

# Why We Need The Child In The Manger

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 5. I'm turned on up here, I don't know if I'm turned up back there.

! Can you hear me all right? All right, I got two quick announcements before I get into today's main text.

Last week, just at the end of the sermon, I was talking about the mission that we have as believers to be reconcilers to other people. And behind that is the ability and desire to share the love of Jesus with someone else.

One of the issues is, oftentimes, we have not been trained or prepared to do that. So, this morning, I'm just kind of working a quick 45-minute workshop after the service.

It's going to be in the upper room where the kids are hanging out now. And I'm just going to go through just a quick way to give you some pointers on how to share your testimony with someone.

[ 1 : 00 ] Just kind of brief, it's not going to be too long, but I think it's going to be able to help you, especially coming into this Christmas coughing season.

Number two, last week, I talked about some books. They're at the back. If you've paid, it's marked. Go grab your books. If not, please pay. The books have been sat down.

They've been sat in the back of the welcome desk reserved for you. So, I got some news for you. We put up our Christmas tree the first week of Christmas.

Now, listen. I know we're supposed to be celebrating the 12 days of Christmas. But for some reason, we've adopted to celebrate the 25 days of Christmas.

This is the earliest time I can ever remember putting up our Christmas tree. And I'll be honest with you.

[ 2 : 10 ] It's not that bad. Right? The tree, it's lit up. It's covered with a lot of special family ornaments, tokens of life's milestones throughout the year.

You know, we've got an ornament we got when we first got married. Special trips, special events for the kids. It's nice. I have to admit that it makes the living room feel much warmer.

Much more enjoyable. It's cozy. It's inviting. And of course, like any sane people, when you decorate your Christmas tree, you put on Christmas songs.

And I'm not talking about Frosty the Snowman kind of songs. But the ones that are based at least somewhat in the Bible. Now, there are reasons why Christmas hits us the way it does.

The lights, the warmth, the music, the familiar memories that we have. And of course, we remember the Christmas stories which tell us something hopeful is happening on Christmas morning.

[ 3 : 30 ] Right? It represents what happened 2,000 years ago. And of course, there's a sense of anticipation with the gifts.

Because we love it. We love Christmas. But as always, as a preacher, I'm a truth teller.

And here's the truth. Most people love the glow of Christmas without ever facing the darkness that makes Christmas necessary.

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Last week and the week before the sermon series, we're learning about, in Romans 5, we learn that the joy, we're supposed to have this Christmas joy because we have made peace with God.

[ 4 : 35 ] We've been reconciled. We have hope. We have joy that we can survive trials and sufferings. We have a Savior who still loved us when we were his enemies.

There's much to be joyful over. But if I was to tell you that Romans 5, verses 1 to 11 announces the peace that God gives, then Romans 12 and on explains to us why we need that peace in the first place.

Before it tells us about the child in the manger, Paul reminds us of the catastrophe in the garden. Let me tell you about the tension of Advent. We can't understand the beauty of Christ's coming until we understand the devastation of Adam's fall.

We won't cherish Jesus until we face what happened first to Adam. So in this text that we have before us, Paul brings us back.

[6:00] He brings us back to the opening pages of human history. Back to the moment where everything unraveled. Why? To explain something every single one of us knows, but cannot always name.

And it goes to the first question. There's something wrong with this world. And there's something wrong with me.

See, Paul answers this with three thunderous words. Sin entered humanity.

And then he follows it with three more words. Death through sin. Sin entered humanity.

You don't need a theology degree to understand this. You only need to look in the news. You only need to drive by a grave site. You only need to take a moment and examine your own heart.

[7:16] Often the problem with Christmas or December, if I might say, every December, the world tries to wallpaper over enough cheer over the brokenness to pretend things are all okay.

Right? We want a wallpaper. We want to talk about the good cheer towards men. But here's the fact. The world is not fine.

And the fact is, it hasn't been fine since Genesis 3. The fact is, we live in a world where sin reigns.

We live in a world where death rules. We live in a world where darkness is very real.

And let's be honest, some of us understand this so well that there is not enough of holiday spirit that can silence the ache that I feel in my heart.

