

Text: Romans 5: 12-19

12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— **13**for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. **14**Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. **15**But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! **16**Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. **17**For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. **18**Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. **19**For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

THANK GOD FOR THIS COMPARISON!

I. Through it he reveals how much we lost through our father.

II. Through it he reveals how much more we gained through his Son!

Lent 1

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St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church

Lake Mills, WI

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When it comes to family relationships one thing that people often discourage is making comparisons. For example, when someone says "You're just like your father," that usually is not intended as a compliment. Or when someone says, "I wish you could be more like your brother," that usually isn't intended as a pat on the back either. So when it comes to family harmony it's usually best to leave comparisons unspoken.

Today, in God's Word, however, we have a "family" comparison that is good. Paul makes a comparison between our father Adam and Christ, God's Son. This comparison is good because through it **I. God reveals just how much we loss through our father, Adam, II. God reassures of how much more we have gained through his Son!** Let's take a look and see what I mean.

Speaking of family comparisons, there's another saying that goes something like this" "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." The point is that children often act just like their parents. And again, such a comparison is usually not intended as a compliment. In sense that is the point that Paul makes. When we compare our thoughts, words, and actions with God's holy Law in the Ten Commandments, we are just like our father Adam. How so? Paul explains, **2**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned..**19**For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners..."

When Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he lost the image of God. He no longer was without sin, and he has passed that image unto us. From him we have received a human nature that is contaminated with sin. That's why we sin, because we are sinners. This part of the doctrine we call "original sin." And so with King David, we must all confess, "Surely, I have been a sinner from birth sinful from the time my mother conceived me." And so you see, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

But there is more to the doctrine of original sin than just receiving a nature from Adam tainted by sin. God also has imputed, that is charged to us, the guilt of Adam's original sin. What does that mean? It means this, when Adam representing the whole human race, disobeyed God by eating from that tree, God not only

held Adam accountable, God also holds us accountable. In God's record keeping, it is as if we ate from that tree ourselves.

Now we might object and say that's unfair. But who of us would accuse the holy, just, and righteous God of being unfair?. The answer is obvious. In fact, if you need proof that God's judgment of us for what Adam is right, all you have to do is go to the cemetery. That's the point of Paul's words when he said,

"**12**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

Do you see what we have lost in our father Adam? We lost our sinlessness and life itself. In Adam we all died. And so you see, we are just like our father. And that truth, that comparison not only hurts, it kills us.

II. But lest we despair, let's continue with Paul's great comparison. "**18**Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. **19**For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

I hope the point is obvious. The result of Adam's trespass is that we all are under God's condemnation. And through the disobedience of Adam we all were made sinners. That's what we lost in our in Adam. But in God's Son, who was the perfect substitute for all, we have gained so much more. Through his act of righteousness there is now justification for all, that is forgiveness, and through Jesus' perfect obedience there is righteousness for all.

Now when we hear this, we usually conclude that Christ undid for us what Adam had done. For the most part we would agree that is true. But that's not the point of Paul's comparison. What I mean is this, if Jesus only undid what Adam had done, we wouldn't be saved. In other words, if Christ won forgiveness for only Adam's sin, there would be no forgiveness for our sins. And if Jesus obeyed only to do what Adam couldn't, then we would still have to render perfect obedience to earn eternal life.

Thanks be to God that that is not the case. Because in this comparison that Paul makes, God reassures us that Christ, God's Son, did gain for us more than Adam our Father lost. "**15**But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! **16**Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. **17**For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."

The point of Paul's comparison is that Christ won for us so much more than Adam lost. When Jesus died, he didn't just die for Adam's sin and didn't win forgiveness just for. The gift of forgiveness was won for us all. And when Jesus lived a perfect life, rendered perfect obedience to God his Father, he didn't just obey one command of God, he obeyed them all and earned heaven for us all.

There are three amazing truths regarding this comparison. First, what we gained in God's Son, who is our brother, is a gift of God's grace. We didn't deserve, it but God did it for us. Secondly, just as the disobedience and guilt of Adam were charged to us, so also, Jesus' obedience and the forgiveness he won have also been imputed to us. We don't have to buy or earn it. God gives it to us and by faith we receive it. And thirdly, through what Adam did, death reigned. But in what Christ did, believers now reign over sin, death, and hell. That's why we sing, "In him the tribes of Adam boast, more blessings than their father lost."

Now you might be thinking, "Pastor, what practical value does all this have for my life today or tomorrow?" This is the practical value: when we hear what Christ has won for us, it invites us to believe and love him as the Savior; when we see the forgiveness God offers to the family of Adam, we are empowered to forgive each other; what we discussed here today gives to you and me the assurance, that if we died today or tomorrow, we will be in heaven. Why? Because Jesus gained back for us more than our father Adam lost. Thank God for that comparison. Amen.