

## **Introduction**

As some of you know, my father died when I was six years old. I do have several keepsakes of his though, one of which is his driver's license. It's quite revealing. According to it, my father was 5'5" tall and weighed 128 pounds when he died at the age of 48. That makes me realize something. I'm a chip off the old block.

And so are all of you. You're just like one or both of your parents in various ways. You've inherited things from them like your father's looks or your mother's charm or your father's temper or your mother's creative flair, and so on. You're chips off the old block in other words.

But of all the ways that we're chips off the old block, there's one in particular that stands out. We see what that is in Romans 5:12-19.

## **Adam**

Look first at verse 12 and the "one man" Paul mentions in it. Some of you know who your ancestors are. One of Sandy Mink's was Edward Shippen, who was a prominent figure in 18<sup>th</sup> century Philadelphia politics. You'll find his name indexed on the Internet in fact. But Sandy and we have a far more important ancestor than him, one who's common to us all. It's Adam. He's the "one man" to whom Paul refers in verse 12.

He then goes on in verse 14 to talk about "the offense of Adam." God gave Adam a command, not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. But he disobeyed and ate it anyway. He then "fell" and suffered two consequences as a result. First, his body, which hadn't deteriorated and decayed, now did and he eventually died. Second, his disposition, which had inclined him to God, now inclined him away from Him.

## **Chips Off the Block of Adam**

But it wasn't just Adam who fell. It was all of us, his descendants, as well. Look at the opening words of verse 12, "**Therefore, just as**

**through one man.**" Paul's point is that we suffer the consequences of his disobedience just as surely as he did. The first consequence, in verses 12 and 14, is death. The second, in verses 12 and 13, is "sin."

"Sin," also called original sin, refers to Adam's fallen disposition. It entered into the world, Paul says, through him. His sons and daughters inherited it from him; their sons and daughters inherited it from them; and so on until you and I inherited it from our parents.

And it's by far the most vital thing about people when they're born. Suppose a baby is born with the IQ of Stephen Hawking, the good looks of Matt Damon or Keira Knightley, and the prodigious talent of Mozart. Something will determine his or her destiny far more dramatically than all three of those things put together. That something is the disposition, the original sin, that he or she inherited from Adam. It is without doubt the single most significant fact about us all.

So let's try to understand it. Think about Adam's first sin. What was it that enticed him to disobey? Genesis 3:5 tells us. He thought doing so would make him "like God." He wasn't naturally disposed to be like God before he disobeyed. But he was after. And so are we, which reveals what original sin is. It's the disposition to self-realization. It's the overriding inclination to think, feel, and act in practice as if we're God. We think and feel that our preferences, opinions, desires, and rights are more important than anyone else's and act as if it's so. That in turn leads to all the bodily habits of evil that run our lives. Why do we gossip, lust, get angry, resent criticism, and so on? It's because the disposition to self-realization resides in and drives us. All those evils are expressions of that one source.

We see that everywhere around us don't we. G.K. Chesterton said it well, **"The doctrine of original sin is the one philosophy empirically validated by 3500 years of human history."** He's right. Consider these real life scenarios. People scream at the manager of a turnpike gas station because gas prices are so high. A wife leaves her Christian husband of 10 years because "He doesn't make me happy anymore." A

pastor demands that people call him "Dr." or "Reverend." A boss swears at and degrades his employees. There's no debating what the Bible teaches about original sin. Normal human behavior empirically proves it.

That then is what we inherited from our parents immediately and Adam ultimately. It's the disposition to self-realization, the overriding inclination to think, feel, and act in practice as if we're God. Every human being is a chip off Adam's block in that regard.

## Jesus

But Paul doesn't write about just Adam here. He writes about Jesus as well. He writes about Adam in fact in order to write about Jesus. We see that in verse 14. He declares that Adam is "**a type of Him who was to come,**" the "Him" being Jesus. A type is one thing in history that foreshadows or points to another thing in later history. Almost all types in the Bible are by way of comparison but this one is by way of contrast. Adam foreshadowed Jesus by way of contrast - in two ways.

The first is found in verse 19. Adam was disobedient but Jesus was obedient. Philippians 2:8 states that Jesus was obedient to the point of death. That's the obedience Paul has in mind here. Jesus obeyed Father God, submitted to His will, by dying on the cross.

The second way Adam foreshadowed Jesus by way of contrast is found in verses 15-18. These verses seem complicated but they boil down to this. Adam disobeyed and the result is condemnation and death for all. But Jesus obeyed and the result is grace and life for all. And the grace and life are far greater than the condemnation and death. That's the message of these verses in a nutshell.

## Chips Off the Block of Jesus

Now, Father God manifests that grace and life to us in many ways. One is found in verse 19, which is absolutely powerful. Paul says that through the disobedience of Adam, you and I were made sinners. But through the obedience of Jesus, we're made righteous. What a contrast!

