

Dead in Adam, Alive in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22)

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[0 : 00] Romans chapter 5, verse 12 to 21. Let's see how good your listening skills are. Okay, Romans chapter 5, verse 12 to 21.! 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 is a pattern of the one to come.

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?

Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin. The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

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.

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.

[1 : 41] 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.

The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase, but where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you so much, Maria. I'm Pastor Michael. Thank you.

Kia ora. Tēna koutou katoa. It's really good to be with you guys. It's a long time since I've been here, so there's a few new faces, but it is a blessing to be able to fellowship with you, and at Howard Baptist Church, we're praying for you on a very regular basis, so may the Lord bless you.

I've been asked to look at your statement of faith. Paragraph 5, which reads, Our church believes that the fall of our original parents plunged the whole human race into eternal condemnation, and that since then all people are sinful by nature, disobeying God and befriending Satan.

[3 : 35] By themselves, they cannot be saved without help, although still permitted to turn to God by volition. Now, don't try and get your heads around all of that.

We're going to take it step by step, and afterwards, as you saw, the church is going to run a question and answer session. If you are really in a hurry to get an answer, talk to me after the service, and I'll call Pastor William over, and he can tell you the answer.

But seriously, there is one verse that sums up that statement of faith paragraph. 1 Corinthians 15:22 Now, Adam, as most of you know, was the first man created by God to be the father of all nations.

You can read about that in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, very beginning of your Bible. And as Adam was the very first man, we are descended from him, every one of us, having his nature.

But then in chapter 3 of Genesis, we read how Adam sinned. He corrupted his sinless nature by rebelling against God.

[5 : 01] Now, get that. He corrupted his sinless nature by rebelling against God. The result, as the text says, everyone dies.

Now, I've got some news for you. Wait for it. You're going to die. Not the news you were hoping to hear today, but the one thing that is absolutely certain for every one of us from the moment of our conception is that we are going to die.

If you look at this graveyard, you'll see that there are some graves that are higher up the hill.

You know, there are some people who think that when they die, they're going to die better deaths than the other people. And I've even heard people say, when I get buried, I'm going to be higher up the hill than the other ordinary sinners.

Whereabouts up that hill do you hope to die and be buried? It actually doesn't matter, does it? Because, well, just think about it for a moment.

[6 : 27] You go up that hill and you read a tombstone and it says this, here lies the body of Tony Smith. He's dead, but his body's higher up the hill than all those other sinners.

Duh. Dead is dead. You are going to be dead. You are. And it makes no difference how high up you are when you die or low down or high up the hill you get buried.

You are going to be dead. That's newsflash number one. Here's newsflash number two. It gets worse. Because after death comes your judgment by God.

We're told this very simply in Hebrews 9, 27. People are destined once to die and after that the judgment. Jesus himself described it like this.

You can look it up in Matthew 25. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne and all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people from one another.

[7 : 45] Then the king will say to those on his right hand side, those judged by Jesus to be without sin, come, you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Then Jesus went on and he said, he will then say to those on the left hand side, those who are judged by Jesus to still have sin, depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. So you are going to die and after you die you're going to be judged by Jesus.

You're going to be judged in his perfect righteousness with justice. Where will you stand on that day? With Jesus?

Without sin? welcomed into his kingdom? Or as a child of Satan destined to spend eternity in that suffering?

[9 : 06] I hope as we work through your statement of faith paragraph 5 today, you'll see why this is and how it can be that you can be made alive in Christ.

That you can have an inheritance, not the one that belongs to you because you're a descendant of Adam, but one that belongs to you because by God's grace you've been made a child of God.

But before we look at that, we need to pray. Our Father, as we bow before you, we thank you that we have in you a God who is holy and righteous and just and perfect, God of love and compassion and forgiveness.

We ask you to come. Come today to us and help us to come to you, not just with understanding of your word, not just with wisdom that we might sort things out, but help us to come to you because in you and in you alone there is life now and forever.

And we ask that in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life that we might live. Amen. So your confession of faith begins with these words, the fall of our original parents plunged the whole human race into eternal condemnation.

[10 : 32] It's just about as cheerful as the news I gave you to start with, isn't it? We're not going to look at condemnation just yet. It overshadows the whole section, but there are two things I want to clear up as we go along.

First of all, what does the fall mean and how does it affect us? The fall is a bit of Christian jargon or language describing what happened in Genesis 3.

I mentioned it earlier, Adam sinned. He rebelled against God, he chose sin in place of the innocence God had given him. And it's called the fall because in that one thing, Adam fell from being the friend of God to being his enemy.

And with Adam, all his descendants, including you and me, all of us without exception also fell from the possibility of friendship and life with God to being his enemies, opposed to him.

