

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Two Men, Two Destinies

Romans 5:12-21

I. Introduction.

- A. We are thankful you all came to sing and rejoice in the goodness of our God in giving us His Son.
- B. The advent season comprise of the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. It is a time of anticipation. It is not a time of mourning but of hope. It is not despair but preparation.
 - 1. The essence of the Advent season is the anticipation of the birth of the Savior and Sin-Bearer, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Now those terms are loaded with meaning and are often dismissed or downgraded into interesting points to consider but nothing more.
 - 3. But the idea and utter necessity of needing a Savior and sin-bearer is abundantly explained and declared in the bible.
- C. And it is here that we find the issue of Christmas for it centers on the anticipation of the coming of God's promised One. So for our time today let us consider the glory of the coming of God's Son, the promised One.

II. Two Men, Two Destinies.

- A. Several years ago I did a series of messages out of Romans 5 where the apostle Paul describes two men.
 - 1. All of humanity find themselves vitally connected to these men. There is no escaping them.
 - 2. To try to deny that vital connection it is like denying that you need air to breathe. You can hold your breathe and pretend that you didn't just pull in a lung full of the very air you claim you don't need. But give it a few minutes and everything will get sorted out neatly once you pass out and starting breathing again.
 - 3. So allow me to introduce you to them and then I will connect this to the whole point of Christmas and the coming of Jesus Christ.
- B. Romans 5:12-21.
 - 1. Read.
 - 2. This chapter is very complex and full but at its core it is also very simple and filled with hope and rest for a weary and burdened soul.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

3. At its beginning it speaks of the fact that through trusting in the good news about Jesus Christ we can be fully justified/declared righteous by God and therefore we are at peace with Him. This is rather amazing since the bible boldly and unapologetically says that there are none who are righteous.
4. At the end it is about how even in the presence of sin that seems to abound, the grace of God super-abounds all the more.
5. And between those two wonderful truths we find out why and how one finds peace with God, finds life instead of death, forgiveness instead of condemnation, and life under a good King rather than serving a king who leads us to death and damnation.
6. Introducing you to the first man who brings sin and death.
 - a. This speaks of Adam.
 - (1) The first human. Created by God. Designed to serve as God's vice-regent over creation.
 - (2) The bible describes his choice of disobedience and rebellion when he chose everything over loving God.
 - (3) The garden, you can read it in the first three chapters of Genesis, was a place of supreme beauty and sufficiency. It super-abounded in good things that brought delight to the soul. We have no concept of the glory and beauty of that place.
 - (4) Two commands, the first was to take and eat from any of the fruit of the garden. And this was about as expansive a command as you can imagine. But the second command was to leave one tree's fruit alone for if you ate it you would die.
 - (5) Here we are told that Satan then began to work his lies. Instead of enjoying the fulness of God's gift in this garden the message shifted to the restriction of that one tree.
 - (a) And Adam's wife listened and turned her heart from the fullness of the gift to the suspicion that it was not enough.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (b) She focused her thoughts, through the deception of Satan, on what was a “No” rather than one the reason given by God.
 - (c) She determined that God was lying in one way or another. Either death would not occur or that the fruit would accomplish something so much greater than the threat so it was worth it.
 - (d) God said that everything in that garden is good and to be enjoyed to its fullest. But not the fruit on that one tree. Don’t eat it. You will die if you do.
 - (e) And here is a key point. God, the Creator is saying, “You must trust Me that My way is good and right. You must live by faith, trusting in My good gifts and My faithfulness.
 - (f) But when she disobeyed and ate, the blame did not fall upon her; rather, the bible lays the blame on the man, Adam. He was not just the head of his household—meaning Eve. He was the head of the human race.
 - (g) Make no mistake, Eve sinned. But her sin was her’s alone. Adam sinned and dragged the whole of humanity into it with him.
 - (h) This is what is meant in vs 12, *“through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*
- b. Sin and death have entered the scene and we are all recipients of their evil fruit since that fateful moment.
- (1) Make no mistake, Adam, as the representative and head of humanity, is the reason for this but it is also true that because of his choice that now, all sinned. We enter the world in sin and we commit sins because of this fact.
 - (2) No one in this room is exempt. No one is free from the enslavement of sin and the fruit of sin, which is death.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (3) This death is not merely the end of our physical life. It is the reality that on our own we will suffer in an eternity of God's righteous judgment. We are guilty. We prove it every day and in such diverse ways as well.
- (4) So why is this so? Well think of it as all of us being born "in Adam." So remember that little phrase, "in Adam" because, in case you forgot, I am here to tell you about two men, not just one.

