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Sermon Notes

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The Reign of Sin and Death Through Adam

Romans 5:12-14

I. The Rake or the Shovel?

Illus. From John Piper: The Rake and the Shovel

C. Paul's Goal

1. Minor point: How did sin & death come to reign universally??
2. Major point: comparison of Adam and Christ so we can understand the Gospel
3. Three points of summary from John Piper:
 - **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.**

Central Goal: Help us understand the salvation Christ offers us... JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

II. Questions of Context

A. Context in Romans: Paul's train of Thought

1. What Romans 5:12-21 says

a. repeated parallel established 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.”

b. 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!!

2. Why Paul says it here

- 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. The history of Adam

- God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden alone, to work the garden and care for it
- Adam given a clear command from God...

Genesis 2:17 *“You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat of it you will surely die.”*

- Even joined him later... the serpent approached her, she was tempted, ate, gave the fruit to her husband, and he ate

2. 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”

3. Death through Sin

- a. preordained penalty: Genesis 2:17

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?

Deep questions: is there a "sin gene" spread from one generation to another

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

A. Sin from Adam to Moses

1. Sin was in the world, even when there was no law given
 - a. last clear enunciation of command: Garden of Eden
 - b. YET internal law of God written in the heart: [Romans 2:15]
 - c. sin clearly existed before Law given to Moses

Genesis 4:6-8 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." ⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

The sin of murder was still sin even before God gave Moses the Law: "Thou shalt not murder"

2. YET no one sinned the way Adam did: by breaking a clear command of God
3. No law, no sin

Romans 4:15 And where there is no law there is no transgression

But that doesn't mean there isn't sin and judgment

B. Death Reigns Over All

1. NEVERTHELESS death reigned
 - a. why "nevertheless"
 - b. despite the fact that there was no law, there was DEATH
 - c. WHY? All died in Adam!!

2. Paul's argument: generations of people died from Adam to Moses because they sinned in Adam
3. Death reigned = held absolute, unerring sway... no one could break its power

C. "Those who had not sinned like Adam"

1. Even clearer example: those who could NEVER have been said to have sinned like Adam

Greek (lit.) "Even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam"

Likeness = pattern, example, manner... Adam set a pattern of disobedience to a known command of God

BUT there is a category of people who absolutely never sinned after Adam's example

2. Who is this? INFANTS
3. Adam heard a clear command from God:

Genesis 2:17 "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat of it you will surely die."

4. However: INFANTS never understood any commands from God, never sinned at all like Adam... yet they died!! WHY???

Paul's point is clear: infant mortality can only be explained by original sin. All human beings are subject to death simply because they are human beings... in Adam, all sinned.

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. Astounding Implications

A. Adam Our Original Head: Father's Day

1. Sin entered the world through Adam not Eve
2. Eve not even mentioned here!! Even though she went first in sinning
3. Paul ascribes the fall of the human race to Adam, not Eve
4. Implication: God has ordained that men bear the responsibility of leadership in the home, the church, and in society in a profound way that women do not bear
5. NO GROUNDS FOR BOASTING, but rather for seriousness... and a great cause of pain... but also an avenue of blessing

B. The Solidarity of the Human Race

1. Every single human being in the world is united biologically by descent in Adam
2. This sin and death problem is a universal one... no race exempt, no race superior

C. Original Sin and Basic Human Nature: FATHER'S DAY

1. This doctrine teaches that every infant coming into the world is born under the effects of Adam's sin
2. "All sinned" in Adam, all under Adam's condemnation
3. All receive also a sin nature which will express itself as soon as the law is understood

A Police Study on Juvenile Delinquency:

"Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered: he wants what he wants... his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toys, his uncle's watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He is dirty; he has no morals, no knowledge, and no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to

continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy every want, every child would grow up a criminal, a killer, a thief, and a rapist.”

Father’s are responsible for training their children... more than anything, to bring them to Christ!!

D. American Individualism

E. The Justice of God

F. A Universal Gospel

1. This clearly proclaims the universality of the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. Jesus is not a “tribal deity”... the “Christian god”; alongside the Muslim god, the Buddhist god, the Hindu gods
3. The whole human race is united in Adam... so people from every tribe, language, people, nation must be saved in Christ
4. The basic issues of eternity are the same worldwide

G. Humility

1. This doctrine tends to humble us totally
2. We realize that we were truly helpless against our sin nature
3. We realize also that, had Christ not acted, we would have died in our acts of unrighteousness

H. Praise for Christ!!!

What a great Savior!! What a great salvation!!!

