

Romans 5:12-21 “Because of One Man”

Intro

Vs. 12-14 Adam he’s our man, if he can’t do it nobody can

Vs. 15-17 Heartaches and ruined lives are why Jesus died on Calvary

Vs. 18-21 Life through Jesus Christ

Intro

In Ray Stedman’s book “Authentic Christianity” he describes one of the marks of an “Authentic Christian” as “Unquenchable Optimism” which describes the reality that the believer in Christ always has reasons for rejoicing. I remember hearing one of my Christian friends tell me something that illustrated that truth when he declared to a non-Christian that: “If this is the absolute best day of your life it’s a real bummer as it is only going to get worse from here on out” Then he said, “But as a follower of Jesus I can have the absolute worst day of my life and I can rejoice because it is only going to get better from here on out!” To understand this section all we need to do is take a look at Paul’s repeated use of three phrases:

1. One: It is used 11 times in this section and Paul uses it as the bases of our identification either in Adam or in Jesus.
2. Reign: Paul uses this word 5 times as Paul saw these two men Adam and Jesus as Kings that reigned over a kingdom.
3. Much more: Paul uses this phrase as a comparison of what we gained in Christ verses what we lost in Adam. Jesus not only undid all the damage during Adam’s reign He did much more by making us children of God. In Adam we lost our kingdom in Jesus we as kings!

Vs. 12-14 Adam he’s our man, if he can’t do it nobody can

Vs. 12 It may befuddle the atheist but according to Jesus (Mat. 19:4-6) and Paul (here in Rom 5:12) they, regarded Adam and Eve as real people and their fall as a lasting effect to the present day. You can’t take away Genesis 3 without taking away principles that lay the foundation for our salvation. Adam was more than the first man as his name means in Hebrew means “humanity.” Death entered the world and spread to all men as God promised Adam that, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Every death and grave is a silent reminder of the spread and reign of sin. Paul draws the first two of four consequences of Adam’s sin in verse 12:

1. Vs. 12a Because of Adam’s failure, sin entered the world: (Universality of sin) Chesterson said, “Whatever else may be said of mankind, this one thing is clear: He is not what he is capable of being.” Theologically speaking we call this “original sin”. That’s not fare you cry, but the reality is that Adam was our champion; he was the best we have ever had. He in a perfect world where he experienced the best of what God had to offer without a hint of failure. We could let lose the cheer, “Adam, Adam he’s our man, if he can’t do it nobody can!” Yet even though he was undefeated, on his home court in the Garden of Eden he got whipped. Now if you think you

could do better try going one day without sin, without one bad thought, one unkind word or one bad attitude. Then when you throw in not just the sins of commission but the sins of omission where you didn't do wrong you just didn't do right, then old great, great, great grandpa Adam doesn't look so bad. Even more amazing is that such sin is not a learned behavior it isn't based upon a lack of education or poor environment. In 1926 the Governor of Minnesota commissioned the Minnesota Crime Commission to do a study on the causes of delinquency that was published in the Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology in May 1927. It's finds were that: "Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toys, his uncle's watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He's dirty; he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist." David wrote in Psa. 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me". Now I love my grandchildren but the truth is we never have to teach them to be bad, they got that from Adam passed on to Grandpa and then on to their parents.

2. Vs. 12b Because of Adam's failure death entered the world: (Universality of death). People may think that Adam and original sin is a load of baloney but every funeral, every grave marker makes them a liar. The moment a baby is born and they start to live they have kicked into action an eternal clock that no one knows but their creator that will one day stop ticking and they will die. We are born to die and it is the story of the human race, as Paul puts it in verse 17 "death reigned", then in verse 21 he says that "sin reigned". Paul will tell us in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death and that death is not only physical but spiritual and eternal death as well. The reason for all of this is Adam, that's why it says the wages of "sin" not the wages of "sins" plural.

Adam is the common father of every person on the earth and we without choice we were born with his genetic makeup. By nature because of Adam's sin we were subject to death even before we have made a choice to exercise what we are by nature. Sin and death have been royal tyrants who have dictated their wills upon all of humanity with only one exception, Jesus.

Vs. 13-14 Next Paul anticipates a question with regards to the "Law" and says that we were made sinners by nature because of Adam, as sin and death were in the world before the Law was ever given. In the garden of Eden Adam did far more than disobey a little command he made a decision to call himself an independent creature, the captain of his own ship and deny the God who he had enjoyed and walked with everyday. In so doing he enthroned himself as god. The "Law" revealed that what we are by nature we will soon enough be seen by choice! "Death reigned" even over those who had not sinned in the exact way Adam did, showing that the principle of sin was at work in every human.

