

Righteousness Applied

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ - Romans 5:9-15

Full Text – New American Standard Bible

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so 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 until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Commentary Romans 5:12-15

There is a natural break at verse 12 in Paul's dissertation. He has moved from David and Moses to the first man. At the end of verse 14 are the words, "Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." That's the hinge on which the text swings. Adam, the first man, is a type, a pattern, or a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. Paul believes that we will understand and cherish the justifying work of our Lord Jesus better if we see it alongside the work of Adam. A compare and contrast a logical progression are here found in this portion of scripture.

Last week we learned that all men sin. There are no exceptions but our Lord. In this section, we turn from the law giver of Moses and the father of Israel Abraham to the father of all. Adam is the father of all human beings. Part of the problem with sin with all human beings can be found in our far-related Adam. When Adam sinned, then everybody in the world, no matter when or where or who – whatever tribe or language or culture or ethnic identity has the same fundamental problem. Further, this means that the sacrifice of Jesus is not just a Jew who died as a Jewish sacrifice for sins, but is also the "last Adam" or the "second man" (as Paul calls him in 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47), who provides righteousness better than what we lost in Adam. This cross hung, buried Jesus is no longer a tribal God, or a local Savior. He is the one and only remedy for the divine judgment of condemnation that rests on every human soul. This means he is a great Savior able to save persons from all times, places, and peoples.

SIN

- Billy Graham: A sin is any thought or action that falls short of God's will. God is perfect, and anything we do that falls short of His perfection is sin.
- John Wesley: A sin is any thought or action that falls short of God's will. God is perfect, and anything we do that falls short of His perfection is sin. Therefore, sin is a willful transgression of a known law.
- John Calvin: It is the inherited corruption [from Adam], which the church fathers termed 'original sin,' meaning by the word 'sin' the depravation of a nature previously good and pure."
- Luther in his Augsburg confession: writes about sin but does not give a definition
- Westminster (Presbyterian): Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.
- I John 3:4, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."

It must be defined.

SIN is the problem with this world.

Sin as a principal is not the problem

It is the actions that are the problem

We have to understand what SIN is.

To be a sinner we have to know what we are doing to SIN. We must have a gauge by which we know.

For the Roman church there was no common standard.

- Do we sin because we break cultural norms
- Do we sin because we studied and determined for ourselves where the line is
- Do we sin because we are not a part of the covenant people (Gentiles)
- Do we sin because I doubt there is a thing called sin.

To be a sinner we have to make a willful decision to rebel from a standard marked out for us individually

I cannot tell you what is sin for you.

I cannot make a judgment that you are living a life full of sin.

Why is it important to define Sin?

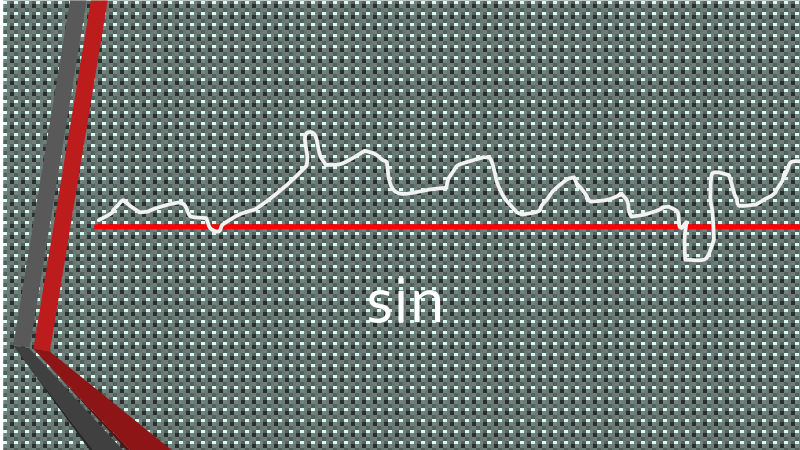
SIN separates the person from the creator.

SIN corrupts the nature of the one doing it.

SIN causes us to fall short of Gods will

SIN is universal in its effect

SIN is part of the nature of man



SELF measured SIN

The robber, murderer, drunkard, rapist, and child abuser are so obviously evil, we readily agree that they are sinners.

In our hearts, we consider ourselves to be respectable citizens since we do none of these things.

These terms, though, bring us face to face with A reality of sin: that it is not always obvious.

Sin is not confined to external conduct.

Sometimes it is buried within one's heart and

cleverly concealed from all but the most discerning.

If we draw a line to which we define as sin. is anything above that line permissible?

How about just A LITTLE BIT below the line?

