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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
February 17, 2021  
Ash Wednesday

Scripture Lessons: Psalm 51:1-12 Passion: Upper Room  
Hymns: 140:1,4,5; 369:1,4,5; 163:1-4; 313:1

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

Sermon Text: Romans 5:12, 18

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

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

INTRO: It's All about Redemption!

That is the theme for our midweek Lenten meditations this year. It sounds obvious, but it is actually anything but obvious. "About Redemption" is what is written under the heading for the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed in the Catechism we use for our instruction classes. We use Luther's explanation for the Second Article as our confession of faith in our midweek Lenten services. Luther addresses the person of Christ, and then the sufferings and death of Christ as the act of redemption, and finally laying out the result of this act of redemption. In our meditations this Lenten season we will be using these words of Luther as our guide to a richer understanding of the grace that comes to us through our Savior's Passion.

On this Ash Wednesday evening we begin our meditations by considering the objects of this wonder of grace flowing to us from the

cross of Christ. This is very personal. It should feel very personal to all of us. It is very personal because --

**THEME: He Redeemed ME, A Lost and Condemned Person.**

Consider --

**I. The Condemnation that Enveloped Each and Every One of Us in the World.**

“Through one man sin entered into the world.” (v.12) And what a disaster that was for all! Death came into the world! Death came through sin. Before sin entered the world there was no death. No death at all! This is the first basic fact the devil attacks with his lies about the origin of the world and how all things began. Most churches now teach something they call theistic evolution. They teach the lie that God started a process of bringing things into being that utilized death as a way to improve things, and that over many millions of years, (yet another lie) things improved. They would have you believe that God and His inept ability at creating things was the source of death! They would have you believe that death was necessary for progress. **No! Death came by sin!**

Death is a horror of separation starting with the separation of man from his Creator God. Death is the enemy, not our friend. Death has passed upon all men, that is all humankind, because all have sinned.

I have sinned. I sin daily in thought, word, and deed. I have sinned and I am subject to death. I was born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. I was alienated from God by sin. Sin is a continuing problem for me because I still carry with me a sinful nature that we sometimes call our sinful flesh; that part of me that is full of all types of evil desires, selfish desires. I was **born** lost, and worthy of death. It was only God's grace that made me alive by bringing me the saving gospel, and opening my heart to believe.

My problem with death was not limited to spiritual death even though that is tragic beyond understanding. It also brought temporal death and the fear of death. From the moment we take our first breath in this world we are on the path to the grave. By one man, the first Adam, sin entered into the world and death by sin. And so the Lord told Adam after that dreadful sin, *“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”* (Genesis 3:19)

I was not only a lost person, I was also, by nature, subject to eternal condemnation in hell. Hell isn't a myth. It is a real place of horrific sufferings and hatred between all who are captive there for all eternity. It is not a place intended for human beings. It was a place made especially for the devil and his fallen angels who arrogantly sought to overthrow God. The devil did bring the spoiling effects of sin into God's perfect creation. But in arrogance man also defies God and thinks that man is not subject to the law of God. In the end that brings condemnation.

*"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation."* (v.18) Judgment came to all men, that is all mankind. The fair and impartial judgment of a just God is condemnation, and that my friends is talking about an eternity spent in hell, forever separated from the glory of a gracious God.

It's not just bad people that go to hell. Well, it is if you understand that all people are bad. *"The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one."* (Psalm 14:2-3) God sees our sin. God knows the truth we are afraid to admit. We also were lost and condemned. We want to think that only people that are REALLY bad go to hell, not nice people like me. I've said it before and I believe it needs saying, a lot of nice people will spend eternity in hell! Indeed, many more people that we would think of as "nice" will be there than people we would think of as being horrible. Because Adam sinned judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation for **all!** That's the truth. Fortunately for you and me and the world, that is not where the story ends.

There was another, One called the second Adam, who by one act, one great sacrificial act impacted the world with righteousness and life. It is all about redemption! The Holy Spirit would lead us to see --

## **II. The Wondrous Scope of Redemption in Christ.**

**Romans 5:18** *"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."*

One man by his sin brought sin and judgment and condemnation upon all! How could this spiritual devastation ever be cleaned up? A price had to be paid. *"The wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23) The judgment is clear. The price that had to be paid, the price that had to be satisfied was someone's life. It had to be a life that could atone for all in order for that one righteous act to bring life to all!

“He has redeemed me!” That is what we confess. That is the truth we hold dear in our hearts. Yes, Jesus has redeemed **me**, as underserving as I might be, a lost and condemned person, but He paid the ransom price for my soul. He has paid my debt.

This wondrous gift of grace is not limited to one person. Think about the wonder of grace found here, while Adam did the vile deed of sinning so that all after him would be contaminated by his sin, and indeed be full of sin themselves, Jesus did the righteous act of sacrificing Himself to pay our debt to God. He paid what I owed. He paid what you owed. He paid what all the people in all the world owed. What John wrote in his first epistle is so precious and important for us to treasure in our hearts as we consider this evening and for the coming weeks the redemptive work of Jesus. *“He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2) Propitiation is a big word that relates to redemption. Propitiation is the satisfying payment made for a debt that also appeases the one who was offended. Jesus is the satisfying payment for my sin. He has redeemed me, and by His righteous act of willingly offering Himself in our place, He redeemed the whole world. Jesus made it possible for all people to be saved. Only Jesus could do that. Only Jesus, the only begotten Son of God could pay a price that satisfied the debt of sin accumulated by all mankind. Only Jesus could Redeem Me a lost and condemned person! And that is what Jesus has done for me, and for you, and for all the world.

“Alas! And did my Savior bleed, And did my Sov’ reign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?”

“Thus might I hide my blushing face While His dear cross appears  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness And melt mine eyes to tears.”

(The Lutheran Hymnal 154:1,4)

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.