

# Man On The Cross

David Humphrey 16/03/2025



Who Do You Think You Are? This was a popular TV show in which well known figures would go around discovering their real origins, working out who they were related to and where they came from. In this they learnt much about their family and what they had inherited, whether by genetics, or by culture. As these celebrities searched their histories, they found many people in whom they could be very proud. But some, not so much. Sometimes these people that they found caused much of the troubles their families faced today, even though history obscured their impact.

When we read the Bible, we go through our own episode of "Who Do You Think You Are?" but on a humanity wide scale. As we read the Bible, we discover what traits we all share from this shared history of ours. In the Bible we find many admirable people that we can be proud are part of this history, but also many we are ashamed to admit are a part of its unfolding narrative. In fact, even the admirable people that we come across have their dark times and failed characters. And we can see how this shared, sometimes beautiful, but often times ugly history of humanity is still visible today. We can see it affect the world at large, but we can also see how it affects our daily lives. As we read the Bible, we find ourselves confronted with the ongoing destructive pattern of Human behaviour and, even though we might not wish to admit it, how we are contributors to this destructive pattern.

We are confronted with the reality that we need a new and better way to live as humanity. We need to be given an escape from this destructive spiral, and we need a new way forward that can stand its place.

Today we are continuing our series on the Cross of Christ. Last week and this week, we are looking at the incarnation and what it means for Jesus to go to the Cross. Last week Victor helped pull apart what it means for God In Christ to go to the Cross. Today's sermon is focusing on the other side of that story, what does it mean for Man In Christ to go to the Cross. Our focus passage will be Romans 5:12-21. In our first point we will see how we are all represented by Adam, how we continue on his pattern of sin, and what that has caused and still causes in our world today. And in our second, we will see how Jesus as the God Man, represents us by taking on the punishment for our sin in our place, saving us from this human pattern of destruction and the human curse of death. We shall see that he offers us a new way that is not like Adam's way and will lead to eternal life.

## Adam: Who We Are

So, point number one, how we are represented by Adam. When we read our Bible, the first book we come across is Genesis. And in Genesis we come across our first human characters. Adam and Eve. Paul, in our passage today seems to reference only Adam, but he refers to him as a coverall for both characters in Genesis 3. In fact, when Paul says in verse 12 "Therefore, 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", he is making it clear that the story in Genesis 3 is not just an isolated historical story, but appropriating it as the story of the entire human condition, and its fall. If Paul is right, let us take a look as to what Genesis has to say about us.

## What Did They Do?

When Adam and Eve are made, they are placed in God's special place, with all the blessings that come from being in that place, as well as blessings that come from having a perfect relationship with God. This was the intended reality we were all made for. In the book God's Big Picture, this is described as being God's people, In God's place, under God's rule. It is a theme you can track through the rest of the Bible to help ground you into where the narrative of the Bible is up to. So in this most blessed place, what were Adam and Eve meant to do. They were told to maintain this garden and that they were free to eat from any tree in the garden... except for one.

Immediately following this instruction and command, a serpent slithers his way into the narrative in hopes of tempting Adam and Eve. When he makes the temptation "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" Eve's response is interesting. Eve repeats God's command "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden" but adds to God's command "you must not touch it, or you will die". It's as though she betrays Her's and her Husband's internal feeling that God has been withholding something from them. With this doubt exposed to the Serpent he presses his advantage and tells an outright lie to them both by saying "You will not certainly die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." And then the first act of disobedience occurs. As a story, it all goes so wrong so quickly. It doesn't take long for humanity to abandon God's word, choose to trust the serpent and reach, ironically, for what was already theirs. They were made in his image, and given his role in subduing His creation. But still they disobeyed the one command they were given, in the hope they might attain what God had cruelly kept from them.

Story sounds familiar right. As we read, and we think about what Adam and Eve did, we are led to think of times in our own lives we have acted just like them. Even when being given much, we still find ourselves distrusting good advice and adding to it in unhealthy ways. We still find ourselves feeling like we could have more. And we find ourselves grasping for what we already have. If we are being honest, we are just like our first parents.

