

“Adam” Romans 5:12 Steve Harden 11/29/20

If you will, turn with me in your Bibles to Romans 5. Tonight, I’m eager to get started in our Advent series, a series of four messages that we’ll be looking at together on the theme of “From Ruin to Redemption.” Shane and I are eager to share this series of messages with you over the Christmas season. Again, the theme is “From Ruin to Redemption.” We hope that you will find encouragement and hope and joy in Christ in this season of the year. Well, the last two years have been a little bit difficult; they have not been easy ones for the family here at Ethos. From the uncertainty around pastoral leadership to not meeting for months and then when we do get to meet we have to scatter out all over the building and wear masks and it’s just, it has not been the way we planned it. There have been some significant hurdles along the way. Some of have even questioned, should we even exist? With all this going on, is God trying to tell us something? But by God’s grace and your faithfulness, we are on the cusp of a new chapter in our life together, a new chapter, a story, if you will, that we think will be filled to the brim with joy and peace and happiness and growth. So, we are very, very expectant this coming Advent season, for the coming year. It’s a great reminder for us that this truly is what the Christmas season is all about. The Christmas story full of hope and expectation. Jesus was born in a very, very dark time for the Jewish people. He came to bring good tidings of great joy.

So, we wanted to focus on hope this Advent season. The story of the Bible is a story that again and again speaks of joy and of hope, of taking situations that we would say are full of ruin and bringing them to redemption. So, these next four weeks we’ll be highlighting, from the story and the ancestry of Jesus, the ruin and redemption stories of His ancestors. But we begin tonight with our Advent series by going back to His very first ancestor, Adam, himself. And we’re going to do that by looking at Romans 5. Romans 5 really is the retelling of the Creation story and the Fall through theological lenses. We have to look at what happened back in the garden of Eden that day, and what it meant for us theologically in our relationship with God. The book of Romans helps us understand why we need a Savior and what Christ has done to provide for us a Savior. In our passage tonight, we will see that the Apostle Paul, the writer of Romans, he will draw a parallel between Adam and Christ and all throughout the section that we read, you’ll see the first Adam and the second Adam. So, that’s kind of laying out where we’re going to be, so let’s read together, but be focused and listening to the parallels. Romans 5, beginning in verse 12.

<sup>12</sup> 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—<sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. <sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is the word of God.

From ruin to redemption. This passage describes for us the doctrine of original sin. Let me read verse 12 again, and I trust it's on the screen. "<sup>12</sup> 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—" Let's walk through this text. The first thing we see is that sin came into the world through one man. We find that sin has not always been in the world, that when God created the heavens and the earth, He declared it good. There was not sin in the world at the beginning. Notice He doesn't say that sin was found in the world, but that sin entered the world, or if you will, invaded the world. God made the world perfect without sin, and He put man in the garden of Eden, and He created Adam and Eve and it was perfect. And then, sin entered in or invaded the world. Theologians call sin's intrusion into the world, into God's perfect world, the Fall of man. God told Adam, "Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And Adam disobeyed, and he ate, and it was through this one act of disobedience that rebellion and sin entered the world. So, the first thing we see is that sin came into the world.

The second thing we see in verse 12 is that the result of that sin is death. Now, there are three kinds of death that the Bible talks about. It talks about spiritual death, when sin entered the world, Adam's relationship with God was broken. We read that Adam used to be able to walk with God in the garden of Eden, but that ended when sin entered the world. So, there's spiritual death where sin separates us spiritually from God. We see that there's physical death that comes in. All men now who live will ultimately die physically. Before sin in the garden of Eden, there was no death. Nothing ever died! So, there's physical death. But the third type of death that sin brings is eternal death. The most serious extension of the earlier two! Eternal death means being separated from God forever and facing eternal punishment.

So, we see that sin entered the world through one man. We see that death was the result of sin entering the world. But then, the next thing that we see in our text is that all sinned in Adam's fall and this is where we'll tarry. Because Adam fell, because Adam sinned, all mankind sinned in Adam. Or if you will, we all joined the ranks, or the category, of sinners through Adam's sin. Sin came into the world through one man and because sin came into the world, death entered the world and death spread from this one man's sin, to all men. Now, Paul, when he writes Romans 5, writes pretty thickly and you've got to pay attention. He writes logically and rationally, but he reasons very closely, so the logical question then as I'm reading Romans 5 is, well, how did that sin pass to me? If Adam sinned so many thousands of years ago, what does that have to do with me? Why am I a sinner because of this man's sin? What is my relationship to Adam, and why does it matter to me? Paul presents that Adam was all of our representative in the garden of Eden, the delegate if you will, of the whole human race. He was not only our father biologically, but he was the representative head of all humanity.

