

“From In Adam to In Christ”

May 1, 2022

We have 6 leadership values. Each week at our Group's Team meeting we go through our leadership values just to keep them on our mind, and make sure we are constantly aware of them and utilizing them in our leadership. Our value of the week is...and then someone will take 2-3 minutes to explain what that value is. One day the value was, “you can teach people what you know, but you reproduce who we are.” It was my turn to explain the value and I simply said, “Have you met my kids?”

There is so much of me in them. My oldest is Zoe, and we resemble each other so much that Facebook has suggested tagging me in one of her pictures. We look so much alike that we can fool Facebook's facial recognition. She is only 11, and she doesn't even have a beard yet!

It goes way beyond looks. I breed competitiveness and confidence.

Last night playing basketball:

- “Don't show them your tears, show them your baskets.” - What is wrong with me?
- “Mom, if you are going to be my partner, you need to learn to shoot better.”

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. My kids are a lot like me. I have reproduced who I am. Today's sermon has a very similar concept. We are going to talk about what we have inherited from our first parents. **Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.**

THE PROBLEM - IN ADAM

1 CORINTHIANS 15:21-22

²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

So, we began this Series last week by talking about the insurmountable blessings God has given to believers “in Christ.” And, we unpacked a theological concept called our union with Him - how our life is bound to his life - such that everything that is his has become our own.

The whole of this series is talking about the beauty and implication of what it means to be “in Christ.” Before we dive more into the beauty and the implications, I want to show you the necessity of it. We needed this to happen because before we were “in Christ,” we were “in Adam.”

*For as by a man came death,... **in Adam** all die, ...*

“In Adam” - Genesis 3 summary

- **The Garden** - all is good. God's observation - God saw that it was good. Shalom - peace, fitted and pieced together. Built perfectly and stable. In this perfect garden, God created humanity, Adam and Eve. They lived and walked in perfect, right relationship with God.

- **The Serpent and Deception** - the devil tempted Adam and Eve. He deceived them and lured them to disobedience and rebellion. Jesus in his own words, tells us the primary way the devil operates is by deception and lies. Elsewhere in scripture he is called the deceiver. Jesus says that lies are the devil's native language. He operates primarily by deceiving.
- **The Fall** - Adam and Eve believed the lie. They believed that God didn't really love them and didn't want what's best for them. They believed they knew more and were entitled to more. They ate the forbidden fruit.
- **The Curse and Exile** - Shalom is shattered/broken. We now only see glimpses of God's peace in the way you see glimpses of reality reflected in a broken mirror. But, it's distorted. Cracked. All things are bent, broken, and cursed. They are removed from the perfect garden and God's abiding presence. Their sin brought death, disease and destruction. Adam passed down his choice and consequences to all of mankind.

Because we're in Adam, sin was passed down to us. "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." We inherited this sinful nature from our grandfather, Adam. Because of Adam, sin now infects everything and everyone. It's like a genetic trait that is handed down from person to person and generation after generation.

Parents, you get a front row seat. You never had to teach your kids how to be selfish. You never had to teach your kids to lie or hit or disobey in a thousand different ways. Remember your parents saying, "I didn't raise you this way." You didn't have to, it was inherited. It is hardwired into us. We are "in Adam."

It's not just our kids, and we don't just grow out of it. Adam is in us and we are "in Adam."

For some of us, our "in Adam" nature is very outward and apparent, and we are readily aware of our inherited state. For others, it's not so outwardly apparent. But, if only people knew our inner dialogue.

Let me give you a little scenario to test your "in Adam" nature. What if we got to hear your inner dialogue while driving at 5pm in Columbia. Everyone in this room gets to hear your thoughts while driving in Columbia, SC which is known for notoriously bad drivers.

- Impatience
- Irritation
- Cursing
- Judgment
- Condemnation.
- Anger
- Rage

Gosh, even just talking about it, I feel it.

Get over. Come on, use a blinker. Are you kidding me? Oh, it's your world, go right ahead. Could you please hurry up? Why are you in the fast lane?!!

