

**“Original Sin”
(Romans 5:12-19)
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Introduction:

(Rom 5:12-19 NIV)

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

We are back to theme of holiness again, at least for a week and then beginning next week for three weeks we'll be starting a mini-series on the subject of family. But in actuality, speaking about family is to speak on holiness because there is a way to do family and parenting and singleness in a manner that's obedient and honors God and of course we can live out those areas of our lives in a way that doesn't honor God. So I guess we'll be talking about holiness in family relationships.

Today's subject is on original sin. Probably most of us have heard the phrase before but may not be exactly certain what that means. We know that there is some connection to Adam and his first sin in the garden and there *is* some relation to that. But original sin as a biblical idea does not mean the first sin of Adam. So the wrong way to phrase the question would be, "What is the original sin?" That's the wrong way to ask the question. The right way to ask the question would be "What is original sin?" So if you were referring to the sin that Adam committed in the Garden of Eden tempted by the serpent at the tree of knowledge of good and evil—the tree of prohibition where God told Adam and Eve directly and clearly that they shouldn't eat from it. That's not original sin. That's the first sin. And that event is called The Fall. Clear so far?

So then what is original sin? And why is it important? Original sin is the concept or idea of how Adam's first sin affected all of humanity. So it has to do with how Adam's sin affected our human nature. It has to do with our inherent sin nature that all of humanity is born with. So because the word "original" has reference to the word "first" they don't call original sin, "original sin", rather they call it "**inherited sin.**" So when you here it called by that name, then it begins to make sense. Because of Adam's first sin, what did I inherit from him? We inherited a sin nature. So here are some proper ways to use the phrase. "We were all born with original sin." "How has original sin affected by life?" "How has original sin affected my relationship with God?" "If we were all born with original sin, does it mean infants who die in their infancy, go to hell?" "What has God done to fix the problem of this original sin within us all?" Now, I'm not sure if we'll be able to address all of those questions, but we'll give it a try. So, that's what is meant by the theological concept "original" or "inherited" sin. Make sense?

Perhaps the first question to address is the 'why' question? Why are we stuck with something that was the fault of someone else? Why couldn't Adam's sin just affect Adam? Why did need to affect all of his race? That doesn't seem fair. The bible speaks of personal responsibility. Personal guilt. Personal sins. Each person is responsible for their own junk, so why pass on to all of humanity the effects of one person's mistake. Several things I would say.

1. Always be extremely cautious when thinking and speaking about fairness and God. Why? Because God will strike you dead if you question him? No. The truth is that you and I have the tendency to impose upon an all wise, all knowing, all holy, all just God, our idea of what is right and fair. There is not a little arrogance, presumption and foolishness in that.
2. I think partly to show all of us the potency of "one little sin." You and I have the tendency to brush off sin, don't we? We say things like, "It's just a white lie" or "who's going to notice?" or "I'm just stealing from the rich to give to the poor, me" or "It's not hurting anyone?" But the bible's teaching on sin, just one sin, says anything but that. It speaks about the deadliness of one sin, the cancer of one sin, the one sin that can lead to a pandemic of sins, the offence of just one sin against a holy and pure and just God.
3. I think also to show us that no man sins alone. I think it might be fair to say that every single one of our sins doesn't just impact us, individually, and it doesn't just impact God and our relationship to him. It also impacts one another. Either directly or indirectly in affects all our interpersonal relationships. Even if you live in a cave, completely isolated from the world, even then you are impacting others. How? The sin of living outside of Christian community. You are to be a contributing member, a blessing to a family, to neighbors, to a church, to a community. The fact that every sin we commit as Christians impacts our vertical relationship with God, necessitates that it impacts our horizontal relationships with others. When you and I are out of sync with God, we cannot be in sync, at our best, offering the most in our relationship with others.

Those are some of the things I would say, generally, about this. But back to the question, 'why?' Why are we all impacted by the sin of the first man, Adam? Perhaps the most satisfactory way to understand this is, "that's just the way it is," meaning that this is how God ordained it, or designed it. In the world that God created with humans as free creatures, given the true ability to choose between good and evil, they chose good, with no fault to God. And he made it such that Adam

would be humanity's representative. This is what the beginning part of today's passage claims. Let's look at it again.

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

So what does this first say? It says without a doubt sin entered the world of men, when Adam committed the first sin. And the consequence of that sin was death, not only to Adam, but to all of humanity? Why to all of humanity and not just Adam? Look at the last phrase. "Because all sinned." This last phrase has caused a lot of discussion in theological circles. Some theologians said that what the phrase "because all sinned" means, is that because every human being on the planet has personally committed sins. But the grammar doesn't say that. The Greek verb tense states a past action of finality, not an ongoing action. So it's saying, because all sinned, not because all human beings will sin or we are always sinning.