You see, God made a covenant with Adam and He said, ‘Look Adam, every benefit you have I will pass on to your progeny, but every punishment that comes to you, I will pass that on to your progeny as well. You act not only for yourself, but for all those who will come behind you.’ Now, this is not a foreign concept for us. We understand it, especially living in the United States. We have representatives that we send to Washington D.C. to act on our behalf. Now whether they do or not, we don’t know, but that’s how the system works! We send representatives to the State house to represent our best interest in the government. We understand what it means for one person to represent someone else. Because Adam, our representative, our delegate, sinned, we all sinned in him. Maybe it’s a little bit of a strange concept for us theologically, but it’s so important for us to understand because you’re really not going to understand what Jesus did for us, if you don’t understand what Adam did to us.

Sometimes, it helps us to understand a concept by understanding what it doesn’t say. So, let’s look at a few things that Paul doesn’t say in verse 12 in this passage. The first thing it doesn’t say, it doesn’t say that we experience death because all have sinned. But he says, we experience death because all sinned. Do you hear the difference? All sinned. Not all have sinned. Now we’re familiar with Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” That is true. We have all sinned. But the sin nature and sin and death come to us not because of our own individual acts of transgression, primarily. Primarily it comes because we are in Adam because Adam sinned. The text said, “All sinned.” It’s not primarily your sinful actions that bring the penalty of death, it’s being in Adam. So that’s important to recognize. The second thing it doesn’t say, it doesn’t say your ongoing sinfulness designates you as sinner, worthy of death and experiencing death. Now we know that’s true, but that’s not the point that he’s making in Romans 5. I have to tell you, I’m not a grammarian, but I know just enough to be dangerous. The word ‘sinned’... some of you are laughing. You know it’s true! The word sinned here is in ‘erest’ tense. For some of you that makes a difference, for some of you it doesn’t, let me explain. The explanation in the original, in the Greek, the word ‘sinned’ is in ‘erest’ tense, and ‘erest’ tense means that a verb conveys an idea of an act completed once and only once in history, a historical event or fact. It is not a description of an ongoing occurrence, okay? It’s referring to something that happened one time in history that will never be repeated.

When Paul writes, “All sinned,” he’s not referring to our ongoing sinful actions. Like, I sinned yesterday, and I sinned this morning and I’m probably sinning even now. That’s not what he’s talking about. He’s referring back to that one sin that occurred in the garden of Eden in Adam. It happened once in history, to never be repeated again. You and I were made sinners and experienced death because Adam sinned. What else doesn’t it say? It says, our individual transgressions are not the main issue! And that’s kind of news for some of us. We tend to think that it’s solely because of our sinful actions that we face condemnation and separation from God, but it’s not solely them and not primarily them. It is them, but not primarily them.

Let’s look at verses 13-14. He will tell you that sin was in the world before Moses the lawgiver. We know that’s true, right? Because Adam sinned, right? But that individual transgressions were not counted against those who lived from Adam to Moses. That’s my explanation, now let me read it and see if that’s indeed what it says. “<sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of

Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.” Now that sounds really strange to our ears, doesn’t it? Do you hear what he says? He’s making the case that individual transgressions were not charged to the account of those who lived from Adam to Moses because the law had not been given. But he does not say that where there is no law, there is no sin. That’s not what he’s saying. They were sinners because of the sin of Adam. Did everyone die between Adam and Moses? Yes! Well, save Enoch, right? They all died! What is the result of sin coming into the world? Death! So, do you see? Their individual transgressions were not held against them before the law, but they were still sinners because, why? Because of Adam’s sin. Now, since the law has been given, our sins are held against us because we have the law, but even if they weren’t, we’re still sinners because of Adam’s sin. Guys, this whole passage is built upon this truth. Let me run through it really quickly in verses 15-19. The offense of Adam is mentioned again and again. In verse 15 it says that “through the transgression of the one, many died.” Verse 16, “judgement arose from one transgression.” Verse 17, “for if by the transgression of the one, death reigned, through the one.” Verse 18, “so then, as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men.” Verse 19, “through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners.” So, all throughout this text, it speaks of the results of one man’s sin, Adam.

