

Romans: From Death to Life
Romans 5:12-21

The main point: through Christ, the reign of death has fallen to the reign of life.

#1 - The Reign of Death (vv. 12-14)

- Three truths about sin and death:

- Sin entered the world through the sin of Adam. (v. 12a)

Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law. (New City Catechism)

We are at the center of the universe. Thus, we end up de-godding God in order to be able to sing with Frank Sinatra, "I did it my way." (D.A. Carson)

- What Adam did was not a misdemeanor—the petty theft of fruit.
- Adam revolted against the One by whom and for whom he was made.
- Death came through sin. (v. 12b)

- Adam was punished with physical death because of his sin.

... for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:19)

- But physical death was not the extent of Adam's death.

Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:17)

- *After his sin, Adam was a dead man walking.*
- *The death Adam died was a *spiritual* death culminating in physical death.*
- This is why Paul talks about death (and sin) as a reign and not just an event.
- And death spread to all. (vv. 12c-14)
- The focus of the passage is not on our imitation of Adam but Adam's effect upon us.
- The death Adam died is the death we inherit as his offspring—death has spread to us.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- Three takeaways from these truths:

- Consider the realism and insight of the Bible.

We human beings are a mystery to ourselves. We are rational and irrational, civilized and savage, capable of deep friendship and murderous hostility, free and in bondage, the pinnacle of creation

and its greatest danger. We are Rembrandt and Hitler, Mozart and Stalin, Antigone and Lady Macbeth, Ruth and Jezebel. (Daniel Migliore)

- We are no match for sin and death.
- We should be sympathetic toward fellow sinners—reminding others and ourselves of the gospel.

This doctrine teaches us to think no worse of others than of ourselves. It teaches us that we are all, as we are by nature, companions in a miserable helpless condition, which... tends to promote mutual compassion. And nothing has a greater tendency to promote those [feelings] dispositions of mercy, forbearance, longsuffering, gentleness, and forgiveness, than a sense of our own extreme unworthiness and misery, and the infinite need we have of the divine pity, forbearance, and forgiveness. (Jonathan Edwards)

#2 - The Gift of Life (vv. 15-21)

- By way of comparison, both Adam and Jesus...
 - Represent two streams of humanity. (vv. 17, 19)
 - Do something profoundly important and significant. (v. 15, 16, 18)
- But it is in the contrast between Adam and Christ where gospel breaks forth and shines.

- We stand in solidarity with Adam—He represents us well.
- But the grace of God is that we can have a better representative—the true and better Adam.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

- We are given life in Christ (“the reign of life”)!
 - Application:

- Are you trusting in Christ and His righteousness?

Until we are united to Christ by faith, all that is true of Adam is true of us. But once we are united to Christ by faith, whatever is true of him is true of us. (Tim Keller)

- As a church, are we living distinct lives in light of Christ’s righteous life?

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. ³ For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:1-7)

- Are you rejoicing in grace that is greater than your sin?

There is no pit so deep that the love of God is not deeper still. (Corrie ten Boom)