



Unit .19

Session .01

Jesus is the Last Adam

Scripture



Luke 3:23,38; Romans 5:12-21

23 Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ... **38** the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. ... **12** 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—**13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. **15** 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. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's

sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. **18** Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Intro Options



Remember, this icon means there is a Leader Pack item that goes with the lesson. See Leader Pack for additional instructions.

Main Point:
The Son of God came to bring those spiritually dead to life.

Option 1

The word *sin* is not a popular word in today's culture. The word—as it is used in the New Testament—has its roots as an archery term and means “missing the mark.” The idea here is that anything less than a “bullseye hit” is sin, regardless of its distance from the center. Sin is missing the mark of God's holy standard; it is anything less than perfection. As hard as we might try, we will never hit the bullseye every time.

While there is certainly much to be gained in our understanding of sin's meaning from this archery term, this assumes a genuine desire to actually get it right. The reality of our sinful state is not that we fail simply because we are incompetent. Rather, we miss the mark because we are not even trying to hit the right target. It's like a player on the court who intentionally attempts a layup for the opposing team's goal. Not only did he fail to make the basket, he was moreover shooting in the wrong direction all along.

Some of us have a hard time grasping the problem of our sin and the proper rescue needed. We try so hard to get it right but find ourselves looking at the wrong goal—self-righteousness—and pointing others in the same direction toward cleaning themselves up. Yet we cannot rescue ourselves by our good performance. Not only will our best performance continually miss the mark, the very attempt to save ourselves is in itself offensive to God (Isa. 64:6).

- **Why do you think we tend to downplay the seriousness of our sin problem and attempt to fix things on our own?**

Option 2

Ask your students to get into small groups and come up with a list of similarities and differences between Adam and Jesus. Tell them to provide scriptural support for their findings. To get them started, you may share with them the poster pack item that highlights many of the connections between Adam and Jesus. After you give them some time, bring everyone back together to discuss their ideas and scriptural support before transitioning to the His Story section.

TEACHING PLAN

Often, Christians treat sin as if it's a disease they can easily pick up, like the common cold or flu. We think that if we can just stay away from the dirty people and places, keep our hands as clean as possible, and do all the good "churchy" things, we'll be protected. At the root of this behavior is the belief that one day we can "make it" as Christians, and when we finally become mature enough, we will conquer all of our temptations and our tendencies toward sin will finally disappear.

▪ Why do you think we have a tendency to think this way about sin?

The reality of our sin problem is much more serious than a seasonal cold. It is not something we simply catch; it is part of our spiritual DNA from the moment of our conception. Through the fall of our forefather Adam, we've each inherited a human nature broken and bent toward sin, the penalty of which is death and separation from God.

Read Luke 3:23,38; Romans 5:12-15.



In Genesis 1:26 we get a peek into a divine discussion. God, who is three persons, said, "Let us make man in our image." And He did. Then God declared that it was good. The Bible doesn't record exactly how long it was this way, but for a period of time all was indeed good, pure, and whole. Until sin entered the scene, Adam and Eve impeccably reflected God's character and enjoyed God's presence, as they were created to do.

But then paradise was shattered with the fall of Adam. The perfect fellowship he and Eve enjoyed with their Creator was lost. Sin opened their eyes, hardened their hearts, and affected all of mankind to come. Everything within these two special creatures had been damaged, and with them all of creation had become tainted with sin.

▪ If you were in Adam's shoes, do you think you would have chosen differently? Why or why not?

Each person, because of our shared sinful nature, now experiences both spiritual and physical death. We no longer reflect the perfect image of God as we were intended to. Add to that, sin cannot and will not go unpunished by God, and the punishment for sin is death. Paul makes it clear that all have sinned and now every soul deserves punishment. We have all been condemned by our sin.

▪ Share a time you experienced or witnessed injustice. How did that lack of justice make you feel?

▪ Why would it be wrong of God not to respond appropriately to sin (injustice)?

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
The Son of God came to
bring those spiritually
dead to life.