So, that’s interesting Steve, but why’s that important? Well I believe it’s really important to understand because many Christians and those who have not come to faith alike really don’t understand this concept of the original sin of Adam and why it matters. And because they don’t understand why it matters, it’s unclear to them what happened on the cross 2,000 years ago! What was it about the cross that has any effect whatsoever on me living some 2,000 years later? How does the cross that Jesus died on, affect me? If you don’t understand this concept of one for many, if you don’t embrace that from the Scriptures, then the cross of Jesus is just kind of this nebulous idea or theory! But praise God it’s not some nebulous theory! This concept of the actions of one affecting the many exists from Genesis 1 to the end of Revelation; it’s all throughout! That’s why the death of Jesus matters. Adam’s sin was the greatest calamity of all of history. It far exceeds any pandemic. Guys, it affects all men. Everyone has fallen in Adam. All die. That is a story of ruin!

But praise God, our story doesn’t end there, because the story is one from ruin to redemption. This is where the redemption story begins! The theme of this passage is that Jesus then is the second Adam! The first Adam, our delegate before God, disobeyed and brought us to ruin. But the second Adam, He is the one, our delegate from God, He perfectly obeyed the law of God and became our Redeemer. From ruin to redemption is the story. This passage is all about the comparison of the consequences of the actions of the first Adam and the consequences of the actions of the second Adam! What was once true of us in Adam, now is true of us in Christ. Both were appointed by God as the head of a race of people. Each was the head of a covenant. Each represents his seed. Each passed on to the seed the effects and fruit of their own work. Now let’s read together in verses 18 and 19 in light of this. Paul writes, “<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” The concept is the same!

And you see this in verse 19 in the little word that is “made.” Do you see it? “The many were made sinners,” “the many will be made righteous.” It’s the same word. It’s a strong word in

the original language, stronger than in English. This word ‘made’ means that you are placed into a category of men, or if you will, you are appointed a particular class. So, if I were to be using this concept in our building tonight, I could say, “Okay, men over here, women over there” so there’d be a women category and a men category. Or I could say, “Blue eyes over here, and brown eyes over there and green eyes and everything else in the middle.” We’d be categorizing ourselves, see? There’d be a category of people. In Adam, we were all placed into the category of sinner. Adam’s sin then was imputed to us. It wasn’t something we did. It was something that was imputed, given to us! But now, in Christ, in the same way, Christ came to purchase for Himself a people! A category, a separate people. His obedience then, is imputed to us. We are not righteous. We didn’t do it! But because of His position, our delegate, our representative, His righteousness then was imputed to us as if we were righteous. Adam’s transgression led to condemnation, but Christ’s death on the cross led to our justification!

And it’s important to understand that word. “Justification” is a legal term, it’s a legal act, a legal pronouncement. There’s no process in justification. It’s a one-time legal event, a one-time act, from God toward a sin. Justification means that God pronounces us righteous based on the righteousness of Christ. His righteousness is imputed to us. We once were condemned because Adam’s sin was imputed to us, now we are declared righteous because Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. That’s why Jesus’ death matters! That’s what actually happened some 2,000 years ago! Jesus, God’s own delegate, designated our Savior from before the foundation of the world, the second Adam, died so that He might impute His righteousness to us. Not because He finds us righteous, not because of anything good in us at all, but simply because it’s His good pleasure.

So do you see how this truth, this understanding, sheds light on what Jesus did for us? We celebrate at Christmastime because Jesus broke into history to redeem for Himself a people for His own possession. Not because we deserved it. Not because He saw that we were going to be okay people down the road. He saw that exact opposite. But because of His great love and grace and mercy He chose to die in our place and then impute His righteousness to us. Praise be to His name. You see, this is why it doesn’t matter one whit how bad you are, or how good you are, for that matter, before you come to Jesus. It’s never been about you. It’s never been about your morality. It’s never been about your behavior. It’s never been about your attitude. It’s not about you! So, by faith and trust, look to Jesus and His death and resurrection and you’ll receive life! You will be placed into that category of Christian, of redeemed. This is the greatest story from ruin to redemption the world has ever known. Let’s pray.