

Two Humanties (Part 1)

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[0 : 0 0] Well let's turn back together to the passage that we've read Romans chapter 5 from verse 12 to 21. We're going to look at the whole passage that we read but we can just read again verse 18 to 21. Therefore, as one test pass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For us by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the test pass 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. Now as we said and when we were reading here in this passage Paul is making a great comparison between

Adam and Jesus and for that reason this is a very very important passage but it's one of these passages where you read it and it can be a wee bit hard to know exactly what is being said. It can look complicated but hopefully as we study it together we'll see that it's not as difficult and not as complicated as it might first appear. Basically at the heart of Paul's argument is the fact that ultimately there are two categories into which humanity is divided. That's something that we often see in life, people they look at the world and we divide the human race into categories, very often it's into two categories so economically we'll speak about the rich and the poor, politically we'll speak about the right and the left, racially we'll speak about white and black, geographically we talk about the west and the rest of the world and these categorisations shape the way we live and so you see people who are passionate about whether somebody is in one category or the other or whether one group treats the other group appropriately. These categorisations shape the way we understand the world, they motivate our political decisions, they shape the way we treat other people, they affect our understanding of money, of nations, of economy, of all of these things. We often put the world into different categories and these things shape the way we live and the way we view the world. Paul is reminding us here that in God's eyes there is only one categorisation of the human race, you are either in Adam or you are in Christ. And so these verses are pointing us to the fact that ultimately there are two humanities. There is the humanity that is fallen in Adam and we are all initially members of that and then there is the humanity that is being rescued and restored in Christ of which everybody can become a member. And every other distinction that we make of the human race whether racial or political or geographical or economic or whatever it may be, every other distinction that we make will ultimately prove totally irrelevant in comparison to whether we are in Adam or in Christ. Economics and politics and race, all these things are immensely important but they are nowhere near as important as the question, are you in Adam or are you in Christ? That's Paul's great theme in these verses, these two humanities, these two categories which shape the whole existence of the human race. And I want us to look at what Paul is saying under two headings. We are going to look at the first one this week and we will look at the next one in a fortnight's time.

So we are going today to look at how Adam and Christ are similar and then when we come back to it we are going to look at how Adam and Christ are different. So this week how is it that Adam and Christ are similar? Well if you look at verse 14 it says, death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who were who sinning was not like the transgression of Adam who was a type of the one who was to come. Paul says Adam is a type of the one who was to come, that is Jesus. So Paul is saying that there is a similarity and a connection between Adam and Jesus. Adam is a type of Christ. Now what does that mean? Well basically it is saying that in some way Adam is a prophetic model of what Jesus is going to be. And so if you imagine that we were going to, that we had to build a new building and as part of that process we came with a small model of what that building was going to be and we put it on a table. That model would be a type of the real thing, wouldn't it? It would be a representation that is looking forward prophetically if you like to what the real thing is going to be. And that is what Adam is in terms of his relationship to Jesus. And there are other types of Christ in the Old Testament, other shadows that are pointing towards Jesus. So Moses for example, he was a prophet who prefigured Christ. Melchizedek in Genesis 14 he was a priest who prefigured Christ. And David was a king who prefigured

Christ. And likewise Adam, Paul is telling us, is a type of the one who was to come. Adam prefigures Jesus in some way. Now when we hear that we might think well that seems a bit strange because our perception of Adam is generally negative, isn't it? He was the one who sinned against God. He was the one who fell from his original condition. He was the one who messed everything up. But our perception of Jesus is absolutely positive.

In so many ways he's the opposite of Adam and he's coming to restore and put right everything that went wrong in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam sinned. So we think of Adam, we think negative, we think of Jesus, we think positive. So how can Adam be a type of Christ? What does Paul mean? Well, the similarity between Adam and Christ is in terms of what we call federal headship. Now if you're looking at that if you tell us what on earth are you talking about what does that mean? Well, basically the word federal is the same as the word covenant.

