

**Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever. Amen.**

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—<sup>13</sup> for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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!<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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. **This is God's Word for God's People.**

**Dear Friends,**

As we enter the season of Lent our Wednesday services will focus on the theme, "The Son of God Goes Forth to War." Each week we will look at Jesus' role as warrior as he battled against sin and death for us. On the weekends we are going to look at the letters of Paul and see the different contrasting pictures he paints for us as we consider our Savior's work.

Today we are going to look at, "**The contrast between Adam and Christ.**" As we do that, Paul helps us to first of all see, "**Adam's impact on our lives,**" and then, "**Jesus' impact on our lives,**" and helps us to consider "**What this all means for us.**"

**I.** When we think about the Adam and his impact on our lives we don't have to look any further than **our Old Testament lesson.** Genesis chapter 3 is about how **Adam and Eve listened to the Devil** rather than God and **through their actions brought sin into the world.** It doesn't make any difference that Eve was the one talking to the Devil or that she ate the fruit first. Adam was right there beside here and he was responsible for his family but he didn't do anything to stop Eve. That's why Paul wrote, "**Therefore sin entered the world through one man.**" **It was Adam's responsibility and he failed.**

What is even worse is that **when God confronted Adam and Eve about their disobedience,** Adam blamed God for their sin. Remember Adam's response to God, "**The woman you put here**

**with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”** And Eve, she blamed the serpent.

We always hope to inherit the best traits of our parents and yet **Adam and Eve passed down to every generation the results of their original sin in the Garden of Eden.** Because of their actions, we are all born sinful and that inherited sin always leads to actual sin. You might say that we have inherited a terminal disease from our parents.

**How do we know it is terminal?** Paul’s words are pretty clear: **“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all [people], because all sinned”** Even before Paul, Ezekiel, one of the Old Testament prophets said, **“The soul who sins is the one who will die.”** (Ez. 18:4). And before Ezekiel, as Moses listed the genealogy of Adam in the book of Genesis he pointed out, **“Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died... Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died... Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died... Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died... and it continues and the ending is always the same, and then he died.”** (Genesis 5:5-17). Death comes as a result of sin.

Just because we have inherited this condition from our parents **doesn’t give us an excuse when we sin** – we are all responsible for our actions and like Adam and Eve **we are all too willing to listen to the Devil when he tempts us.** When he prompts us to **gossip** about a coworker or acquaintance or to **not do our homework** or to **lie** or to **hurt someone** either physically or verbally or to **drink too much** or to **put yourself first rather** than to show love to our neighbor, friend or coworker.

And like Adam **we are all to willing to try and blame someone or something else for our actions** and if Adam’s example and inheritance were all that we had, **we would be lost in so many ways.** That is why the Apostle Paul doesn’t leave us to despair but rather **points us to the influence of Christ in our lives and the gift of God.**

**II.** That is why Paul points out that the **influence of Christ is so much greater than the influence of Adam** with these words: **“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!”** **The gift of life** that Christ brings us overcomes the disease of sin and death. **Christ has the cure for our terminal condition!** And he dispenses that cure as a free gift.

For many of us we received that gift at baptism when the Holy Spirit inoculated our hearts

with faith. **When we were brought to life the faith in our hearts overcame the original sin we were born with and as we continue to live our lives we receive booster shots against the disease of sin through God's Word.** Just as it is necessary to receive vaccinations against disease throughout our lives so it is also necessary to continue to receive those injections of God's Word against the disease of sin throughout our lives.

That is what Christ is all about. His impact on our lives is that he brings us the cure against the deadly disease of sin. He did that by paying for those sins so that they can be cast away from us. **He has removed the pain of death** by assuring us that our physical death is only a doorway to everlasting life in heaven. All of this comes to us through faith in him as our Savior. All this comes to us as a free gift. That's a much better message and influence than what Adam left us with.

**III. So what does all of this mean for me?** Paul sums it up for us this way, **“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. <sup>19</sup> 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.”** Adam's sin affected us all but Jesus work affects us even more. Satan was behind Adam's sin but, **“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work”** (1 John 3:8). **Now, the power of the devil has been destroyed; the power of sin has been destroyed; and the power of death has been overcome with Christ's death and resurrection.**

Through the work of Christ – his perfect life and perfect sacrifice – **we have been made righteous**. We have been made right with God. Not because we are perfect but because we are perfectly forgiven. Christ has taken the death sentence sin brings and he has given us life. He has saved us!

What a sharp contrast we have between Adam and Jesus. They both have had a large impact on our lives but there is no doubt that the greatest impact has come from Jesus because **He has brought us the cure for sin**. He is the reason we can wake up in the morning and know that everything is alright between us and God because he has brought us the gift of life and salvation. Because of Jesus and his saving work, we can all say, **“The Lord has been good to me for he has given me life and salvation.”** Amen.