## What Did That Cause?

And the truly unfortunate reality that we share with Adam and Eve, is that once we have ignored the command and taken what is not ours, the truth of our wrong is laid bare. They were shown that God was not holding back, but God gave them his good word that they might live well in his place. "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." They try to hide their sin, even from each other, and when God walks into the Garden they hide even from God, lest their wrong might be exposed. And so God, having no problem in finding them, confronts them both and asks "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" and Adam gives a very human response, "The Woman, You put here with Me". Very telling that he blames everyone, but himself. After the transgression has been fully exposed, humanity reaps what it has sown and God lays down his verdict. God, in honouring his word and judgement that came with it, he sent them both out of the garden, cut off from the tree life, where they would surely die. But in his verdict, he makes two promises, One, that the serpent would be killed by one he would wound, and that Eve's child would do this. Put it in your pocket. We will come back to this later.

We know this story, even if this is the first you have heard of it because we have been where they have been. We also know what it is like to be confronted with our sin. We know what it is like to defer blame onto anyone but ourselves. And we know what it is like when the law is laid down in front of us we are forced to reap what we sow. At the end of the story we see how

we all are left in the very opposite state God intended, not his people, out of his place, under his judgement.

### What Does That Mean For Us?

In the show *Who Do You Think You Are*, white Australians would often look back at colonial records and find a rascal of an ancestor who stole a loaf of bread, or took pennies from people's pockets. They find that this is their reason they are in this country, that this ancestor was arrested and chucked on a convict ship, ready to spend the next 200 - 300 days sailing towards this sunburnt land. By their actions they had been labeled "Convict", and even as we might look today with some pride on our convict heritage, many convicts lived in that same horrible cycle that humanity always finds itself in. You see all humanity, because of Adam and Eve, we have inherited our own universal title "Sinner". As Romans 5 states, "Therefore, ... sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned". We find ourselves today slaves to sin, and as Jesus says in John 8:34 "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin". We are victims of Adam and Eve's sin, but we are also agents of sin, just as they were.

### We Need a New Representative, and a Substitute

As slaves to sin, we need someone to rescue us from it. We long for the promise that God makes that someone born of Eve would come and kill that dreaded serpent. We need someone to take our place in that terrible judgement of death. We need someone to obey God where Adam disobeyed. We need the hope that Jesus brings when he says "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

### Jesus: The Second Adam

As Paul goes on in Romans from verse 15 to verse 17 "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!". Jesus is the new Adam we are waiting for, who can do what Adam, or anyone for that matter, couldn't. Jesus can offer his own life as a gift for all, and cover the many wrongs we have committed in our life. But why and how can Jesus do this and no one else.

### What did Jesus Do?

As we follow the biblical narrative away from the Garden of Eden, we find ourselves confronted with Jesus in another garden, called Gethsemane. Here we find him praying to God "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." He can do what we can't because, unlike Adam, he trusts God's word, does not add to it, and trusts in the goodness of God's provision. He obeys where Adam disobeyed. When Jesus says take this cup from me, Jesus is talking about the cup of God's wrath. God's wrath is the wrath that is destined to judge humanity for its sin. This is the cup that, in obedience to God, Jesus will drink dry so that all who have faith in him may share his life. Jesus does this great act of obedience, that is taking on God's wrath. He takes on the punishment that we deserve for our sin. He is our representative in that he acts as we should act, and our substitute in that he takes our place where we should be. He takes on this judgement, our judgement, by walking in Adam's shoes to the death that Adam deserved. And so in that final hour on the cross as Jesus said "it is finished",

Jesus had fully taken Adam's place. And so, if you reach into your pocket, we find our 2 truths. God's promised death to the serpent and God's promise to Eve that it would be one of her children that would do it. The forbearance of God is finally at an end when Adam's judgement is laid on Christ, finally letting the due be paid, once for all. As Paul puts it in Galatians 3:13 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.'"

### What Did That Cause?

Adam's place has been taken fully by Christ. As Paul shows in Romans "For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" Jesus was obedient to death, even death on a cross. But the story doesn't end in his death. Because of his act of obedience, God brings Jesus back to life. If Adam's one act of disobedience led to condemnation and death, now Jesus' one act of obedience leads to justification and life. Where Death is God's "NO" to Adam's sin, Life is God's "YES" to Jesus' obedience on the cross and so God raises him from the dead. We are no longer cut off from the tree of life, but it is available through Jesus, as he walks back through the guarded gates.

