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Class Handout

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Adam and Christ

Romans 5:12-21

Romans 5:12-21 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-- 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 one man's trespass, 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 man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and 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. ²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*

I. Overview

1. Paul's Goals

- a. Minor point: How did sin & death come to reign universally?
- b. Major point: comparison of Adam and Christ so we can understand the gospel

2. Summary

- **The obedience of Christ is parallel, but vastly superior, to the disobedience of Adam.**
- **The righteousness imputed to those who are in Christ is parallel, but vastly superior, to the sin imputed to those who are in Adam because of his disobedience.**

- **The life that comes to us who are in Christ through that imputed righteousness is parallel, but vastly superior, to the death that comes to those who are in Adam through that imputed sin.**
3. Reason for the position in Romans: Justification by faith alone is so difficult to understand and accept, Paul positions this section here to help explain it more fully.

II. Adam and Christ Compared and Contrasted

1. NOTE: The repeated parallel between Adam and Christ

vs. 14 [Adam] is a type of him who is to come (Christ)

Adam:

vs. 12 “Just as sin entered the world through one man...”

vs. 15 “The many died by the trespass of the one man”

vs. 16 “The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation

vs. 17 “For if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man...”

Christ:

vs. 15 “... God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow[ed] to the many”

vs. 17 “...reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ”

Summary:

vs. 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.”

vs. 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 were made righteous.”

2. But also... key differences between Adam and Christ:

vs. 15 “But the gift is NOT LIKE the trespass.”

What difference? Christ’s effect on those in him is **abundantly superior** to Adam’s effect on those in him

vs. 15 “...how much more

Jesus did not come simply to return us to ground zero... back at the Garden of Eden where Adam was before he sinned... He takes us light years beyond that!!

3. Why Paul teaches this at this point in Romans:

We MUST understand justification by faith alone apart from works of the law

[We have a constant tendency to revert to our own good works... the doctrine of original sin obliterates that!!]

We MUST see how superior Christ is, and what a great SALVATION we have in him!

III. How Sin and Death Entered the World

A. Through One Man's Sin

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

1. Sin entered through Adam

- a. perfect purity in the world beforehand
- b. Satanic rebellion in the spiritual realms
- c. Adam joins Satan's rebellion
- d. "Sin" entered
 - i) not so much "individual sins"
 - ii) a realm, a nature, a power, a state of relationship with God

Romans 3:9 *We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.*

Romans 6:14 *For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

- iii) Adam's disobedience locked him into a new realm: the realm of "sin"

2. Death through Sin

- a. preordained penalty: Genesis 2:17 ("... the day you eat, you shall surely die.")
- b. major biblical theme: sin results in death

Romans 6:23 *"The wages of sin is death..."*

The animal sacrifices all acted out in dramatic fashion the clear connection between sin & death

- c. what kind of death? Three stages
 - i) spiritual death

Ephesians 2:1 *"But as for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live..."*

- ii) physical death

Genesis 5:5 *"Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died."*

- iii) eternal death

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

B. Death Spread to All

1. "In this way"
 - a. Adam's sin the instrument of death for all his descendants
 - b. active judgment from God
2. "Death spread"
 - a. Greek word: "to go through," "to come to," "to move throughout"
 - b. Paul's concept: death spread to each descendant of Adam

See the steady drone in Genesis 5

Genesis 5:5 Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

Genesis 5:8 Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

Genesis 5:11 Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

Genesis 5:14 Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

- c. biological? genetic?

Speculation unhelpful... sin is a moral and spiritual issue with physical ramifications

3. Universal death penalty: "in Adam"

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

C. "All Sinned"

1. Two possible interpretations
 - a. we all sinned LIKE ADAM did, and that's why we die too
 - b. we all sinned IN ADAM, through some profound union we had with him
2. Paul's clear teaching: we sinned in Adam
3. Drawing out implications of each interpretation
 - a. if it means "All did individual acts of sin and so we all died"

Then draw out parallel:

Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all because all **did individual acts of sin like Adam did**, so also through one man righteousness came into the world, and life through righteousness, and in this way all came to life because all **did individual acts of righteousness like Christ did**.