Four things happened as a result of that fall. First of all, death was introduced into creation. it hadn't been there before. Everything was alive and living without death.

[11 : 45] But then Adam brought death in and he died. You can hunt around Auckland or Palestine or Timbuktu, you won't find Adam, he's dead.

And so everyone who's descended from him comes into death too. And because of his righteousness and holiness, God's righteousness and holiness that was despised by that sin, the whole world was contaminated.

So this creation is now terminal. You know what terminal is, don't you? It means it's coming to an end. Your life is coming to an end, so is this creation.

And we wait for a new creation to come in its place. Adam's nature, thirdly, was changed. He became a sinner by nature.

His very nature was to be a rebel against God. And obviously that means all of Adam's descendants like us, us sinners. Now that didn't surprise us. When you were born, your mum, maybe your dad, asked the midwife or whoever was helping to bring you to them.

[12 : 56] What were they expecting? Were they wanting to check out whether you were an alligator or an ant? Or perhaps you were going to be a giraffe? No, they were expecting a little person like them, someone who had their nature.

And thankfully when they looked at you they didn't say, oh, what a beautiful little mouse. Right? What an amazing hippopotamus. No, they said there is someone with my nature.

But of course, that's the problem, isn't it? our human nature means we're like our parents, which means we're like Adam, which means we're sinful by nature.

We are sinful by nature. All people are sinful by nature. So if we flick on to slide four, we're going to see that the entire human race, including you and me, without exception, have been plunged into eternal condemnation through the fall of our parents.

we get Adam's nature. We are and always have been dying sinners. We heard a moment ago from Romans chapter 5 verse 12. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin.

[14 : 18] In this way, death came to all people because all sinned. Do you want evidence that you're a sinner? Simple. You're going to die.

No sin, no death. Death means sin. And when did you become sinners? When did you become a sinner? Oh, I'd love to hear the stories.

No, I wouldn't really. But David confesses in Psalm 51 and verse 5 and 6, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

For you desired faithfulness even in the womb. Hang on to these words of David as we work through this. He says from his conception he was a sinner.

David was saying that at birth he was already a sinful sinner because even in his mother's womb where God had called him to be faithful in whatever way such a little child can be, he was not faithful.

[15 : 22] He was opposed to God by nature. By the way, this makes it abundantly clear that the unborn child is someone God regards as a person in relationship with him.

We haven't got time today to look at that but just bear that in mind. The unborn child, God says, is a person and he is calling that person even in the womb to show faith.

So we are dead in sin. To make that clear, your confession states that since the fall, all people are sinful by nature, disobeying God and befriending Satan.

And of course it's right. Listen to what God says in Romans 3. There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God, and all, all have turned away from God and become together worthless.

There is no one who does good, not even one. There is no fear of God before their eyes. So God says, no one does good and no one seeks God.

[16 : 36] And right now I'm sure some of you are wanting to ask me some questions. Surely you know people who do good, don't you? And what about the unborn child? In what way can an unborn child do bad stuff?

sin? And the answer is you've got the wrong idea of sin, if that's your question. Because you see, in most cultures I know, sin is about the stuff you do.

Right? If kids, mum and dad ask you, are you a sinner? They're going to ask you for proof and you're going to start talking about the things you've done wrong. The stuff. But sin is not about that.

That's called sins. The sin itself is your basic attitude, disposition, nature that opposes God. You're his enemy. All right?

Now it's no use if you're at times of war and the other army turns up and says, looks at your uniform and says, oh, are you trying to shoot me now? No? Oh, you must be on my side.

[17 : 42] No, you can't change sides just by being nice. And God sees us from our conceptions as his enemies.

Or to put it another way, you're not sinners because you sin. You sin because you're sinners.

When you were brought to your mum, you were probably crying. Sorry, kids, that's probably true. We look for the young newborn baby to cry and we say, yes, they're alive.

How do we know they're alive? Breath is coming in and out and they're making noise. How do we know you're sinners? Because you sin. right? When you were born, breathing didn't make you alive.

You breathed because you were alive. And in case of one of my children, there was no breathing and there was panic. This child is alive but if we don't get her breathing soon, ah, and then she breathes.