Anybody ever been there? People are telling you to be joyful, to be cheerful during Christmas? It doesn't work.

[8:34] Personally, as I've told the story, we had a perfect nuclear family. Every Christmas was either with one set of family or another. Every single year, till dad left, then there's no Christmas.

It's going over to those same families and everybody getting gifts but us. It's not the same. But in these verses, Paul tells us the truth behind that ache.

And it tells us what every human heart senses. And that is, there is something fundamentally, catastrophically wrong with the world and with us.

And the Christmas stories in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke remind us, quietly yet gloriously, through the sing of angels, that someone has come to make it right.

So today's message is called, *Why We Need the Child in the Manger*. And the simple answer is this, because Adam left us in ruins, and only Jesus Christ can give us life again.

[9:56] Before we celebrate the wonder of his birth, we must stare honestly at the world that he stepped into, and at the humanity he came to save.

So this morning, like last week, I looked at three specific truths. This morning, we're going to look at three specific truths that Paul demonstrates for us. And I'm going to try to expand this whole passage.

And as I said last week, this is one of the most dense theological passages in all of Scripture. It's also the hinge for understanding the book.

So I want to go over, starting in 12, I'm going to take you all the way to verse 21, just to give you an overview. All right, you ready for that? We're going to kind of move quickly, but we're going to have three specific truths.

Does anybody have a recall? I totally forgot to bring something, or a cough drop. That'd be great. Gold star, whoever's first.

[10:59] Yes, thank you. Sorry. I'll take it later if you want to. I wasn't really coughing, but now it's bugging me.

All right. Before I go any further, let me just pray. Dear Lord, Holy Heavenly Father, as we just jump into this incredible text, it's kind of wordy, it's kind of confusing, but the message is crystal clear.

And I just pray that I, just by how I've subdivided it, I pray that the saints, and those people here who are checking out Christianity, what is this? I want them to really understand what it is about Christianity.

If they want to hate it, I want them to hate Christianity for the right reasons. If they want to reject Jesus Christ and hate Jesus, I want them to hate and reject for the right reasons.

So if someone was asking why I don't believe, they can give an answer. That's truthful.

[12:07] So Father, help my voice. I don't know if cough drops are worse or better. In your name we pray. Amen. So, the first truth that Paul shows us is he shows us that we have a problem.

And that problem is Adam's legacy. The first problem, or the problem, the first truth, is Adam's legacy. Like I said, before we can understand why we need the child in the manger, we must understand the catastrophe in the garden.

You see, Paul does something in Romans 5.12 that the world hates. The world hates us. And this is it. He tells us the truth about ourselves.

Tells us the truth about ourselves. Come on, how many of us battle with the mirror? We hate what it reveals. See, Paul doesn't give us the polished Christmas version, but he gives us this real version. And he does it using only one sentence, a single sweeping statement that diagnoses the entire world's condition. And here it is, verse 12.

[13:22] Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. And because of this, and so, death spread to all men because all sin.

You see, this is the story behind every funeral. This is the story behind every war. This is the story behind every broken family.

This is the story behind every sleepless night. This is the story behind every addiction. This is the story behind every cancer treatment. This is the story behind every issue of mental illness.

This is the story behind every regret, every headline, and every visit to the hospital. Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. That's big.

So for this first truth, I'm going to break it down phrase by phrase, and I'm just going to pull out the meaning of the text for you. So this is about understanding the text. Notice it said, sin entered the world through one man. And the one thing I want you to notice here, I want you to notice the precision of Paul's words here. He says, sin did not begin in Adam. Okay, it's not saying the sin began in Adam. It entered the world through Adam. The serpent sinned before Adam.

[15:13] The angels in heaven sinned before Adam. But the way sin entered our world, our human history, our bloodstream was through one man. One commentator just simply emphasized, Paul is not talking about personal imitation here, because Adam did we imitate him. He's talking about representation.

You see, you need to understand that Adam stood as the head of the human race. He was our representative. He was the hope. He was created in the image of God. He was everything we were supposed to be.

So when he fell, we fell with him. Commentator John Murray says, union with Adam is the central truth. We must grasp to understand the ruin of humanity.

