

“Obedience”

In our Scripture Reading, the Apostle Paul created the metaphor of a son of God, applied it to the legendary first man, Adam, and further applied it to the Crucified and Risen Jesus the Christ. (PAUSE) Paul skillfully wove together his comparison of those two sons of God. He contrasted important aspects of their relationships with God and humanity. (PAUSE) We could be looking at a good number of slides showing side by side Paul’s comparisons and contrasts of those two sons of God. However, examining all those details is not the focus of today’s sermon. Instead, we will review Paul’s summation of the nature of the impact of both Adam and Jesus. We will also flesh out the Apostle’s conclusion about which of those two sons of God is the most important and which of them reveal the Truth about God – our Creator and Divine Parent. (PAUSE)

The Apostle to the Gentiles shared a summary of what he attributed to Adam in **verse 12, and parts of verses 15 - 17, “*Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death***

has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. ... It is true that many people died because of the sin of that one man. ... After the one sin, came the judgment of 'Guilty' ... It is true that through the sin of one man death began to rule because of that one man." (PAUSE)

According to the Apostle Paul, the legendary Adam's major impacts on humanity and God was that through him everyone was a "sinner" in relationship to God and everyone was under the reign – control of death.

(PAUSE) Let's take a moment to dig deeper into what being a "sinner" means. It means that person is alienated from God because he or she has missed the mark – separated himself or herself from being in a loving and faithful relationship with the Creator and Divine Parent. (PAUSE)

Supposedly, that is the case because through Adam's disobedience – eating the apple or the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, (pause) all humanity has also inherited the trait of disobedience toward God. (PAUSE) The ancient Hebrews knew nothing about DNA

and how through it one generation does inherit certain aspects of the make up of its parents. (PAUSE) Is there a gene for disobedience toward God?

(PAUSE) Although many, including philosophers, have believed human nature is to be disobedient – to be bad or evil, (pause) just how that is transmitted from one generation to another is totally a mystery. (PAUSE)

The following video titled “Grace Like Rain” helps us examine the human condition and begins to reveal how God has responded to it. [Please show the video titled, “*GraceLikeRain*”.] The video promised the whisper of God’s Grace brings hope (pause) but how does that work? (PAUSE)

To answer that question let’s return to what the Apostle Paul had to say about the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. His impact on humanity and our relationship with the Creator and Divine Parent (pause) is very different from what the author described as that of the legendary Adam. (PAUSE)

Paul wrote about the impact of Jesus in **portions of verses 15-19**, “*God’s free gift is not like Adam’s sin. ... But God’s grace is much greater, and so is His free gift to so many people through the grace of the one*

man, Jesus Christ. ... but after so many sins, comes the undeserved gift of 'Not guilty!' ... But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! ... the one righteous act sets all people free and gives them life. ... in the same way they will all be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man." (PAUSE)

The impact of God's Grace and Agape Love shown through Jesus Christ is far greater than the power of the legendary Adam's legacy of sin and death! (PAUSE) This is Good News for everyone! (PAUSE) Whether you and I have sinned against God and other people because we are descended from Adam or because human beings have "free will" (pause) does not matter. What is crucial is (pause) God's Unconditional Agape Love – Free Gift of Grace – Unmerited Forgiveness, Invitation, and Welcome. (PAUSE) Our Divine Parent gives us this Gift of Grace because of God's Constant and Unconditional Agape Love for you, me, and all people. Jesus' death and resurrection did not buy or earn it for us, instead his suffering death and being raised back to life (pause)

demonstrated the Abundant Agape Love and the Free Gift of Grace the Almighty had and has for humanity! (PAUSE)

This “Are You Filled” video (pause) emphasizes how it is God’s Love, Mercy, and Grace (pause) which changes our Relationship with our Divine Parent, instead of our works righteousness or good deeds.

(PAUSE) The human condition is radically transformed by God’s Abundant Agape Love and Mercy expressed through God’s Unconditional Grace. [Please show the video titled, “*Are You Filled*”.]

Now we come to the closing section of this message. (PAUSE) The Apostle Paul raised up in **verses 18 and 19**, “*All who receive God’s abundant grace and are freely put right with Him will rule in life through Christ. ... they will all be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man.*” (PAUSE) The way Paul wrote that last sentence, comes close to sounding like Jesus’ “obedience” (pause) puts everyone “right with God”. (PAUSE) However, the Apostle described himself as having been a “Pharisee of the Pharisees” when talking about

his life prior to his conversion experience with the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus. (PAUSE) Perhaps, some of that Pharisee thinking led Paul to be a little more ambiguous – sound more legalistic than his arguments leading up to this sentence. (PAUSE) Let me suggest a slightly different way to think of what the apostle was talking about in verse 19. (PAUSE) Instead of thinking Jesus bought and paid for our forgiveness from God, as many have come to declare, (pause) I propose, Jesus is the one, who revealed God’s Abundant Grace to everyone (pause) by showing how much the Divine Parent Constantly and Unconditionally Agape Loves everyone – by submitting to be the Ultimate Expression of that Agape Love through his sacrificial and suffering death on the cross and resurrection from the dead! (PAUSE) I realize that may come as somewhat startling news – since it demonstrates God’s Abundance Gift of Grace – Forgiveness, Invitation, and Welcome for us undeserving sinners (pause) but that is the Radical and Extravagant Nature of God’s Grace, Love, and Hospitality toward everyone – even those rejected by the religious elite and society as a whole. (PAUSE) This God Is Still

Speaking Message may shock and be welcomed by folks, who either have felt or worry about being rejected by religious folks, or who are extremely unhappy with the rejection and disrespect they have witnessed others experiencing. (PAUSE) This Good News can bring Joy, Comfort, and New Life to many others! (PAUSE)

That brings us back to that earlier quote from **verse 18**, ***“All who receive God’s abundant grace and are freely put right with Him will rule in life through Christ.”*** (PAUSE) For those of us – for all people, who have come to recognize the message of God’s Unconditional and Constant Agape Love and Abundant Gift of Grace (pause) and who rejoice in being put right with God – Welcomed into the New Faith Relationship with God, (pause) how do we “rule in life through Christ? (PAUSE) This video titled, “This Is Love” (pause) illustrates what this New Life in Christ includes. [Please show the video, *“This Is Love”*.]

Will you and I ***“rule in life through Christ”*** – follow his teachings, commands, and example of living agape love and grace toward everyone?

**(PAUSE) Will you and I also be obedient – submit to manifesting our
Divine Parent’s Agape Love and Free Gift of Grace? (PAUSE) Let
our response be one of bold affirmation (pause) with loving lives (pause)
and words! Amen.**