

Rooted: Studies in Christian Discipleship

-Sin Entered The world, And Death Through Sin...-

- Teacher's note- In writing this lesson. I also read the corresponding chapters of Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, J.I. Packer's *Knowing God*, and Bruce Ware's *Big Truths For Young Hearts*. A very helpful resource was Tom Schreiner's *Commentary on Romans*, in particular his exegesis and explanation of Romans 5.
- I was thinking about how to teach the next few weeks, and here's what I landed on.
 - I was considering teaching through a couple more of God's attributes right now- specifically his sovereignty- but instead, we're going to do this in a slightly different order.
 - First, we're going to go from the holiness of God last week to the fallen nature of man this week.
 - Then, in two weeks when I'm back, we'll teach on the incredibly popular theological doctrine of hell.
 - Then, after hitting on those two hard doctrines, at that point I'm going to teach on God's sovereignty, and try to do so specifically in relation to the question of sovereignty and man's fallen nature and hell. We'll see that according to Scripture, God is totally sovereign and then we will try and work through two questions.
 - ◆ If God is totally sovereign, how do we understand the fact that man, God's created being, is sinful?
 - ◆ If God is totally sovereign, why did he make a hell and why does he send people there?
- This week we're turning to one of the darker pictures we'll study in this class- our own sinfulness. And it only gets worse next week! Jerry has graciously agreed to teach the class next week on the topic of Hell. But here's the thing- it is only as we see our position as sinners who rightly deserve the eternal judgment of a Holy God that we see how loving God is in offering the Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- Here's the question for you to consider as we walk through Romans 5:12-19. **Are we sinners because we sin, or do we sin because we're sinners?** You might think this is one of those chicken or egg questions, but you'd be wrong. The Bible clearly answers this question, but a lot of times we don't like the answer.
- Romans 5:12-19
 - *[12] Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—[13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*
 - [15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [16] And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. [17] For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*
 - [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. [20] Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [21] so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to*

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eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Romans 5:12-21 ESV)

- There are a number of things we need to see in this text, but what I want to point out first is that every single person in humanity is represented in this passage. You could go so far as to say that there are two types of people in the world- those in Adam, and those in Jesus Christ. Adam, as the first creation, made unfallen and without sin, fell and rebelled against God. Everyone since then has Adam as their representative. That is, until Christ came. Now those who trust in Christ are saved from sin and its effects. Let's dig into the text here and see how Paul describes those in Adam, and then we'll contrast that with those in Christ.
- Adam:
 - ◆ Dead- vv. 12,14,15
 - Death entered the world through sin, and now death reigns. This isn't just physical death though, is it? This is both physical and spiritual death.
 - Ephesians 2:1-3
 - 1 Timothy 5:6 *[5] She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, [6] but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.* (1 Timothy 5:5-6 ESV)
 - John 3- the conversation with Nicodemus shows that we need to be made alive again, have a second spiritual birth because of the reign of death since the time of Adam.
 - Death is not “natural.” It is a result of sin.
 - ◆ Condemned- vv.12-13, 16
 - In Adam we stand condemned before God. God designed that we would stand guilty and condemned because of one man's sin so that we would be able to stand righteous and freed from sin through one's man's sacrifice.
 - Death is actually a clear, physical sign of our inherent guilt in Adam. What does Paul go on to say that the reward, or just payment of sin, is? It's death. Where death is present, sin is as well. So Paul is connecting the two in this passage. We're born guilty and condemned of sin, and so we are born into a world where death reigns.
 - Ps 51- “In sin did my mother conceive me..” This isn't speaking of the mother's sin, but of David's. The entire point of Psalm 51 is that David is a sinner, entirely, the whole way down, and his only hope is God.
 - John 3:1-12
 - What about verse 13?
 - This speaks of the time between Adam's Sin and the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. Adam's trespass was a clear disobedience of God's revealed command. That can't happen again until God gives the Law- his clear revealed command to his people. So the sin from the Fall until the Law isn't “technically” counted as breaking the Law of God. However, he can't be saying that there was no sin. Death was reigning during all this time. And death is the reward or payment for sin. This is the sin apart from the revealed law of God.
 - Of course, Noah and the story of God's judgment was during this time so we know that God isn't saying there was no sin at the time!
 - This also is a part of Paul's teaching on what the Law of God does in the OT.
 - Romans 7- *[7] What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no*

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means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." [8] But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. [9] I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. [10] The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. [11] For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. [12] So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. [13] Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. [14] For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

(Romans 7:7-14 ESV)