We are not sinners because we happen to sin. We sin because we were born into fallen humanity. You with me on that? Because we are related to Adam.

Christmas says, people are basically good. Let's just bring it out of them. Paul simply says, no, people are in Adam. You see, Advent begins not with twinkling lights, but with this long shadow of Eden what happened in the garden.

[17:08] Second phrase, and death through sin. Now, most of us grew up with the myth of evolution being taught in our high schools.

We were taught that death is a part of life, right? The circle of life, if you want to get all Lion King on me, right? We rejoice. You know, someone died. Yay. Someone lives. Yay. New life.

That's what the humanists call it. They call it the natural part of life. But the Bible does not describe death that way. The Bible treats death as an intruder.

As a usurper. As an invader. See, Paul is not speaking primarily of just physical death or spiritual death.

He's talking about this sin brought in a total death reign over all humanity. Death would be seen as separation from God.

[18:17] Death as physical the gay. Anybody getting older? You know it, right? I spent more time golfing this year, and I found more pain points in my body that I ever can imagine, and it's because I'm old.

Death as judgment. And death as the evidence of guilt. You guys all remember, when you first become a Christian, you start reading your Bible, and you start in Genesis.

And you start in the stories. By the time you get to Genesis 5, you start reading this long list. So-and-so died. Here was Seth. He lived a good life, and he died. Then there's Enoch. He lived a life, and he died. Then there's Methuselah, who lived a life, and he died. It just goes through all these people, who they begat, and it ends with, and he died. James Montgomery Boyce says, It sounds like a funeral bell toiling over and over. Death, death, death, death, death.

[ 19 : 26 ] You see, before Christmas ever proclaimed peace on earth, Genesis proclaimed death on earth. See, death is the proof that humanity is under judgment.

Death is the evidence that sin has spread further and deeper than we could ever imagine. And death is the reason why you and I need a Savior and not a life coach.

Let's take a look at this third phrase. And so death spread to all men because all sinned.

One commentator says this little phrase is one of the densest theological statements in all of Scripture. Now, first let me say what it does not mean. It does not mean all sinned individually. Even though that's true, that's not what it's saying here. It's not all eventually do what Adam did. That's not what he's saying here. It does not mean all are corrupt, therefore all died.

[ 20 : 32 ] No, that's not what he's saying. Paul is meaning something and more precise here. He means to say we all sinned in Adam.

We're in Adam. Adam's sin is counted as our sin because Adam acted as our representative head. What Paul is teaching here is what theologians call the imputation. It's what Adam's sin is put on us. Adam's sin, his guilt was placed on the entire human race.

And this becomes the central passage on the doctrine of representation. And I'll tell you why this is important what I'm telling you. Babies die.

They haven't even had a chance to sin. But they're in sin. There's decay. Disease. Hunger.

[ 21 : 37 ] Hunger. It means that death reigns even when there is no law. If there's no law, everything's permitted.

There's still death. And even with those who never knowingly rebelled, they don't know about the Bible or whatever.

They don't know about God. When they die, they die. And it's all because of this simple truth. And we need to understand it. It's because we are in Adam.

Paul tells us in verse 14, he says, Death reigned from Adam to Moses. Remember, this is the time when there was no law. People did not know what was right except for what God had spoken to them or their conscience.

Even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. So Paul is making a logical point here. And this is it.

[ 22 : 47 ] If death is universal, does anybody know anybody who's not dead or isn't dying? That means the guilt must be universal.

And if the guilt is universal, the cause must be singular. Meaning if the guilt is spread to everyone in the same way, it has to have one source.

One source did that sin come in. And the cause is singular. And that cause must be Adam. You with me?

We're doing some theological thinking. There's some logical reasoning here. But this is what it means to be in Adam. Because of universal sin.

Because guilt is universal. The cause must be singular. And if the cause is singular, the cause must be Adam. But the world's going to tell you a different story.

[ 23 : 45 ] The world's going to tell you the reason you are the way you are is because of psychology. Physiology. Politics.

Economics. Even racial. Even your sexual identity. These are all reasons why you sin. Paul simply says, Nah, it's because of Adam.

You're in Adam. He had federal headship. And the reason we are in the condition we are in is because we all entered the world in Adam.

