

Lenten Devotional March 11, 2021

Scripture

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—13 sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. 16 And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. 19 For just 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 But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. T. Ann Daniel '92

The renowned Greek philosopher Aristotle has left a legacy for logical thinking. It has influenced many since the fourth century BCE. There is a logic that the first century CE writer Paul adopted in Romans 5:12-21—a logic he expects us to follow in order that we may not miss the depth of the argument. The argument is the power that one individual can have over the entire world. It can be demonstrated positively and negatively. As I write, the world is grappling over the death trail of the pandemic novel coronavirus disease, which no doubt originated with one individual or one group of individuals.

Our text states that the first human creature sinned and all humans inherited this original sin; the full context is in Genesis 3. The New Testament speaks of the first person who was both truly human and truly God, Jesus Christ, who broke the power of sin so that all humans may receive salvation and inherit eternal life. The impact of the original sin is double death, both physically and spiritually. The impact of sin canceled is maintaining forever our spiritual life, which begins when we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and continues eternally, even beyond physical death. To accomplish this, Jesus gave his life on Calvary's cross as the purchase price for eternal life available to the entire world. Then he conquered physical death by rising on the first Easter day.

The dominion of physical death caused by disobedience, trespasses, and condemnation is intercepted and interrupted by God's grace as a free gift, perfect peace, and endless life. Let us accept this new status now: life with hope to live after physical death. The Lenten season invites us to hit the pause button, be reflective, be penitent, and remember that Jesus died for us. All that is required from us is to seek forgiveness, claim the gift, and die to whatever originally caused us not to live in full recognition of the love of God for the world generally and the salvation of our souls personally. Receive new life—your sins are washed away!

Prayer

Dear God, the architect of all plans, the giver of new life, the transformer of souls, we look to you for redemption, salvation, and life forever in your presence. Help us to dwell with you, whether it is currently in the human body, where your grace is being infused, or in the future beyond the grave, where there will be no temporal interruptions or distractions. Set us free from sin, shame, and skepticism; then bring us to the place where we may fully trust you, confidently obey you, and joyfully accept your gift of salvation. This we pray in the name of the sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.