- [18 : 52] Yes! You see, God puts it like this. He says, and this is Jesus speaking, out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.
- You see, what he's saying is what you do and what you eat and what you see and what you hear doesn't make you a sinner. There are lots of cultures worried about what we eat.
- Is this going to affect my spiritual life? Right? Or what I watch on TV. Well, that could have an impact on you but it won't make you a sinner.
- All it will do is stir up the sin in your heart. That's where the sin comes from. What did we just read in Romans 18? Sorry, Romans 3 verse 18.
- there is no fear of God in their eyes. That makes you a sinner, not to love and fear God, not to honor him first.
- [20 : 02] So in God's providence, he takes people who have no fear of God in their hearts and he causes them to do good.
- So when you're coming here this afternoon, you probably didn't have somebody driving at you to kill you. Anyone? No, you all got, you traveled along the road reasonably safely?
- Why? If those people have no fear of God, why were they sticking to the road rules? Because God in his providence comes and holds society together against the will of each one of us.
- And you know, when you struggle with sin, why? Because that's what you want. Sin's attractive. We like it.
- We do it because we're enemies of God. And when God transforms us to be his children, then that sin starts to die and be shed like the skin of a praying mantis that's growing older or the cocoon of a caterpillar that's metamorphosizing from an ugly looking grub to a beautiful thing.
- [21 : 14] God takes us and gives us new life to get ah, but to get where? Let's go back a moment to Romans 1.18.
- The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth in their wickedness. This is the essence of sin, being opposed to God.
- God, remember what we said? Romans 5, verse 13, to be sure sin was in the world before the law was given.
- That was read to us just before I started to speak to you. To be sure sin was in the world before the law was given. You see, sin isn't about breaking rules and law.
- Sin is about who you are. Paul's saying that there was a time from Adam to Moses, he named it, he said it in our reading, from Adam to Moses there wasn't a law but there was still sin.
- [22 : 19] Now how did he know there was sin? Because people were dying. Simple. There's some science that is so straightforward, isn't there? People are dying, therefore they're sinners.
- And between Adam and Moses there was no law given and yet people were dying. Why? Because they were sinners. But, you know, at the end of that verse that I was just reading to you, there was a strange statement that Paul says sin was not charged or imputed to anyone's account when there was no law.
- And as that was being read to you, I'm sure you said, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, probably not. What does Paul mean? Let me give you an example from civil law.
- That might help. Now, I have to admit, it's been probably about 30 or 40 years since I looked closely at a legal issue. So I might be out of date.
- But if I understand it correctly, United States law does not prohibit someone taking a New Zealand coin and defacing the image of our king on it.

[23 : 30] You know what I mean? Smashing it up. Right? That's the law in the United States. It doesn't make it morally right, does it?

I mean, to deface and to insult a king is not morally good. Now, kids, don't copy this. This isn't in my notes, but when I was about your age, we used to sneak up to the railway line near our house and we'd put a penny on the railway line when a train was coming.

And by the time the train had finished, the penny had been squashed to about that size. But in the process, please don't do it because it really is dangerous, but in the process, the image of our queen as she was then, our monarch, was completely defaced.

Now, in the United States, you can take a New Zealand coin and deface it. But here in New Zealand, did you know that it's illegal? It's actually called treason.

Now, it's unlikely you'll be executed for it, but the last time I checked, treason was one of the few crimes for which you can still be executed. It's so serious.

[24 : 50] And the point is this. In the United States, you can do it even though it's morally wrong and it's not charged to your account. But if you do it here, one of those men or women in blue can come along and tap you on the shoulder and say, you're under arrest.

You're under arrest for treason. That's pretty serious, isn't it? Right? So what's the difference? Well, Paul is saying before the law came, there was still sin.

It was morally wrong to be opposed to God. It's pretty basic, isn't it? But once the law came along, the law tapped you on the shoulder and said, aha, you've now broken the law and you are condemned twice over.

You're condemned because you're wrong and you're condemned because you broke the law. So coming back to the Bible, Paul's point is this. God's law was given through Moses, but sin was in the world before then.

Death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command like Adam. And Paul's point is pretty simple. People died, so they must have been sinners.

[25 : 57] But their sin was not evidenced in the things they did. No, without a law they couldn't break a law. But it was evidenced in this, that they died.

they produced sin because by nature they were sinful. We don't need a law that makes defacing God's image an indictable offence.

We don't need a train to run over a coin with God's image in it, because you were born a rebel to God, defacing the image that God had given you of himself at creation.

Do you see that? we take people, ourselves, created according to Genesis 1:27, in the image of God, and we use that image to mock God and to refuse to bow before him.

This is the essence of sin. So we're not just born to die, we are born dead. We are born as those who are already opposing God and under his wrath.

[27 : 01] And listen to Ephesians 2. You're doing some memory verses in Ephesians great. You were dead, or you are now dead, in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live, or perhaps some of you still do, when you followed, or now follow, the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is at work in those who are disobedient.

You were dead until Christ changed you, and if Christ hasn't changed you, you're still dead in your sins. All of us, he says in Ephesians 2, lived like that, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its evil thoughts and desires.

Like the rest, we were by nature deserving God's wrath. And that brings us to the next big heading. We are under God's wrath.

