

Theme: **Reforming our lives through God's Word changes a person forever**

Text: Romans 5:12-21

Season: 7th Sunday of Pentecost

Date: July 23, 2017

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you let God reform your lives, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For the past 5 weeks, we have been studying of the book of Romans and the Apostle Paul has put us in a courtroom situation before God our judge. Our defense attorney showed the judge how we were given the honored status of being a child of God. The prosecuting attorney showed the judge how we have destroyed that special relationship by our sins. Our defense attorney showed the judge how those sins were justified by the actions of God's only Son, Jesus Christ and then presented the case of Abraham and the amazing Grace that God gave to him and to us through faith. Today we are listening to a discussion on the verdict that God, our judge, will hand down to us, as we listen we hope learn more about reforming our lives to God's Word.

The Prosecuting Attorney begins with these words, **"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all sinned."** (Rom 5:12) We are not sinners primarily because we commit sins; No, we commit sins because we are sinners from the moment that we were conceived. Sin involves more than what we do; sin lies at the core of all that we are, or should I say, in the case of all those who have been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who we were. What Adam did to the perfect world that God created him for should bring the verdict of death for our sin filled lives, for that is what we deserve.

Now this concept of original sin is not something that most people acknowledge or are very enthusiastic about believing, but they do acknowledge that we often follow in the sins of our parents. We have the problem of thinking that we can do something to improve the situation we find ourselves in, but we don't always acknowledge our problem started before we were born. History though shows that we can't do anything that deals with the real problem without God in our lives. So, look around at the world that we live in or even at our own new born children and you will quickly come to the conclusion that we are all bent out of shape by the sin we inherited and there is nothing that we can do about it on our own. Then again sin is right there with us

from the moment of our conception, for there is not a moment in our lives when we don't have the possibility of dying, that is unless Jesus comes before our life ends on this earth.

Our original sin has changed us from being in the likeness of God, as He originally made us, to being in the likeness of Adam, which brings us to death. Oh, it's not the fault of God's Law that we have death to look forward to but the sin that is now our nature instead of the perfection of God love that was originally given to us. The sin that we inherited from Adam, the sin that has deformed us, can be seen in the human race in all kinds of ways. We not only disobey the laws of God that has been written on our hearts and minds, but we follow Adam's sin and try to make ourselves equal to our creator. We are bent out of shape under the burden of our sins, just as Adam was changed from the moment of his sin, as were all of his descendants after him, which includes each of us. The truth of our verdict might make us cringe at the thought of living in the pain and suffering of death forever instead of life that we once had, so we shake our heads in disbelief but it's still the truth and we can see it all around us. There is no life in this world or in the world to come without God, for He is the creator and sustainer of all life.

Our Defense attorney stands and says, **“But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one-man Jesus Christ abounded for many.”** (Rom. 5:15) The first Adam brought sin and that sin brought death into our lives. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, brought God's Grace and that grace gives us life, true life once again. Adam's trespass brought us sin and death. Jesus' righteousness brought us reconciliation and life, true life in the love, peace and joy that God gives to us now and forever.

Our Defense attorney goes on to say, **“And the free gift is not like the result of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.”** (Rom. 5:16) Christ's free gift to us went far beyond the damage done by Adam's sin. Jesus Christ made eternal life and eternal glory possible for all of mankind beginning with Adam and Eve by faith. But here is still the problem, for some of Adam's descendants have chosen to walk away from God's love, peace and joy for them and think they can control their destiny. If some of mankind doesn't want the gift that God what's to give to them it doesn't change the fact that God's grace overflows to all of us from Jesus Christ by faith. **“For God yearns for all of mankind to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the**

truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) God's grace overflows to all of us, even those who will reject Him because it is a gift of His great love for us, it's a free gift of His love, peace and joy that He wants all of us to have, but not all of us want it by faith.

God's gift is not like the trespasses, for the gift came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. God's gift is not like the result of the one man's sin for the gift brought us justification and the righteousness that we had lost and so it was given back to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Only Son. Our Defense Attorney says, **"For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."** (Rom. 5:19)

Christ's entire life was one of obedience to His Father perfect will – in everything that He thought, in everything that He said and in everything that He did - He fulfilled all that God wanted Him to do in this world. Theologians call this "Active obedience" to God and Jesus Christ was the only man to do it perfectly. Then as the crowning touch to His life, Jesus gave up His life for ours on the Cross of Calvary, this is called "Passive obedience," because at any moment Jesus could have stopped what they were doing to Him, but He didn't. Our Defense Attorney says, **"Christ became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"** (Phil 2:8)

Think of it! Christ, the Son of God and our Lord gave up His perfect righteousness for us and took all of our sins upon Himself so that He could go through all the physical agony and the pain that we should have suffer even to the point of being separated from His Heavenly Father and suffering hell for us. All this He did so that we can once again live with Him in the perfect love, peace and joy of God now and forever. We are made righteous in the sight of God because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, not anything we have done.

The judge bans down his gavel and announces, "The verdict is life." Immediately the Prosecuting Attorney jumps up and says, "I object Sir!" The judge responds, "On what grounds?" "On the grounds of the Law of God, Sir," says the Prosecuting Attorney. Our defense Attorney stands and says, **"Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."** (Rom. 5:20 – 21)

God's law was given to us so that we would recognize our sins for what they really are – transgressions against the will and law of God. For the laws of God were given to us to show us

how to be God's children, not to make us God's children. When our sinful human hearts and minds see the laws of God, they incited in us a rebellion, for that is our true nature and we come to see how God's perfect love, peace and joy is the opposite of our world of hatred, turmoil and sadness. Our Defense Attorney reminds the judge, **"Where sin increased, grace abound all the more leading to eternal life."** (Rom 5:20)

St. Augustine about 1000 years ago explained it this way, "With these words God shows clearly that the Jews did not understand what the purpose of the Law was given for, the law was not given to make sinner alive – that is divine grace alone, which by faith makes us alive – but to show us just how strong the chains of sin are that we are all bound by and held captive by, so that all those who arrogantly assert that the Law is to be kept by their own power will know they can't do it. The human race therefore did not receive help and healing from the Law, but only an increased understanding of how serious our sickness of sin is."

When we walk into the doctor's office most of the time we already know that we are sick, but it is by the tests and the knowledge of the doctor that we are told just what our sickness is and shown the way to health again. The Law of God is our doctor, he's not the death that is coming. The doctor's knowledge and skills are the amazing grace of God gives to us to make us alive again, for Jesus is our great physician. God's Amazing Grace is His free gift to us if we only have faith enough to let it go to work in our lives through the Holy Spirit. We say with all the believers of God, **"Lord forgive my doubts and give me a stronger faith!"** It's that faith in all that Jesus Christ has done for us that given to us by the Holy Spirit through God's Word that makes us come alive again instead of falling into death. It's the Holy Spirit working in our lives through God's Word and Sacraments that enables us to reform our lives to the new life given to us by God instead of the death we deserve.

The Judge reads off all the offenses we have committed and looks at the Defense Attorney and slams down the gavel one more time as says, "The Verdict is Life by Grace alone, by Faith alone, by Christ Alone!" Amen.