

What Have You Inherited?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 March 2015

Preacher: Nick Louw

[0 : 00] Well, I want you to think of the things that you've inherited, right? The things that you've inherited from maybe your parents or your grandparents.

And not just the material things that you may have inherited, like a house or maybe that funny old clock that you always only put out when your parents come to visit, you know what I'm talking about, something like that.

Things that you've inherited, but not only the material things, but also the genetic traits and maybe personality traits that you've inherited. Some of which you probably don't like.

Maybe your father's big nostrils or your mother's asthma or her skewed nose or whatever it is, it'll be different for each person.

But there's certain things, aren't there, that you can't help inheriting. Whether you like it or not, you have no choice but to inherit them. You know, it's not like a baby gets born and you get a tick list of all the things you'd like to inherit from your parents.

[1 : 03] You get them whether you like it or not. And it's the same in this morning's passage because here in Romans 5, we learn about something that we've all inherited, every single one of us.

And not from our parents, not even from our grandparents, but we've inherited it from someone who goes way further back than that, our original parent, our founding father of the human race, who we read about in the book of Genesis, whose name is Adam, Hebrew for that is mankind or humanity. And we've all, every single one of us in this room, we've all inherited something from him, a trait that we don't particularly like, but nonetheless, we all have a trait called sin.

Look at verse 12 of Romans chapter 5. Sin entered the world through one man and death through sin.

And in this way, death came to all people because all sinned. Okay, so there's a number of truths about our world that I want us to see in this passage that not many people realize.

[2 : 18] And the first major truth I want us to see is that sin entered through one man. Sin entered our world through one man. But to understand this verse, we still need to define just what sin is, what this word sin means.

What is the sin that's apparently come into our world through this one man, Adam? Typically today, the word sin is used to describe, you know, doing naughty things.

That we shouldn't get into the habit of doing, but, you know, we do anyway, and sometimes they're quite fun. That's kind of how the world understands sin. It's interesting, you even get a sin tax that many of you might pay without even knowing it.

You know, sin tax is the government cashing in on people buying naughty things like alcohol and cigarettes. And that's what sin is really understood to be the word sin in today's world.

A bit of mischief on the side, you know, but not too serious. Well, that's not what the Bible means at all when it talks about sin. In reality, sin is something much more serious than some naughty things we do.

[3 : 31] Sin, according to the Bible, is a deep-seated defiance of our Creator and a denial of His ownership over us.

And a desire to put ourselves in His place as the rulers of our lives. That's what sin is, no less than that. And that defiance of God leads us to do things that we know that God doesn't want us to do, but we do them anyway.

But sin, you see, is not those individual things we do. Rather, sin is the state of our hearts that causes us to do those things. And we've got to understand that.

Those things we do, particular individual sins, are just evidence of what's in our hearts. To put it another way, we're not called sinners in the Bible because we do particular sins.

No, it's the other way around. We do particular sins because we already are sinners. We must understand that. But why? Why are we like that?

[4 : 35] You know, where did that sin come from? That inclination to defy God all the time, which we all have. Where did it come from? Well, we learn here in this passage, it came from our original forefather, Adam.

We inherited it from him. And this is the clear teaching of Scripture. We must understand that whether we like it or not, we are born sinners.

As David said, surely I was sinful at birth in my mother's womb. And it's the same for all of us. But that seems unfair, doesn't it?

It seems unfair that we don't even have a choice in the matter. But to understand just why that is, why Adam's sin affects us all, even thousands of years later, we need to first understand who Adam actually was, you see.

Adam was, in fact, the prototype human being. The first creature that God made who was self-aware, who could reason, who could create, who had the capacity for things like love and hate, and who had a soul.

[5 : 40] The Bible calls that being made in the image of God. And it's what separates us from all the other animals and creatures in the world. And Adam was the prototype human being.

You know, you get a prototype of cars. If you're into cars, you'll know that. It's the first model before the cars are produced. They produce one prototype. And if you're really lucky, you might get to drive it to see what it's like, especially if you have enough money to maybe buy one when they get produced.

So you drive the prototype to find out what the others will be like. Well, Adam was the prototype of humanity. His name is humanity, literally.

Because when we look at him, you know what we see? We see what humans are like deep down inside when we strip away all the differences. You know, after the prototype car, when you produce all the others, they come out in various different colors, don't they?

But you look at the prototype, and that tells you what all of them will be like, irrespective of their color. And Adam tells us what humans are like, irrespective of our color, our race, our culture. Adam is our common denominator, really.

