

The Cure Is Greater than the Disease

Romans 5:12-19 (NIV)

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned— ¹³ To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ 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! ¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Today we heard again about how it all went wrong for humanity. God had put the warning label on eating fruit from that specific tree: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:7) It's like one of those prescription drug commercials with the voiceover saying, "Side effects of eating the forbidden fruit include uncontrollable hormones, guilt, shame, fear, stupidity, lying, lack of responsibility, blame-shifting, broken relationships, evilness, and death." You'd think that such a warning label would have been enough to deter anyone, but it didn't.

By allowing Eve to listen to the devil and partaking in the forbidden fruit, Adam brought the disease of sin into the world. This disease is hereditary and fatal. Paul says in verse 12, "Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned." Everyone inherits this disease of sin which leads to our death.

"Well that's not fair. I didn't do what Adam did. Why should I have to suffer for what he did wrong? Why should I have to die because he ignored a warning label?" We might say the exact same things when we are diagnosed with a hereditary disease – that it's not fair, we don't deserve it, we didn't do anything to cause it; we just inherited it.

This argument about fairness in inheriting diseases is moot. It assumes that you should not have this happen to you, that you should be above it. You assume that you don't deserve a certain disease because you have spent your whole life with a careful routine of diet and exercise. You have done everything in your power to prevent this, and yet you still get it. But it's hereditary. What you do cannot stop the fact that your parents passed this on to you. You are their child and nothing you can do will change that. Paul is telling us this information because it is fact, just the same of when you were diagnosed with the hereditary disease that you tried so desperately to avoid. This is the problem that we have before us. It is yours regardless of the perceived fairness of it. So it is with inherited Adam's fatal disease of sin. We have it, regardless of what we've done to try to prevent it from entering our lives. It came from our parents, and from our first parents: Adam and Eve.

We know that we have inherited this disease because the symptoms abound. The symptoms of sin vary from person to person, but they are there. One person is more prone to lying than another. Another person is prone to hatred and hurting people. One person is more prone to sexual sins, another cheating, another disrespect, to another gossip, and the list goes on and on. Your symptoms of this disease of sin are probably different than mine, but we all have the same disease. We are infected. Now, how do we fix it?

You don't cure a disease by treating the symptoms, by suppressing them, pretending that they aren't there. A cure for a disease is created by understanding and dealing with the root cause. So it is with the fatal disease of sin.

Sadly, the body has no natural antibodies to sin. There's nothing inside of us that can be raised up to defeat and cure us of this fatal disease of sin. This means that everyone infected with sin - and that's everyone ever - will die from this. "To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come." (verses 13-14) Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, his sin, is the root cause of our disease. We need a counter to that root cause. We need a cure.

Enter Jesus. Whenever scientists work on discovering a cure for a disease, they have to run tests to determine its effectiveness. In the case of creating a cure to the disease of sin, that test subject was Jesus. We saw the trials, the experiments, today in our Bible readings from Matthew. Test #1: "Turn those stones into bread and fill your hungry belly, if you really are the Son of God." Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Test #2: "Throw yourself down from the temple and God will send his angels to rescue you so that you don't get hurt." Jesus answered, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." Test #3: "Bow down and worship me and I will just give you the world so that you don't have to suffer and die for it." Jesus answered, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."

Trial after trial, the disease of sin could not infect Jesus. He would not succumb. He resisted. He fought. He prevailed. In doing so, he became the cure for the disease that Adam brought into the world. "Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." (verses 18-19) Because Jesus came as God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and as a man, born of the Virgin Mary, he did not inherit Adam's sin. He was obedient to God the Father his whole life through. He resisted every temptation that the devil threw at him. He gives us his perfect life as the cure for our hereditary fatal disease of sin.

The best part about this truth is that the cure is greater than the disease. The disease cannot stand up to the cure. The cure eradicates the disease. If everyone receives the cure for a disease, then it's wiped out. Jesus is that cure. That's why he is so much greater than Adam, that's why what Jesus did is so much greater than the disease that Adam brought into the world. The disobedience of Adam cannot overcome the obedience of Jesus. The obedience of Jesus will cure anyone who receives it of the fatal disease of sin. The cure of Jesus, of what he has done for us, gives us life where before we only had the fatal prognosis of death. Paul wrote, "The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 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!" (verses 16-17)

When you are receiving treatments for something like cancer, how do you know that the medicine, the radiation, the chemo has actually helped? Going on how you feel doesn't necessarily mean that your disease has been cured or eradicated. Sometimes even when the treatment is working you feel even worse than before. The doctors have to do scans and tests and show you if it's actually working. We know that the cure of Jesus works because his tomb is empty. If God had not accepted his payment for sin, as the reversal of the disease that Adam brought us, then he would not have raised Jesus from the dead. God shares with you your test results. Yes, you tested positive for the disease of sin. But by what Jesus has done for you, you are cured, you are healed. The cure of Jesus has eradicated the fatality of the disease of sin passed on to us by Adam and given you instead life even after death.

What's more is that God has entrusted us with the cure to sin, with his holy Word, with his message that Jesus' obedience is given to us and makes us righteous, saves us from the fatal disease of sin. We can give that cure to others. In fact, it is our responsibility to do so. Some people of this world want to ignore the symptoms of their fatal disease of sin. They want to pretend that nothing is wrong with them or that they can beat this disease on their own with the right amount of healthy and good living. However, we know the truth. Try as they might, they cannot cure themselves of the fatal disease of sin, just the same as we could not. There is only one cure, and that's Jesus and what he did for us. His cure gives people life everlasting.

God has given us the cure to the fatal disease of sin so that we administer it to other people. We are the onsite medics to give people God's life-saving message. If you don't give that cure of Jesus to people, who will? Think of someone in your life who needs this cure. What can you do to administer this cure to them? Have you prayed for the words from God to help you administer the cure to sin, to administer Jesus to them? Can you share this sermon with them – send it as an e-mail, share on Facebook, print it and mail it to them? These are the things we need to think about and strive to do because we have a life-giving cure in Jesus Christ which eradicates the fatal disease of sin.

We have the cure to the fatal disease of sin. We have Jesus. With whom will you share the cure? God be with you as you do. Amen.