One way we can see Jesus' work as our representative is through the idea of the Power of Attorney. A person with power of attorney acts on your behalf, and their actions are considered your actions. On the cross, Jesus acted in our place, so that we share in what he has done. We share in his righteousness and receive all the benefits of what he has done as our representative.

### What Does That Mean For Us?

So the big question becomes - Who is going to be your representative? Adam or Jesus? Are you going to stay with Adam, and stay under the curse, facing judgement? Or are you going to receive the gift of life that your new representative has purchased for you with his own blood? This is Paul's argument in Romans, that we are now no longer under the law, no longer ruled by death, no longer represented by Adam before God, but represented by Jesus.

It is only in Christ that we can receive the gift God offers. "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." You see Adam's one trespass, caused sin and death to enter the world, and we've been following his example ever since trying to replace God with ourselves. But God's plan was always to have us with him, so much so, in Christ he takes our place. He is "The way, the truth, and the life" the only way back to the Garden, back to the Father, is through him. And he can do this because he is like us in every way, yet without sin. He obeys God's righteous command.

And so will you continue to follow your father Adam, grasping for equality with God? Or will you accept the gift that Jesus offers: "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!"

## Readings:

### Scripture

- Romans 5 - 6 (Epistle Reading)
- Philipians 2
- Genesis 3 (Old Testament Reading)
- Matthew 26 - 28 (Gospel Reading)
- 1 Peter 3
- Psalm 8 (?)

### Church Fathers

- Anselm: Argument as to why Jesus have to become Man
- Augustine: The Propensity to Sin (Original Sin)

### Modern Literature

- The Mediation of Christ (T.F. Torrance)
- The Cross of Christ (John Stott)

## Sermon Structure

### Introduction

#### Point 1: Adam, the First Man

Adam is our representative

##### (a) What Did Adam do?

Adam lived in the garden with God in a perfect relationship with God.

And yet he GRASPED for the fruit (We are to consider both Adam and Eve)

The specifics are important

- He wanted to be like God
- He didn't trust God at his word
- He resented God for holding back from him

##### (b) What Did He Cause?

The moment Adam sinned, death entered the world. Death reigned.

Even where there was no law death reigned

The specifics are important

- Hiding and feeling shame

### (c) What Does This Mean For Us?

Adam is the head of the human race and because we are IN him, our destination is his destination.

We Need a Way Out. We Need To Be Rescued.

We need a new representative. We need a substitute.

### Point 2: Jesus, the New Adam

Jesus is our new representative and perfect substitute

#### (a) What Did Jesus Do?

Jesus was born into our world, the world that Adam was lead into when he left the garden.

Jesus did not sin, and in fact was sinless (unaffected by the sin of Adam (funky Catholic ideas arise out of hear as well as Protestant))

Symbolism as well as Jesus' action are important.

The specifics are important

- Did not consider equality with God something to be GRASPED.
- If there is another way, bet yet not my will but yours.
- Refer to first point

Jesus did not just obey at the beginning (i.e., from Adam's first trespass) but continues to follow Adam's journey out of the garden (of gethsemane) and still obeys even while experiencing Adam's judgement and experiencing his curse by being hung on a tree.

#### (b) What Did This Cause?

He died the death that we deserved, covering our many trespasses

#### (c) What Does This Mean For Us

We need not grasp to have God's blessing for his intention was always to bless us as gift

Why go on and Sin like Adam now that we are found in Christ

## Further Notes

The IN language is really important where is concerns the mystery of being identified with/by/through Christ. What do the New Testament writers mean by this? What Old Testament ideas are they leaning to pull out this idea.

The early chapters of Genesis are a progressive revelation of the rest of Genesis, and then the Genesis and the Pentateuch is a progressive revelation of the rest of the Old Testament, etc. Jesus therefore is also a representative of Israel as they are children of Adam. (It doesn't skip straight from Genesis 3 to Matthew 26)