[6 : 51] He's the common denominator of all people. But we must understand, with Adam, he was more than that as well. He was more than just a prototype. Adam was also our leader and our representative.

He was the family head, if you like. And so his decisions and actions in his life actually counted for all of us who were going to come from him.

You know, it's like a president of a nation. You know, a president, when he makes a decision, his decisions, whether we like his decisions or not, they count for the whole nation.

If the president decides to go to war, the whole nation goes to war. Whether or not you agree with the president's decision. And it's the same with Adam and us.

You see, Adam's decisions as the forefather and the prototype of the human race were made on behalf of the human race. And so what did Adam decide?

[7 : 45] Well, Adam decided to defy God. He, and let's not leave out Eve, his wife, his other half, both of them, they were really the whole of humanity at that point, Adam and Eve.

Both of them decided that they wanted to run their lives. And so they defied God's instructions. They didn't want him running their life. They wanted to run their lives themselves.

And so you see, I want you to realize this morning that Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden that we were reminded of in that video earlier, that sin wasn't, the sin that he committed wasn't just eating from the wrong tree.

Like, oh, whoops, sorry, God. I didn't notice. You know, it was a little bit of a slip. It wasn't that at all. No, it was an action that was rooted in a denial of God's ownership of him and God's right to say what he should or shouldn't do.

So do you see how that seemingly simple sin was much, much more and much deeper than we think it was? Because of what it was rooted in. It was rooted in a denial of God's ownership of him.

[8 : 54] And that is what we have inherited from him. We have inherited that inclination from him because we do that in our own lives, don't we? In various ways, in various areas of life, we ignore God and we ignore his right to say how we should or shouldn't live.

And we ignore his word. You know, we might try to read it on a regular basis, but deep down inside, we all, whether we like it or not, have this inclination to run our own lives and not let God run our lives.

And that's why the world is in the mess it's in today. Because we've all inherited that same inclination. And so do you see how the one action of Adam, thousands and thousands of years ago, has disastrous effects for the human race that would come from him?

It's kind of like one small match setting off a huge fire that grows and blazes away. I mean, we're very familiar with that, aren't we? Given last week, you know, a stomp.

It can start a huge fire. Lots of people believe that last week's fire was caused by someone throwing a cigarette stomp out their car. Now, it's the word.

[10 : 08] I love that word. It sounds like a very playful and innocent thing. It's a stomp. A stomp. I mean, how harmful can that be? However, it can cause a huge fire, and probably did, that blazed through thousands and thousands of hectares and destroyed homes and endangered lives.

You know, that's a picture of what Adam's sin did for the human race. You know, it doesn't sound like such a big thing. Yes, eating from a tree that he shouldn't have eaten. But that one action, because it came from his rejection of God, it has disastrous and long-lasting consequences today.

The consequences that reach into our world today when we look at the newspapers. All of that is rooted in Adam's first sin. Consequences that reach into your heart, whether you like it or not.

Adam's sin is there. Adam's sin is influencing your decisions. Adam's sin is ruling you, in a way.

Because you have Adam's blood in you, and spiritually you have Adam's sin in you.

And you can't get rid of it. It's like a virus that you had in you even before you were born. Now, you might disagree with that. Lots of people do disagree with what the Apostle Paul says on this point here in Romans.

[11 : 29] This idea of inherited sin. But then that's why what he does next is that he goes on to prove that it must be true that we've inherited Adam's sin.

And he does that also in verse 12. Have a look again. Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin. And in this way, death came to all people because all sinned.

Now, you see what he's saying here? You see his point? He's saying, you know how I know that we all have sin in us? Because we're all going to die. And death is irrefutable proof of our sin.

Because what he reminds us of here, and the second thing we learned this morning, is that death is the result of sin. And we forget that. But we must remember this morning, death is the result of sin.

You know, we're so used to the idea that one day we're going to die, aren't we? We're so used to that. It's part of our life. We never actually stop to ask, why?

[12 : 34] Why are we going to die? Why is death in this world? In the first place? You know, we're so used to growing older and heading for the end of our lives that we think that is natural when it's not actually.

And in fact, that's one of the most common ways to cope with the idea of death. Is to say, well, it's just meant to be. You know, it's just the circle of life. It's natural.

There's nothing wrong with it. But I tell you, anybody who's suffered the loss of a loved one knows that that's rubbish. There's something deeply wrong with death.

And we know that. It's not meant to be. It's a cruel and horrible severing of relationships. You know, those who die, we miss terribly. And we're not content to say, oh, well, it's just the circle of life.

