

I want to start this morning by having you think about the question at the beginning of your outline. **Other than Jesus, what person has had the most impact on your life?** This might have been a negative impact, not just a positive one.

This morning I want to point you to one person who has had more impact on you than anyone else you might name, other than Jesus. To introduce what this person did to us all we're going to look at a bit of Israel's history.

In the book of Joshua, the Israelites had entered the land of Canaan to conquer it by God's command. The first city they came to was Jericho. This first city was to be dedicated completely to God. The Israelites were not allowed to keep any of the plunder for themselves. It all belonged to God. All the people living there, all the animals, all the gold, silver, bronze, all the houses, and everything else belonged to God. Some went into His treasury and the rest was burned.

But one Israelite man kept some for himself. A man named Achan stole some of the plunder. Look at how he answers for himself.

Joshua 7:20-23 (NIV) Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD (YAHWEH), the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

So the whole Israelite community finds out who sinned and how and why. Now look at what the consequence of this one man's one sin was.

Joshua 7:24-25 (NIV) Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.

Note the price that Achan's family had to pay for his sin. He died, but so did they. His sin affected his whole family. That does not seem fair in America's way of thinking. But it was quite common in that world. And in fact, it is true of us all as we will see in a few moments.

This is the sixth in a series of sermons from the Baptist Faith and Message. Today we are reading Article 3.

----- **BF&M, Article 3, Man**

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Gen. 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 17:5; Matt. 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1 Cor. 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Eph. 2:1-22; Col. 1:21-22; 3:9-11;

I will not deal with all of this statement. I want to draw your attention to a just a few of the truths in it. Adam, our ancestor, broke a direct command of God. His sinful action affected us all. To see that we will look now at the book of Romans.

Romans 5:12 (NLT) When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Sin entered the world through one man. Sin in the world is Adam's fault. **Adam gave us a sin nature.**

So we sin.

We don't become sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.

We inherited an inclination to sin from our ancestor, Adam. Sin is our nature. We don't have to think about it. We do it naturally. It is our first and natural reaction to everything. Obedience is what we have to learn. Obedience does not come naturally to us.

Even very small children sin. Ray Stedman tells about sin in his 2 year old grandson. "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. Nobody had to teach him that. We've never sent him to school to learn how to disobey. He's only two years old, but he knows how to resist instruction and command; he wants to do what he ought not to do."

We all sin. Even very small children sin. We sin against authority over us. We do this because we inherited a sin nature from Adam.

We also inherited death from Adam. **For Adam's sin, we all die.** Even young children die,... because of Adam's sin.

God gave Adam a direct command.

Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV) And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from

any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

God gave Adam a direct command. And Adam deliberately,... thoughtfully,... broke that command. This wasn't an accidental sin. This wasn't a little sin. This was a deliberate, defiant act of rebellion against God. And for that sin, Adam died.

Now there is no record of God giving another direct command to the rest of mankind until the Law of Moses was given, about 1,500 years later. And yet every person between Adam and Moses died. Adults died, teens died, even children died. None of these had access to the tree in the Garden of Eden that was not supposed to be eaten. They could not break the direct command of God. So that raises a significant question. **If there was no command to break, why did everyone between Adam and Moses die?** That is the question Paul next raises in his letter.

Romans 5:13-14c (NLT) Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did.

If there was no command to break, why did anyone die? Why did Seth die? Why did Enoch's brothers die? Why did Noah die? **The answer is that they died for Adam's sin.**

We inherited death from Adam. Adam's sin brought death to everyone. Just as Achan's family died for his sin, so we die for Adam's sin. Adam has had a tremendous negative impact on the life of every person who has ever lived. We will die for Adam's sin. Just like Achan's family died for his sin, so we inherit sin and death from Adam.

Just as I inherited a long face from my dad, just as I inherited a bald head from my grandfather, so I inherited sin and death from Adam. We all have. Like Adam, and because of Adam, we all need a savior. We all need Jesus.

Now Paul is going to contrast Adam and Jesus. He told us what Adam's action did. Now he is going to compare that with what Jesus' action did. **Paul contrasts what we DO get from Adam with what we CAN get from Jesus.**

Romans 5:15-21 (NLT) But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do you see the wonderful contrast? Adam has ushered in sin and death to us all. Jesus has ushered in righteousness that we can all partake of. You had no choice to be included in Adam. You have a free choice to be included in Jesus.

Whether we like it or not, Adam was our representative head, and when he fell, we fell. You may say, "I don't want Adam to represent me." But you cannot change it. And in fact you live represented by others every day. You may not have voted for any of the government representatives in the house, the senate, or for the president. But they now represent you. And the choices they make will affect you, for good or ill.

In that same way, Adam represented us all. That is pretty bad news. But the very good news is that Jesus also represented us before God when He died on the cross for all of our sins. So if you will receive Jesus as your savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord, all your sins will be forgiven. The bad news is how we were affected by Adam's sin. The good news is how we can be affected by Jesus' righteousness.

I want to make another point this morning from the Baptist Faith & Message. Look again at the last sentence.

The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

We are presented a paradox in the Bible. We see it in Paul's letter to the Romans. Since we are stained with Adam's sin and already condemned to death, how can we feel good about ourselves? How can we have any sense of self-worth? We were born sinners. We were damaged goods from the start. We were dirty with Adam's sin at the start of our lives. And we have compounded that with sins of our own. So there is good reason to be down on ourselves.

But look at the other side. God made you. He made you individually. And God loves you. Because God loves you and showed that love in Jesus, you have reason for self-worth.

This is the paradox: **God wants you to see your sin and feel your guilt. But He also wants you to see His love and feel the joy of the hope of your salvation.** We miss His will if we only feel bad about ourselves. We also miss His will if we only feel good about ourselves. A proper view includes both. We are sinners in Adam, but we are loved in Jesus.

See what you are in Adam. But see also what you can become in Jesus.

In Jesus you can be forgiven of all of your sin. In Jesus you can become a part of God's family. In Jesus you can inherit eternal life. Today, choose to put yourself, by faith, into Him.