So here's my point. And I think I'm going to call it the Advent implication. And the implication is you truly cannot understand Christmas without understanding Adam.

This is the point of the message. If we misunderstand the fall, then Christmas is just a sentimental time. It was not a rescue mission.

[ 24 : 55 ] Jesus was simply an example for us to follow. Not the Redeemer he claims to be. And the manger is simply a decoration.

Or a decoration. Rather than a declaration. See, Advent, this Christmas, confronts us with this truth. You needed the child in the manger.

Because you were born in the shadow of Adam. And the world will only see Jesus rightly. When it sees Adam honestly.

You're with me on that? The world will only see Jesus rightly. When it sees Adam honestly.

That's the first truth. Adam's legacy. Let me bring you to the second truth.

[ 26 : 02 ] And this truth has been banged into us by Paul for four straight chapters. That there is a gift that God gives us. And we cannot earn that gift.

We cannot earn that gift. The gift we could never earn. Only comes through Christ's supernatural work. So I'm going to focus on verses 15 to 17.

If point one, if truth one, was the darkness that we cannot escape because of Adam. Point number two is the light we could never produce to save us.

So Paul now pivots from Adam's ruin to Christ's rescue. With one explosive phrase. Verse 15. It's beautiful. But the free gift is not like the trespass.

Understand this. The trespass of Adam and the gift of Jesus Christ are not equal aspects in a cosmic tug of war.

[ 27 : 04 ] Right? And I'm going to give you the most beautiful, brilliant news this morning. We can look at the misery of Adam and it hurts.

It hurts us. We feel it in us. We recognize it in us. We recognize it in our families. We recognize it in our government. We recognize corruption.

We recognize war. And it's there and it hurts. And we sometimes think that God's, it's so powerful. That somehow Adam and Christ are two evenly matched sources.

Here's the truth that I want you to get from the rest of the sermon. Christ's work is infinitely greater than Adam's fall.

Christ's work is infinitely greater than Adam's fall. Grace is not a reaction. Grace is a reign.

[ 28 : 03 ] As in grace reigns like a king reigns. So I want to walk through. There's several contrasts that Paul keeps using here.

And he's not talking about, he's trying to say why we need the child in the manger. But he, and he's not trying to balance the scales. As you're going to see, he's going to overwhelm the darkness.

The first contrast. We find this in verse 15. If, for if many died through one man's sin, much more have the grace of God and the free gift abounded for many.

What that means is Adam's one sin brought death. But Christ's one act brings overflowing grace, is overflowing life. Here's Paul's logic.

If Adam's sin, one sin, unleashed catastrophic death in this world. How much more powerful is Christ's one act of righteousness.

[ 29 : 10 ] John MacArthur says, Christ's one act of righteousness does far more than cancel Adam's sins. Grace doesn't. It recreates the world.

So God just doesn't undo the fall. God outdoes the fall. Grace doesn't just restore what was lost.

Grace multiplies. Grace overflows. Grace super abounds. This is why the manger matters.

Christ born in Bethlehem came not merely to reverse the curse, but it came to unleash a kingdom of grace greater than the power of death.

Amen? Like I said, make no mistake, Jesus and the devil are not two evenly matched foes. To say so, it's like Muhammad Ali in his prime, showing up today and wanting to fight me.

[ 30 : 22 ] I took some jiu-jitsu, you know. He would wipe me out without throwing a punch. He would just need to dance around that ring, and I'd faint out of tiredness just trying to follow him.

No contest. Here's the second contrast. Judgment came by one trespass, but notice justification comes through many trespasses.

Let's look at verse 16. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

It's interesting. Adam's sin brought judgment even though he committed only this one sin that we know of. But it condemned us all.

Christ's obedience brings justification. In case you don't know that word, justification, to be made right with God. That work that he did on the cross.

[ 31 : 33 ] His work, after millions have lived, millions have lived, which means billions have sinned, there's this overflowing mountain of human rebellion.

Christ's one act was enough to overcome it all. You with me on that? Adam causes the mess, and it's an insurmountable mess by human standards.

Jesus' death on the cross crushes it all. James Boyce says, Here's the truth.