No. It's not meant to be. The truth is, what the Bible says, is that death is not natural at all. It came into our world as a foreign invader.

[13 : 34] You know, there was a time in our world without death. Believe it or not. Before sin entered. And that's what humans were made for. Life, not death. You were made for life, not death.

But when sin entered, death entered too. And ever since then, no matter how promising a person's life has been, it's been cut short by death.

And the reason is because each person has inherited Adam's sin. And sin always leads to death.

And it really can't be any other way, can it?

When you consider what sin actually is. Sin is a turning away from God. It's an attempt to live life without reference to Him. But, because God is the source of life, turning away from Him is turning

away from life itself.

And so you see, death is the inevitable consequence of our sin that's in our hearts. Adam died because he sinned against God. And the reason you will die one day is because of that same sin deep down inside of you.

[14 : 41] And it's the reason you're getting older as well. It's the reason that when you look in the mirror, there's one more wrinkle or one more gray hair. You know, one day your body will start malfunctioning.

And maybe it already has. I won't ask you to raise your hands to tell me. But am I right? Our bodies begin to malfunction. And it'll just get worse.

Sorry to say. Okay, no matter what medical science and homeopathy and herbs and vitamins are out there, it's only going to get worse. Your body will decline and eventually it will stop working. And you can't reverse that process. But, that's not how it's supposed to be. That's not right. It's not natural. Even though we're so used to it, aging is a symptom of the sin inside us.

You know, when you go to the doctor for some sickness that you have, what does the doctor do? He looks at your symptoms, doesn't he? He looks at the presenting visible things to determine what the problem is deep down inside.

[15 : 48] The symptoms, the evidence on the outside show you what's going on on the inside. And you see, growing old is a symptom of sin. When you look in the mirror and you see yourself growing older and you don't like it, that's there to remind you that's an external symptom of the internal problem of sin.

You see? It's a symptom of the terminal disease that you have. Yes, you have a terminal disease. You know, we're so petrified of terminal diseases, aren't we?

Like cancer and AIDS. And for good reason. But we forget, we've already got a terminal disease inside us called sin, which is going to kill us just as surely as those others.

Well, you'll be pleased to know that this is not Paul's main point of this passage that we have in front of us. In fact, these first verses, reminding us of our inherited sin and death, are just an introduction to what Paul really wants us to know about.

And it's something that many, many people don't know about. And we see it in verse 14. At the end of verse 14, have a look. Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

[17 : 07] Adam is a pattern of the one to come. You see, everybody feels the effects of Adam's actions as our representative. But not everyone realizes that humanity has another representative who has always planned to come after Adam.

And this other representative is the man, Jesus Christ. And what we go on to learn in this passage is that Jesus came to undo sin and death.

He came to undo the effects of Adam's sin on you and me. Look at verse 17. You see, what he's saying here is that whatever Adam did to put us in the state that we're in today, Jesus did abundantly more to get us out of it.

He came as a second Adam. Adam was a foretaste and a representative, really, of what Jesus was going to come and do. He was a type of the one to come.

So just as much as he's affected us negatively, Jesus can affect us positively. To counteract that. More than counteract it. Just as much as Adam is the representative of all who are born in him.

[18 : 36] So Jesus is the representative for all who are born again in him. You see? And that's what the biblical term born again means.

It's literally being regenerated, remade, starting a new life, patterned not on the prototype Adam, but patterned on the new prototype Jesus.

And that's what being a Christian is. It's turning away from the old pattern and living in the new pattern. And so you see, Adam and Jesus are similar in that they are representatives of all who follow after them.

They are representatives of two groups of people. But there are also some very key ways that they are different that Paul then goes on to show in verse 15.

And you'll go into detail in your Bible studies on that. But basically, what we read there is that the effects of what Jesus did are far stronger than the effects of what Adam did.

[19 : 39] Which is incredible. Given the effects. Given rather how strong the effects of what Adam did are. Sin and death. Those effects are pretty strong, aren't they?

If we look around in our world, even at our own lives, the effects of sin and death are inescapable. You can't stop yourself from sinning and you can't stop yourself from growing old and dying. The effects of Adam's sin, this inherited sin in us, seems to be overwhelming. Seems to be the most powerful force in our life. Well, not anymore. Because this passage is here to teach us that even though sin and death have so much power over you, there is something even more powerful that can overrule the effects of sin and death in your life. Namely, the grace of God. The grace of God is stronger than sin and death. Look at verse 17 again. God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness. You know, as we've learned over the past few weeks, being right with God is a gift, isn't it?

