

Grace is Greater than Sin # 17

Romans 5: 12-21

Had there been any doubt, Paul has well established the universal nature of sin and total depravity of humanity. We are all born in sin, separated from God, and stand in need of salvation. We don't have to learn to sin, or be taught to sin; it comes naturally. We are not sinners because we commit sin. We commit sin because we are sinners.

In our text Paul takes us back to the first of God's creation. Adam was created in the image of God and dwelt in a perfect world. He knew no sin and enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. Tragically that all changed when Adam succumbed to temptation and partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. He fell in sin and thus was cast out of the Garden of Eden, and the curse of sin came upon creation.

We are all descendents of Adam, and through his fall, we are all born in sin. There is no denying our guilt, but fortunately God had a plan. The first Adam failed through sin, but the second Adam, Jesus Christ, provided redemption through His shed blood. What Adam lost, Christ regained. We have a means of salvation from sin in Christ.

Let's consider the [details](#) Paul offers in the text as we think on: [Grace is Greater than Sin](#).

I. The Presence of Sin (12-14) – Here Paul discusses the presence of sin within the world and humanity. Consider:

A. The Entrance of Sin (12a) – [Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world](#). Paul speaks of the fall of Adam and the subsequent entrance of sin into the entire human race. His failure brought the curse of sin on all who enter this life. None are able to escape sin or the guilt it brings. The presence of sin is an undeniable fact in all our lives. [Rom.3:23 – For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God](#). 1 Kings 8:46 – [...for there is no man that sinneth not...](#) Isaiah 64:6 – [But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away](#).

B. The Effect of Sin (12) – [Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned](#). The consequence of Adam's sin was death, both physical and spiritual. His sinless nature became tainted by sin and he no longer enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God. Sin also brought about physical death. Adam and Eve began to suffer the effects of aging, pain, and disease, all brought about by sin. This great tragedy was

passed on to all who followed Adam, including you and me. Death is the final and fatal consequence of sin. It is inescapable apart from Christ. [Rom.6:23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.](#) [James 1:15 – Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.](#)

- Sin always results in death. It is absolute and there is no means of escape within ourselves. There are three types of death associated with sin.

- **Physical Death** – [Heb.9:27 – And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.](#) The mortality rate for mankind is 100%.

- **Spiritual Death** – Because of sin, we are all spiritually dead, separated from God. [Eph.2:1-2 – And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ^{\[2\]} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.](#)

- **Eternal Death** – The Scripture speaks of this as the “second death.” It refers to the eternal state of those who are never saved and rejected of God in judgment. [Rev.20:14-15 – And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ^{\[15\]} And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.](#)

C. The Evaluation of Sin (13-14) – [For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ^{\[14\]} Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.](#) Although the law was not given until the Lord spoke to Moses, death reigned upon the earth during that time. Even though men did not have the law of God to reveal sin and condemnation, the dreaded effect of sin remained. All died because of sin; none escaped regardless of the life they lived.

- Today one might rationalize death for the murderer, the rapist, or the substance abuser who ignores warnings against bodily harm. What about those who live a good, moral life? What about those who seek to help their neighbor and strive for the good of mankind? The end result is the same. We all have an appointment with death, and apart from Christ, death will be eternal.

II. The Provision of Salvation (14-21) – In our remaining verses Paul discusses the solution for the fatal consequence of sin: Salvation. The Lord provided a means of escape. In these verses Paul presents several contrasts. We see:

A. The Contrast of People – We see a sharp contrast between Adam and Christ. First let's consider:

- **Adam** – Paul speaks of Adam's **transgression** in **V.14**. In **Vv.15 and 17** he speaks of the **great offence** that resulted in death for all. In **V.19** Adam's **disobedience** is revealed. The effect of his original sin and the dreaded consequence it brings continues to affect all humanity today.
- **Christ** – While Adam's sin resulted in sin for all, the sacrifice of Christ offers the **gift of grace** to all, **V.15**. Adam brought condemnation through sin and Christ offers **justification** through salvation, **V.16**. Adam had no power over sin and death, but Christ offers **life** through His righteousness, **V.17**. While Adam acted in disobedience, Christ acted in **obedience** to God, thus fulfilling our redemption, **V.19**.
 - Through Adam we face death and condemnation. In Christ we have life and reconciliation. **1 Cor.15:22 – For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive**. Adam was made a living soul, which will last for eternity. Christ came a quickening spirit, able to make alive and redeem from sin. **1 Cor.15:45 – And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit**.

B. The Contrast of Possessions (**16-20**) – Our standing in relation to the first Adam or the last Adam determines our possession in this life and in eternity. Paul contrasts these possessions.

- **Condemnation/Justification** (**16, 18**) – **And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.** ^[18]
Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. Sin is enmity with God. Through Adam, all are born in sin. God cannot condone sin; it must be atoned. Those in sin stand condemned of God, facing His righteous judgment for sin. Although we are born in sin, condemned of God, there is a remedy. Through Christ we can escape condemnation and be justified in Him. We are declared righteous through Christ our Lord.
- **Death/Life** (**17**) – **For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.** We have discussed the ultimate consequence of sin: Death. None can escape this consequence apart from Christ. Being born into this world, born in sin, we all face death. It is a sobering reality we are all too familiar with. Our world is filled with reminders of death. We know the sadness and separation it brings. There is an alternative however. We can experience life in Christ. That is not

to say we will escape physical death, but we can be delivered from spiritual and eternal death through salvation in Christ! Rather than dead men walking, we can become live men living!

➤ **Disobedience/Obedience (19)** – *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Adam fell in sin because he disobeyed the command of God. Living a life of disobedience is a mark of every sinner. Sinners live to please the flesh, while serving their master Satan. We may not like to admit it, but each of us was disobedient to the Lord while in sin. Christ came and lived His life in complete obedience to the Father. He willingly submitted to the death of the cross to purchase our redemption. We can overcome and live in obedience through Him. That is not to say we will live perfect lives apart from sin, but that we will desire to live in obedience to Christ.

➤ **Law/Grace (20)** – *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:* The law of God reveals our sin and declares our guilt. It removes the veil of self-righteousness and exposes the heart of sin. Those living apart from Christ are condemned of the law and are bound to face His righteous judgment for their sin. However, where the law declares the abundance of my guilt and cries out for justice, the grace of God abounds even more. Through His abundant grace in salvation, our sin is covered so deeply it cannot be uncovered. Our sin is cleansed and we are set free from condemnation and wrath!

C. The Contrast in Positions (21) – *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* There is no doubt that sin reigns unto death. We are born in sin and face the final consequence of death for our sin. Those who remain apart from Christ will face spiritual and eternal death. There will be no escape. They will be judged of God and cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

▪ There is hope and healing in Christ however. Where sin reigns unto death, salvation by grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. We can escape the eternal consequence of sin through our Lord and the gracious sacrifice He made on our behalf. We may face the chilly hand of death physically, but for the believer, life will just have begun. We will enter the presence of our Lord and Savior and there we shall ever be, throughout eternity!

Conclusion: Each of us identifies with one Adam tonight, the first or the last. We are either condemned because of sin or we have been liberated through Christ. The difference lies in our birth. Everyone who was ever born identifies with Adam. Only those who have been born again through faith in Christ identify with Him. It has been said: those who are born once die twice, while

those who are born twice die only once. Where do you stand today? Which Adam are you identifying with? Sin is undeniable, but there is a remedy. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. If you are unsaved, come to Christ by faith and receive deliverance from death!