A question helps explain the connection between Jesus' obedience and our being made righteous. Who is the most self-centered, egotistical, person who ever lived? It was Jesus, on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "**He (God) made Him (Jesus) to be sin on our behalf.**" Few people grasp that. On the cross, Jesus took into Himself the very disposition that human beings inherit from Adam. I knew a man who let his good wife work and put him through law school. He then divorced and left her after he developed his practice and began making money – for a prettier woman. Try to get a hold on the self-interest, the utter egotism, of a disposition that would do that. Well, Jesus had that very disposition during the six hours he hung on the cross. Or to say it another way, He was a chip off Adam's block!

That reveals that Jesus' death, in conjunction with His resurrection, had two purposes. One was to deal with our *sins*. The legal terms condemnation and justification in verse 16 are about that. The other was to deal with our *sin*. The phrase "reign in life" in verse 17 is about that.

Now, verse 19 reveals what Father God is able to do as a result of that second purpose being achieved. He's able to make us righteous. I'd sum it up this way and it's a remarkable message. Jesus took on Adam's disposition that we might take on His. We *are* chips off the block of Adam. We *have* his disposition in us. But we *can become* chips off the block of Jesus. We *can come to have* His disposition in us.

The question of course is "How?" How can we come to have His disposition in us? It requires two things of us.

## **Recognition**

The first is recognition. You and I must recognize two things.

First, we must recognize how bad the disposition of Adam is. We do that by examining in detail what the Bible says about it, in passages like Romans 3:9-18. We also examine in detail what the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others and us tell us about it.

Take what Shakespeare called "the green sickness," for instance –

jealousy. Some years ago, I read that a friend of mine from college had achieved success as a professor. I immediately felt a tinge of jealousy that he had and secretly wished that he hadn't. But the Holy Spirit took me to task for it and I examined my response. What kind of person am I anyway to want him not to have something because I don't? The answer is a revolting person who thinks and feels in practice as if he's God. I was as disgusted with myself at that point as God was.

Do what I did that day. Examine the disposition of Adam in detail. You'll recognize just how hideous it is if you do.

We must recognize a second thing – how good the disposition of Jesus is. We do that by examining it in detail. Study what He said and did in the Gospels. Also study what the New Testament says about the kind of person we can become in Him. Then put the two together.

A certain kind of disposition will emerge from that if we do. It's one that: receives criticism with gratitude and joy, has compassion for those who wrong it, doesn't need or crave the praise of others, roots for its competitors, is content with not getting its own way, is undisturbed by waiting, is satisfied in poverty and plenty, and so on.

You and I desperately need to examine in detail what the Bible tells us about the disposition of Jesus. We'll recognize, if we do, that it's the most desirable of all conditions or states – that it is in fact the condition or state that human beings down through the ages have sought.

So that's the first thing that having the disposition of Jesus requires – recognition. We must recognize how bad the disposition of Adam is and how good His is.

## **Relationship**

The second thing it requires is relationship. To have *the disposition of Jesus* we have to have *relationship with Jesus*. That relationship begins with a decision. We firmly decide to be disciples of His. The relationship that begins with that decision then proceeds and deepens with carrying it out. We carry it out by arranging all of our affairs

around being with Him in order to learn and do all that He says.

Now, this relationship with Jesus that proceeds and deepens does something to us or actually in us and it's a spectacular thing. It makes our disposition less and less like Adam's and more and more like His. C.S. Lewis captured the essence of this far better than I can. He wrote: **"The real Son of God is at your side. He is beginning to turn you into the same kind of thing as Himself. He is beginning, so to speak, to 'inject' His kind of life and thought, His Zoe, into you; beginning to turn the tin soldier into a live man."** That's exactly what Jesus does in our relationship with Him. He slowly but surely, over the course of our lifetimes, turns us into the same kind of thing as Himself. He makes us less and less like Adam and more and more like Him. He makes us chips off His block instead of off Adam's.

I know that because I've experienced it. Several months ago, I learned that a pastor I know is succeeding as a writer, something I highly value and enjoy. I feel glad that he is and hope that he has even greater success in the future. What a contrast that is to the way I thought and felt about my college friend succeeding as a professor.

That change in me illustrates what relationship with Jesus does. It slowly but surely and continually makes our disposition less and less like Adam's and more and more like His. It makes us chips off His block instead of off Adam's.

You now know the two things that having the disposition of Jesus requires - recognition and relationship - and they're linked. I don't have time to explain why but only those who recognize will relate.

## **Conclusion**

I close this morning with a thought. God doesn't condemn us for having the disposition of Adam. That's because it's like everything else we inherited - not our fault. But He does condemn us for rejecting His deliverance from it - relationship with Jesus. So recognize and relate. You'll be a chip off the block of Jesus if you do!