[20 : 50] We don't do anything to deserve it. We inherit it, but through nothing we've done. We inherit it through what Jesus did on the cross as our representative when he died for our sins.

And so, this is the point. Just as much as you inherited sin from Adam, you are able to inherit so much more righteousness from Jesus, which outweighs the effects of Adam's sin in your life. You know, back in the day, they used scales like this one. You recognize that? And the idea of those scales is that you try to match the weights so that you know what something weighs. It was often used in the olden days to measure trades that people did to make sure that they were paying enough money. Well, I want you to imagine for a second a scale that's used to determine your standing with God.

Now, most people incorrectly think that, well, it's their good deeds on one side and their bad deeds on the other, and their good deeds must outweigh their bad deeds in life. Well, the problem with that thinking is that, as we've seen, our sin goes much deeper than the deeds we do.

[22 : 01] Doesn't it? Our deeds are actually just evidence of the root sinfulness that we've inherited, which has already cut us off from God. And so, on the one side of our scale, we put sin as a whole.

The sin we've inherited that can never be made up for by any amount of good deeds that we do. Because no good deeds can get rid of the root sin inside us that we've inherited from Adam. But, on the other side, Jesus comes and puts his righteousness in. And here's the point of this whole passage.

That righteousness doesn't only balance out our sin, it completely outweighs it. 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 the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

You see that? And so, while death in this life is certain, because you're born of Adam, new life in Jesus Christ, in the life to come, is even more certain if you're born in Jesus Christ.

[23 : 19] Let me say that again. And let it just, just take it in and take it away with you this morning. Your death is certain, alright, because you're born in Adam. But even more certain if your faith is in Christ, even more certain than your death is your new life to come.

And that's the point of this passage here. Just as Adam was the representative of all those who followed him, Jesus is the new representative of all those who follow him.

And he can do way more for you than anyone else. But I've got to ask you this morning, which one of those two represents you? Which of those two groups are you in?

Are you following Jesus or are you following Adam? Well, let me tell you. By default, you're following Adam. By default, you defy God.

By default, you deny his ownership on you. You see, like father, like son. Or like father, like daughter. Just as Adam defied God, we do it.

[24 : 20] By default, we follow Adam. And the consequence of that is eternal death, separation from God. But, if you follow Jesus, then you've received God's gift of grace in Christ.

And he will take you into new life, into the eternal life that you were originally made to live. That you were meant for. But notice, this is key in verse 17.

You need to receive that. You need to receive that. From Jesus. Have you done that yet? Have you received that gift of grace?

From God. You must receive it. Maybe you've been coming to church for ages. Years and years and years. But you're still not born again. In Jesus.

Jesus. And you know it. Or maybe you're here for the first time. And maybe this is the first time you've even heard of this. Well, if either of those are you, then I have a booklet that I would love to

give you.

[25 : 23] It's a little booklet that you can get from me free of charge on your way out. Just come get it from me. No questions asked. It's a booklet that helps you to know how to receive God's gift and be born again in Jesus.

And you can take it home and read it in your own time. But if you have done that. If you have received God's gift and been born again. Then I want to leave you with one thing this morning as I close.

I want you to look at verse 17 again. 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.

Now, just look at that verse and notice the difference in who is reigning. For those who are in Adam, as opposed to those who are in Christ. For those in Adam, death reigns.

Death rules. Death holds the ultimate power. People in Adam fear death above all else. But for those in Christ. We reign.

[26 : 33] In life. You see the difference there? Which means we don't need to fear death anymore. It has no power over us because we have eternal life that is even more sure than our death.

But more than that, we who reign in life, we who have access to this life can and must now share that life with our family and friends who are still under the power of death.

And we do that by pointing them to Jesus, the new representative that came for them if they received that gift too. And this is the good news that we have for the world.

This is the good news that we as a church exist to make known in our community. This is the good news. As Paul says elsewhere, and with this I close. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, he gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[27 : 34] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the sobering reminder in Scripture that we have all inherited the sin of Adam. And there's nothing we can do about that.

But we thank you so much that Adam was merely a pattern, a type of the one to come. Jesus Christ, who came to represent us and to give us his righteousness, to outweigh the effects of Adam's sin.

And Lord, we do pray that you would help us to follow our new representative. Help us to live our lives in light of the gift of grace that you bring us.

In light of the new life that starts today and that carries on into eternity. And Lord, we pray that you would help us to be so excited about what you've done for us.

That we would not be able to keep quiet about it. And we pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.