- The Law came to show us our sin. The Law didn't bring sin, verse 13 makes that clear. Sin was already present in us, shown through our death. The Law came to show our sin to us, so we could see the need for salvation.
- The conclusion is that we have sin reigning in us from birth. We're born in sin, our flesh is sold under sin, enslaved to it. One way people say this is that we have a sinful nature. By nature, we are sinners.
 - Jeremiah 13:23- "And if you say, 'Why have these things come upon me?' It is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up and you suffer violence. Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil."
 - It's not just what we do, it's a part of who we are.
- One phrase we use to describe our state is total depravity.
 - This does not mean that we are as depraved as we possibly can be, but that there's a totality to our corruption. The concept of degree vs. extent. The extent of our sin is total. The degree may not be.
 - There's no part of us that is not in some fundamental way corrupt.
- ♦ An intentional Rabbit Trail
 - The question that naturally rises in our minds here is this, "If we're born condemned, guilty in Adam of our sin, 'sold under sin,' then what are we to think about infants who die?" Normally I try not to encourage rabbit trails in this class, but this is one we need to look at. Sadly, I can guarantee that this question will effect every single person in this room- you may undergo the loss of a precious little one, or someone close to you will. But there are millions of little humans being killed in our day today. Millions who were conceived in sin, born with the guilt of Adam, and we know that's true because death did reign in their bodies. They died. What should you think about that? What should you tell someone who is struggling with this?
 - Now, some will say that they are in heaven with Christ because they were born innocent. They never had the chance to sin and so they weren't condemned. Even young children. I don't think that's a Biblical response though. No one enters the world without the taint of sin, the guilt and condemnation of Adam- this is the point

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of Adam. And no one enters heaven apart from the work of Christ. So, we shouldn't say that these little ones entered heaven because of their innocence, as though any one except Christ could come to God through their own righteousness. Because that's what you'd be saying.

- However, let me be very clear. I am absolutely sure and confident that these little ones do enter into heaven, and are rejoicing with the Father. Let me give a brief Biblical explanation for this.
- First, we should recognize that God interacts with children even in the womb. Jeremiah recognizes this about himself. David also points this out about himself ([Psalm 22:9-10](#)). We see God interacting with John the Baptist when he was in his mother's womb. God knows these little children at their conception, He knows them intimately in fact. It isn't at their birth that God recognizes them as life.
- There is evidence that God recognizes and, in His mercy, provides excuse for those who are incapable of “seeing” and “reasoning” out the Gospel. They are still saved by the Gospel, but they have an excuse in their inability to reason out the Gospel.
 - *[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. [19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*
(Romans 1:18-23 ESV)
 - John 9- *[39] Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” [40] Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” [41] Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.*
(John 9:39-41 ESV)
 - Here, those who are incapable of saying “we see” would be those who can't understand the revelation of God in creation and in the Word. We're seeing that God is merciful and understanding- he won't condemn those who cannot see. Adults, rational and thinking, capable of understanding the world and the message of the Gospel, have no excuse. Even those who never hear the Gospel have seen enough of God in the created world to reject him. But infants, very young children, those with severe mental disabilities. They can't see. They can't perceive. Are they born in sin? Yes, but God is merciful, not evil. He is patient, kind, and forbearing. Remember, it was God the Son who rebuked man when the disciples kept the little children from him? It wasn't man pleading that God have mercy on children. And for the most part, man isn't pleading to God on behalf of children today. Man is killing

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children.

- An Old Testament example- *Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it, (Deuteronomy 1:39).* The little ones were allowed to enter into the Promised Land of Canaan because they were not held accountable for the sin of Israel.
- Another- David fully expects to see again his infant child- [21] Then his servants said to him, “What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.” [22] He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ [23] But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”
(2 Samuel 12:21-23 ESV)

- The final point here is that, yes, these children are born into sin, are sinners, but we see again and again that God is merciful to the blind, to the helpless, to the weak. I believe absolutely that God has mercy on these little ones through the blood of Christ. In the Romans 5 paradigm, they're on the “in Christ” side, not the “in Adam.”

- One other thing that could be drawn out of Romans 5 is that we are “enslaved to sin.” I have Ephesians 4:17-19 down as a picture of that. Romans 7 is another picture.
- In conclusion- scripture clearly teaches that we are born with a “sinful nature.” We are born condemned in Adam, and enslaved to sin. So, we sin because we are sinners! We aren't sinners because we sin!
- We didn't really spend time with the “In Christ” side of the picture because we're going to be looking at the life giving power of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST all next spring. But before we see that, we have to be crystal clear on our problem. Everything about us when we are apart from Christ is under the reign of sin and death. Everything. That's why we're “new creations” in Christ. If you're a christian, death doesn't reign over you. You aren't made sinners, but made righteous.
- Next week, Jerry will be bringing this home for us. When sin and death reign in us, when we rebel against God, we are under the righteous condemnation of a Holy God. Jerry will point out that Hell isn't merely separation from God- it is the active attention of the wrath of God. Thanks be to God that He is merciful, and offers salvation in Jesus Christ.

➤ Application Questions

- Go back and read Romans 5:12-19 for yourself. Take the time to list out all the differences between those who are 'in Adam' and those who are 'in Christ.' How does Jesus' work fully overcome our sinful state?
- What do you think “death reigned” means? Is it only physical death, or is it spiritual also? Before God makes a person a new creation in Christ Jesus, is there any part of them that is free from the reign of death?
- Read Psalm 5 this week. If sin is a part of our nature, and death reigns throughout our bodies, does it make sense for us to separate sin from the sinner? What is God's attitude towards

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sinners in Psalm 5? If God “hates the wicked,” how does He at the same time show His love for sinners? (think John 3 or 1 John 3...)