[7 : 21] And so it's conveying the idea that Adam is a covenant head or a federal head, it means the same thing. Adam is a federal head of a larger group and so too Jesus is a federal head of a larger group. So that means that in terms of how they relate to God, in terms of how Adam relates to God, in terms of how Jesus relates to God, they do not stand as isolated individuals. In reality, they are representatives of a much larger group. Adam is a federal head of a larger group. Christ is a federal head of a larger group. So when God enters into a covenant relationship with Adam, it is not simply with him, it is with all humanity who descend from him. And likewise, God's covenant dealings with Christ don't just affect him, they affect everybody who is united to him. Adam and Christ both function as federal heads. In their dealings with God, they represent others. And the whole of humanity is represented before God by one or the other. And so we've got a diagram here to show.

We've got one federal group that is headed by Adam, the other that is headed by Christ, and humanity is in one or the other. Now, this whole idea of federal headship is something that we kind of find a bit strange to understand, particularly in our postmodern individualistic society. Because our general assumption is what I do affects me and it's nobody else's business. And so the idea of kind of federal headship can seem a wee bit alien to us. But if we just stop and think about it, we recognise the fact that federal headship is much, much more common in our own day than we realise. For example, if and when Theresa May signs the treaty or the document that brings the UK out of the European Union, she is doing that as a federal head. So although it's only her name that goes in the document, she is not the only one who is going to come out of the European Union. Everybody in the United

Kingdom will come out with her, even those who do not want to. Because she is the federal head representing a whole body of people. Same thing applies in business transactions.

Imagine, and this is perhaps an unrealistic example, but imagine Donald Trump came to Carlisle Way and says, I want to buy the Carlisle Way estate and the directors in a moment of madness agreed to sell it to him. They would be the ones making the transaction, the directors.

But it would affect everybody. Because everybody who lives on the estate would no longer be living on the land owned by the Carlisle Way estate. They would be living on land owned by Donald Trump. Federal headships are very, very common thing. One representative's actions affect other people. And so Paul's great point is that if you are in Adam, then Adam's relationship with God determines your relationship with God. But if you are in Christ, then his relationship with God determines your relationship with God. And that's why the implications for this are of the utmost importance. Because we are all in one or other of these groups and we all start in Adam. We are all conceived in Adam. The entire human race is descendant from him. So we all start off on that side of the diagram, on Adam's side. Therefore, if Adam is your federal head, then Adam's federal status is your federal status. And the vital point is that Adam's federal status is not good. In fact, it's desperately bad.

[12 : 06] Adam sinned. Adam fell and he brought all of us down with him. And so Paul says in verse 12, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. And so death spread to all men because all sinned. Now, that's what the Bible, that's what we call original sin. An unstoppable brokenness that passes from every generation to the next.

And Adam spreads to all. And the Catechism explains it very well. I'm going to put four questions up from the Catechism. Always remember that Catechism's brilliant for explaining things like this. Okay, so question 16, 17, 18 and 19. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? In other words, did Adam sin just affect him or did it affect other people? It says the covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, those who descend from him, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. That's, that's all of that answer is about federal headship. The covenant was made with Adam, but he was not just for him. It was as a head of a larger group. So we all fell with him into what estate did the fall bring mankind, the fall brought mankind into any state of sin and misery. The next two questions explain what that means. Where is the, what cons, where in consists the sinfulness of the estate where in man fell? So remember the last question, we fell into any state of sin and misery. Next question. Okay, what's the sinfulness of that estate? Sinfulness of that estate where in man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness or the lack of original righteousness, the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin together with all actual transgressions, which proceed from it. And the next question, what is the misery of that? What does it look like? All mankind by their fall lost communion with God under his wrath and curse and so made liable to all miseries in this life to death itself and to the pains of hell forever.

