

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Choose Your Champion

Romans 5:12-21

2000

Introduction

1. In Romans 1:18-3:20 we discovered that the whole world stands accountable to God for our sin and rebellion against God. And that His wrath that is being revealed against all ungodliness. And against those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.
2. However, we also discovered in Romans 3:21-5:11 that circumcision, the keeping of the Law, or any religious ritual can't remedy our situation. The only remedy is found in accepting by faith the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

I The Origin of Death

Paul begins by drawing our attention to 3 consequences of Adam's sin

- A. **Sin** entered the world through one man – Gen 3

In the opening chapters of Genesis, we find God giving Adam two commands.

The first was to not eat of the tree of good and evil (Gen 2:16-17). The second, was to multiply and fill the earth.

Only two commands! I'm sure it didn't take long for Adam to discover that the second command was fun!

The first was a bit different however. Through the influence of the serpent, Adam and Eve compromised the clear command of God and committed the very first sin.

When Adam disobeyed God, sin entered into his life and generated a constitutional change in his nature, from innocence to sinfulness that would be transmitted to every one of his descendents throughout history. That sinfulness is referred to as the "sinful nature". And we see the evidence of this sinful nature everywhere – especially in others!

Illustration: Children

They don't have to be taught to be selfish

They don't have to be taught to lie

They don't have to be taught to disobey

It all comes very naturally! On the contrary, to build into a child moral, ethical and spiritual values takes a tremendous amount of time, patience and love.

Ps 58:3 "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies."

We don't even have the potential of living a sinless life. We are conceived in sin, born in sin and enslaved to sin by our Adamic nature. Our sin nature is our spiritual inheritance from Adam and Eve.

Important point:

A person does not become a sinner by committing sins but rather commits sins because he is by nature a sinner.

B. **Death** entered the world through sin – Gen 3:3

No truth is more self-evident than the certainty of death. Regardless of one's wealth, status or accomplishments, we all have to face the reality of death. Because we all, without exception, have a sinful nature, we are all, without exception, under the sentence of death.

Three aspects of death that sin ushered into the world:

1. Spiritual death; separation from God
A breach in the spiritual union between God and man, which Adam experienced immediately after his disobedience.
2. Physical death; separation from life
Although Adam did not die immediately after sinning, he became subject to physical death the moment he sinned.
3. Eternal death; final separation from God's presence in Heaven
This is really an extension of the first separation – only permanent in nature with immeasurably worse consequences.

However, the believer has no reason to fear any of these aspects of death. Why? Heb 2:14-15 “He destroy[ed] him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- and free[d] those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

Christ saves us permanently from spiritual and eternal death, and our physical death is a glorious transition into God's divine presence.

C. Death came to all men – Heb 9:27

1. Because all **sinned**

Sinned = Aorist tense = Meaning that at one point in time all men sinned. A clear reference to Adam's first sin.

Now the idea that we all are guilty of sin by virtue of Adam's sin some 6,000 years ago grates against our modern concept of individualism. But the Hebrew mind had no difficulty accepting the concept of corporate solidarity.

Illustration: David and Goliath

An example of a nation presenting two champions – winner takes all!

Adam represented us in the Garden of Eden and he did better than we would have done. He didn't have any bad habits; he wasn't brought

up in a dysfunctional home; he didn't grow up in a disadvantaged neighborhood; he was untouched by human tragedy. He was the best humanity had to offer – and he failed.

Rom 3:23 "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

Rom 3:9 "... [and are all] alike are all under sin."

Application

Many people have a hard time accepting the fact that they are corporately guilty as a result of Adam's sin. They weren't there in the garden. They didn't commit the sin. They weren't even alive. These events occurred over 6,000 years ago. Therefore, they shouldn't be held responsible for someone else's failure. On face value, these statements appear to be valid.

However, the same must be said about the benefits the believer experiences from the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. We weren't there at Golgotha on the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Nor did we die on the cross for our own sins. Yet it was the penalty for our sin (both our sin nature and our sinful behavior) that Jesus died to pay over 2,000 years ago. Long before we were even alive.

