

# FOLLOWING THEIR OWN CORRUPTION

**+ SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Everyone is a sinner deserving death, but God has provided the means of rescue through Jesus Christ.

**+ BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Romans 1–8

**+ SETTING:**

In the beginning, God created everything good and perfect. But soon the choice of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden unleashed the deadly power of sin upon God's good creation. The accounts of the judges make it abundantly clear that sin is a powerful force to be reckoned with—and we don't have the power to do so. Even the bright spots of Ruth, Boaz, Hannah, and Samuel were plagued by sin personally and dealt with a world marred by sin's effects, including famine, infertility, idolatry, and death. On our own, we are helpless before sin and death, but through the Savior sent for our salvation, we overcome.

# DAY 1

## READ:

**Romans 3:1-12**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Romans 3:10-12**

## NOTES

According to their website, The Coca-Cola Company started small. Dr. John Pemberton served the first Coke at Jacob's Pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 8, 1886. From their humble beginnings, the company has grown into a global powerhouse. No matter where you travel, you will likely find a place to purchase a Coke. Even their current slogan affirms their universal reach: "Refresh the World. Make a Difference."<sup>1</sup>

Like Coke, sin is universal. Paul argued that both Jews and Greeks are under sin, meaning everyone is a sinner. There is not a single person who is free from the stain of sin. To prove his claim, Paul quoted from Ecclesiastes 7:20, Psalm 14:1-3, and Psalm 53:1-3: No one is righteous. No one seeks God. No one is good. Without exception, every person is a sinner. This sin problem is a worldwide phenomenon. No matter how far you travel, you will find the presence of sin.

While sin is universal, it is also personal. Sin is not simply "out there"; it is "in here"—it is in us! Each day, we are reminded of the reality of sin as we struggle to resist temptation and obey God. Each day, in big ways and in small ways, we sin against God and others. Thankfully, grace is available for those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ. If we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

**What sins do you need to confess today?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

Romans 3:9-20

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 3:13-18

## NOTES

Jesse James is one of America's most notorious outlaws. The son of a slave-owning hemp farmer, Jesse joined a band of Confederate guerillas as a teenager. After the Civil War, James gathered a band of former "bushwhackers" to rob banks, stagecoaches, and trains. For nearly a decade, Jesse James and his gang of outlaws terrorized the Midwest. James was eventually murdered by Bob Ford, one of his gang members, on April 3, 1882, but the legacy of the violent outlaw lives on.<sup>2</sup>

Jesse James was an embodiment of the apostle Paul's words in Romans 3:13-18, especially verses 15-17: Surely his feet were quick to shed blood, and his path was marked by destruction as he took the innate human desire for peace and dismantled it for both himself and others.

Yet violence and conflict are not the only sins Paul mentioned. He also highlighted various sins of the tongue. While many people may not be able to identify with Jesse James or bloodshed, they can identify with lying, gossiping, and using venomous words. Sin is not committed with our hands alone; it is also committed with our mouths.

Our inability to control our tongues is a sign of spiritual immaturity; the mature human being controls his or her tongue (Jas. 3:2). Why does this matter? Because our words are powerful. We have the potential to build people up or tear them down depending on what we say to and/or about them. Let's ask God for the strength to use our words to build up others in need and to give grace to those who need to hear it (Eph. 4:29).

**How will you focus on growing in the area of controlling your tongue?**



# DAY 3

## READ:

Romans 5:12-21

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 5:12-14

## NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Although through one man's sin death has passed to all men, him whom we do not refuse to acknowledge as the father of the human race we cannot refuse to acknowledge as also the author of death ... In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of paradise, in Adam I died. How shall God call me back, except he find me in Adam? For just as in Adam I am guilty of sin and owe a debt to death, so in Christ I am justified."<sup>4</sup>

-Ambrose (c. 340-397)

On April 15, 1912, the luxury British steamship RMS Titanic sank in the chilly waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. More than 1,500 passengers and crew members died in the wreck. The most tragic part of the infamous event is that it could have been avoided if the crew had heeded the warnings sent by other vessels. Unfortunately, sporadic reports of ice from other ships were ignored, and the Titanic struck an iceberg, filled with water, and sank to the bottom of the ocean.<sup>3</sup>

In the garden of Eden, Adam was warned about the consequences of sin. God told Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would die (Gen. 2:16-17). Yet Adam ignored the warning, ate the fruit given to him by his wife, and plunged the entire human race into sin.

