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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
July 5, 2020
5th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Jeremiah 20:7-13, Matthew 10:24-33
Hymns: 24; 410; 369:1,2,5,6; 50:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Romans 5:12-15

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.¹⁵ But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Historical Figures.

This 4th of July week-end commemorating the birth of our nation is to be a great patriotic festival in which we call to mind with gratitude the blessings of our republic, and the freedoms we cherish. The United States is in quite a turmoil right now. Traditionally we have especially remembered the sacrifices that many individuals have made to secure and then to preserve the United State of America as a nation of freedom and opportunity for all. No, we are not a perfect nation. The fact is where there are people there are going to problems. Even as the nation is flawed so are the people, and so it has always been. We remember our founding fathers, and the risks they took to make a new nation born with the idea of liberty and justice for all. One doesn't have to look too hard or too close to discover that every one of our founding fathers, every one of our national heroes had flaws in their characters and sins in their lives. Each of these individuals made a difference that led to life as we know it in America, and overall a difference for good.

My point now is to take us this point from something lesser to something greater. As great a celebration as we normally have for Independence Day, there is an even greater event in history that we are to observe each and every Sunday. We were liberated from a great oppression, the oppression of sin. Individuals can and do make a difference in this world, and two such individuals stand out above the rest because of the impact their actions had on the rest of the world for its entire history. The Spirit would have consider –

THEME: The Difference One Man Makes in the World.

Remember, we are talking about real historical figures today who impacted the world like no one else. Many are worried about rewriting history to serve someone's social or political ends. Believe me, many have tried down through the centuries to rewrite Bible history as well, all to no avail. What happened really happened, and just as that cannot be changed so the effects of what one man did stand out on every page of world history. We see the difference one man made in the world when Adam, the first man, sinned, and that difference was –

I. For Evil: Sin Entered into the World and Death by Sin.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit we know how the world came to be in this mess with sickness and murder and social unrest and death, so much death. We read the truth of the matter right here in our text:

Romans 5:12-14 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam.”

Through one man sin entered into the world, and that man was Adam. Did one man make a difference in the world? Profound hardly begins to cover the difference that Adam's fall into sin brought upon all of us. Sin entered into the world, and **death** through sin. A couple

points we need to make very clear. I mentioned that people have tried for centuries to rewrite the history of the world to make man look good, and God look weak, and ineffective. When man writes the lie that the world came to be what it is through evolution, and some suggest that the idea of theistic evolution improves that idea, they are attempting to shift the responsibility for death coming into the world unto God and off of man and sin. All that God made was indeed very good, vastly superior to the world as we know it today, and death was not a part of that perfect creation of God. Death was the fruit of sin. God had warned Adam and Eve that the day they ate of the tree in the middle of the garden they would die.

In an act of rebellion against God for keeping them back from knowing both good and evil, they ate of the forbidden fruit and they died. In that moment they died **spiritually**. **In that moment** they introduced corruption to the world as is evident from the corruption in their own minds and hearts. **In that moment** death came upon the world. Death spread from Adam and Eve to their children. When one reads the genealogy table, that some have told me is so boring, one fact stands out; after living so many years, and a declining number at that, and having had sons and daughters, people died. They returned to the earth from which they came.

Now there are some that would debate the fairness of God in this. They challenge God's judgment regarding the nature of man, (people want to believe that man is innately good, not evil) and then they challenge the fact that God holds all people accountable when for so long there was no set law that man broke, like Adam when he ate from the tree from which God told Adam not to eat.

The Ten Commandments came many hundreds of years later, so how can God hold man accountable when he didn't know! Oh, but man did know! Man knew he was defying the will God. All people are born sinful. "*The imagination of man's heart is evil for his youth!*" (Genesis 8:21) And honestly, don't you know that too? Rebellion is evident. Selfishness is innate in what we call human nature, and that is sinful human nature. **In Adam all die.** That is the difference one man brought into the world. All the misery, hunger, sickness and disease, war and suffering, and injustice and hatred, all of it is the fruit of spiritual death that leads to eternal death as man passes through physical death.

It is easy for us to point the finger back at Adam, and think this is all his fault, after all isn't this sermon about the impact one man had on the world! That doesn't let a single one of us off the hook, so to speak. The Spirit makes it very clear that all die for one reason; ALL have sinned.

When we come to church we humble ourselves before the Lord and confess our sins, seeking His mercy and grace. Some think coming to church just isn't that important. If for no other reason it is important that we humble ourselves before the Lord and, together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, confess our sins and seek His grace and forgiveness. How is that forgiveness even possible to imagine?

Well it all comes down to the difference one Man made in this world --

II. For Good: Grace Abounds unto Eternal Life.

Our text introduces this one Man by saying –

Romans 5:14-15 “Adam ... is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

That is saying that the Lord holds Adam up before us as a sign of the Promised Savior. There was to be a similarity, something in common between the two that connects them. That connection is the universal impact each of these two men had upon the world. One because of his offense brought death. The other because of His death brought the gift of life, and a **free** gift at that! Because of Adam’s fall into sin the masses of humanity all face death and the grave, and yes, even hell! But the free gift is not like the offense, because Jesus, the second Adam brings life. By the grace of this one Man, Jesus the God Man, forgiveness, life and salvation abound.

There is so much sin, and suffering and death in this world. So much evil that we can’t comprehend it. We can’t even begin to comprehend it. It is vile, and yet God sees it all. God comprehends it all, every last bit of the evil that stinks to high heaven, every last one of the sins that broods in the dark recesses of **your** mind or heart, God knows it all.

The Lord responds with the **grace** of sending the Man Christ Jesus to bear our sin and the curse of death. The greatest act of kindness the world has ever seen and will ever see was Christ Jesus taking our sins to cross where He endured the wrath of God in our place and secured forgiveness for you and me and all men. “*He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2)

Remember that big word – “propitiation.” It is not only the all sufficient price for the sins of the world, but it is the all atoning sacrifice that secures our peace, and sets aside the wrath of God for all mankind, for ALL mankind. Grace abounds. All that sin, and yet the grace this one Man brings to the world is greater and covers ALL that sin. You have forgiveness in Jesus’ name. You have peace in Jesus’ name. You have life in Jesus’ name.

Now think of historical figures that have made an impact on humanity. We erect statues in their honor, carve their faces on the side of a mountain, but none have impacted the world or, for that matter, our individual lives anywhere near as much as Jesus. May His name, His image be carved in our hearts till He Himself receives us to eternal life in heaven!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)