If the principle of corporate solidarity were not true regarding Adam's sin, then it would be impossible to make the point that all can be made righteous in Christ.

The Good News is that it wasn't your personal performance that made you guilty before God and it won't be your personal performance that will make you righteous before God.

II The Impact of The Law

A. Sin was in the world before the Law

The Law was not received until 2,000 years after Adam. Certainly from the time of Adam to the time of Moses we have many accounts of sin in the Bible.

B. Sin is not taken into account before the Law

Rom 4:15 "And where there is no law there is no transgression."

Illustration

Now if I drive through Kapaa town at say 80 miles an hour, it wouldn't be long before I would see police lights in my rearview mirror. But if I drove the same speed on the German Autobahn, it would be perfectly acceptable. Why? Because there is no specific law against it.

1. Nevertheless, death **reigned** from Adam to Moses

One of the repetitive, heart-wrenching facts of life after the is fall that everyone died. “Death is the dictator to which every man must bow.”

- a. Even over those who did not break a specific command as Adam did
So even though there was no written Law, mankind was still accountable because of our solidarity with Adam. Based upon his performance all mankind became guilty before God. And if that bothers you and seems unjust, remember that it is also through our corporate solidarity with Jesus Christ and his performance that we stand righteous before God.
- b. Who is described as a **pattern** of the one to come.
Adam is a counterpart of Christ, whom Paul calls “the last Adam” and “the second man” (1 Cor 15:45-47)
 1. Adam; The first man
 - a. Jesus; The first and only God-Man
 2. Adam; Created in God’s image
 - a. Jesus; By very nature God
 3. Adam; The progenitor of the human race
 - a. Jesus; The progenitor of the heavenly race
 4. Adam; Tested by the tree in the garden
 - a. Jesus; Tested by the tree at Gethsemane
 5. Adam; Failed to pass his test
 - a. Jesus; Succeeded in passing His test

III The Contrast Between the Gift and the Trespass

Now Paul details the contrasts between the first Man and the first God-man –between the trespass and the Gift. The only similarity between them was that each man committed a singular act that changed the course of human history.

- A. There is a contrast in **degree**
 1. Many died by the trespass of Adam
Trespass = Paraptoma = "To deviate from the right path"
It carried with it the idea of going where one should not go – and so is sometimes translated “trespass”.
 2. Many live by the gracious gift of Jesus Christ
1 Cor 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

Is 53:11 “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”

How much more = Not only is God’s grace greater than Adam’s one sin, it is greater than all the accumulated sins that mankind has ever committed or ever will commit!

Overflow = “Perisseuo – “To superabound” “To have enough with plenty to spare”

Application

The wonderful truth of the gospel is that the power of sin, which is death, can be broken. But the power of Christ, which is salvation, cannot be broken. The effect of Adam’s sin is permanent only if not reversed by Jesus Christ. The effect of Christ’s act, however, is permanent for those who believe and cannot be reversed.

B. There is a contrast in **result**

1. The judgment followed one sin

Judgment = Krime = “A legal decision rendered for a crime committed

a. And brought condemnation

It is shocking to realize that God hates sin so much that it took only one to condemn the entire human race and to bring death. In the same way, any sin that any man has ever committed would have been sufficient to damn the whole human race, just as Adam’s one sin did.

2. The gift followed many trespasses

a. And brought justification

Justification = Dikaiosis = “Acquittal” “An act that declares a person not guilty”

Greater than God’s hatred for sin is His love for sinners.

2 Cor 5:19 “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.”

Christ gives to mankind far more than we lost in Adam’s failure. In fact, we have the opportunity to have much more than Adam’s original innocence. The gift offered in Christ is infinitely greater! Christ not only reversed the curse of death by forgiving and cleansing us for sin, but also provided the way for us to share in the full righteousness and glory of God.