Romans 5:12-14 recalls Adam's act of disobedience and the entrance of sin and death into the world. The origin of sin and death is traced back to Adam's act of disobedience. From Adam onward, sin and death have plagued humanity.

Because of the universal nature of sin, death is unavoidable. Every person will die. As the author of Hebrews put it, each one of us has an appointment with death (Heb. 9:27). This means the real question is not "Will I die?" but "Am I ready to die?" The only way to be prepared for death is to trust Christ, the One who conquered death by dying for sin and rising again. Christ's resurrection demonstrates His power over death and assures His followers they will share in His victory over sin and death. On that day, for the believer found in Jesus Christ by faith, death will have lost its sting. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:54-57)!

**What are some ways Adam points forward to the coming of Jesus Christ?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Romans 7:14–8:4

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 7:24–8:4

NOTES



## ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #41: SIN AND DEATH

The ultimate consequence for sin is death—physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death (Rom. 6:23). God was clear to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17). The type of death that would result from the fall in the garden of Eden wasn't only physical death but spiritual death as well, the separation of a person from God. Spiritual death continues in a permanent state when someone dies apart from the reconciling work of Christ, who defeated death through His own death on the cross and subsequent resurrection.

On June 23, 2012, twelve boys entered the Tham Luang cave in Thailand with their soccer coach to explore. While inside the cave, the water began to rise, and the boys and their coach were trapped 4 km from the entrance of the cave. That evening, a search began for the boys, but they were not discovered until the ninth day. Rescuers were unsure “how to extract 13 people—some of whom couldn't swim—from a winding, flooded 4km-long stretch of caves that even experienced divers would struggle with.”<sup>5</sup> A plan was devised: Each boy was given a full-face oxygen mask and paired with a diver who helped navigate the boy through the tunnel and out to safety. All twelve boys survived the incident, as did the coach, but one of the divers died in the rescue operation.

In Romans 7:24–8:4, Paul praises Jesus Christ because only Jesus could rescue him from his “body of death” (7:24-25). In the early chapters of Romans, Paul painted a bleak picture of the human condition. All are sinners, and all deserve God's righteous judgment. This sinful condition cannot be remedied by good works—people cannot save themselves. But God sent Jesus to save sinners by being a sin offering on their behalf (8:3). Through faith in Christ's sacrificial death, hopeless sinners can be rescued from sin and its consequences. Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death (8:2)!

Christian, before Christ saved you, you were dead in your sins, a son of disobedience, and a child of wrath (Eph. 2:1-3). The outlook was bleak, but Jesus changed everything, paving the path to God by shedding His own blood so we could be near Him (Eph. 2:13)! Christ rescued you by giving His life to save you. Now He calls you to give your life to serve Him.

**What are some practical ways you can express your gratitude to Christ for saving you?**



# DAY 5

## READ:

Romans 8:1-17

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Romans 8:5-11

## NOTES

In the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Tony Stark used an arc reactor to power his original Iron Man suit. The fusion-type power source featuring a palladium core provided the necessary energy to power the superhero's armor and weaponry. Without the arc reactor, the Iron Man suit lacked power and was not functional. With the arc reactor, the Iron Man suit was fully functional, enabling Tony Stark to fight bad guys and rescue people all over the world.<sup>6</sup>

Similar to how the arc reactor provided power for Stark's Iron Man suit, the Holy Spirit provides power for Christian living. In Romans 8, Paul contrasted the flesh and the Spirit. People who rely on their flesh lack the power to resist sin or obey the commands of God. It is impossible for them to follow God's law (Rom. 8:7). Christians, on the other hand, rely on the Spirit, so they have the necessary power source. The Holy Spirit gives life and spiritual vitality to Christians, enabling them to experience victory over sin.

