

Eternal Security – Message 3

Life in Christ

In the first message we learnt how we all sinned in Adam. We're guilty human beings with a fallen Federal Head and so in our natural state, God can do nothing with us.

Remember that God's perfection and holiness means that He cannot bear to look upon even *one* sin - and that was all it took to sink the human race!

And we know, of course, that Adam's sin was only the beginning of our human tragedy. From that *one* sin, for which we *all* share the guilt, the corruption that ensued has been passed on through Adam's line - namely the human race.

We *all* inherit Adam's DNA in the form of the *human genome*. Like a burning candle, passing on the same flame to innumerable other candles, - Adam's life has been transmitted to each one of us - complete with the innate tendency to continue *sinning!*

Look at how the Bible describes what the human race has become:

Rom.3:10-12 "None is righteous, no, not one;no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned

aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

So Adam's *Federal Headship* has made it impossible for a natural man, a *sinner*, to please God - to achieve eternal life. It's a *double whammy* if you like - although really the two sides of the same coin: the shared guilt for that one act of trespass - imputed because of Federal Headship - and the ensuing corruption passed down through the blood, from father to children.

In any event, the upshot is that the whole race is involved. The whole race! Not individuals per se - but *every individual in the race!* We've been categorized a *race* of sinners and the guilt of that first sin is shared by every member.

This has made it impossible for us to be accepted by God in our natural state.

1 Cor.15:50 says this:

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

So what's the solution to this terrible dilemma?

There could only be one! If we were to be truly freed from sin and brought back into a relationship with God, two things needed to happen.

Firstly, the corruption of sin passed down to us needed to be dealt with. In other words, the sins committed by each of us *individually*, needed to be forgiven and Christ made this *possible* by dying for them *in our place*. That was his first action in his role as our *representative*: he substituted for us on the Cross.

1 Pet.2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Certainly that took care of the damage sin caused in our lives - and satisfied God's righteous requirements in regard to the expiation *of our individual sins*.

But what about the second problem faced? Even with individual sins forgiven, we would still be in a doomed human race - still represented by a fallen Adam - still sharing in the collective guilt of that first trespass; still "*in Adam*", as the Scripture puts it: still sinners!

This was the dilemma faced in the incarnation of Christ. If Christ himself had come into the world in the ordinary way, he would still have been legally constituted a sinner - even

if he had lived a perfect, sinless life. This would have been simply on the grounds of him being born into this race of sinners and consequently represented by the first Adam.

No - Christ had to come into the world in a way that bypassed any connection with Adam and, in the wisdom of God, this problem was ingeniously solved by the virgin birth!

So it wasn't enough that our sins themselves were forgiven. Christ was born with no connection to Adam as regards the guilt and corruption of sin, and, to be justified - to be eligible to share in Christ's righteousness - we *also* had to sever our connection with Adam.

Adam had to go! Certainly he was the first-born of our race but we needed to be in a *new* race - a *spiritual* race with a *new representative head*: a first-born who could do for believers what Adam did for the entire human race - and transmit spiritual life to us in the same way that Adam transmitted natural life through the human genome.

That's why, in **verse 14** of our passage, it says that Adam was a *pattern* or *example* of Christ. This was, if you like, the second vital role Christ has played as our representative.

A pattern is also known as a *type* - a term you may be familiar with. It means an *example*, a *representation* or a *shadow* of the substance or reality of what is to come..

In the Old Testament the pattern or type was normally something natural or physical and the fulfilment, the substance of that shadow – known as an *anti-type* (and seen in the New Testament) - was something spiritual.

1 Cor.15:46 says that:

The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

For example, the children of Israel were delivered on Passover from Egypt - spared from death by the blood of the lamb applied to the doorposts. This is a type of our deliverance by the blood of Christ.

After escaping from Egypt, the Israelites then passed through the Red Sea. This is a type of believer's baptism - which also follows *our* redemption and deliverance from sin.

The Old Testament is full of types like these - types that find their fulfilment (or their *Antitype*) in spiritual realities today.

The animals offered in the court of the Tabernacle were a type of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for our sins. *He* therefore was the fulfilment or *Antitype* of those offerings.

And this brings us back to our subject because Adam, the earthly man created from the dust, is a *type* - an example (or forerunner) - of the Lord Jesus Christ, the man from heaven.

This relationship is beautifully described in **1 Corinthians 15:45-49** which says this:

So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being” ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

So God provided for an entirely fresh start; a new creation - a race of believers with a *different* Representative Head. A second or *last* Adam who didn't fail and who would fulfil for that new race *exactly the same function as the first Adam did for the human race!*

So, as the firstborn of a new, spiritual race, Christ stands in heaven as our representative - a representative who is holy and acceptable to God. And to assess and judge you and me, God looks at the one who *represents* us and in doing so, pronounces *us* to be holy and acceptable. Ephesians describes it as being: '**accepted in the beloved.**' (Eph.1:6)

So our passage in Romans goes on to say this:

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 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.