NO NO NO NO NO!!! That is justification by works all over again

United with Adam... YOU WERE THERE in Adam when He sinned; God imputed guilt to you

3. God imputes Adam's sin to us, applies Adam's penalty to us... before we are even born!!
 - a. "imputes" = reckons, counts, applies to our account
 - b. he thinks of us as having sinned in Adam

Question: How does Paul prove that this is exactly what he's saying?? He interrupts the flow of his thought to clarify "because all sinned" lest you misunderstand!!!

IV. Death's Reign Universal Because "All Sinned" (vs. 13-14)

vs. 13-14 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.

Paul's purpose: to show that sin was imputed to those who did NOT sin the way Adam did

V. Adam a Type of Christ

A. Paul's Main Idea: Adam is a type of Christ

1. Greek = tupos... pattern, example, type
2. Just as in Adam, so also in Christ
3. Adam was our representative at the tree of knowledge... in him we sinned and died
4. Christ was our representative at the tree of Calvary... in Him we were made righteous and live

B. Why does he include this here? It is the GOSPEL!!!

1. Human beings constantly want to take credit & responsibility for our own salvation
2. I got myself into this mess... I can get myself out of it!!
3. I was under the death penalty because of bad things I did... I can get myself out of it by doing good things
4. BUT HERE, there is absolutely NOTHING we can do to get out from under being in Adam!

VI. Christ's Impact Immeasurably Greater Than Adam's

Romans 5:15-17 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.

A. Christ “Not Like” Adam... His Effect is Infinitely Greater than Adam’s

Notice the “how much more” language!!

Wrong idea: Adam’s sin put us in the hole a “minus 10” ... Christ’s act of righteousness balances that out so that we’re back to the starting place

NO NO NO NO!!!

The effects of Christ’s actions are superabundantly beyond the effects of Adam’s actions

Adam gets us a minus 10, Christ a positive infinity! HOW MUCH MORE ABUNDANT is grace than sin!!

Romans 5: 20 “Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.”

Q: What is “the gift”? How is the gift not like the trespass? (15-16)

Q: How did many die by Adam’s trespass? (15)

Q: How did God’s grace overflow to many through Christ? (15)

Q: How are the results of Adam’s sin and Christ’s action different? (16)

B. Summary

- Free gift MUCH GREATER THAN judgment
- Grace to many MUCH GREATER THAN death to many
- Many transgressions MUCH GREATER THAN one transgression
- Christ’s Result MUCH GREATER THAN Adam’s Result
- Reign of grace receivers MUCH GREATER THAN Reign of death

Gives a sense of a mighty river of grace, washing away all your sins... a supereffusion of grace...

Like the Amazon River, 4.2 million cu feet of water per second!!

John MacArthur: “Adam’s sinful act, devastating as it was, had but a one-dimensional effect—it brought death to everyone. But the effect of Christ’s redemptive act has facets beyond measure, because He not only restores man to spiritual life but gives him the very life of God. Death is by nature static and empty, whereas life by nature is active and full. Only life can **abound**.”

John Calvin: “Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam was to destroy.”

C. Christ’s Results GREATER THAN Adam’s Results

vs. 17 “...those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness...”

Spurgeon on the effect of Adam’s sin:

“We came into the world with a bias towards evil. Those of us who have any knowledge of our own nature must confess that there is in us a strong tendency towards sin, which is mixed up with our very being. This is not derived solely from faults of education, or from the imitation of others; but there is a bent within us in the wrong direction, and this has been there from our birth. Alas! that it should be so; but so it is. In addition to having this tendency to sin, we are made liable to death — nay, not liable alone, but we are sure in due time to bow our heads beneath the fatal stroke. Two only of the human race have escaped death, but the rest have left their bodies here to molder back into mother earth, and unless the Lord comes speedily, we expect that the same thing will happen to these bodies of ours. While we live we know that the sweat of our brow must pay the price of our bread; we know that our children must be born with pangs and travail; we know that we ourselves must return to the dust from whence we are taken; for dust we are, and unto dust must we return. O Adam, you did a sad day’s work for us when you ... ate of the forbidden tree. The world has no more a Paradise anywhere, but everywhere it has the place of wailing and the field of the dead. Where can you go and not find traces of the first transgression in the sepulcher and its moldering bones? Every field is fattened with the dust of the departed: every wave of the sea is tainted with atoms of the dead.”