C. There is a contrast in **supremacy**

1. Death reigned and triumphed through Adam’s trespass

2. Life reigns and triumphs through Jesus Christ

1 Cor 15:57 “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When death reigns, we are powerless to escape its clutching reach. But when Christ reigns, we share in His risen life and eternal glory.

Rev 22:5 “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

a. To those who receive God’s:

1. Abundant provision of **grace**

Eph 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.”

2. **Gift** of righteousness

Rom 1:16-17 “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

D. There is a contrast in **judicial** standing

1. Adam’s one sin brought condemnation for all men

Adam and Eve didn’t sin because they wanted to die. On the contrary they sinned because they were promised that they would be like God. But instead of becoming more like God, as Satan had promised, man became more unlike His Creator and separated from Him. And man was transferred from the kingdom of light to the kingdom of darkness.

Application:

The very same temptations face us today. "Take control of your own life! You are god! You can have it all! Be your own person!" However, the results are always the same – darkness instead of light.

2. Jesus’ one act of righteousness brought justification

Christ’s path to greatness was quite different from Adam’s.

Philippians 2:6-11 “Though Jesus was “in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Application:

The same spiritual principle applies today. If you want greatness and pursue it the world’s way, you will fail and fail miserably. But if you

pursue greatness God's way – through a yielded life of obedience and service to others – you will find it and receive a great reward.

E. There is a contrast in ultimate **fruit**

1. Adam's act of disobedience made many sinners

The guilt and penalty of Adam's sin was accounted to him and all his descendants. Along with Adam, we legally guilty in God's sight.

2. Jesus' act of obedience will make many righteous

In the same way that Adam's actions were imputed to all of humanity, Christ's obedience causes all those who believe in Him to be made righteous in God's sight.

2 Cor 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

IV The Purpose of The Law

A. The **purpose** of the Law

It was added = Pareiserchomai = "To come in alongside"

Gal 3:19-24 "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come ... For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

Illustration:

Imagine that you built a home on Kauai that failed to meet the county code. The home is leaning at a 15% angle. There is water spewing from all the faucets and toilets. The roof is sagging badly in the middle. And you painted the whole thing with lead paint. It is not only an embarrassment to your family and friends, it is a danger to everyone who enters it. Eventually you would have to face the Kauai county building inspector who will lovingly introduce you to joys of Kauai's county building code – along with a nice little fine.

1. To highlight our true condition

The Law was introduced, not to bring about a righteous life, but to point out our inability to achieve this righteousness apart from Christ. It fulfills its purpose when it brings us to a point of understanding that we are utter failures and are hopelessly lost apart from the free gift of eternal life in Christ.

B. The **effect** of the Law

1. To magnify the grace of God

a. Where sin increased, grace increased all the more

Now the remarkable thing about the Law is that it seems to have the opposite effect you would expect. Instead of inspiring holiness, it excites sin.

Illustration: “No Dumping,” sign on Loop Road.

There is nothing wrong with the sign. Its message is perfectly legitimate and good. But because it places a restriction on people’s freedom to do as they please, it causes resentment and has the effect of leading some people to do what they otherwise might not even think of doing.

Increased all the more = “Super-increased”

No matter how great or wicked your sin may be, God’s grace is greater. It superabounds to you! No one – no one is beyond the grace of God!

C. The **objective** of the Law

1. To guide us to God’s gracious gift:

Gal 3:24-25 “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.”

a. A **righteousness** based on grace

Application

1. I must accept the hopelessness of my condition apart from Jesus Christ
2. I must accept the sufficiency of the grace and gift of God
3. I must accept the victorious, reigning status of Christ

b. Eternal **life** through Jesus Christ

Conclusion

In Adam we are all guilty of sin and must face our spiritual, physical and eternal death.

In Christ we are offered forgiveness and a righteous standing

Remember, it wasn’t your personal performance that made you guilty before God and it won’t be your personal performance that will make you righteous before God.

Salvation is not based upon your knowledge, or keeping of the Law, or certain religious rituals. It is based on only one thing: *The grace and gift of God in sending the Great Champion, the Last Adam, Jesus Christ.*

Choose your champion!

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