The many were made sinners! We've already seen that the word '*made*' means: *to put in the category of*. We were made: *a race of sinners*. Well - exactly the same word is used in the expression: '**made righteous**'.

So we can now understand the parallel!

The whole human race, of which you and I are members, was pronounced to be a race of sinners because of the action performed by Adam - its Head and Representative. I didn't become a sinner because of my personal actions but simply by being born into that race.

In just the same way, I didn't become righteous *personally* but simply by being born into the new race through the process of the new birth. I was immediately incorporated into Christ and he replaced Adam as my representative.

Now, because of this substitutionary role, *his* actions as my proxy (my representative) have become *my* actions. And as the firstborn of this new race, as **Colossians 1** tells us, he not only represents us but transmits his life (his *spiritual DNA*, if you will) to each one of us.

How comforting to know that as individuals we ourselves play no part in our salvation once we've come to Christ and been born again. Our responsibility for our sins *ends right there!* After all, if God judged us by our own worth, that would mean that we would be *unrepresented!*

The whole point of *representation* - or *substitution* - is that you and I are *not present* in the sense of being the ones under the microscope. Instead, God looks at the man from heaven who *represents* us - our spiritual Adam - and, quite logically, in finding *him* to be holy, righteous and acceptable, pronounces those he *represents*, to be holy, righteous and acceptable.

So let's recap the process! How did the *human race* fall into sin?

On account of Adam! No other reason!

How did each *individual* fall under the curse?

By being born!

You did nothing wrong to become a sinner. Simply being born into our race made you a son of Adam and therefore a sinner!

It is therefore logical that the solution to the guilt of sin encountered at birth is another birth - a second birth!

It was the first Adam's disobedience that condemns you. In order to be saved and considered righteous before God, you *must* exchange your identity with Adam to an identity with Christ. That's what justifies us!

Natural birth was the source of our sin so another birth is the solution! The only way a person moves out of Adam's headship and comes under Christ's headship is by being born into a new race - a *new creation*.

2 Cor.5:17 says this:

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

How wonderful the plan of God! This is why He has always used the principle of Federal Headship as we saw earlier. It was the only way He could save us!

All those who are in Adam (namely the entire human race) experience Adam's act and are declared *sinner*s solely on the ground of Adam's act of disobedience.

All those who are in Christ experience Christ's act and are declared *righteous* solely on the ground of Christ's actions.

So **2 Corinthians 5:21** says this:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him (see the parallel - in Adam we died, in that what he did, we did) we might become the righteousness of God.

Isn't that amazing? We take on *his* righteousness by the principle of *substitution* or *representation*.

Just as the human race is represented by its Federal Head in Adam, so the regenerated race of believers is represented by Christ. In each case, God judges every member of that race by the actions of its representative.

So this is how it works. God looks at the 7 billion people who live on planet earth today - and the other billions who

lived here in the past - and he sees two people who stand out from the rest of humanity.

They are representative men!!

The whole history of the human race revolves around those two men-what they did, and what flowed from what they did!

Augustine said this:

"God has dealt with two people. He has dealt with Adam, and he has dealt with Christ. And the rest of us fall into the relationship that he has set forth in the Word."

Certainly God gave us a law but that law wasn't there for us to keep, as such: it was a benchmark given to show us how far we had fallen short of God's glory and to thereby reveal to us the true nature of our fallen race in Adam.

So **verse 20** tells us that **...the law was brought in so that the trespass might increase.**

Far from being intended as a way of salvation, God's law was given only to show us that we needed a Saviour.

In **Galatians 3:24** we read that:

the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ

F.F. Bruce summed it up beautifully:

The law has no permanent significance in the history of redemption. There are only two things that have permanent significance - one is the act of Adam, the other is the act of Christ. For the act of Adam will be that which damns the lost forever. And the act of Christ is that which redeems the elect forever.

It's pretty conclusive isn't it?

In Christ you can no more lose your place in the *new* race than can a human being move out of the *human* race. You might be a good person, a bad person, a selfless human being or a vicious self-centred psychopath - it doesn't matter - we're all equally human and condemned because of what our representative has done.

Similarly, born into the new race, you're not assessed on your individual worth - whether you're an obedient Christian, a disobedient Christian, a loyal follower of Christ or a rank backslider. In the eyes of God, it's enough that you've been born into the new race - and that you're now consequently represented by a new Federal Head!

If we follow this line of thought through Scripture - some wonderful facts emerge.

Now we know that Christ died for you on the cross in obedience to the Father and rose again into a new life. Because he was representing you, in effect *you* died on the cross - thus paying for all your sins in the person of your *substitute*!

Paul expresses this truth in **2 Corinthians 5:14** when he says:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

But it doesn't stop there! We also rose again with him!