So theologians came of with a phrase that explains how all of humanity sinned when Adam sinned. The phrase is called Federal Headship. Adam, as the representative of humanity, acted on behalf of all humanity. What he did impacted us all.

Berkhof: Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendents; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed to their account, so that they are all liable to the punishment of death. It is primarily in that sense that Adam's sin is the sin of all.

Erickson: "we all were involved in Adam's sin, and thus receive both the corrupted nature that was his after the fall, and the guilt and condemnation that attach to his sin." 639.

I.e. football, sports. If one person screws up, the whole team suffers.

That's still not fair. Well there are a lot of things in the world that God created that are, so to speak, not fair. And by fair I think we're thinking, I shouldn't receive the consequences of someone else's actions. Let's think about this for a moment. There are many things that we have no control over. We have no control over things related to our birth, right? The place in time we were born, our race, our gender or parents, whether we were born in the rich West where education, health care, safety are not gifts, but rights; or in a poor developing nation where hunger, disease, and war are just a normal part of the landscape. We had no control. We contributed nothing to these things. That's not very fair, is it? We have very little control over the circumstances pertaining to our death. How we are going to die, of what we are going to die, when or where we are going to die.

In addition, there are many good things and bad things that we receive the consequences of that we had nothing to do with. We had nothing to do with the discovery and invention of drugs like aspirin and Tylenol, yet we benefit from them. Negatively we had nothing to do with the corruption in our government, yet we bear the consequences of those things. Such is life. Such is the world we live in. Friends, God has ordained our lives as a collective human race to be inter-related and inter-connected to one another. There is of course, personal, individual responsibility, but there is also a corporate, universal aspect to our lives as well. Perhaps this is more seen now than ever before as the world is becoming smaller through travel, media, and communication.

But isn't it funny how we often take credit for the good things in our lives and pass the buck and blame for the bad things?

All this to say, this is the way it is. This is the way God ordained it.

What are the consequences of original or inherited sin?

- A. Our nature as human beings were affected. So in our natures as sinful human beings we lack any spiritual or moral good before God. It's not that we're generally good, but sometimes do bad things. That's what secular humanists would say. But human history and our personal experience has shown that we are quite evil. The question isn't why are people so bad, the question should be, how can be that people could at times be so good? That's the more difficult question. We are so totally, inherently corrupted by sin, it's a wonder that we do any good at all.

Human beings, all of us, Christian or not, can do some good. We can help our elderly neighbor cut the grass. We can offer out seat to a pregnant lady on the bus. All of us are capable of doing some good, but the bible teaches us that sinful human beings cannot do spiritual good. The essence of who we are has not changed. Our natures are still sinful.

Listen to what Romans 3 says,

- "There is no one righteous, not even one;
¹¹there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God.
¹²All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one."
¹³"Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit."
"The poison of vipers is on their lips."
¹⁴"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."
¹⁵"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
¹⁶ruin and misery mark their ways,
¹⁷and the way of peace they do not know."
¹⁸"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

When you hear or read that do you say, "well that's not me. God must be talking about someone else. I'm not that bad." But the truth is that it does describe us, every single one of us. This is an accurate description of our sinful nature. This is what original sin, inherited sin did to us.

B. Not only was our nature affected, but also our actions as humans beings were affected.

You and I cannot perform an act that God accepts as good. We, because our sinful nature has been so corrupted we cannot please God. The bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Apart from Christ, we are unable to live a life that God will accept.

That's why Christianity is not a self-help program. Christianity is not about here's how to become a better person. It's not about, "where there's a will, there's a way." It's not a patch job for the

soul. Christianity is transformation. It's re-creation. It's changing a person's essence, their very nature. It's working from the inside out.

How did God make that possible? What did God do to undo the effects of the sin of Adam, or our inherited sin?

Big problems require big solutions. Adam's sin sent a shockwave throughout the whole universe, affecting everything, especially humanity. How do you fix a mess like that? God's solution was to send to us, the second Adam, infinitely better than the first Adam.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

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- The first Adam had the image of God. The second Adam had the nature of God.
- The first Adam was the first to be created. The second Adam was the creator himself.
- The first Adam was to rule the earth. The second Adam created it and everything else.
- The first was tempted and fell to that temptation. The second Adam was tempted in every way, but never sinned.
- The first Adam's sin, brought death to billions. The second Adam brought life to billions.
- The first Adam died because of his sin. The second Adam died because of our sin.
- The first Adam brought separation and alienation from God, the second Adam for reconciliation to God.
- The first Adam died and decayed, never to rise again. The second Adam died and rose again three days later .
- The first Adam might be in heaven, the second Adam is Lord over heaven.

If you haven't figured it out yet Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the second Adam.

Friends this is the gospel. God loved hopeless, hapless sinners so much, he gave his only Son, as our sin payment, to undo the consequences of sin in our lives and in our world, to make you and me into new creatures, with new natures.

Application:

Worship.

Holiness and obedience.

Believe the gospel.