

The Third Sunday in Lent
March 11, 2012

“AS BY ONE MAN”

Sermon Text: Romans 5:12-6:4

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Dear Little Flock,

Our text says that it was, first of all, through the disobedience of one man (that is Adam), many were made sinners.

This means that the sin of the first man, Adam, was imputed to each and every one of us. His disobedience is counted against every naturally conceived human being since The Fall.

That is Original Sin.

Each and every natural human being born since Adam is thus guilty of sinning against God; that includes new born babies, children of every age, as well as all adults; and we are worthy of only the righteous condemnation of God, physical death and eternal punishment in hell.

For though before the law was codified--given by God to Moses--and individual sins were not imputed to the transgressor, yet sin **was** in the world and *by sin*, Death reigned in the world,

As our text says in verse 12:

“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And verse 13 and 14: (For until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression...”

The tyranny and unrestrained sovereignty of Death (both physical *and* spiritual death), therefore came upon all mankind by the one transgression of Adam. It was imputed to all just as our text states,

“... by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

The Law of Moses was then given as an addition, a subordinate thing, to Original Sin.

The Law of Moses was given, set before us as a mirror, so that we should be brought to face and realize the enormity of our individual sins before God and so that we should find that all our deeds, even what we believe to be our good works, are so tainted by sin that they are become as filthy rags.

Natural unregenerate man is then as a lifeless rotting corpse.

He is clothed in the filthy rags of his good works, permeated with the rot of sin and crawling with the Worm of Corruption, incapable of producing anything good in or of himself. He stinks of Sin and Death. He cannot lift even one finger to help himself, much less raise himself up to walk upright before God.

Death and eternal damnation are ours by right.

It is what we deserve on account of *Original Sin*, not to mention the additional overload of our own personal violations of the Holy Law given by God to Moses.

There's a line from a song that makes a long list of the little pleasures of life and then says "These are a few of my favorite things...."

Well, the Devil also has quite a few "favorite things"...evil things he likes to use to get you to turn the focus of your heart away from God.

Have you allowed the Devil the upper hand in your life, so that a few of his favorite things have become "a few of *your* favorite things"?

The Bible tells us: "... *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" (Matthew 6:21)

Have you placed anyone or anything above God in your life?
Is there a movie star, athlete, or learned man or woman you idolize?

Do you put money, the pursuit of material goods and leisure activities ahead of your service to God?

Do you trust in yourself and what **you** can do to see you through thick and thin?

Do you use the Lord's name in vain?

That is, do you casually use the name of God to express yourself or to impress others of your sincerity in your conversations with friends and co-workers?

Do you flippantly or without much thought call the wrath and judgment of God down on people that make you angry?

Are you superstitious? Do you try to "make a deal" with God or rely upon "good luck charms" to try to ensure things go your way?

Do you honestly and sincerely observe the Lord's Day as a time to humbly reflect upon your thoughts and deeds of the past week and joyfully re-dedicate your life in service to God and your neighbor? Or is the Sabbath-Day just a day to show up at church in order to put on a public show of how "righteous" you are, and then when church is finally over ... well, it's "Miller-time"... time to forget all that religion stuff and watch some serious football on the television?

Do you grudgingly get the kids and yourself ready for church as though it's a chore equivalent to scrubbing out garbage cans with a toothbrush?

Children, do you make it a habit to talk back to your parents when they tell you to do something? Are you disobedient? Or do you happily comply with your parent's wishes knowing that God has placed them in authority over you to guide and protect you on your journey from childhood through adolescence into adulthood? Do you mock your parents or speak evil of them to your friends?

Adults, Do you respect the legal authority of your government and your elected officials and earnestly pray for them to do God's will, or do you take every opportunity to slander and otherwise speak evil of them?

Do you always seek that which is good for your fellowman, or do you find yourself wishing evil upon someone because of the color of their skin, economic status, or because they choose to live their lives or make choices you don't agree with in matters in which God's Word is silent?

Have you been spiteful of your neighbor when his lot in life improves? When things don't seem to be going his way, do you seek to help him improve himself, his property and business when the opportunity arises or do you simply say "he's just getting what he deserves" and let it go at that?

Have you purposely stood by doing nothing while your neighbor is harmed in body or soul? Are you silent when others do so?

Is adultery your "favorite" sin?
Have you been completely faithful to your spouse in thought, word and deed?
Have you engaged your mind in sexual fantasy with someone who is not your spouse?

Are you in the habit of looking at pornographic magazines or pornographic internet websites? Be aware, not only is the physical act of sex outside of the bonds of marriage, adultery, but also those sexually charged thoughts and fantasies are adultery in the eyes of God.

For the Bible tells us that "...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28)

And lest some of you women start to climb up on your high horse, the same standard applies *you* as well. So many of the daytime television dramas, "soaps", magazines and novels that seem to be a regular staple of the average American woman's daily activities either are close to, or of a truth, could be considered pornographic as well.

Have you taken anything that didn't rightfully belong to you?

Have you made plans within your mind to take or somehow obtain the property of others?

Have you stolen from your employer, thinking, "They don't pay me enough, so this is rightfully mine."

Have you falsified an on-the-job injury claim in order to collect workman's compensation?

How about taking longer breaks than you are suppose to, or having someone punch your timecard for you so you can sneak out from work early.

Are you stealing from the hardworking taxpayers of this nation by collecting unemployment benefits, welfare or other assistance when you honestly could be working?

Do you steal time away from your family to play golf, watch sports on TV, or engage in some other activity, when it's your family's physical, emotional and spiritual needs that require your attention?

