**Sinner in Adam, Saved in Christ**

We’re currently studying through the book of Romans in the Wednesday evening auditorium class. This past Wednesday, our focus was on chapter five and we addressed some major themes dealing with justification. Romans 5 sort of represents a transition of thought where Paul is concluding his discussion with how one is justified before God and beginning his explanation of how this creates a new humanity “in Christ”.

Paul just finished explaining the depth of God’s love for us in that while we were still sinners, he sent Christ to die for us. If he accomplishes such while we’re enemies, what will he do for us now that we’re friends? Could salvation be any more thorough?

Now, throughout Romans Paul bases his subject of writing at any particular time usually by anticipating questions his reader is having. Beginning with verse 12, he’s probably anticipating the question: “How can that one act of Christ be so efficacious in a sin-soaked world?” His answer is interesting: we can understand how this salvation spreads by looking at the beginning and spread of sin. Sin, and death through sin, began with Adam’s first disobedience against God. When anyone sins, they express solidarity with Adam and are “in Adam”. And so, death spreads to all humanity. But when we express solidarity with Christ, we are “in Christ” and salvation then spreads to us.

This is how Jesus is spoken of as the “second Adam”. He is now a new representative “head”. Both are representative “heads” for humanity – and through that paradigm, they function similarly: Adam brings condemnation, Christ brings justification; through one man’s disobediences many were made sinners, through one man’s obedience, many will be made righteous.

However, the differences between the two are just as important as the similarities. Here’s how they’re different. First, Adam’s choice was selfish, Christ’s choice was sacrificial. Second, one choice resulted in death, the other resulted in eternal life. Finally, salvation brought by one man is much more powerful than the sin brought by the other man. In fact, Paul makes the claim that over against sin, grace has a – literally in the original language – “superabounding” power. A great illustration of what Paul means here is the image of the cross itself. At the cross, we see the worst sin in the history of the world: the utter blasphemy and crucifixion of the son of God. No other sin can compare as people literally curse, crush and crucify God in the flesh. It’s the worst sin can ever do – but *even then* grace overwhelms the sin because this very act forgives sin, overcomes sin, overwhelms sin with the love and grace of God as it defangs the powers of sin and condemnation once and for all.

But it only comes to those who are “in Christ”. It only comes to those in the army of Israel, relying on their David to slay the Goliath of sin and death so that victory and salvation can spread to the entire camp – weak, fearful, strong and courageous alike - all because David goes to battle in our place. That’s Paul’s point.