

JESUS IS THE PERFECT SOLUTION TO OUR GREATEST PROBLEM

What would you say are some of the worst terrorist attacks in the history of the world? We all remember 9/11, a terrorist attack that killed about 3000 people? Wouldn't you consider the bombing of Pearl Harbor a terrorist attack that killed about 2400 people? How about the terrorist attack led by Adolph Hitler better known as the Holocaust in which about 6 million people were murdered? Terrorist attacks have been going on throughout the history of the world, some worse than others.

Of all the terrorist attacks that have occurred, the worst one in the history of the world took place thousands of years ago in a garden, a garden called Eden. In that garden, the terrorist named Satan attacked Adam and Eve. He convinced them to fall for his lies, causing them to doubt and rebel against God and infecting this once perfect world with sin and death. Because of this one act of terrorism, every form of evil that we can think of exists. Because of this one act of terrorism, everyone born into this world will die. Every day millions of people die. Sad to say, many of them will go to hell no matter how nice or good they might be, maybe even some people we know and love.

In our text for today, Paul speaks about this terrorist attack and our greatest problem as a result of it. Yet, he doesn't leave us hanging out there without any hope. With every problem there needs to be an answer, a solution. Paul gives us the solution. It's Jesus. Paul makes it very clear that **Jesus is the perfect solution to our greatest problem.**

Of all the problems there are in the world and our lives, we can narrow our greatest problem down to sin and death. They go together like soup and sandwich. That's the point Paul made in the verses of our text. He begins. **Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned**— Sin is the cause of death and it all began with one man, Adam. I don't think a lot of people fully understand the magnitude of what took place in the Garden of Eden.

Imagine being at your home, and you're having a big get-together with family and friends. Your house is packed with people. You receive a package, and on the package it says; "Anthrax – do not open." You think someone is pulling a joke so you decide to open it. You struggle to open it up, and then the package bursts open. Anthrax is everywhere! All your family, all your friends inhale the anthrax and die. Ultimately, whose fault is that? It's yours! You opened the package.

When Adam sinned, it was as though he had opened a package he shouldn't have opened. Sin entered his body, entered the world, and affected everything and everybody. Billions and billions of people have been affected by that one moment in the Garden of Eden. Spiritual anthrax meaning sin entered the world. And it's lethal. It results in death. Adam and Eve then passed this disease on to their children. This would continue on from generation to generation until the end of time. From that moment on, people were born with the problem of sin. There is a test you can perform on yourself to see if you've been infected. Pinch yourself. Are you alive? Do you have flesh and blood? Then you are infected. To prove it, ask yourself these questions. "Have I had any unkind thoughts even maybe here at church this morning? Have I said anything that was harsh or did I gossip about anyone this past week? Why am I selfish sometimes? Why do I at times disobey and not respect those in authority? Do I always put God first in my life? Why do I forget to pray? Why do I lose my temper? Why do I

make mistakes?" If you are honest and answer yes to any or all of the above, then you have been infected with the deadly disease of sin. That's why we all will die.

Yet, my friends, physical death is the least of our problems. Verse 18 tells us that **the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men.**" When Adam sinned, he not only brought sin and physical death into the world, he also brought condemnation. What happens after a person dies? Paul tells us. "Condemnation." In the Bible, "condemnation" means hell – eternal punishment for sin. Because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, hell deserves to be overflowing and heaven deserves to look like a ghost town. That's our greatest problem.

Is it any wonder that people don't like to hear or talk about death? Sad to say, many try to solve the problem on their own by what they do, how they live as their ticket to heaven. In order for that to work, God demands perfection from us. We can't give him that so that solution cannot work. So what is the solution to life's greatest problem? It's really simple. It's Jesus. Paul wrote. **Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.** God knew the problem we would have right when Adam and Eve sinned. He knew the helpless situation they and all people were in and what they deserved. He didn't tell Adam and Eve that he was going to need some time to think about the problem and then see if he could come up with a solution or if he even wanted to. No! God cared. He loved them and didn't want hell to be filled with the bodies and souls of every human being. So he took action. He promised to send someone to take care of this problem for them, his very own Son, Jesus. Jesus would be the perfect solution and give all people a way to escape their deserved fate in hell.

How would he do it? Jesus had to become a man and do battle against the devil. He did just that as we heard in our Gospel lesson when at the beginning of his public ministry, for forty days and forty nights, the devil launched attack after attack against Jesus trying to get him to fall once, to believe his lies just once. Jesus resisted every one of them perfectly and would do that for the next three years. Then he took Adam and Eve's sin as well as the sins of the entire world on himself and suffered the condemnation that we deserved. Instead of us being condemned, Jesus was condemned on the cross of Calvary where he defeated sin, death and the devil for us.

There is a movie called the Last Emperor in which a young child became the last emperor of China with over 1000 servants to take care of his every need. One of the emperor's friends asked him what happened when he did something wrong. The boy emperor said, "When I do something wrong, someone else is punished. I'll show you." He picked up a vase, smashed it and then ordered that one of his servants be beaten for breaking the vase. This is the exact opposite of what Christianity is all about. When the servants, meaning you and me, break something, meaning God's commandments, instead of pronouncing us guilty, God pronounced his son guilty. Instead of punishing us, he punishes his Son instead. It wasn't just a time out or a slap on the hand. It was death by crucifixion and the pains of hell itself. This is how Jesus solved our problem. Adam's sin was the worst mistake made in the history of the world. What Jesus did, his perfect life and death on the cross, is the best thing that ever happened in the history of the world. Just as Adam's sin affected every human being, so does Jesus' life and death. Paul summarized this well when he wrote. **For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!** Because of who

Jesus is and what he did, all who believe in him will be declared righteous in God's sight because of the abundant provision of God's grace.

Grace is such a beautiful word but sometimes misunderstood. What's the definition of grace? It's God's undeserved love found in Christ's perfect life and death. When you think about it, grace is really a person, the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Grace is Jesus being born on Christmas and living a perfect life as your substitute. Grace is Jesus being blamed for the sins of everyone and dying as your substitute on the cross. Grace is Jesus rising from the dead, proclaiming God's forgiveness and destroying the power of death in the world. Grace is Jesus Christ. Grace isn't a team effort where God does his part and we do our part. Grace is all about the Triune God doing everything on his own to win our forgiveness and salvation.

Imagine for a moment that if you could have one wish, it would be to stand on the platform of the Olympics with a gold medal around your neck. You have been training hard as a skier to make it to the Olympics and are ranked number one in the world. In your final run to make it, you take a horrible fall and are paralyzed from the waist down. There goes your chance at a gold medal. One day as you are sitting in your wheelchair recovering, a U.S. Olympic skier who won the gold medal walks into your room, takes the gold medal off his neck and puts it around your neck. He won it but he gives it to you. You can't believe it as your eyes well up with tears. What a gift! This is what Jesus has done for you. You want to have the gold medal of eternal life wrapped around your neck. But your sin makes that dream impossible until Jesus, the perfect solution, stepped into the room of this world and won the gold medal for you with his perfect life and death. He gives you the gold medal of eternal hope and joy and promises you that on Judgment Day, you will stand on the winner's platform in heaven with him. What a gift of his grace! Jesus is truly the perfect solution to our greatest problem. To God be all glory and praise! Amen