Now that's a summary of the implications of Adam's failed, federal headship. But that raises a question. How do we know that's true? How do we know that what the catechism says is true? How do we know what Paul says is true? Well, Paul gives us proof in Romans five and he says the proof of all this lies in the fact that everybody dies. Now this is a really important point because we are so familiar with death that we forget that death is an unwanted intrusion in the experience of humanity. In other words, death is not natural. It is the complete opposite of what God wants and intended for us. But because of Adam's sin, that great enemy called death has spread to us all. And that's the great point that he makes in verses 12 to 14 that we'll read together, a passage that I used to find hard to understand. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned. For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one to come. Now it's a kind of passage where you read it, you think Paul, what do you mean? It's very full language and he seems to go from one thing to the next thing very quickly. What's he saying? Well, here Paul is proving the reality of sin in the world. That's what he's doing, he's proving that sin is real.

And he does so by drawing a distinction between the definition of sin and the effect of sin. So he's distinguishing between the definition of sin and the effect of sin. So how do we define sin? Well, sin is defined by the law. That's how we know what sin is. God's law tells us, God's law tells us God's standards and therefore sin is defined in reference to those standards. So Paul is saying, okay, the law didn't come until Moses. So does that mean that there was no sin before Moses? He says no. And the reason that we know that there was sin is because even though there was no definition of sin during that period, which of course is why sin is not counted, where there is no law. So in that period between Adam and Moses, God did not require things of people in the way that he later was to require of them. So for example, Abraham did not have to worship God in a tabernacle in the way that the Israelites later had to. God didn't count a law to Abraham, which he didn't have. God is always fair. But Paul is saying sin was still in the world, because even though the definition of sin wasn't there, the effect of sin was because people still died. And so even though from Adam to Moses, they didn't have the law, so they weren't able to define sin in the way that Moses and his descendants were, they still experienced the effect of sin because they still died. So Paul says death reigned from Adam to Moses.

I hope that makes sense, but I'm going to give you an illustration to try and explain what I mean. Imagine that a rare disease broke out in Lewis as of today, which is the 28th of January. Imagine some rare disease, maybe a new disease that nobody ever knew or a very, very rare disease broke out and many, many, many people became ill. In fact, everybody became ill. But imagine then that it takes three years for doctors to discover what the disease was. You have this three year period where we do not know the definition of the disease. We do not know the diagnosis of the disease. But does that mean that the disease didn't come to the island until the doctors made the diagnosis? No, because for the past three years, the effect has been there because people are getting sick. The moment of diagnosis is not the moment when the disease begins. It is the presence of the disease is clear because of its effect. And so Paul is saying that the law diagnosis sin. That's how we know what sin is. That's why he says the law came, it increased the trespass because it just heightened our understanding of what sin was. But that does not mean that sin didn't exist before the law. Sin was in the world ever since Adam because ever since

[20 : 01] Adam people have died. And we think that death is normal. So much so that people think that it's a good idea to hasten death in certain circumstances. But the Bible says death is not normal. Death is a horrible enemy. Death is an unwanted intrusion. But because of Adam, we are all under the tyrannical grip of sin and death. And that's the situation that we are in in humanity. That's what Paul says. Because of Adam's actions, sin came into the world and through sin came death and death has spread to everyone. So whoever is in that humanity represented by Adam is in a desperate state. They are under the power of death.

We are all under its grip. And when we find ourselves recognizing this, we are so tempted to say to God, that's not fair. How can we be held responsible for Adam's failure? Adam's sinned. He's the one who did it. How come we suffer? How come we are the ones who face death? How is it that we can also, we also have to face the responsibilities of Adam's sin? That's something that people struggle with. That's something that's really, really hard to understand. And I want us to think about that for the last few minutes. When we think about all of this, there are two things that we must remember. And these are two things that we are often prone to forget. The whole world is based around this principle of federal headship, whether you're in Adam or in Christ. There's two things that we must, must, must remember. First thing is this. Despite our 21st century individualism that we are surrounded by, the truth is that the human race is utterly bound up by the reality of the fact that we are connected to one another. And this is, this is a grounding principle of humanity.

