

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood that flowed from the cross,

Two days ago was "*April Fools Day.*" Fifty-three years ago, in the dark morning hours of April Fools Day, while everyone on the campus of ILC was asleep, four men in the college and seminary were fast at work!

When the day dawned, the main entrance to the girls' dorm was **blocked!** **Five cars** had been pushed from the upper parking lot down the hill where the **gym** now stands! There were **saw horses** hanging from the trees, and a garbage can hanging from the **flag pole!** . . . And the **best part?** – No one knew who was responsible, and the college freshman class was blamed!

Surely all of us have played harmless April Fools jokes for the fun of it. But what do you think God's intention is in the words of our text? Is He playing an April fools trick on us, trying to make us look foolish and gullible? Many people think we are **foolish** for accepting Paul's words about man's **inherited accountability for sin.**

The Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists and others insist that it would be **unfair** for God to charge man with the guilt of Adam's sin. **The Baptists** think it is foolish to baptize infants because of sin. They say that infants are **not accountable** and **not condemned** for inherited sin. **Evolutionists** believe that death is only a natural process of life, rather than the result of the spiritual fall of a man named Adam. In the 1960s **leading Methodists** taught that man is **not spiritually dead**, but continually **evolving** until he come to the moral and spiritual level as God Himself!

Even some so-called **Lutherans** have been teaching that Adam did not exist at all!

We are members of the *Church of the Lutheran Confession*. We believe the **Augsburg Confession of 1530**, which says this about **Original Sin**: "*Since the fall of Adam, all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with evil desire; and (that) this disease or vice of origin is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.*"

This morning we test this old confession of the Lutheran Church against the **unchanging** Word of God. Remember: Our God does not wish to make fools of us, but to save us from our sins. So we shall see from our text that Scripture teaches:

DEATH BY THE FIRST ADAM – LIFE THROUGH THE SECOND!

I.

Take a look at v. 12. It tells us that our father Adam brought both sin and death into the world. **It was not Eve.** For while **the woman was used by Satan against the man**, it was through **Adam's transgression** of God's command that the human race died.

Notice also that Paul does NOT say that **each man brings death upon himself because of the sins he commits in his own lifetime.** NO! Paul says that "*all men have*

sinned,” even though all men were not yet brought into the world. Whether we understand it or not, Paul says that **“death went through to all men”** – right there in Eden at the moment of Adam’s fall. We ALL were counted by God as **having sinned RIGHT THEN when Adam sinned!**

Notice vs. 13-14. Paul says that before the law even came to men **“sin was in the world; although sin is not charged when there is no law. Even so, death ruled from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is a type of Him Who was to come.”** Paul says that Adam disobeyed a direct and specific command of God. There were no more such commands given by God to men, **no divine law**, until Moses and the giving of the commandments on Mt. Sinai, over 2,000 years later! Therefore, no one was charged with sin against a law of God during this period. However, Paul says, **“Sin was in the world,” And “Death ruled over men from Adam to Moses”!**

Abel was murdered by his jealous brother. **Lamech** boasted to his wives about killing a young man. Death ruled through sin in the final destruction of all people except those who were saved in the Ark of Noah. Thus, sin was in the world, even though there was no law. **Men died just because God counted the sin of Adam also against his descendants!**

You and I and all people are guilty of damnable sin **before we ever come out of our mother’s womb**. This is a stubborn fact of life that cannot be argued against. **God is not fooling with us!** Inherited sin has brought death to all through Adam!

II.

But now notice that Paul does not shake his fist in God’s face! He does not challenge God’s right to count the sin of Adam against the rest of mankind. How could he, **when the same God Who has condemned all men because of Adam, has also declared all men righteous because of Christ?**

At the end of v. 14, Paul says that the first Adam was a **“type of Him Who was to come.”** Adam and Christ were **SIMILAR**. **What each one did, God counted for the rest of mankind. This cannot be said of any other two men in history.**

But these two men are also **DIFFERENT!** What the one did for man is the **OPPOSITE** of what the other did! While the **first** Adam brought sin, death, and eternal condemnation to all men, the **Second** Adam brought righteousness and life! While the **fall of Adam** is the **source of evil**, the **completed work of Christ** for man is the **source of good!**

Now in v. 15 Paul wants us to see that **“the free gift” in Christ is NOT like the offense**” in the Fall of Adam. **FIRST**, there is the difference between what Adam **“earned”** and what God **“freely gave”** through Christ. By his fall into sin Adam **“earned”** death for all men. But what God **applied** to all men was a **“free gift of His grace” by the One man Jesus Christ.**”

SECOND, what God **“freely gave”** to all in Christ **far surpassed** what Adam **“earned”** for mankind. **“For if by the fall of the one man, the many died, much more did the grace of God” “ABOUND to the many!”** In other words, the free gift of God and Christ

not only restored the damage done by Adam, **but went far beyond.** The gift of life through the grace of God in Christ is **much more** than the paradise of Eden! **It is the perfection of heaven, where there will never again be a falling away from God!**

In v. 16 Paul mentions a **THIRD** difference between the result of Adam's sin and the gift of God's grace in Christ. ***"For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses, resulted in a verdict of justification."*** What did the holy God do when He saw the "many offenses" of man that resulted from Adam's sin? God could have repeated the verdict of condemnation upon all those who came from Adam. **Instead,** God pronounced a **second verdict** which **declares these sinners righteous!** This verdict was NOT earned! It was a "free gift" of God in connection with Christ!

So, the **FIRST** verdict which resulted from Adam is completely done away with by the **SECOND** verdict resulting from Christ! This is impossible, even foolish, by human standards. There is only one explanation: ***"The abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness."*** So Paul says in v. 17: ***"For if by the one man's offense death ruled through the one, much more shall those receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness rule in life through the One, Jesus Christ."***

III.

There you have it: **Death** through the first Adam, **life** through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. But please notice that although the righteousness which brings life **IS FOR ALL MEN**, v. 17 speaks of **"RECEIVING"** the "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.

How can anyone **really believe** that he has forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation by the free gift of God in Christ, **if he does not first believe** that through Adam he has inherited a corrupt nature which is **completely unable** to make itself righteous before God? If a person **objects** to the teaching that **the many** were condemned by the sin of one man, how can that person truly receive the teaching that **the many** will be saved by the righteousness of the ONE man, Jesus Christ?

So you see that we may have **life** through the **Second Adam** only if we recognize our **death** through the **first Adam.** ***Our God is not fooling with us! He wants to save us!*** May God the Holy Spirit preserve among us the teaching of ***Original or Inherited Sin***, as it is set forth in Holy Scripture. Only then may we receive by true faith ***"the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ."*** In this way Death shall NOT rule over us, but we shall rule with Christ in life eternal! God help us, **as He has helped us** through the **Second Adam!** Amen.