Everyone knows there is a problem both in themselves and in the world that we inhabit. We know we are broken and the world is broken. But, we don't know how to fix it. **Many times people get caught up treating symptoms rather than the actual illness.**

Martin Luther King Jr. said,

“There is something wrong with our world, something fundamentally and basically wrong. I don't think we have to look too far to see that... And when we stop to analyze the cause of our world's ills, many things come to mind. We begin to wonder if it is due to the fact that we don't know enough. But it can't be that. Because in terms of accumulated knowledge we know more today than men have known in any period of human history... It can't be because man is stagnant in his scientific progress. Man's scientific genius has been amazing. I think we have to look much deeper than that if we are to find the real cause of man's problems and the real cause of the world's ills today. If we are to really find it I think we will have to look in the hearts and souls of men.”

It is important that we are aware of what is wrong with us, so we can be pointed to the right solution. If you misdiagnose the underlying problem, you have virtually no chance at solving the deepest problem. If you have pneumonia, it's not enough to just treat the cough that you have. It's not enough to just treat the symptoms. You must deal with the root of the problem!

The root of the problem is that **we are in Adam, and that Adam is in us. It's clear that we dwell in sin and that sin dwells in us.** That apple didn't fall far from the tree. We believe the lies. We act on the deceit. We are affected by the curse, and we perpetuate the curse.

This means the solution can't be from within. The inner is polluted; we need to be cleansed. Sin runs in our bloodline. It's flowing through our veins. Self-actualization does not work. Self-help won't cut it. You can treat the symptoms, but you can't cure the disease. You can change some things and improve your life, but you can't change your nature. You can't perfect or absolve yourself.

Podcasts -I recently moved to the NE; thus, increasing my commute time and increasing my time for podcasts...And, my favorite podcasts are the long-form interview ones...where someone sits down across the table from an interesting person, usually a successful person, and just gets them to talk about their life, area of expertise, and influences.

And, I've just become so fascinated by how the rich and successful attempt to fix what they sense is broken within them. The most successful people turn their attention to self-perfection and extending their life. Becoming the best version of themselves. Exercise and wellness, routines of sleep, eating, self-reflection, meditation, therapy...microdosing mushrooms and psychedelics.

It's an endless pursuit for the best version of self. And, what's so fascinating to me is that the people with all the resources humanly imaginable still can't seem to find the solution to fix themselves. They're still chasing it.

Even with all of their resources, they just can't fix themselves. Help must come from the outside. If our blood is tainted, then we need a transfusion; we need new blood.

What then is the SOLUTION?

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ** shall all be made alive.

And, the solution is Christ coming to us, **so that we can dwell and live and be in Him, and He can dwell and live and be in us.** We need new blood.

Good Friday and Member Meeting offering communion - this is Christ's blood shed for you.

Let me remind you, Jesus has succeeded where Adam failed.

- Where Adam failed in the Garden, Jesus succeeded in the Garden.
- Where Adam succumbed to lies of the devil, Christ resisted.
- Where Adam believed the lie that God doesn't love us, Jesus entrusted himself to the Father.
- Where Adam rebelled, Jesus obeyed.
- Where Adam's sin brought death, Jesus's death brought life.
- Where Adam brought the curse, Jesus became the curse.
- Where Adam's choices exiled him from the garden and God's dwelling place, Jesus's suffering welcomes us home to be with Him and enjoy Him forever.

"In Adam" we are failures, succumbing to temptation and deception, rebellious against God, cursed objects of wrath, exiled from God, awaiting death and judgment.

"In Christ" we are more than conquerors, victorious, able to resist temptation and follow the truth, growing in obedience to God as children of the Almighty, abiding in Him, and awaiting our eternal home and reward.

For those who believe, we are now "in Christ" because, as Pastor Sinclair Ferguson wrote,

"all that we were when we were "in Adam" was put on Christ for a moment - when He took our sin upon Himself and died for us - and all that He has has become ours forever."

- Sinclair Ferguson

Romans 5:18

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

In bringing us into Himself and uniting Himself to us spiritually, our guilt and condemnation and shame and unrighteousness became His on the cross; and, in Him we receive His:

- Righteousness
- Status as a child of God

- Victory over sin
- Victory over death
- Eternal life with God the father
- Inheritance of the Kingdom of God

He brings us into Himself, and so unites our lives with His life that it's like He is saying to us, “What you were in Adam became mine when I was crucified, and the spiritual blessings that are mine are all yours, forever!”

