BC 15; Eph. 2:1-5; Rom. 5:12-21; “Original Sin” I. The Agent of this Fall II. The Consequences of this Fall III. The Cure to this Fall

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, have you ever heard someone say “well, nobody is perfect” as an excuse for sin? Although it is true that nobody is perfect, can we use this as a get out of jail free card? And have they ever wondered why it is that nobody is perfect? Today we consider the doctrine of Original Sin. This doctrine is at odds with the mentality of the world- where most people will say that they believe that all people are basically good. Well if people are basically good, why is the world so bad? If people are basically good, why is it that nobody is perfect? Since it is true that we all fall short, who can blame us for sinning once in a while? The Bible uses many different names to describe sin. We find the words trespass, transgression, lawlessness, rebellion and straying to describe our heart and actions. But where does sin come from? So today we will be considering the doctrine of Original Sin with this theme: Jesus Christ is given as the last Adam who takes away the sins of the world.

**I. The Agent of this Fall**

In our first point we will be considering the agent of this fall. In answering the question- where does sin come from- the answer comes in the form of a person! When considering Original Sin, we have to keep something in mind. Original Sin is not referring to the actual act of Adam when he sinned in the garden alone, but rather this doctrine is dealing with the consequences of his action. So Original Sin is not referring to Adam taking the forbidden fruit specifically, but rather the spread of corruption that come to us all because of Adam’s actions. In other words, how does the sinful action of Adam affect us? When Adam and Eve fell in the garden, they were not acting alone. Specifically, Adam is known as the head of humanity. Adam’s name means “man,” and it was in Adam that all of humanity is contained. Adam was like a fountain- the source of water from which the rest of humanity would flow. If Adam remained pure, then the rest of humanity would remain pure. If Adam sinned and became polluted, then the rest of humanity would suffer the same consequence. Adam not only was the head and source of humanity, he represented humanity as an agent. Adam acted as our federal head. He was the chief or leader of our humanity and he spoke for us. He was our representative- chosen by God to be the head of humanity in the context of the covenant. Adam was acting like a president if you will- he spoke for the nation of humanity. Now you may not like what your present says, but he still represents you to the rest of the world. So Adam spoke and acted on our behalf in the presence of God. As he goes, we all go. We find this in our passage- Rom. 5:12, sin came into the world through one man; and death through sin. Adam was this one man whose actions introduced sin and death into this world- and corrupted the entire human race with the plague of sin and death as well. Adam is unique in this roll. As an agent of the covenant, his actions would be imputed to us all. Adam was completely free and capable of obeying God. He could have listened to God’s word- but as we saw last week -he chose to listen to the words of the devil and he plunged us all into sin. His original rebellion means that original sin now spreads to all. Now last week we saw that when Adam rebelled and fell into sin, mankind in him lost our true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. This week we will see that we not only lost these excellent gifts, we also inherited some pretty terrible ones in their place! We are now all sinners, we in Adam share in his sinful flesh. We are like him in every way- fallen in every part. So original sin or inherited sin describes us- we are now bent- prone to rebellion.

**II. The Consequences of this Fall**

Continuing on in our second point, we find the full consequences of Adam’s sin. Although Adam is the agent through whom sin and death were introduced into this world, we find that this sin and death is now attributed and applied to us all. To illustrate this, all of humanity is compared to a tree. If the root- or Adam- is cursed and polluted; the rest of the tree will grow up to produce a bitter and poisonous fruit! So it is, that in Adam we all fell. As we read in Rom. 5:12, so death spread to all men because all sinned. We all sinned in Adam. Original sin is the context in which we all sin. Our nature has fallen- we have a corrupt mind and will- our desires are bent in the wrong direction. This applies to all men- we all fell in him. This original sin and guilt is passed on to every generation. Just as every person was made in the image of God, now every person bears the image of the rebellious man. Every man, woman and child. Even the little babies in the womb. As Psalm 51 says, we are sinful from the womb- or sinful from conception. We all enter this world guilty and prone to rebellion. The youngest of children know how to steal and get angry! Now to be clear- we do not sin and therefore become sinners. Rather we are born sinners who are corrupt- and that is why we all sin. The consequence of Adam’s action is that we are all born sinners who sin on a regular basis. So to answer the question- who is a sinner? The answer is- all of us! Every man! From Mother Teressa to Adolf Hitler. The best and the worst of humanity share this trait- born in sin! Which brings us to the next consequence- we all deserve and receive death. As v. 12 expands- death spread to all men because all sinned. To be clear, we do not die because of Adam’s specific or actual sin. Rather we die because we are sinners. We die for our own sin! Death covers this world with its icy grasp- the pale veil of mortality covers this world- because every man is a sinner- and sinners must die. So who is liable to death? Every person because we are all sinners. Our fallen nature leads to wicked actions- and we deserve this judgment- this verdict is just because we are ourselves sinners in our nature and in our works.