AT WHAT POINT ARE WE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR DIPPING BELOW THE LINE?

JUST A LITTLE BIT. DOES IT BETRAY MY STANDARDS?

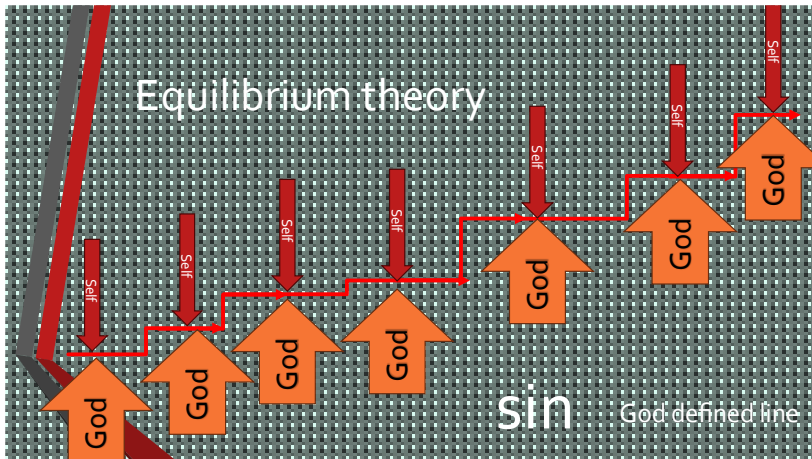
At what point does God hold us accountable?

For that matter why do we sin?

What causes us to fall below our own line? Where does the want to come from.

AS LONG AS I AM THE ONE DRAWING THE LINE, SIN IS NEVER DEFINED.

The God defined line is ever upwards



THEORY OF EQUILIBRIUM

We live our lives on the flats of experience. There are times when we are pressed to go higher.

We live our lives in places of equilibrium. When the pressure of self is equalized with the pressure to go higher.

These places are defined by equal pressure between the self we are and the God we believe. We are satisfied with them the

pressure of being where I am, at the place where my God pressure is equal to my self pressure.

But ultimately we will give in to the upward pressure and make a move upwards. It causes discomfort, it causes pain (Tribulation), it causes much effort to climb. But at some point we are slowed by self to a point where the effort is not worth the growth. And we stop and say to ourselves, "I am good enough." At some point the risk and rewards equalize and you find a new level. You are satisfied at that level. But at the same time the God pressure constantly increases until you look up to the next level.

To not go higher, to not try is sin.

Romans 5:11-23

It addresses the inbred nature of take self preservation.

Part of us says I can go no more. "Seek First the Kingdom of SELF" and all will be OK>

I have written my SIN LINE and that is good enough.

- For the Pagans. It was total rejection of God
- For the Greeks the line was something to studied and changed as new knowledge is introduced
- For the Latins the line was set by the culture and the socio-economic strata you liven in. Rome set the morals.
- For the Merchant class Jews the line was set by ancient covenant.
- For the Slave class Jews skeptical of everything. There was no absolutes no line at all.

What happened in Adam and how did the work of Christ become remedy?

Adam's fall

V12 states emphatically "Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people because all sinned." You would expect if the clause that started with a comparison, JUST AS, he would immediately move on to ALSO SO. A comparison must have two parts. Paul places a hold on the thought and begins to expand on his comparison. The first part of the comparison is about ADAM. He sees a need to expand on the first before he addresses the second. The statement "because all sinned" needed additional explanation.

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

If one man sinned, Adam, the principal of SIN entered into the world. And because of this SIN, an accompanying penalty is attached, which Paul calls DEATH. But he does not stop here, he continues to say this original sin of Adam spread to all mankind. One man's sin is directly attributable or causing everyone to sin. Or conversely, is Paul saying the penalty of Sin is spread to all. All who sin will die. How does Adam's sin affect all others?

Please remember the clash of factions. The Jewish Christians were making the claim of Abraham as the foundation stone of their specialness. Abraham was made righteous because he was chosen of God. This special favor was passed down through generations for all Jews. But for the Gentiles, the Greeks, Latins, and pagans where there was no such favor, no such specialness. Paul here was harkening back to a time even before the covenant of Abraham and the Law of Moses. Therefore he brings the father of all men, including Abraham and Moses as recipients of the penalty of sin.

Sin entered the world. Before Adam's sin, there was neither sin nor death. After the sin of Adam, both existed and needed a solution. Adam's transgression was the cause of both.