We are connected to one another. At a very basic level, we can prove that this is true. Because extreme individualism would lead to the extinction of the human race very, very quickly. Because the whole reason the human race exists is because we relate to one another and depend on one another and are connected to one another, both as children, to parents, and as men and women in terms of, of, of reproduction. It's logically, scientifically, and functionally impossible for the human race to exist in isolation from one another. It's just a fact, a basic fact. There is this interconnection. We depend on one another. We have a responsibility towards one another. We exist as a part of a collective group that is more than just ourselves. Therefore, our behaviour does not just affect ourselves. It impacts other people. Adam's behaviour did not just affect him, affected many others. And it's the same is true of us. Although we have our individual personalities, there's a collective identity inherent in the human race. And if humans live totally for themselves, then they will simply destroy themselves.

That's why individualism is destructive, isn't it? We love people, today we love individualism and we put it up in a pedestal as this model that we should follow and this kind of thing that really should be, you know, maintained, that we are to look after number one and the individual is what really matters. Individualism is destructive, isn't that true? Because individualism destroys marriages, doesn't it? When people do what they want to do. Individualism ruins friendships. Individualism brings hostility to the workplace. Individualism divides communities.

Individualism impoverishes the weak. Ultimately, individualism can lead even to war. All sorts of awful things happen when we fail to recognise the fact that as human beings we are connected together. Individual humans are inescapably part of a collective group. Therefore, if the head of the group does something, then it's basic logic that it's going to affect everybody else. We are united together through our connection in Adam and the impact of his actions are inescapable for us all. So we must remember that we're all connected together.

[25 : 23] But secondly, and I think even more importantly, we are far too prone to forget how desperately awful sin is. We talk about Adam's sin, we talk about how that affects everybody, we think that's so unfair, it's wrong. Behind that lies a misunderstanding of how awful sin is. Our individualism means that we all too often think that sin is individualistic as well. So if I sin, I'll answer for it. It's a private thing and it's no one else's business. And that's the kind of mindset that makes us think of sin in terms of a personal bank account. So the things I do wrong are counted as a debt against me, but if I do things that are right, then it outweighs that, it cancels it. Nobody else's business, it's all about me and ultimately people hope that the good that we do will outweigh the bad.

It's all about what I do or don't do. It's no one else's business. And I can understand why people think like that, especially in terms of the way our society is just now.

But that mindset is making the false assumption that sin is predictable, that sin is controllable and that sin is orderly. We think, you know, if I sin, I can sort it. If I do good, I can undo it. There's kind of an order and a predictableness to it. That's a false assumption because sin is far, far, far worse than that. Sin is a brutal and hideous enemy. Sin has no concept of justice or control. Sin is lawless rebellion that wrecks lives in any way that it can.

Sin is not predictable. It's not controllable. It is absolutely lethal and it brings misery and devastation. And a good illustration of this is illegal drugs that people use and that's a desperate problem for people to face. People sometimes think that they can have an element of control over abusing some kind of substance like that. So you think, well, yeah, I know that this is going to have an effect on me, but I can control it. So I will take a little bit of this, I'll take a little bit of that, and I can control it. And yet far too often we hear of people who take one pill, expecting it to maybe give them some kind of experience for a few hours. They take one pill and they're dead. Reminding us that that drug is not controllable or predictable or orderly. But it is chaotic, dangerous and unpredictable. And that's what sin is like. It's not orderly. It's not predictable. It is just brutally vicious and dangerous and horrible. Never ever forget that the devil did not entice Adam and Eve to rebel against God because he wanted them as his friends.