Our BC art. 15 puts it like this- Adam’s original sin has spread to the whole human race. We have an inherited depravity that infects even small infants in the womb. It is so vile that it alone is enough to condemn the human race. Our article then concludes by referring to the Pelagian error. Pelagius taught that people sin because they follow bad examples. He taught that children were born with a blank slate- neither good nor evil. They only turn out bad because they have bad examples. This is both false and problematic. It is proved to be false because even children with good examples still sin. And it problematic because it undermines our guilt- and nullifies the need for Jesus. If humanity only needs good examples in order to do good- then Jesus needs to be a good example alone! The solution to sin because better education, a change in the environment, or having a better teacher. Jesus becomes nothing more than a good example! But that is not the gospel! We need more than good examples- we need a new heart! We need to be born again by the Spirit and Word! And this new life is exactly what we receive in Jesus Christ!

**III. The Cure to this Fall**

So we come to our last point- the cure to this fall. To keep things in perspective, remember that original sin includes the imputation of guilt based on the actions of our federal head. We are declared sinners because of the first Adam. But back in our reading from Rom. 5:17 we find another man! This other man- who we will call the 2nd or the last Adam- was referenced in v. 14. The first Adam was a type of this one who was to come. Now notice the tight connection here. We have two men- two Adams if you will. The first Adam sinned and brought condemnation, guilt and death. This is the Adam that rebelled in the Garden. The second Adam- Jesus Christ- is also a federal head. The works of Jesus Christ also fall under the realm of covenantal representation. The second Adam was obedient in the garden- and it was through His obedience that justification. As v. 18 reads- so one act of righteousness leads to justification and for life. So I hope that this comparison and contrast is clear. 2 Adams- one brings guilt, condemnation and pollution. The second brings grace, righteousness and justification. The first’s actions bring sin and death to all- the second’s actions bring righteousness and life for all men. By the first Adam’s rebellion we were made sinners- by the second Adam’s obedience we were made righteous. So it is clear that justification is the answer to original sin! Adam’s disobedience was answered by Christ’s obedience! Sin is met by grace- death answered with life! Or as we read in Eph. 2 put is, we were once dead in our sins and trespasses but now we are made alive together with Christ! What we need is not a simply dusting of morality! No, we need a radical change! We need to be transferred from one group of humanity under Adam to a new group of humanity under Christ! We need to be cut off from the branch of the old man and grafted onto the living vine of Jesus! Our dead, cold hearts need to be replaced with a living, warm heart! If Jesus was only an example as Pelagius taught, we still would remain unmoved and dead! Still enslaved to our bent and corrupt nature! But Jesus gives us new life- resurrected to a new family under a new leader!

To conclude, when we keep these two camps separate the glory of the gospel shines in all its light! The first Adam plunged us into sin- so sin spread to all bringing condemnation and death! The last Adam, Jesus perfectly obeyed in our place and brought grace, justification and life! Instead of having our sins imputed to us, we are now forgiven as we have Christ’s righteousness imputed to our cause. Jesus Christ is given as the last Adam who takes away the sins of the world. Praise God for sending the last Adam to deal with our original sin and depravity!