And death by sin. If sin had never entered the world would we still have to die? Is the terrible gradual march to feebleness and sickness caused by the sin of one man or the sin of all men? Adam's sin was caused by a moral breakdown. Adam thought himself exempt from the stated will of God. God, though loving and caring as any father to his begotten, had by his justice nature punish Adam for his rebellion. It would seem natural evil is the effect of moral evil. Adam's moral willful decision caused an effect. **Dust you are and to the dust you will return**, was never spoke or even thought of before Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit.

So, **Death passed upon all men.** Because of one man's sin, his neglect of God's directly expressed will, all men, you, me, and everyone else are paying the penalty. Because of the moral stand of Adam, the very morality of Adam spread to all because all have sinned and will sin. There seems to be a taint on our humanity. A shadow that shades all we do, all we want, all we desire, all we crave. We all are born with a sinful, moral nature. We are flawed from our birth. This explanation of the moral nature of man flew in the face of the Latin moralists. Even their constant efforts to live by a moral code was flawed by the inner man tainted by the original man. To the knowledgeable Greeks they are taught it is not the lack of knowledge that would be their bane of existence but the shadow on all they learned and depended upon.

The very attitude of Adam which wanted to be independent of God was the start of rebellion. He wanted to do his own thing. And like Adam, all of us are like him. This rebellion, this now corrupt nature changes all efforts to be like our creator. 1) This rebellion shadows our prayer life. Prayer, by its own property, speaks of dependence. 2) Our moral compass of our lives are askew because of Adam. We rather do the right thing only if it gets us something. 3) Worship becomes shadowed by our own desire to be entertained and to feel something. 4) Love becomes just a feeling that expects something from another in because you made an effort. 4) Our studies become corrupt because we want to hold to the ideas and beliefs we already have and are not willing to allow God to speak to us in contradiction. 5) Our confession is filled with excuses, "The woman you gave me, gave me the fruit."

THEREFORE, because the first person was rebellious, and I am a part of his family, then I too am subject to death and moral breaks.

Logical progression

Questions which must be asked at this point:

1. How do we reconcile the sin of one man in pre-history, being the cause of my personal willingness to sin?
2. If I am a progeny of Adam and therefore eternally tainted with his want to sin, how am I held responsible?
3. If the motivation of sin on my part is predicated, and rooted in the sin of someone else, is Paul saying, in no uncertain terms, I am destined to sin?
4. Does this mean there is no escape from this blood poisoning?
5. Does this mean Adam's sin has destined all men, including me, to corrupt moral viewpoint?
6. If I am destined to sin because of my inherited nature, am I also destined to die?
7. If Adam's sin is that important, do my own sins become less important?
8. Do I now have an excuse? Can we shout from the rooftops, "Adam made me do it."

So many questions.

But the biggest question that must be answered is, does it matter? I have sinned, I will sin, does it matter if Adam sinned? Why does my individual sin have anything to do with Adam? If our judgment and condemnation are the results of what we deserve, why does it matter if I can find a deeper cause of our guilt and death and condemnation – namely our union with Adam and in his sin at the beginning?

Or for that matter, if Adam's sin condemned me to sin, then why does not the forgiveness of Adam's sin also pass through all men. If Sin tainted all mankind by Adam, and it seems he was forgiven after being cast out of the garden then the logical ALSO SO would be simply God eliminated this stain. God can forgive because He loves. Nevertheless, forgiveness does not eliminate the disease. The inherited nature has already spread. Inoculation for the first or second or one-millionth sinner does not eliminate the illness of all those who are infected.

This stand by Paul trapped him in a logical next question. What happened to all those living between the two ADAMs? Sin was a common occurrence after Adam and before Jesus, so how did these ancients become righteous?

Sin existed before there was law

13-14 For until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

If we depend on the keeping of the Law, what happens to those who lived in the generations between ADAM and Moses? We can go back a step or two and say there was a previous codification to Noah after the flood. But that just puts the measuring rod a little further out. To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given. Paul here is stating directly, **that sin is not imputed when there is no law**, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there was no law. No law, no label. The internal skewed morals of these people were the reason for condemnation. God gave Israel the law for the people's good, in practice, it only revealed their sins. But there also was a place for grace when associated with faith. When faith became greater than the inner willingness to rebel then grace was applied.

Wait a moment. Are you saying that sin that terrible affront, that snide offense to the holiness of God was not held or charged to these before the law?

The identical cure for sin before the law existed is the same after. If I don't know the law but I submit to God's control, ever seeking God's will, living in the light, and having faith in the redemption power of God, then you are counted righteous as Abraham. If you do know the law and use it as a pointer to God's control, to His perfect will, to live in the light, and have faith in the redemption power of God, then you are counted righteous.

