

Romans 5:12-19
“Another Destiny”
Lent 1

March 5, 2017
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
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Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

Ash Wednesday. Good Friday.

These two holy days bookend our Lenten season.

From the cross marked upon your forehead to the cross of Christ, you have our Lenten season.

If you were in church this past Wednesday,
you heard the echo

of those words first spoken in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve:

“Ashes to ashes, dust and to dust – to dust you shall return.”

When Adam fell into sin,

he not only put himself under condemnation and plunged into death;

he brought all of humanity—including you—including me—with him.

That is, Adam’s destiny is death,

and because your life is bound up with his,

you are walking on the trail he blazed.

[In Sin]

All mankind fell in Adam’s fall.

You see, sin is never static.

There is never a sitting still, a resting point.

You are either growing in sin or diminishing sin in your life.

And it has a life . . . all its own.

We see this in Genesis, as Eve is seduced into unbelief by the serpent.

Adam—her husband and head—who should have been her guardian,
is drawn with her to defy their Creator’s word.

He, too, ate of the tree of which God had warned him
that in the day you eat of it you will surely die.

The curse did descend from Adam and Eve to their children.

Cain’s slaughter of Abel – This is evidence of this downward spiral.

The Scriptures testify that sin came into the world through this one man, Adam,
and because of his trespass, death reigned through him.

But our problem is more than morality.

It is not simply that we live out our years and then perish.

If it were only a matter that dying was just a part of nature,
just another turn in the inevitable cycle of life,
then perhaps we could meet death with calm composure.

But death is not natural. Despite what you hear . . . death is not natural.
God did not create human beings to die but to have life with him.

Death is the result of sin, and where there is sin there is God's wrath
—his righteous opposition to our rebellion.

God's wrath is revealed against all unrighteousness.

“The soul that sins shall die” is a curse that embraces the whole earth,
for all have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

Such a death is not simply the last event of our biological life;
it is the shadow that casts itself over every step of the journey from the cradle to the grave.

[***Corruption Creeps***]

Sin is devastating.

Its corruption is ever on the move, it “creeps.” It enslaves!

It enslaves Adam and all of his naturally born children
in a prison from which no inmate may escape.

We confess it in the liturgy ***“that we are by nature sinful and unclean.”***

Holy Scriptures confess:

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps 51:5).

From our birth, we lack the true fear of God and neither trust God nor love him.

This is more than a tendency toward sin

that could be overcome with a decision of the will
or the persistent practicing of some spiritual disciplines.

The heart itself is desperately evil, wicked above all things, says the prophet Jeremiah.

And Jesus himself declares that the heart is a veritable cesspool
out of which bubbles hatred, lies, adultery, and all other toxic symptoms of our inherited sin.

We sin in thought, word, and deed because we are sinners.
That is our death-bound destiny received from Adam.

God's image given in creation is shattered,
and we live not only in a dark world
but also with a darkness of the soul
so dark that we could never find our way back to the Father's house.

[*Came to Bear*]

But Christ, the second Adam, came to bear our sin . . . and shame and woe.

We are all too familiar with Adam's destiny...
"He was born and he died" is not only a biblical refrain; it is the truth about each of us.

But the apostle Paul testifies to another destiny,
not of trespass, wrath, and death
but of righteousness, grace, and life.

It is the destiny of the one man, Christ Jesus. Remember how the apostle puts it in our text?
"But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many" (v 15).

This Jesus is the second Adam, but he is so very different from the first Adam.

The contrast between these two men could not be more pronounced.
Adam stands at the head of humanity, turned against God and turned in on himself.

United to Adam, we share his fate, were it not for the **"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all"** (1 Tim 2:5–6).

He is the one who has purchased and won all of Adam's children, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and his innocent suffering and death.

Indeed the gift is not like the trespass,
for in Christ there is grace upon grace,
blessing piled upon blessing!

In Christ, there is an abundance of mercy, which covers our trespasses.

In Adam, there is condemnation aplenty.

In Christ, there is no condemnation (Rom 8:1), for his blood cleanses us from all our sins.

Death asserted its lordship over Adam and all who are in him.

[Conclusion]

Adam's destiny was death.

In Christ, you have another destiny

—righteousness and resurrection to life everlasting.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! AMEN!