Vs. 15-17 Heartaches and ruined lives are why Jesus died on Calvary

Vs. 15 This verse starts the comparison and contrasts of Adam and Jesus. The clearest contrast is that:

- Adam sinned once and brought death to all
- Jesus died once and brought life to all

As a result of Adam's offense, many died as a result of the free gift of Jesus, the grace of God which abounded many lived. This world is not the land of the living it's the land of the dying. Yet as certain as this is Paul says that the reign of life through Jesus is much more certain. Imagine that "The believer's reign in life through Jesus" is more certain than death or taxes! Paul draws the third of four consequences of Adam's sin in verses 16-17:

3. Vs. 16-17 Because of Adam's failure, condemnation entered the world: Because of Adam's foolishness enumerable numbers have died and the carnage of ruined lives litter human history. In that old song called "Something about that name" there is a stanza that goes "I will serve thee because I love thee, You have given life to me, I was nothing until you found me, You have given life to me, Heartaches, broken pieces, ruined lives are why You died on Calvary, Your touch was what I longed for, You have given life to me" Oh dear ones Adam's failure would be insurmountable if not for the fact that "Heartaches, broken pieces, ruined lives are why Jesus died on Calvary". Adam polluted. Jesus purifies! Adam washed out. Jesus washes us clean!

Vs. 18-21 Life through Jesus Christ

Vs. 18 Between Adam and Jesus all of humanity is identified: We are born identified with Adam but we can be born again into identification with Jesus. We initially didn't chose Adam but the moment we sinned we identified ourselves with him and the moment we chose Jesus we identify ourselves with Him.

Vs. 19 Both Adam and Jesus communicate the effect of their work to their "followers" as Adam's work makes us sinners Jesus' work makes us saints. Satan could not complain to God that it was not fair that another Man represent us by acting on our behalf because it was our representative in Adam that placed us in the state we are in. Paul draws the final of four consequences of Adam's sin in verse 19:

4. Vs. 19 Because of Adam's failure sin continually enters the world: Adam's failure would be tragic if he was lost. It would be a tragedy if his generation would be lost. Oh but his failure has affected every single person after him with no escape, no option, and no hope found in man's ingenuity or creativity. Oh listen to me where sin did abound grace did much more abound. Sin reigned in death but grace and life reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord! Jesus didn't come against death with a crusade or a march, He came with compassion. He didn't mobilize the multitudes or strategize and compartmentalize. No He came to lay down His life that we may have life! In Jesus I have found everything I was looking for and many things I didn't know ever existed. Because of Him I've stopped striving to prove I'm worthy of His love. I was a worker now I'm a worshipper which cause me to worship in my work.

Vs. 20a Not only does the law not justify us it doesn't even make us sinners - Adam did that. The purpose of the law is so that man's sin is more visible by contrasting it with God's holy standard. In the jewelry industry to grade diamonds every gemologist needs to have a "proof set" of stones by which they can grade diamonds. They are without flaw and in various color grades (D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K etc) so that a person can lay the perspective stone next to that which is the standard. That's what God's perfect law does as it exposes our "flaws", reveals how "off color" we are making our sin abound.

Vs. 20b-21 Ah but where "sin abounded under the law, then grace abounded much more under Jesus." The phrase "abounded much more" means "super-abounded" as God makes His grace super-abound over abounding sin! Is it not amazing that "where sin abounded" it was not God's anger or judgment that abounded much more. No, it is God's love and grace that abounded much more.

Some folks have a misconception of "abounding grace" as they will say in response to their casual attitude towards sin, "Hey I'm under grace". But according to Paul's letter in Tit. 2:11-12 abounding grace teaches us: "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and instead that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." A person who isn't "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" or "living soberly, righteously and godly in this present age" is demonstrating not that they are under grace but that they aren't under grace!!! The legalist's fear is that the reign of grace will provide wicked hearts with a license to sin, but Scripture doesn't share that fear. Grace does not accommodate sin, it doesn't wink at unrighteousness, it confronts it with the atonement at the cross and the victory won at the open tomb. "Grace is no friend to sin; it is its sworn enemy." Let us refuse to be content with a Christian existence that cannot be fully summed up as "He reigned in life through Jesus Christ!" Yes over sin, over satan, over the world system, over difficulties, adverse surroundings and circumstances.