7. Introducing the second man—Jesus Christ.

- a. Hear vs 15 now. *"But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."*
- b. So now we have a new Man on the scene. This One brings God's grace to us.
- c. Grace, that beautiful but misunderstood word. Grace, God granting us good when all that we are and do deserves nothing but judgment.
- d. In Romans 5 we see that we are helpless, we are sinners and we are enemies left to ourselves.. That was and is our position on our own before God. Why? Because we are "in Adam" and in Adam all sinned. We cannot escape that birth right anymore than we can demand to be born into some other household or lineage.
- e. So now hear vs 17 again, *"For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, **much more** those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."*
- f. So Paul sums the whole thing up in vs 21, *"... as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

C. Here, then, is the beauty of Christmas.

1. God repeatedly said that He would send One who would make all things right and new.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

2. He would resolve the issue that separates us, sin.
3. He would destroy the power of sin, which is death.
4. And we were to trust Him for this promise.
5. And that is what we find in the Christmas story—the grand mystery that no one would have imagined.
 - a. Not just some good man trying to fix things.
 - b. But God’s Son, God Himself, taking on flesh and dwelling among us.
 - c. God did not stand above the mess and start screaming like we tend to do as parents. He did not merely threaten us that we better figure out how to fix this mess.
 - d. No, God became man without ever giving up His deity and we encountered a new mystery. God-Man. Or as one of His titles says, “Emmanuel—God with us.”
6. Note that the power to find forgiveness does not lie in us. The power to have eternal life is not found in us. And the power to be declared righteous before our holy God is not in us. The power to make peace with God is not found in us.
7. We stand condemned, helpless, sinners and in opposition to Him. We bring nothing to this whole mess but our sin.
8. The answer is found in that phrase in vs 21, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
9. We don’t come to Jesus because on the other side of Him is life, forgiveness and salvation. No. We come to Jesus because **in Him** (remember that phrase), in Him is life, forgiveness and salvation.
 - a. He is not merely a key marker in our path toward enlightenment which we pass along the way.
 - b. He is our beginning and our end. He is our goal. He is our resting place.
10. And so the call then is not only to come to and trust in who Christ is, but also what He did. This is the gospel. And quite the good news it is! No person is so far gone that Christ cannot or will not save him.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

11. There is no condition you must first meet to make Him willing or to make you acceptable to Him. That is the nature of grace. Grace works in spite of you.
12. So hear me well. If you believe that there is some condition you must first meet to make you able to come and find life and forgiveness, then you will not come to Christ as you must, empty of all but your sin.
13. The ability and willingness to save does not begin or end with you as a person. Christ alone shall save you and keep you.
 - a. The benefits of the gospel, adoption, forgiveness, eternal life, peace with God, justification and such are not separate from Jesus but found **in Christ**.
 - b. You are in Adam. And no matter how much you clean up that man, you are still in him. And all in Adam die for all have sinned.
 - c. But through faith in the second Man, you are transferred from being “in Adam” and with all the hopelessness and curses found in him; to now you are “in Christ.”
14. This is the glory and joy of Christmas. “In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son.”
15. And this is why being “in Christ” is so important. “Christian “ is not the common description of a believer. “Saint” is more common though now it carries unfortunate baggage. However, “In Christ” is used well over a hundred times because it strikes at the core of the Christian faith.
16. Christ offers Himself as life not to those who think they possess some qualification for it. Rather, Christ offers himself to those who have nothing at all that qualifies them.
 - a. There are no steps you must take to receive the benefits. All are yours “in Christ.” What does happen is the often you grow to see what already you possess simply by trusting in Christ and his work.
 - b. One does not become more justified or more holy or more at peace with God, more adopted, more loved, more forgiven.
 - c. In fact any enmity, disfavor, displeasure you think exists between you and God is only because you do not see how full those are yours already.
17. And for the one who is not a Christian yet, if you think you must first somehow rid yourself of those things that separate you, then you will die in your sin. You cannot bring anything to this. God has done it all through His Son.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

18. Christ is where you begin your new life because in Him is life. In Him is how you are reconciled. Romans 5 while enemies you are saved. While helpless you are save. While dead in sin you are made alive..."in Christ", Ephesians 2.
19. So in the person of Jesus Christ is the fullness to save you. Nothing else is needed. And, just as wonderful, in Jesus Christ is the freeness to save. Nothing in you prevents Him from saving you.
20. The call then is to come to and trust only in who Christ is and what He did to secure salvation and justification. This is the gospel. No man is so far gone that Christ cannot or will not save him.
 - a. He became a man to become the New Man who would undo damage the first man, Adam, did.
 - b. As a perfect man, He offered Himself as the perfect, complete sacrifice for our sin. He died in our place, for our sin.
 - c. And on the third day He defeated the power of sin by rising from the grave.
21. There is no condition you must first meet to make Him willing or to make you acceptable to Him. If you believe either then you will not come to Christ as you must, empty of all but your sin.
22. So again, the ability and willingness to save does not begin or end with you as a person. Christ alone shall save you and keep you. The benefits of the gospel, adoption, forgiveness, eternal life, peace with God, justification and such are not separate from Jesus but found by being in Christ.

III. Conclusion.

- A. This is the glory and joy of Christmas. In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son.
- B. This is why "in Christ" is so important. You come
- C. Christ offers life not to those who think they possess some qualification for it. Rather, Christ offers himself to those who have nothing at all that qualifies them.
- D. There are no steps you must take to receive the benefits. All are yours in Christ. What does happen is the often you grow to see what already you possess simply by trusting in Christ and his work. One does not become more justified or more holy or more at peace with God. Any enmity you think exists is only because you do not see how full those are yours already.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- E. Christ is where you begin your new life because in him is life. In him is how you are reconciled. Rom 5 while enemies you are saved. While helpless you are save. While dead in sin you are made alive Eph 2
- F. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”*