of death, and in doing so Jesus also removed our condemnation.

Now, when God addressed Adam's sin, instead of admitting his sin Adam simply tried to avoid God's condemning verdict by making excuses. When God asked him if he had disobeyed his command Adam said, **"The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it"** (Genesis 3:12 EHV). Adam didn't just point the blame at Eve, he tried to the blame on God! But Adam's excuse didn't remove God's judgment. God had said death would follow the breaking of his command. Adam was now facing the condemnation of eternal death. Adam's excuses failed at removing his condemnation.

So why do we think it will somehow work differently for us? Why do we think that if we make excuses they will somehow get us out of God's condemnation. Let's be honest, we all make excuses for our sins. The pattern of those excuses sound an awful lot like Adam excuses. They usually go something like, "If it had not been for \_\_\_ I would not have \_\_\_ ." Then just fill in the blanks with your favorite combinations: "that person making me angry ... said those nasty things", "my alarm not going off ... had to speed to get to work", "money being so tight ... to live with my girlfriend." I think you get the picture. We often try to excuse our sins, but our excuses don't remove the condemnation that comes with our sins. God doesn't want excuses, he wants repentance. God wants us to turn away from sin and cling to Jesus who paid for those sins. But we cannot cling to Jesus if we are holding on to our sins. So God calls us to let go of, this is repent, of our sins and turn to Jesus for the forgiveness we need.

This is why Paul writes, **"And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin, for the judgment that followed the one trespass resulted in a verdict of condemnation, but the gracious gift that followed many trespasses resulted in a verdict of justification"** (v. 16). God's gift of salvation that is found in Jesus justifies sinful people, because in Christ God declares the people of this world "not guilty" of their sins. As Paul says, **"So then, just as one trespass led to a verdict of condemnation for all people, so also one righteous verdict led to life-giving justification** (a declaration of "not guilty") **for all people"** (v. 18).

By defeating Satan in every temptation Jesus won the battle of living a perfect life. That is the battle Adam, and all of us, have lost. Then, in a completely selfless act of love, Jesus exchanged his perfect life for our sin. Christ made that exchange on the cross. There on Calvary Jesus took upon himself every unrighteous act, every failure, every sin, and shed his holy blood to pay for it all.

The one thing Adam could not do, the one thing none of us could do, Jesus did. Not only did Christ pay for our sins but he removed the condemnation those sins bring with them. When a person trusts in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins God the father does not condemn that person. Instead God looks at that person through the robe of Jesus' own

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perfect life. When a person is covered with Jesus' righteousness God sees perfection. That is something Adam lost, and it's something we could never have on our own. But God has done this for you: out of his undeserved love God has given you the gift of faith in Jesus, and through that faith God grants you forgiveness of your sins; God declares you to be his own son or daughter.

But this gift that God gives you is not a static thing. It doesn't just sit on a shelf as something to look at. No, this gift is life itself. It gives life, and it gives a person the ability to truly live life. Through faith our Lord now gives us the ability to fight Satan's temptations. Now, this is not going to be an easy battle. The temptations we face in this world are very real, and very dangerous. They are not something we want to try and fight on our own. So we rely on Christ and on the power of his Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus fought for us, he also now works within us. Through the power of his word he strengthens us to stand against the temptations of Satan and this world. What does that look like? When someone makes us so angry we want to lash out at them Jesus' word reminds us, "**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God**" (Matthew 5:9 NIV). Jesus' words help us fight that temptation by reminding us of the blessings we have as God's children. Through his words Jesus gives us all we need to stand against any temptation. But that means we need to know his word. And to know Christ's word means we need to hear it, read it, learn it, and study it. Trying to stand against temptation on our own will only lead to failure. Just ask Adam. But where Adam failed, Christ prevailed and saved the world from the damning consequences of its sin.

So was it greed that led Adam into that first sin? We may not know the answer to that question until we get to heaven. But we can certainly learn from Adam's mistake. Instead of trying to stand on our own against temptation, we can trust in Jesus and his victory over all of Satan's temptations. We recognize from Adam that to stand on our own against Satan means that we would fail. But Christ has prevailed. And now his victory, his forgiveness, and the life that comes with it are fully and freely ours. Amen.