BUT...

Spurgeon on the GIFT of Christ’s righteousness: “Adam commits one fault and spoils us; but Christ’s works and achievements are not one, but many as the stars of heaven. Look at that life of obedience: it is like a crown set with all manner of priceless jewels: all the virtues are in it, and it is without flaw in any point. If one sinful action of our first covenant head destroys, shall not a whole life of holiness, on the part of our second covenant representative be accepted for us?”

D. Reign of grace receivers GREATER THAN Reign of death

vs. 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.

1. Unexpected break of parallel
 - a. expect Paul to compare reign of death to reign of life
 - b. if so, it would have read

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, **death reigned** through that one man, how much more will **life reign** through the one man Jesus Christ.”

2. TRUE: Life reigns!!! Grace reigns!!! But here, Paul says something even more astounding:

YOU, O CHRISTIAN, WILL REIGN!!!

“...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

Christians reign in life through Christ!

We reign now... we will reign more later!

Now: We reign over sin, over temptation, over trials, over spiritual forces of evil

Later: We will reign over death, we will reign with Christ forever and ever:

Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Paul's point: the reign of grace receivers is GREATER than the reign of death ever was

- It is an eternal reign... death's was temporary
- It is an unbreakable reign... death's was defeated
- It is an abundantly fruitful reign... death's was totally barren

The reign of Christians in life is FAR GREATER than the tyrannical reign of death

E. Conditional promise: not true of every human

THIS IS A **CONDITIONAL** promise

"...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

- a. Paul is stressing that not every human being receives this gift of life
- b. every human being is condemned in Adam
- c. BUT only those who receive the gift of grace will reign in life!!

In the closing months of 1999, a blue-ribbon panel assembled by Time Magazine got together to determine their "Person of the Century." The rules for this game were clearly agreed upon: they were looking for the person who had had the greatest impact on the century, for better or worse.

By those rules, some of the panel brought up the question of Adolph Hitler. Of course, they all recoiled from the idea of putting Hitler's face on the cover of their magazine with the title: "Man of the Century," [that would be terrible for marketing and sales!] But they still felt duty bound to investigate the possibility from a purely academic point of view. Had Adolph Hitler, the man who had unleashed forces which lead to a massive upheaval and a total transformation of the world as we know it... had this evil man had the greatest impact of any human being on the 20th century?

U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke reluctantly nominated Hitler, saying that the essence of Hitlerism is still with us today: "Racism, ethnic hatred, extreme nationalism, state organized murder is still alive, still causing millions of deaths." Holbrooke said, "Freedom is the century's most powerful idea, but the struggle is far from over."

Time then went deeper to analyze the issues of good and evil themselves.:

You could ask this of any year, any century: Which has the greater impact, good or evil, the heroes or the villains, Roosevelt and Churchill or Hitler and Stalin? To what extent do they depend on each other, when threats produce resolve, when terror engenders courage, when an ultimate challenge to principle has the effect of making principles stronger, forging them by fire? Thoughtful people who argue for Hitler as the Person of the Century do not want to honor him; they want to autopsy him, understand what made him strong and what finally killed him, and search, perhaps, for a vaccine for the virus that reappears still in ethnic enclaves, on websites, in the wilderness camps of skinhead anarchists and in the halls of Columbine High School, where two boys celebrated Hitler's birthday with a memorial massacre of children.

These are the very issues that Romans 5 seeks to answer: not only the origins of evil, but also how it has spread to every person on the face of the earth. In a very real sense, the Apostle Paul would say that, if you're looking for the person most responsible for the evil of every century, you need look no farther than one man: Adam.

But in Romans 5:15-17, Paul goes deeper into the incredible good news of the gospel... the ultimate hero of the 20th century is the good hero... that the effect of the good hero FAR OUTWEIGHS the effect of the evil villain. But the good hero of the 20th century was not Roosevelt or Churchill or Albert Einstein, for that matter. The hero of the 20th century is the same as the hero of the 21st century and of every century... Jesus Christ. And the point of Romans 5:15-17 is that Christ's powerful effect is MUCH GREATER than anything that we received in Adam, no matter how horrible it was.