How can a person tell if they are driven by the flesh or powered by the Spirit? Evaluate the "fruit." If we have a mindset of the flesh, then the works of the flesh will be obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like (see Gal. 5:19-21). That is quite the list!

On the other hand, the "fruit" of the mindset of the Spirit is also obvious. In the believer, the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see Gal. 5:22-23). The presence of these characteristics in your life is evidence of the Spirit's work in your life.

**Do your attitudes and actions reveal the Holy Spirit's activity or absence in your life? How will you seek the development of good "fruit" in your life?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Adam is a type of Christ in that just as those who descended from him inherited death, even though they had not eaten of the fruit of the tree. So also those who are descended from Christ inherit his righteousness, even though they did not produce it themselves."<sup>7</sup>

-Chrysostom (c. 347-407)

**POINT 1: All are guilty of sin against God** (Rom. 3:9-18).

The problem of sin is \_\_\_\_\_. Every person, regardless of their background or heritage, is a sinner in their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**?** How should Christians process and understand the "good works" of people?

The problem of sin is extensive, affecting every part of us. Sin taints the way we \_\_\_\_\_, what we \_\_\_\_\_, and how we \_\_\_\_\_ the world.

**?** How would you respond to someone who says, "I'm not as bad as the kind of people Paul describes in Romans 3:10-18"?

**POINT 2: All are dead through sin against God** (Rom. 5:12-14):

### ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #41: SIN AND DEATH

The ultimate consequence for sin is death—  
\_\_\_\_\_ death, \_\_\_\_\_ death, and  
\_\_\_\_\_ death (Rom. 6:23). God was clear to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17). The type of death that would result from the fall in the garden of Eden wasn't only physical death but spiritual death as well, the \_\_\_\_\_ of a person from God. Spiritual death continues in a permanent state when someone dies apart from the reconciling work of Christ, who defeated death through His own death on the cross and subsequent resurrection.



The fallout of Adam's sin covered all of humanity and creation in \_\_\_\_\_. But by God's grace, Adam is a type pointing forward to \_\_\_\_\_, whose impact brings \_\_\_\_\_ and overcomes death.

NOTES

**?** What are some ways the gospel of Jesus addresses the fall of Adam and his descendants?

**POINT 3: All can be rescued from sin and death in Christ** (Rom. 7:24–8:11).

The cry of \_\_\_\_\_ for rescue from sin and death is answered only in Jesus Christ, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God to deliver us from \_\_\_\_\_ condemnation.

In addition to eternal life, believers in Christ receive God's \_\_\_\_\_, who enables Christians to resist \_\_\_\_\_ and live righteously in the present.

**?** What will it look like to live according to the Spirit and not the flesh?

## MY RESPONSE

Because God has rescued us from sin and death through the death of His Son, we seek to put sin to death in our lives and instead live in holiness out of love and gratitude for what Christ has done.

- **HEAD:** How does your understanding of sin and death shape your presentation of the gospel?
- **HEART:** How will you express your gratitude to God for saving you?
- **HANDS:** What is one specific step of obedience you will take this week as you rely on the Spirit for help?

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Apart from grace, we were unable to obey [the law]. As recipients of grace, we are both capable of obedience and commanded to obedience—to eager obedience, to be precise. Whereas the law pointed us to our need for grace, now grace points us to our need for the law. Grace enables us to humbly submit to God's good government. And God gives grace to the humble that they may do just that."<sup>8</sup>

–Jen Wilkin