

Pastor Writes

Greetings to you all. We are in the first Sunday of lent and our theme for the morning is 'The contrast between the failure of Adam and the obedience of Jesus whose victory we are called to share.' The bible presents Adam as the first human being, and gives the Lord Jesus Christ the title of the 'last Adam' (1 Cor. 15.45) What does this term mean? Why was it given to Jesus? What are the similarities and the differences between the first Adam and the second Adam?

If we go to the beginning of scripture we see that the first man Adam was created by God in his image and likeness, directly from the dust of the ground. God breathes into Adam's nostril the breath of life, and he became a living being (Gen 1. 26, 27). The last Adam on the other side was the one through whom God created all things (Col. 1. 15-20). While Adam was made in the image of God, 'Christ is the image of the invisible God' (Col 1.15).

In the creation account we see that God had created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden of Eden. However by the time we come to Genesis 3, we are given the account of the Fall. We notice that Adam and Eve had doubted the goodness of God and had disobeyed him. This disobedience led to affecting every realm of human life: it affected the spiritual realm because of mistrust between God and human beings; it affected the intellectual realm, because their minds were darkened and they began to rationalise as to how good the forbidden fruit was; it affected the physical realm because of the physical act of taking and eating it; and finally it affected the social realm because they shared the fruit with each other. The reality of sin has affected every sphere of our lives.

In the reading from the book of Romans Chap 5, Paul reminds us that sin came into the world through one man and death came through sin. Adam was responsible for the entry of sin into the world of human beings. It is through his disobedience that sin has come and through him all have sinned which lead us to death. Adam was the door through which death entered. There is an illusion to it in Gen 2. 17, 3.19 where death (both physical & spiritual) is said to be the penalty of disobedience to God's commands which brought about death to all humanity.

Paul then goes on to the contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam –verse 15-17. Paul says that the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many who died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. The free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. The difference between Adam and Christ lie in the nature of the two actions and their results. Adam's sin was indeed a fall. It is the image of one making a false step so as to lose footing; a violation of moral standard, offence, wrong doing and sin. Adam disobeyed God and insisted on going his own way, whereas Christ obeyed God and gave himself in an act of self sacrifice. In the case of Adam, God's judgement brought condemnation, but in the case of Christ God's gifts brought justification. One brings death and the other brings life. The first Adam disobeyed God, the last Adam was obedient unto death even the death on the cross! (Phil 2.8) Christ is the free gift of God. Adam brought death but Christ brings life.

In the final section in Rom 5:18-21, Adam and Christ are compared. Paul reminds us that justification is available to all because of what Christ has done on the cross. Just like the Adam's disobedience many were made sinners, so by Christ's obedience many will be made righteous. Christ has defeated sin and death on the cross. God's grace is abundantly available to all those who turn to him. Just as sin exercises dominion and death, grace exercises dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The first Adam failed the test and so involved all humanity in his defeat dragging the human race down with him.

As a result in Adam we all stand condemned, spiritually bankrupt, enslaved in sin and expelled from paradise (Roman 5. 12ff). The last Adam, Jesus was victorious over sin, the flesh and the devil. As a result believers stand justified and redeemed, spiritually wealthy, liberated from sin and included in the paradise of God. (Rom. 5.18ff; 1Cor. 15. 21ff).

We are all connected with the first Adam as depraved and guilty sinners and so are included in the sentence of death which God pronounced on him. However, all who are connected with the last Adam, Jesus, through repentance and faith in his redeeming work are forgiven and have, received the free gift of righteousness and so have passed from death to life. (Col 1.14; Rom 5. 17; John 3. 14). This morning God calls us to repent of our sinful ways and put our faith in his redeeming work, so that we may be forgiven and receive the free gift of righteousness and pass from death to life.

Shalom

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