The important idea here about the lack of imputation of sin (regarded as, carrying the sign, comprehended as, or counted as) is that these intermediate generations from Adam to Moses were not subject to the Laws because they did not know of them. The passage here states a great and important principle, that people will not be held to be guilty unless there is a law that binds them of which they are aware, and which they voluntarily transgress. Sin is not sin unless I know what God's will is and I willfully decide to rebel against it. Where there is no law there is no transgression of Law. Nevertheless, even without the direct, expressed, and codified law, you can still sin. We all sin not because of the Law but because we have an attitude of rebellion in the first place.

The contrast of Adam and Jesus

Paul pounds this argument again and again a contrast of the first Adam and the last Adam.

1) *Adam brought death, Jesus brought a gift.*

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Death the penalty of sin is evident from the time of Adam to Moses. The law was not in the world from Adam to Moses for about 2,500 years. The penalty of sin was still evident because the world was part of the progeny of Adam. Sin had been diffused through the world. Therefore every man that comes into the world comes with a sinful propensity. Death is passed on to all men. Death reigned over mankind.

But in contrast, there is a gift. This gift is not like the overwhelming, propensity to sin causing death. It is not forced upon us by our lineage. It is greater than the shadow of Adam. It is a gift that Jesus, a man without sin paid the price that forgiveness and righteousness my abound to many.

The contrast can be no more telling. This taint of blood poisoning can be overwhelmed by the **abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness**. We are not all condemned and without recourse. There is a solution. There is a remedy for the willful acts of any individual. How **much more** is the solution, the cure? It is a multiple more than a curse. It is more than the bent toward the offensive act. It is more than the proclivity to be sinful. It is **grace**, the unmerited favor of God that is applied to the untenable stain. It is a **gift of righteousness that** is freely offered to those who would avail themselves to accept. This grace and gifting through **the One, Jesus Christ**.

New words

| Word | Greek | Verse | Definition |
|---------------|-----------|-------|--|
| Imputed | ellogéō | 13 | to reckon in, set to one's account, lay to one's charge, impute |
| Offense | parábasis | 14 | transgression, breaking, violation, the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law |
| Transgression | paráptōma | 15 | trespass, transgression, sin against, to sin as a moral failure to keep a command, fig., stepping out of the bounds of God's law |
| Condemnation | katákrima | 16 | The damnatory sentence, condemnation |
| Reigned | basileúō | 14,17 | to reign as a king, become king. To exercise the highest influence, to control |
| Disobedience | parakoé | 19 | disobedience, unwillingness to hear |
| Eternal | aiōnios | 21 | without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be |
| Lord | kýrios | 21 | he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord |

Compare and contrast

| VERSE | SIN OF ADAM | CONSEQUENCES | DEATH OF CHRIST | RESULTS |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 12, 18 | As through one man | Death passed unto all men | One act of righteousness | Justification |
| 15 | By the trespass of the one | Many died | Gift by the grace of God | Did abound unto the many |
| 16 | Of one | Condemnation | The free gift | Unto justification |
| 17 | By the trespass of the one | Death reigned | Grace and gift of righteousness | Reign in life through Christ |
| 18 | Through one trespass | Condemnation | One act of righteousness | Justification |
| 19 | Through one man's disobedience | Many were made sinners | The obedience of the one | Made many righteous |
| 20 | The law was brought | Trespass and sin might increase | | Grace increased all the more |
| 21 | Sin reigns | In death | Grace | Might reign through righteousness |

Theology sidenote: The big debate

There is considerable debate on the word Paul uses in this section of his theology. What is death? One school of thought says the word death in this passage was used as Paul normally used it, so it describes spiritual death. It is true that Paul used this word to describe spiritual death (see Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:1; Ephesians 2:4-5). Those who adhere to this view argue that before people are reconciled (Romans 5:10-11), they are spiritually dead (Romans 5:12).

Others argue that the word death in Romans 5:1-21 is physical death. Those who support this explanation appeal to 1 Corinthians 15:22. The argument for this view goes something like this: If the death described by Paul is spiritual, the consequence of Romans 5:1-21 must be universal salvation (If all die, all are made alive). Unless we are prepared to affirm that everyone will go to heaven, then death must be understood as spiritual death. Spiritual death comes to all when sin is committed and charged to a person's account (Romans 3:10; Romans 3:23).

We must favor the view that says this death is spiritual, but we must also acknowledge that physical death is a consequence of sin. Both kinds of death resulted from the sin in the garden. The death that Paul described in this verse (1) was the result of sin and (2) has been passed to all men (Jews, Gentiles, Pagan, Latin, Greek).