Romans 6:5 says: **If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.**

and in **Galatians 2:19-20**, Paul wrote these words:

For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me.

And to follow this even further, each one of us are, in our representative, *already* in Heaven.

Ephesians 2:6 says:

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms *in* Christ Jesus.

So *in Christ - incorporated* in him - bundled up in him - represented by him - we are fit for heaven in spite of the fact that we have no righteousness of our own.

The Bible says that we're *justified!* It means to be legally *declared righteous*. We are, in fact, given the credit for *Christ's* righteousness. And why? Because he *represents* us, of course. Being incorporated *in* Christ, we are - in the eyes of God - *as righteous as he is!*

It's as if he has said to each one of us: 'you're not righteous; you can never be righteous - but don't worry - I'm righteous enough for the both of us.'

1 Cor 1: 30 says this: **It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.**

Because our representative lives, *we* live. Because *he* is righteous, *we* are righteous. Because *he* is totally acceptable to God - *we* are totally acceptable. Because *he* can't change, neither can *we*!

Hebrews 13:8: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

But it's all '*in Christ*'! The Bible says that we are **accepted in the beloved**. *In* him - not *by* him; *in* him we have redemption through his blood - the forgiveness of sins and so forth!

So, Because he is the same, yesterday, today and forever, so are we. We can't lose our exalted position before God simply because *he* can't.

As Christ's death to sin on the cross was *our* death to sin, only if Christ died again could we die again - and that can't happen! *That's* how God *guarantees* our salvation!

Listen to these words from **Romans 6:**

Firstly **verse 4:**

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

And now **verses 8-11:**

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Knowing that Christ, being raised

from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

Can you see the force of these words? First Paul makes the point that we died with Christ. What follows on is that we will live with him. But not just this - we *know* that we will live with him. The emphasis here is that we can be *confident* of this fact. Nothing can *change* it - it's a done deal! We *know* we're going to live because *Christ can't die*. Our eternal security is dependent - not on us - but on *his* continuing life!

So the passage goes on to say:

For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Pretty clear, isn't it? What happens to the head of our new race is what happens to us.

Not one of us can die again - or if you like: *lose our salvation* - because *he* can't die again!

So **1 Cor.15: 21-22** says: **For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.**

By the process of *natural* birth, Adam passed on his *natural* life to every member of his *race*. By the process of the *new* birth, Christ passed on his *eternal* life to every member of *his* race.

Everyone of you listening to this message, everyone in your city - in this country and, in fact, the whole world - is seen by God corporately as either in Adam or Christ.

If God sees you *in Adam*, then you stand before Him *condemned*.

If God sees you *in Christ*, then you stand before Him as *righteous* - eternally secure!!

People say if sin is bad enough or persistent enough, we are in danger of losing our eternal life!

But how is this possible? Think about this for a moment!

Is our estimation of God so low that we think He can overlook our daily small sins (and who is free of those?) and we only blow it with big or persistent sinning? No sin can be overlooked! If you could possibly lose your salvation on the basis of anything wrong that you could do - *then the first sin you committed after being saved, would have done it for you!!*

Remember that only one sin sank the old creation!!

So it's a question of absolute sinlessness and perfection or judgement and death - there's simply nothing in between!

So we're only safe and secure because our Representative is holy, righteous and acceptable to God!

And *he* is *our* righteousness!

One final word

Death came to Adam and to all men - and in the old creation sin ruled through death. **Romans 5:21** tells us that **sin reigned in death**

And so death only has any power *when sin is present*.

So we read in **1 Cor.15:56** that **the sting of death is sin.**

But where sin has been dealt with, the power of death is taken away - and this is what happened with the new creation in the work of Christ. The Bible tells us in **2 Timothy 1:10** that:

..our Savior, Christ Jesus .. has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the .gospel.

So now, of course, death has no power and, instead, **Rom.5.21** goes on to tell us that grace reigns **through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The destruction of the power of death meant that Adam's headship could be overthrown or over-ruled - and we could be removed from its power, rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light (**Col. 1:13**).

But the converse of this is not true!! Death has been destroyed - it is *powerless* to reverse what Christ has accomplished. Christ's headship can't be over-ruled because in Christ, life has triumphed over death!

If *one* saved soul could be lost - for any reason whatsoever - sin would have triumphed again; death would have overcome life; Christ's work would have been nullified; our representative would have failed!

Your assurance of salvation comes not from your feelings, but from understanding your identity.

Look at yourself in Adam; though you had done nothing wrong, you were declared a *sinner*.

Now look at yourself in Christ; though you have done nothing right, you are declared to be *righteous*.

We must get rid of all thoughts of our actions as far as gaining or keeping salvation.

We are made righteous because of obedience of Christ - and Christ alone!

In Christ our salvation is secure - eternally secure!

May God bless each one of us!
Amen

Stephen Smith

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