

Eternal Security – Message 3

LIFE IN CHRIST

In the last message we learnt how we all sinned in Adam. We're guilty human beings with a fallen Federal Head and so, in our natural state, God can do nothing with us.

Remember that God's perfection and holiness means that He cannot bear to look upon even *one* sin - and that was all it took to sink the human race!

- *Corrupted and Condemned*

And we know, of course, that Adam's sin was only the beginning of our human tragedy. From that *one* sin, for which we *all* share the guilt, the corruption that ensued has been passed on through Adam's line - namely the human race. If we are 'in Adam' (condemned as a race), Adam is likewise 'in us' (corrupt as individuals).

- *The human genome*

We *all* inherit Adam's DNA in the form of the *human genome*. Like a burning candle, passing on the same flame to innumerable other candles, Adam's life has been transmitted to each one of us - complete with the innate tendency to continue *sinning!*

Look at how the Bible describes what humanity has become:

"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks for God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (*Romans 3:10-12*)

So Adam's *Federal Headship* has made it impossible for a natural man, a *sinner*, to please God - to achieve eternal life. It's a 'double whammy' if you like - although really the two sides of the same coin: the shared guilt for that one act of trespass - imputed because of Federal Headship - and the ensuing spiritual corruption passed down from father to children.

The upshot is that the whole race is involved. The whole race! Not individuals per se - but *every individual in the race!* We've been categorized a *race* of sinners and the guilt of that first sin is shared by every member (*Romans 5:18a, 19a*).

- *Heaven and humanity: an impossible mix*

This has made it impossible for us (as an entire race) to be accepted by God in our natural state. As Paul said, when writing to the Corinthian church::

"I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." (*1 Corinthians 15:50*)

So, what's the solution to this terrible dilemma?

There could only be one! If we were to be truly freed from sin and brought back into a relationship with God, two things needed to happen.

- *Corporate and individual responsibility*

Firstly, the racial guilt incurred by our representative in the garden, needed to be erased. And secondly, the corruption of sin passed down to us needed to be dealt with. In other words, the sins committed by each of us *individually*, needed to be forgiven.

(Added to this, of course, provision had to be made in order to eliminate any possibility of any repetition of Adam's lapse into sin and death).

And God's solution to both of these problems was ingenious!

- *A new beginning; a new Adam*

Because the human race couldn't be 'fixed', it would have to be replaced! God would have to make a new beginning – what the Bible terms “**a new creation**” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). A race that wouldn't fall. One that would prove eternally pure and righteous!

Adam had to go! Certainly, he was the first-born of our race, but we needed to be in a *new race* - a *spiritual* race with a *new representative head*: a first-born who could do for believers what Adam did for the entire human race - and transmit spiritual life to us in the same way that Adam transmitted natural life through the human genome.

The children of wrath were to become children of God! (**John 1:12-13**)

So, God provided for an entirely fresh start; a new creation - a race of believers with a *different* Representative Head. A second or *last* Adam who didn't fail and who would fulfil for that new race *exactly the same function as the first Adam did for the human race!*

That's why our chapter describes the earthly Adam as “**a pattern of the one to come**”. (**Romans 5:14**).

As Paul further explains to the Corinthian church:

“So it is written:’ The *first man Adam* became a living being’; the *last Adam*, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that, the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.” (**1 Corinthians 15:45-47**) (*italics mine*)

The new Adam would be quite the reverse of the first Adam so that instead of transmitting death – he would transmit life!

“For as in Adam, all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)

- *Death by Disobedience: the first Adam*

Sin had entered the world (with death as the result) through what Adam did in the garden of Eden. As Paul says here:

“sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin”, (Romans 5:12)

And the sin that one man committed was the sin of disobedience to God’s commandment:

“.. you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:17)

Adam disobeyed and **“the many died by the trespass of one man,” (Romans 5:15)**

- *Life by obedience: the last (second) Adam*

Now it follows that if the Adam’s act disobedience to God brought death to the entire human race, life could only be transmitted to the new race through a contrasting act of obedience!

And our Adam (called the ‘last Adam’ and the ‘second man’ (1 Corinthians 15: 45,47) was characterized by perfect obedience to God in thought, word and deed. (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

During his days of earthly ministry, Christ said:

“My food...is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

On a further occasion, he identified perfect obedience as the basis for his uninterrupted fellowship with the Father when he said..

“The one who sent me is with me; he had not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:29)

- *Temptation in the garden (Eden v Gethsemane)*

And our Adam’s perfect obedience didn’t stop there. As earthly Adam’s obedience was tested in the garden of Eden and Christ’s obedience was tested in the garden of Gethsemane.

And what a contrast! Adam ‘caved’ and died by disobeying God but our Adam died in obedience to God! Though in agony of soul - facing a terrible death and suffering on our behalf - he didn’t waver – continuing to do the things that ‘pleased’ the Father.

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:42) (italics mine)

And so, the Son of Man, in the words of the second chapter of Philippians:

“humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:8) (italics mine)

- *The way of Salvation*

Adam, as Federal head of the human race in Eden, acted on our behalf - as our proxy (or substitute) - when he disobeyed God. Christ, as the Federal Head of the new race, similarly acted on our behalf of all its members when he went obediently to the cross.

So this is how we are saved – and our sins forgiven.

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.

The human race was incorporated ‘in Adam’ and therefore seen by God as also having committed Adam’s act of disobedience in the garden. By the new birth, we, the divine race, are similarly (but by contrast) incorporated in Christ and therefore seen by God as having participated with him in his act of obedience on the cross.