The devil did it because he wanted to destroy them. And that's exactly what sin does to us as humans. It destroys us and the devil wants to destroy you. He doesn't want to make you his friend. He wants to destroy you and anybody else that can get caught up in your sin as well. That's what makes sin so awful. It does not just affect us. It affects so many other people. There's this collective implication of sin. And experience proves that that is true. Because does our sin only affect us? The answer is no. So whether it's anger or greed or theft or sexual misconduct or bullying or addiction or quarrelling or drunkenness, do all of these things just affect the person who's doing them? No. It affects so many other people as well. Sin does not just wreck our lives. It has a devastating effect on other people as well. And that's why we must never ever think that we can play with sin. Sin is out to destroy us and to destroy the people around us. It is a vicious, wicked, brutal enemy. And if we find ourselves recognising this truth saying to God, it's not fair and complaining about our situation. We are failing to understand the awfulness of sin. Sin is far worse than simply unfair. Sin is a merciless enemy. It has no concept of fairness and it's out to destroy you. And Adam's actions brought that reality into our experience. That's why we should not be crying to God, it's not fair. We should be crying to God, Lord, please save us. And that is where Paul gives us an amazing message of hope in this chapter. Because although there are similarities between Adam and Christ in the sense that they are both federal heads, there are also massive differences. Christ has come to be a new federal head, a new covenant head to form a new humanity and he is gloriously different to Adam. And Paul highlights some key differences that we're going to look at next time. Jesus has come to create a new humanity. Jesus is calling us out of the wreckage of the humanity in Adam. He is giving us hope and liberty from the grip of sin. He is telling us to come out of darkness into his marvellous, marvellous light. In Adam, we are all bound up in this awful web and tangled mess caused by sin. But Christ has come to call us out.

[31 : 54] Christ has come to set us free. And Paul is reminding us in these verses that ultimately these are the only two humanities that count. We are in Adam or we are in Christ. And I want to close by just highlighting three things very briefly. First of all, in this divide we cannot claim neutrality. You can't look at those two humanities and think that you stand on neutral ground between the two of them because there is no neutral ground. We're either in one or the other. And the most urgent question that anybody can ask themselves is which humanity do I belong to? We cannot claim neutrality. Secondly, this reality of the two humanities must shape our worldview. At the start we said people are really passionate about the categories that they put humanity into. So people who are concerned about economic disparity between two groups are passionate that the people in the less well-off group get into the better group. People who feel that one political group are causing problems are desperate that the other will come and sort that out. People who are fighting for racial equality want those who are in the group that's suffering to get out of that, to get to be treated in a way that means they are no longer viewed differently or treated negatively in comparison to others. People are passionate about solving the problem of categorisation. And of course these things are important. But by a mile the most important thing is whether we are in Adam or in Christ. And that's why the people who are in Adam desperately need to hear the message of the Gospel that's calling them into a new humanity.

And so we as a church, we need to have that worldview that is more passionate than any political activist, more concerned than anybody who is worried about racial inequality, more determined than anybody who is wanting to bring economic fairness to the world. We should be filled with that passion that wants to call people out of the sin-sick realm of Adam into the glorious hope of Christ's new humanity. We need to make sure that our worldview is shaped by this. And last of all, we need to remember that Jesus has come to tell everybody in Adam that there is hope. Nobody is stuck in Adam. Jesus is saying, come to me. Come into my kingdom. Come into my realm. So I want you to recognise two things. I want you to recognise how unbelievably serious this is. Because this really is the definition of humanity. You're one or the other. It's not just theological terms. It's not just an interesting passage from the Bible. This is what you are. You're one of them. You're in Adam. You're in Christ. So please recognise the seriousness of it. But also, I want you to recognise how easy and simple it is to get from Adam into Christ. Because all Jesus asks you to do is trust in Him. That's it. Let's pray. God our Father, we thank you for all that your Word teaches us. And we realise that so often we are just going through our lives worrying about things that really aren't that important. And yet here your Word reminds us of just how desperately urgent it is that we would put our faith in Jesus. Help us never to think that we are on neutral ground. Help us never to think that sin is just a plaything.

Help us never to think that being in Adam doesn't really matter. Help us all to see how desperately and urgently we need to be in Christ. And we thank you that He came to open up that way so that whoever comes to Him will be saved. We thank you so much for the hope that we have in our great federal head, Jesus Christ. Amen.