



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

A Delicious Poison

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Romans 5:12-14

Clint Pressley

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

(Pastor prays)

We've come to a difficult passage. Paul has brought us to the deep water of origins. The “why” behind the “would” of our broken world. When People ask the searching question of how a good God could let such bad things happen, Romans 5:12 is the answer. Why is there mass incarceration? Why are hospitals filled with suffering and cemeteries filled with the dead? Why are our homes filled with strife and our hearts filled with unrest? Why would a loner white boy hate people of color so bad that he would walk into an El Paso store and start killing? Why? Why is there such racial division? Why is there such sexual confusion? Why is there such domestic dysfunction? I think verses 12-14 gives us the answer. In fact, I'll go so far as to say that if you get verse 12, you get the whole Bible.

This passage explains human history and our magnetized minds that are forever drawn to doing what we know is wrong. Here is why you cuss when you stub your toe. Here is why you keep looking at pornography. Here is why you lose your temper or get addicted or eat too much. And lest you think I'm saying it's not your fault, it *is* your fault. But you had help. That help is your own sinful nature and that's what this passage is about.

It starts out with a bridge word. See it in verse 12. It's the word “therefore.” That's a connection to the passage before it in verses 11, and in that beautiful passage Paul tells us that people are

sinner and Jesus Christ is the one who died in the place of the ungodly sinners and enemies of God.

The last passage told us that God has justified and reconciled us in Jesus. Now it's like he's anticipating a question. How is it that all people are sinners? And to answer the question, he takes all of us way back to the first man and woman, and the whole economy of Salvation is set up in verses 12 -19. What Adam did affected the many. What Christ did affected the many, and you are either dead in Adam or you are alive in Christ!

Sin is a Delicious Poison and Christ is the Only Antidote

The Root of Our Problem is Sin

You'll find it right there in verse 12. It's the presence of sin. Just as sin came into the world through one man. We find out in verse 14 he's talking about Adam. Sin came into the world through Adam. Adam was the first created person and with his wife Eve notice the phraseology in verse 12. Sin came into the world. Sin entered when there was nothing of its kind in man or in the world. The garden of Eden was a paradise and man wasn't a sinner.

The only evil in existence before man became a sinner was Satan. In Genesis 3, Satan tempts Adam and Eve so that sin entered humanity by one man. It was a place and a time, an event in history. That's important for the Gospel story because just as one man, Adam, opened us to sin, so one man, Jesus Christ, brought the remedy.

Now, if this had not happened, if the first Adam had not sinned, then there would be no need for reconciliation... but look what happens. Let's study the rest of verse 12. *¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.* Because Adam was the first created person, his sin had consequences for every person born into the human race. Verse 12 says that death spread to all mankind as evidenced by all sin. The primary cause of our sinful nature would be the sin of Adam.

There's a problem with the presence of sin. There is the **penalty** of sin. Why, according to verse 12, did death come through sin? What's the connection? To get that you've got to go all the way back to Genesis 2 when God put Adam and Eve in the garden. Let's look at Genesis 2:16-17. *¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* I am showing you all of this because only by grasping the

seriousness of Adam's sin can you appreciate the power of Christ's redemption. The very moment Adam sinned, death entered. The Bible points to several kinds of death.

Spiritual death. This is where we find ourselves outside of Christ. It's what Paul meant in Ephesians 2:1-2. *2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—* Spiritually dead means you are numb to the things of God, blinded by worldly passions and a slave to worldly addictions. You are distracted by worldly attractions. To be dead spiritually doesn't mean you don't know right from wrong; it means you haven't been born again by putting your faith in Christ alone. There is another description of death.

Universal Death. This is death spread to all men and women because all of us sin. ¹ Corinthians 15:21-22 says, *²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.* Here is the doctrine that used to be called Original Sin. All People sin and die because Adam originally introduced sin and death into the world. Through Adam, the dreaded disease of sin spread to everyone. We inherit his nature, we follow his example and we relive his story.

Verse 12 is amazing in its scope. It takes us from **one** man sitting to **all** people dying. Listen. This speaks to our condition, our battles to change and abilities to cope. If we came into this world neutral and just learned to sin, then we could unlearn it through behavior modification. But if we are born this way, then we need a changed heart. We need a grasp on what it means to be a sinner. A person doesn't become a sinner because he commits sin; a person commits sin because he is a sinner.

That's important, because if your defense for your tendencies is "I was born this way," I'll just say that's exactly what the Bible says. We are born sinners in need of a savior. We are born into condemnation in need of redemption. We are born in the likeness of Adam and saved by the cross of Christ.

We talked about death before, spiritual and universal; it's also physical and eternal. Every ache, every gray hair is a tap on the shoulder from death. As evidenced that every person who has ever lived has died; and since we are in Adam, we all die. It's what Paul meant in I Corinthians 15:22. As in Adam, all die outside of Christ. But the Bible tells us that physical death is not the

end, but the beginning of an eternal death. Revelation 21: 8 says, ⁸ *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.*” It's a frightful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Romans 5:12 says that death spread to all people without exception. No person ever escaped death, even Jesus, when He took on sin and took on death. But sin was a universal and worldwide epidemic that saturates humanity. That's what Paul says in verses 13-14, that death reigned from Adam to Moses from creation until the 10 Commandments. Even people who didn't have a stated command from a revealed God like Adam, sin was universal, pervasive and unconquerable. In fact, the language in verse 14 is language of what a king does. Verse 14 says death reigned like a sovereign, like a ruler; before Christ came all creation lived under death's rulership. But Paul has tucked a promise into verse 14. It's at the end. Adam is a type of foreshadowing, a faint hint of the One who was to come. If the root of our problem is sin then:

The Answer to our Problem is Jesus

This is a messianic phrase, the Coming One. Death reigned like a king. But the real King is coming and ultimately all people are in the first Adam or the second Adam, Jesus. All People are in Adam or in Christ. Adam equals ruin and the misery of the Fall. Christ equals redemption and the glory that comes with it.

Sin is a delicious poison and Christ is the only antidote. Sin is the root of our problem, and the *answer* to our problem is Jesus.

(Pastor prays)