Luke 3

3:23,28. “The genealogy presented in Luke appealed to a broader audience than the one in Matthew. Luke emphasizes Christ’s humanity and His universal appeal. Luke does not begin Jesus’ genealogy with Abraham (as does Matthew); he traces Jesus’ lineage with an emphasis on His humanity, showing that Jesus was the son of Adam as well as the divine Son of God (v. 38).”¹

Romans 5

12. Spiritual death is both connected with physical death and distinguished from it. It is the separation of the entire person from God. God, as a perfectly holy being, cannot look upon sin or tolerate its presence. Thus, sin is a barrier to the relationship between God and humans, bringing them under God’s judgment and condemnation. The essence of spiritual death can be seen in the case of Adam and Eve. “For when you eat of it [the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you will certainly die” (Gen 2:17) did not mean that they would experience immediate physical death. It did mean ... that their potential mortality would become actual. It also meant spiritual death, separation between them and God.²

15. Paul’s whole argument in this section of Romans is based on headship: Adam, as the head of the human race, sinned and God saw in Adam the whole human race as guilty. Conversely, the second Adam, Jesus Christ is the head of a new spiritual race. Christ did not sin, and God saw in Christ’s innocence all who unite themselves to him by faith as likewise innocent. Our being declared guilty in Adam is no more on the basis of our “sins” than being declared innocent in Christ is on the basis of our “not sins.” In both cases, headship is the cause. Those who think it unjust of God to lump them into Adam’s sin might consider whether they should think it just for God to lump them into Christ’s righteousness.³



99 Essential Doctrines *(p. 08, DDG)*

Imputation

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

TEACHING PLAN

Read Romans 5:16-17.



Christ came to overcome the destruction of Adam, both in terms of our guilt and our corruption. The condemnation for our guilt must be corrected through what Paul in verse 16 calls justification, our being declared to be in a right legal standing with God. But not only are we declared justified, our sin-ridden selves are progressively renewed and changed through a process known as sanctification, solving the spiritual corruption that sin brought with it. To make things clearer, justification is a permanent, once-for-all declaration of righteousness (right standing with God through Jesus); sanctification is an ongoing work where we are transformed and made more and more like Jesus.

▪ Why can't one have sanctification without justification? Why are both important when thinking about our salvation in Christ?

With the advances in the DNA technology of forensics science, exoneration has been granted to individuals who have been falsely accused, condemned, and imprisoned. Many, after losing decades of freedom, were released and officially declared “not guilty.” From condemnation and chains to innocence and freedom, these men and women are given a new lease on life.

The declarations of a legal system hold great power and influence over the lives of its defendants—as do the declarations God makes over us. However, there is a huge difference between those situations of false imprisonment and our own legal status before God. Every one of us deserves the penalty of death. We were rightly declared “guilty” and spiritually imprisoned by our sin. Yet through the gift of Christ’s righteousness, this ruling has been overturned. We have now been declared “not guilty” because Christ Himself has paid our penalty. 

Read Romans 5:18-21.



▪ How would you feel if you were forced to take on someone else's guilt?

Justification is an important concept to solidify in our minds. It is a huge part of the grace we’ve received through Jesus’ work on the cross. Christ hung on the cross, having been falsely accused and condemned to execution. Yet exoneration didn’t come. Jesus carried out the suffering and death caused by sin “[God] made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21, *CSB*). Christ took on our sins then gave us His righteousness—all so God could make the declaration “not guilty” over us.

As pointed out, not only are we declared righteous but we have also been given everything we need to live out this righteousness (2 Pet. 1:3). This is what we referred to as the doctrine of sanctification. God has given us a brand new holy wardrobe, and it is one we could never afford on our own. We’ve been called to live out the holiness of God through displaying the righteousness of Christ. Our inward identities are to become outward realities as we begin to display the glory of the One who saved us.

▪ Do you truly believe that you have been made righteous before God, through Christ? Or are you still trying to prove yourself good enough for God?

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
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Romans 5

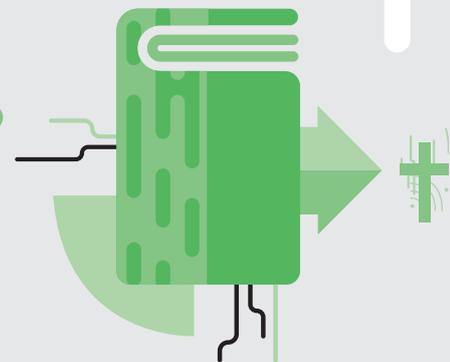
16-17. The first Adam entered this world without the presence of sin yet failed to remain in that state. The last Adam, Christ, entered this world holy and succeeded to remain stainless, allowing Him to make what theologians call, with reference to the doctrine of justification, “The Great Exchange.” Jesus took on our sin, guilt, and condemnation, surrendering Himself to the death penalty we deserve, and we, by faith, receive His perfect righteousness He achieved. Through the shedding of His sinless, life-giving blood, the Messiah provides spiritual restoration to all who accept His gift of grace.