So, if you're a believer, this means your truest identity - more than anything else about you- is you are “in Christ”. The truest true things about you...are all of the things we said last week:

- You are holy and blameless.
- You are a child of the living God.
- You are forgiven and redeemed.
- You are an heir to His kingdom.
- You are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

This is incredibly important. The phrasing, “the apple doesn’t fall from the tree,” can be funny and silly and good. But, for many it can feel like a curse. It feels like an unwanted destiny.

So, I have a couple of friends who carry a lot of fear, sometimes paralyzing fear, that they will eventually turn into their dads. For one of them, his dad wasn't great and is probably best described as absent. So absent that from a very early age my buddy had to be the man of the house. And now, as a grown man, he lives with this constant, low-grade, gnawing sense that the other shoe is gonna drop one day - that he's gonna let his guard down, and he's gonna fail his family like his father failed before him. “The apple doesn't fall far from the tree” haunts him.

What he needs to hear, what many of us need to hear, is that yes, we may have inherited some things from our parents; yes, we will reflect them in many ways. But, our biological father is no longer our ultimate identity or destiny. Our destiny is what is written in **Romans 8:29**, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...”

“Hallelujah, thank You, Jesus
 I was a prisoner, now I'm not
 With Your blood, You bought my freedom
 Hallelujah for the cross”

Many of us have felt trapped in our sin, in our shame, or even in our life trajectory. Petrified that you're destined to become the worst parts of you, or the worst parts of those who raised you. That the sins of your parents or whomever are just gonna keep on repeating themselves in you, and the wounds and scars you bear as their offspring are just gonna haunt you, follow you, and define you for the rest of your life.

Hear me now. For those who are “in Christ,” the course of your life has been altered. The trajectory is not the same. Help has come. Help has come from the outside to change the inside. We were “in Adam” and now we are united with Christ.

I so badly want to tell you more and even to get more practical. But, I can’t because that is what the rest of the series is about. I do want to leave you with another scripture and 2 quick illustrations.

Conclusion

Ephesians 4:22-24

²²...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

You had a former manner of living, your old self, when you were “in Adam.” Now, you are called to renew your minds, and to put on the new self, and to live out what it means to be “in Christ.”

2 quick examples to leave you with.

The Christian life according to *Princess Diaries*. Have you seen it? It came out in 2001. Mia (Anne Hathaway) did not know her true identity, but her grandmother (Julie Andrews) comes to inform her that she is a princess. She does not feel like one, and has to spend the movie deciding whether to live in light of this new identity with its life changes and responsibilities and privileges.

When we are in Christ, there is a similar sense that He is telling us our new identity, and then inviting us to live it out.

We have a ministry called Recovery. Recovery is a group that meets in a 10-week cycle to help people achieve freedom and healing from issues that seem unbeatable in their lives. We have seen God do incredible things through this ministry. If you haven’t attended, you should. I won’t overhype it at the moment because our next cycle doesn’t start until the fall.

Anyway, on Recovery, night one, we ask people to write down a word that describes themselves. Then, explain why they chose this word. This is a quick way to learn the defining story people are telling about themselves. **Words from this past cycle: slave, unredeemable, broken beyond repair, victim, hopeless, damaged goods.**

At the end of the cycle, on the last night of Recovery, everyone is given the opportunity to go around and reshare that word, but they also share something else: what they now know to be true about themselves. A few weeks ago, we finished up our spring Recovery; and, folks got to go around and share: after Recovery, a lot of things are the same, but now I know like never before about friendship with Jesus.

"I walked into Recovery feeling like a victim of sexual assault, that I was totally broken. My word was victim, but now I know I am redeemed and whole."

"I walked into Recovery a slave, my word was slave, but now I know I have freedom in Christ to repent and believe the gospel."

We all have an old self, a former way of living. The dominant story of our lives was that we were trapped in Adam and Adam in us. Through the power of the cross and the resurrection from the dead, we have been given a new life, a new identity, and a new story to live out. We are "in Christ," and Christ is in us.

Pray and Intro to Communion

Offering the body and blood of Jesus. Remembering our helpless state. Unable to save or rescue or heal or help ourselves. We remember that Jesus came for us. His body was torn for us, and His blood was shed for us. We are now "in Christ."