I mentioned that before. The wrath of God is now being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people. that means that while we're opposed to God, God is opposed to us.

He brings us under judgment and promises an eternity of his wrath because of our rebellion. What can you do about this? Well, you can do what any dead person can do, decide to be alive.

[28 : 22] Right? How many people do you know who are dead can decide to be alive? It doesn't work like that, does it? To be dead means you can't choose life and to be dead in your sin means you can't choose to be free of sin and alive with Christ as his friend.

Now try it on the way home tonight, stop off somewhere, maybe children, your parents won't want you to do this, but you older people, stop off somewhere by a graveyard and go and stand among the graves and say, hey guys, come alive.

Well, you could give them some help, couldn't you? You could say, look, I tell you what guys, poke your hand up and I'll grab it, no, actually, you wouldn't, being November, I suspect you would actually turn around and run all the way home, but imagine, a hand comes out of the grave, you can reach out and I'll help you.

It's not going to work, is it? They're not going to poke their hand out, they're not going to say, I want to live, and you see, your statement of faith is right. God permits every sinner to turn to him by will.

The problem is, what will you always choose as a sinner? You're dead. What will you always choose to do? Be dead. You will never choose the righteousness that Christ calls you to unless he steps in and makes you alive.

[29 : 40] Now, remember the resurrection? Jesus rose from the dead as victor over death. He will come to you and lift you from death to life and then you can start to get sorted.

You know, sometimes sometimes we think we have to know an awful lot before we come to Christ and faith. It's a good idea to know some stuff about Christ and his forgiveness and all these doctrines we're working our way through with this statement of faith, but there's one basic thing that Jesus says, whoever comes to me, whoever comes to me, I will never turn away.

You got it? The most basic thing is to say to Jesus, I cannot live without you. Come and give me life and then I'll get all that other stuff sorted.

Don't think you have to sort stuff out to come to Christ. He says, come to me and I will never drive you away. God is not stopping the dead from choosing life.

He's not stopping you from choosing life, but you won't choose life until you live. And so you need to come to Christ. your statement of faith is beautifully understated at this point.

[30 : 56] By themselves, those who are dead in their sins cannot be saved without help. Yep, right. But we need more than help. We need life. And that is exactly what God gives.

This is newsflash number three. The good news that God gives dead people life. Let me ask you again, if you remember what we read in Romans 5 just before the sermon.

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, just as through the disobedience of that one man Adam, many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man many were made righteous.

Did you get it? Adam brought sin and death. Christ brings righteousness and life to you. Yes, you were born in Adam's line, so you were born a sinner.

Yes, because you're a sinner, you're going to die. Yes, because of death, God's judgment is coming after you die. Yes, because of sin, your judgment is going to be his wrath forever, except there is the good news.

[32 : 07] God is life to dead sinners. So, yes, come to Jesus and you will live.

Take note of a couple of verses here. First of all, Ephesians 2, what you've been looking at in your memory work. because of his great love for us God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions by grace you have been saved do you see that?

salvation comes because of God's grace he will love and befriend all who come to him and in fact he makes us alive so that we can do that and secondly in Romans 3.21 this life comes because of God's righteousness this righteousness is given through faith to all who believe come to the Lord Jesus Christ trust in him he will give you life in place of death he will transform that sinful nature to one that aligns with Christ if you're not right with God today still dead in sinfulness and therefore guaranteed God's wrath then it is by believing in God that he will give you life so what are you going to do about this in response?

this afternoon all you who are still dead in Adam without life in Christ destined to be sent to God's judgment listen this is what God says believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved two and a half thousand years ago God said this as surely as I live declares the sovereign Lord I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather that they turn from their ways and live turn turn from your evil ways why will you die?

sorry but it's it's such a a basic question isn't it? why will you die? when God says come and live turn to me he says and be saved all the ends of the earth I love that verse where are the ends of the earth?

[34 : 32] well when that was spoken it was literally on the other side of the world in the Bible lens we are as far away as we can be from there we are at the ends of the earth and he says I am God there is no other come to me or perhaps this afternoon you are rejoicing in the fact that you have come and that you know Christ is Saviour that you know he is Lord what are you going to do?

please please hear the scriptures the righteous will live by faith go on believing go on living with Christ let's pray we thank you our Father that as Adam brought sin into this world and with it death in the Lord Jesus Christ you have shown compassion and love and salvation that we come to you not because we have anything to offer but because you have life to give bring us every one of us here today bring us we pray by faith to Christ asking you for life that we cannot stir up ourselves and Father help us to walk we pray by faith not trusting in our own works but in the righteousness of Christ and may we see day by day that sinful nature being crucified and replaced by the image and likeness of Christ himself and we ask it in his name amen amen

Thank you.