Grace doesn't wait for us to get our act together. Grace meets us at our worst and clothes us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ himself.

Does it mean you get all pretty and you want to put on your best clothes so you can present yourself to Jesus? No, bring me. You come. Come in your tattered rags. I'm going to put a robe on you that will be so absolutely beautiful and wonderful, and you will look marvelous.

[ 32 : 53 ] Grace meets us at our worst and clothes us in our righteousness of Christ himself.

Because Advent tells us the truth.

Christ did not come for a world that was slightly off track. Christ came into a world that was buried under its own trespasses.

And get this, the justification, it's free. So the third contrast, we're going to look at verse 17, is death reigned through Adam, but those in Christ reign in life.

And I want you to see this here. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness, get this, reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

So remember what we talked about in Romans 5. We're just not saved from hell. We're saved unto a new life.

[ 34 : 14 ] Nannery used a great, Pastor Nannery, in case you don't know him, but Nannery, who he hates to be called by, but Nannery, Dave, comma Dave, pastor here, he uses this as a great analogy, and that analogy is, you've come over to visit God and you don't have to leave.

You're home. That's why it's so important for us to understand who we are in Jesus Christ.

There's peace now between us and God. We're family. We're welcomed in. We don't have to leave. So now, because we're with God, we reign in life.

Adam brought in a kingdom of death. Jesus Christ brings a kingdom of life. Here's two things.

Adam's reign is passive. The reality is, we don't choose death. Death chooses us, right? There was no button.

[ 35 : 29 ] No, I'm going to go in the non-decay category. But Christ's reign is active. When we're placed in his presence, he makes us kings.

You see, Adam's legacy in death reigning over us, Christ's gift is life reigning through us.

This is John Murray. And John Murray's not, this isn't poetic imagery. This is spiritual reality. See, in death, in Adam, death sits on the throne, sin dominates, and humanity is enslaved.

In Jesus Christ, life reigns, grace reigns, righteousness reigns. You see, Advent is not a sentiment, my friends.

Advent announces a regime change. The child in the manger came to overthrow the tyrant of death and install a kingdom where grace is the ruling power.

[ 36 : 44 ] Give me a Baptist amen. The child in the manger came to overthrow the tyrant of death and install a kingdom where grace is the ruling power.

See, what that means is Christ's grace is not equal to our sin. It is so far superior in every single way.

And he wants you to understand this. Paul wants us to understand that grace is not fragile. Grace is not limited. Grace is not a bandage for Adam's wounds.

You start thinking that grace is limited when you're like, oh man, I sin. I sin big. I gotta be separated from God.

I'm not gonna go to church for the next four weeks or four months. The reason you're thinking like that is you don't believe there's enough grace for you.

[ 37 : 41 ] That's simply what it means. Or I gotta come to church today. I gotta make sure I'm at church next Sunday and the next four church Sundays because of something I did.

Right? You start thinking that because you don't believe there's enough grace. Well, I'm gonna tell you right now, grace is a kingdom. It is a reign. It is a power.

And it swallows death whole. The manger isn't the beginning of a modest repair job.

The manger, manger, is God's invasion in this earth.

You see, Christ didn't come simply to fix us. Christ came to recreate us. Christ came to justify us.  
[ 38 : 49 ] Jesus Christ came to empower us. Jesus Christ came to establish his reign in us. This is why we sing the familiar Christmas line, let earth receive her king.

Because in this child, because in this child, a new world has begun. So now that we understand that in Adam we are dead.

Christ, the manger, Christmas, is about a new kingdom. kingdom. My third point to you today is to help you understand these two truths.

To help you understand yourself and the grace that Jesus Christ offers. And the third truth is that God is creating a new humanity through Jesus Christ.

That's why the rest of Romans is how, tells us how we are to live within ourselves and with each other as people who are no longer enemies with God.

[ 40 : 14 ] The fact is, Adam shaped our past, but Christ determines our future. So in this next section from verse 18 to 21, Paul is bringing his argument to the very summit of this mountain of teaching.

And he's tying together everything he has said in one sweeping, breathtaking contrast. And in verses 18 to 21, Paul announces nothing less the existence of.