“In acting as the representative of all humanity, Adam was in a sense a model (or prototype) of Christ. But the actions of the two men were very different (5:15): Adam’s act was characterized by disobedience; Christ’s act, by self-sacrifice in obedience to the will of God. One man was selfish; the other gave a gift. The results of their actions are also different (5:16). Adam’s sin brought condemnation, death and separation from God; the gift of Christ brought justification despite our many sins. Ultimately, Adams’ actions led to the reign of death, but Jesus’ actions meant that those who receive God’s grace will reign in life (5:17).”⁴

18-21. “The description of Adam as ‘a type of the Coming One’ (v. 14c) introduces a series of contrasts between Adam and Christ (vv. 15-17) before a simple comparison is made in v. 18. The comparison is repeated in v. 19, with Adam’s trespass described as an act of disobedience and Christ’s righteous act as an expression of obedience. The universal effect of the former is that ‘the many were made sinners,’ and the universal potential of the latter is that ‘the many will be made righteous.’ The conclusion to the whole argument comes in vv. 20-21. Law is said to have entered into the situation ‘to multiply the trespass. But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more.’ This startling claim is amplified in the final clause, linking together several key terms from the preceding verses: ‘So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’”⁵

(p. 10, DDG) Christ Connection

The first Adam’s transgression brought sin, death, and condemnation upon the world. Jesus is the last Adam, the long-promised offspring who overcame Adam’s transgression through His life of perfect obedience and His payment for sin on the cross. Through Jesus we have life and are declared righteous before God.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



How might you explain the good news of salvation to someone interested in learning what Christianity teaches?

How would you explain the similarities and differences between justification and sanctification?

Heart



Using Romans 5, how would you describe the problem of humanity to someone?

How would you describe to that same person the promise of hope that also exists for those who trust in Jesus?

Hands



Why do you think people tend to keep their beliefs about God and Jesus private? Why does it go against Christianity to keep our beliefs private?

What are some ways you can intentionally reflect the righteousness of Christ in your attitudes and actions this week to those who don't know Him?

Main Point: The Son of God came to bring those spiritually dead to life.



Head

Stop to consider for a moment what God has done for us through Jesus. On one hand, Jesus bore the punishment and judgment our sins deserve. The pronouncement of death that should have been over us was pronounced upon the Son of God in our place. God is just and couldn't simply pretend our sin never happened or sweep it under the rug. No, He is both merciful and just, and both of these characteristics were displayed when Jesus bore our sins.

However, as wonderful and awesome as forgiveness and mercy are in Jesus bearing the penalty of our sins, He has done more. Not only did He take our sin upon Himself, but He also gave us His righteousness so that we could be in a right standing with God. He took away the penalty of our sins, yes, but also gave us the added benefit of being made right with Him and the ability to become more like Him every day through our adoption into God's family.



Heart

We live in a broken world that bears the marks of sin. Even we ourselves, as we have learned, are broken at our very core. Not only have we inherited a sin nature from the fall of our representative, but we also willfully, and most times joyfully, sin on a regular basis. If something is to change within us, it would have to start at our very core.

The thing is, that's exactly what Jesus does. The promise of the New Covenant was to create a new heart within us—one that loves God and seeks to live for God as an overflow of that love for Him. Thus, we can either continue to allow our hearts to pump out a desire for self and the things of this world to the point that we destroy ourselves, or we receive the heart transplant that we so desperately need. Only by doing the latter will we know and experience the presence, peace, and power of God at work in our lives.



Hands

There are a lot of people who think that religious beliefs should be kept private. They think that religious beliefs fall under the category of personal value and opinion and should be separated from everyday reality. However, Christianity couldn't be further from this. Christianity is about a very public and historic event—the death and resurrection of Jesus—and how this event and the gospel of Jesus changes everything about us—how we think, feel, and live from day to day. In fact, when you think about it and truly consider what God has done for us in Jesus, how would it be possible to keep that private? Wouldn't we want to make this known? Wouldn't we want others to experience the freedom we know for ourselves? It is only natural to want to show off God's glory and goodness to those around us.