Do you enjoy gossiping about your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends or your family?
Are you one of those people who say: "*I'm not the kind to go around repeating gossip, so you'd better listen close the first time.*"

Is it your philosophy "It's best to keep the attention focused on the misdeeds of others; that way no one will see what I'm doing."?

How many times do we hear someone say: "You should hear what so-and-so did yesterday!" and then we give them our full attention and respond with a "*Well, I never!*" instead of telling them you don't care to listen to gossip and walking away?

Let's honestly examine ourselves. Before you claim to not see yourself in any of these situations, or something similar to them, let's read First John 1:8:
"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

And before you congratulate yourselves on being guilty of only one, two, ... (ok, maybe "just" three) of these sins, you need to know that your boasting is not good.
You need to know that *ALL* these sins are yours and mine. We are guilty of *each and every one*.

The Scriptures tells us in James 2:10:
"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

And Psalm 14:3 says that "*... there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*"

We are indeed, lost and condemned creatures! Let us repent of our sins and be turned to God.

First John 1:9 says: "*If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

How can this be? It is most assuredly **not** by anything we can do, or merit, of ourselves!
---Remember... we are dead in trespasses and sins. *Dead as a doornail!*

But, thanks be to our gracious and merciful God, who foresaw mankind's sinful condition and planned a way for us all to escape the eternal punishment that was ours on account of sin.

God's grace super-abounded where sin did abound. For when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Only Begotten Son, to be born of a woman, to be made under the Law that we might receive the full benefits, rights and privileges as holy, righteous children of God.

How?

Our text tells us:
"Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift (that is salvation in Christ Jesus)--came upon all men unto justification. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of

One shall many be made righteous...that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Dear Ones, God sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ--that very precious ransom of our bodies and souls from hell, to take on the form of a servant--to set aside the full glory and majesty of His Godhead--to humbly live a life in which he was sorely tempted, just as you and I are tempted and struggle every day--and to be victories over every temptation in our stead--to perfectly keep and fulfill the demands of the Law in our place, which we cannot do on account of sin. He became the blood sacrifice for sin--for your sin and mine-- for the sins of the whole world--the blood sacrifice that the Law demanded.

His righteousness becomes *OUR* righteousness. Because of what Christ suffered in our place, we can come and stand before God, The Father blameless, innocent of every sin, including *Original Sin* - the sin of Adam once imputed against the whole world! Our debt is paid in full and we are reconciled to God as His precious children.

And how did the world receive Jesus?

The very same people He came to save rejected Him.

They rejected His Word of Truth.

They rejected His Godhead.

They rejected His mercy, His terrible sacrifice, and His gift of the Forgiveness of Sins and Life.

See with your mind's eye how they mocked Him, spat on Him, whipped Him, scourged Him, and so forcefully set a crown of thorns upon His head that He bled.

See how they made Him carry the very instrument of His own death--that heavy roughly hewn wooded cross--through uneven streets over-crowded with people, gathered as if to see a carnival show. Gathered to see the god-man, Jesus, mocked as the "king of the Jews", put to death.

See them drive the heavy spikes through His hands and feet. Witness them raise the cross up, dropping it into place with a slamming thud to make Him suffer even more the torture of a slow and agonizing death.

And as He suffered, see Him athirst, and offered, not water, but vinegar mixed with gall.

Witness, as He becomes Sin, itself, for you. Hear His suffering cry of anguish at His Heavenly Father's complete and utter abandonment on account of the horrible weight of the world's sin:

"My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And after all this, hear Him cry out to His Heavenly Father, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."* And see, as He commends His soul to the Father, and gives up the ghost -- He dies.

Jesus Christ, true god and true man, died, and in doing so gave this world the greatest gift it will ever know. For you see, the world is made righteous before God, made free from the guilty stain of sin, free from the power of sin, free from the eternal punishment that was so justly deserved on account of sin.

And the third day Christ Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

In this, God the Father put His seal of approval on the Redemptive Work of Christ Jesus.

For, as we read in Second Corinthians 5:19&21:

"...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

What a blessed and wonderful gift of God this Gospel message is to all who are truly repentant of their sins. Yes, what a blessing, indeed, to those who come not boasting of any merit or worthiness, but trusting only in His loving mercy, come to it by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone worked in their hearts by His Holy Spirit through the hearing of the Word of God.

It can't be bought with silver or gold or all the riches of heaven and earth. It cannot be earned.

It's absolutely free, *by Grace, through Faith* in Christ Jesus.

How precious a gift we've been given! What a super-abundance of Grace where sin did abound!

And what shall be our response? Shall we continue in living in sin so that grace should all the more abound? God forbid!

Dear Ones, through our justification in Christ Jesus, we are *dead to sin*. Sin no longer has any dominion over us--it has no power to enslave us anymore.

How, then shall we who are dead to sin, spend our lives any longer serving sin?

As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.

The Christian is not only baptized with the Words of Jesus Christ in order to be united with Him in His death and to be benefactors of His suffering and death. But as Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven to take His place at the right hand of the Father as our prophet, priest, and king, so too we are raised to a new life in Christ.

And in this new life we are, indeed, to walk, to live our daily lives, to conduct ourselves as the wholly ransomed Children of God.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Dear Ones, we are Christ's.

Let us live as such, giving all glory and honor to Jesus, *By The One* through whom we are made Children of God and heirs to eternal life in heaven. Amen.

And now may the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in The One, Christ Jesus. Amen.