There are two humanities. There are two verdicts, two testimonies. And here's the God's honest truth. The entire world is either in Adam or in Christ.

Let me show you. Verse 18. As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads justification in life for all men.

Two men, two acts, two verdicts. These are the two most significant actions in human history. Paul, Adam's disobedience led to our condemnation.

[ 41 : 30 ] Christ's obedience leads to justification in life. Note, there is no neutral ground.

There is no third option. every single person who has ever lived is either in, in Adam, which means they are condemned, or in Christ, they stand justified before God.

That's it. James Boyce says, two men stand at the head of two humanities. You are in one or the other.

No one stands alone. This is why Advent matters. Christ didn't come merely to forgive us, but Christ came to move us into a new humanity all together.

Second truth. I want you to see. Adam's disobedience creates sinners. Christ's obedience creates the righteous. Verse 19.

[ 42 : 42 ] For, as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience the many were made righteous. Now, I want you to notice the words here.

Were made sinners. Not by personal limitation, but by representation. This is what I said. This is called imputation. Adam's guilt counted to us.

Now, I want you to notice the change of verb here. It says, we will be made righteous. Guess what? That righteousness does not come from personal performance. It comes from performance of Jesus Christ. This, my friends, is what theologians called double imputation.

God lived this perfect life on earth. He was born a baby. He dealt with every single life episode that you and I can ever imagine.

[ 43 : 47 ] And he was crucified. And he was taken out to a wilderness and tempted by Satan himself. It is a life without any other comparison. And he never sinned.

He gives us this life. And our life, my sin stained life, Jesus Christ reaches into me and says, I've got that.

And he pulls it out. And now he wears me. So when he's on that cross, 2,000 years ago, the wrath of God was being poured out because Jesus wore my sin.

That's why Jesus Christ wore Adam's sin. Jesus Christ wore King David's sin.

Jesus Christ wore your sin. Jesus takes our life and gives us his life.

[ 45 : 08 ] And this, my friends, is the center of the gospel. And now that we are in Christ, we are placed in a new realm, a new identity.

We have a new representative. see, this is why Jesus came. This is why Jesus had to be born and live under the law. This is why he had to live a sinless life.

His obedience was for you. The child in the manger wasn't just destined to die for you. He was destined to live for you so that his obedience would become your righteousness.

Here's the third truth. And Paul's anticipating an objection here. And you've heard this, you're familiar with this, and the truth of the matter is the law increases the trespass, but grace overflows the boundaries.

So what someone's asking him is if Christ brings justification, what about the law? What about Israel? What about obedience?

[ 46 : 28 ] What does that mean? We're going to get into that in Romans. But you need to understand, it comes from an understanding here. His answer to this question in verse 20 is stunning.

He says, now the law came in to increase the trespass. What he's saying is the law did not heal us. the law wasn't designed to make us perfect.

The law wasn't made to design that we could please God. Hey God, I'm doing this, I'm pleasing you. No, no, no.

The law came to reveal the depth of our sin. The law came to shut every mouth. The law came to drive us to Christ.

But the verse doesn't end there, it says, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. All right, now I want you to understand here, that word abounded in the Greek, the Greek starts with hooper, which is super.

[ 47 : 36 ] You with me? It's like super grace. This idea of overflowing just doesn't go into the cup. It's overflowing. It's like a tanker truck.

Hey, I'm thirsty. Let's bring up that tanker truck and just dump all that water in that glass. It's overflowing. It spills over the edges.

It is uncontainable. I think the cough drops are killing me, but that's okay. please make sure Sue is sitting on the opposite room today for Christmas dinner.

I don't know if I can handle it. Anyway, Kistermacher, he's a commentary writer, he says, the law reveals the sickness, but Christ's grace applies the cure.

You see, here's the Advent message. Sin may increase, but grace outruns it. Sin may rise, but grace rises ever so higher.

[ 48 : 43 ] Sin may reign, but grace dethrones sin. This, my friends, is the gospel. And it brings me to the final truth.

We go from a kingdom of death to a kingdom of grace. Look at verse 21. It is the triumphant crescendo, so that as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Do you see it? There was a kingdom where sin sat on the throne. There was a kingdom where death ruled over every man and woman.

But, Christ has come. The new kingdom has dawned.

So, when we think about Advent, it's not sentimentality. Advent is the beginning of the regime change. In Adam, death reigns.

[ 50 : 06 ] In Christ, grace reigns. And not grace as a sentiment, but not grace as a vague idea, but grace as a king, as a power, as a reign.

This is why he came. This is why he took on flesh. This is why the angels sing, this is why Harold trembled. The new king had entered Adam's domain, and Adam's world would never be the same. So, our Christmas Advent implication is, the manger is the birthplace of a new humanity. Romans 5 teaches us anything, it teaches us this.

Christmas is the story of two humanities, and Christ has come to make you part of the new one.

Please make no mistake, Jesus Christ didn't come to help you self-improve.

Jesus didn't come so you could add moral polish. Jesus did not come to heavenly inspire you. God what he did is to introduce a new kingdom.

[ 51 : 21 ] Through his death on the cross, he's a new representative, a new verdict, a new life, a new identity, a new future. This is why we worship the child in the manger, not because he's cute, but because he's king.

Not because he brings warm feelings, but because he brings eternal life. So you know there's only one question I have for you this morning.

One question. Which humanity will you belong to this Christmas? Are you going to have Adam as your head or Jesus Christ as your head?

You see in this section from verses 12 to 21, he's not giving us abstract theology, he's giving us a mirror. He's giving us a verdict, but he's giving us a choice. And he's telling us that there's two humanities. You can choose Adam where there's condemnation, where there's sin, and there's death, or you can choose Christ where there's justification, righteousness, and life.

[ 52 : 51 ] Now for you in between people, there is no third category. There is no neutral Switzerland to belong to.

There's no undecided middle ground. the reality is you walk into this room today in one of those two kingdoms.

And you have an opportunity this morning to walk out still in one of those kingdoms. You see, this is why Christmas has to happen.

This is while a child had to be born. This is why heaven invaded earth. not to sprinkle sediment on a re-season, but to start a new creation, to launch a new humanity, to dethrone sin in grace, and to establish a new reign of grace.

grace. My appeal to you is that I know some of you are living in Adam's kingdom.

[ 54 : 05 ] you have sin you can't conquer and you feel the weight of Adam's legacy you have guilt that you cannot outrun you have shame you can't shake and I'm going to tell you now you have death that you cannot avoid and here's the truth you don't need more advice you don't need more resolutions you don't need more self effort you need a new head a new representative you need a new humanity you need the child in the manger because you need the man on the cross because you need a king who rules in life so this advent

God is not asking you to decorate your life God is asking you to surrender your life God is not trying to make your life harder he is asking you to come under a new king he's not offering you a season of inspiration he's offering you a life of justification he's not inviting you into religious performance he is inviting you into union with Christ which means you are no longer in Adam but you're now in Christ let me pray Father we thank you for the manger we thank you for this deep but so glaring repetitive passage that reveals not only the truth of what it is to be in Adam but the life that you offer us is so much more it's a place where grace abounds it super abounds it hyper abounds it overflows your goodness your mercy your kindness

Father I pray today that someone would make that change this morning that someone who is under Adam they're in him they're in his sin they feel his guilt they feel his shame this morning I pray that they don't want it anymore they pray that they surrender to you Jesus take me Lord I am yours I want to go I want to move to the kingdom of life and in that kingdom of life I will become a new person a new reality will be created for me how I deal with my wife my kids my workplace my parents my children everything will change and the greatest thing is that you will be with me because Romans 5 tells us that you pour yourself into us we are not alone we are in you and you are in us we are in you we are not gods we are broken people who are no longer sinners but we are saints who sin who still struggle with our rebellious hearts but our address will never change and Father you will forever work on our conscience and continue to build into our hearts the truths that we so fundamentally need to hear this morning

Father we thank you for the child in the manger because without him we are nothing but sons and daughters of Adam reigned over by sin and destined for death but in Christ we are sons and daughters of the living God reigned over by grace and destined for eternal life Father I pray that today someone or some people will make that choice in your name we pray Amen