This truth is expressed time and time again in the New Testament – particularly in the writings of the apostle, Paul:

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him...” (Romans 6:6-8a)

And, writing to the church in Galatia, Paul says this:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Go back to the illustration of the Russian nesting (‘Matryoshka’ or ‘Babushka’) doll that we looked in the last message. It serves as a great picture of the human race incorporated in Adam, and it similarly serves as a clear illustration of the divine race incorporated in Christ

We talked about the human genome and made the point that every living human on earth has been ultimately produced from within Adam.

1. Each of the dolls is identical to the other

Take a babushka doll apart and you'll find each doll is identical (though successively smaller in our physical analogy)

And so it is with us in Christ. As Christ is the new Adam, head of the spiritual race, his 'spiritual DNA' (if you will) has been handed down successively to each member of that race. As with saw with earthly Adam, it can be likened to the flame of an original candle being passed down to successive candles – different candles but the same flame!



So we were born again by dying with Christ on the Cross, and, in place of our old nature, receiving the nature of Christ – giving each believer the absolute right to entrance into the family of God. (*John 1:12*).

We, of course, are not little 'gods'. We've received the resurrected life of the glorified Son of Man (his human nature) but as this is forever joined with the divine Son of God (he is both God and man in one person), we are fitted for heaven with him.

"...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature...." (2 Peter 1:4)



And like the smaller dolls within the original Babushka doll are separate – yet identical - Christ has formed in us (*Galatians 4:19*) and we are being progressively transformed into his image:

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which come from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18)

With the result that one day, we will be as Christ is in glory today. As John says in his first epistle:

"Dear friends, now we know that we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.." (1 John 3:3) (see also *Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:1:27*).

2. Crucified with Christ

We also saw that whatever you do to the one large outer doll, you effectively do to all the other dolls inside! Lift up the Babushka doll, roll it around, float it in water – whatever – and whatever you do to the main doll – you do to all the dolls inside. Each not only participate in the action, but also in the consequences of that action.

Remember how we talked about the time that Abraham met Melchizedek. Levi hadn't yet been born yet he was credited with Abraham's action in paying tithes to Melchizedek.

*“One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.”
(Hebrews 7:9-10)*

Levi was genetically in Abraham's body – incorporated in Abraham! So great-grandfather and grandson were regarded as acting as a unit.

Now we've already seen that because we are viewed by God as being in Christ, we too are regarded as having died on the cross – and thereby having paid for our sins. Because of this substitutionary role, *Christ's* actions as my proxy (my representative) have become *my* actions.

Paul expresses this truth when writing to the saints in Corinth:

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” (2 Corinthians 5:14) (italics mine)

(Christ was, of course, far more than merely a proxy. He was our champion, doing - on our behalf – something that no other being in the universe could possibly do.

*‘There was no other good enough,
To take away my sin;
He only could unlock the gates
Of heaven and let me in.’)*

3. Buried with Christ

But our identification with Christ doesn't end with his vicarious death on the cross. If we died with him, we were also buried with him (Romans 6:4) and this burial (signifying a permanent separation (by death) from this world), is so that we might now, in this place of death to the world, live a new life (his resurrected life) with him.

4. *Living with Christ (his resurrected life)*

In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul wrote these words:

“..through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me.” (*Galatians 2:19-20*)

5. *Resurrected with Christ*

And one day we’ll be physically raised in glorious, incorruptible bodies to join Christ in the air (*Philippians 3:21*) – united with him in a spiritual union (as a wife is to a husband) (*Ephesians 5:21*)

“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” (*Romans 6:5*):

6. *Seated with Christ*

I died with Christ who represented me on the cross. I was buried with him and am now living a new life – which is his resurrected life. One day I’ll be physically resurrected to be just like him – body, soul and spirit and right now, I’m *already* seated up there in heaven because he’s there – and he’s representing *me*! So, Paul says to the Ephesians:

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms *in Christ Jesus.*” (*Ephesians 2:6*)

7. *‘What you see is what you get’*



Now when we look at a Babushka doll, we only see the outer doll, All the smaller ones are inside that outer figure. In our illustration, she incorporates (and hence represents) all the others.

And his is the reality of true substitution – or representation. I don’t directly assess or judge the incorporated dolls. I see only the outer doll and infer from that, the shape, colour etc. of all the dolls inside. The outer doll is all I see- the others share in my assessment purely by their identification with her.

8. *Substitution: God’s chosen way of Salvation*

This aspect of the Babushka doll is purely a (necessarily imperfect) physical representation of a profound spiritual reality. Just as the high priest in the tabernacle of old, was “appointed to represent the people”, (*Hebrews 5:1*), so, as the firstborn of a new, spiritual race, Christ stands in heaven representing every believer.

And he's the only one God sees! If God looked at us personally– it would be a nonsense to say that Christ is *representing* us. A proxy, substitute or representative means, *by very definition* – that you're not present - personal under scrutiny!

So this is what then happens – and will do so (in a sense) for all eternity!

God viewed only one man – Adam - in order to assess and judge you and me. Our entire race was condemned solely on the basis of what our representative did in the garden. God placed the entire race in the category of sinners on the basis of Adam's action – and Adam's action alone.

Therefore, in that sense, God doesn't see or judge us individually at all. He sees and judges the first man. He doesn't need to look any further: He knows that we're in Adam & Adam is in us. So, we all share in that judgment and the results of that judgment

And because Christ is the second Adam (our Adam), God does exactly the same thing. He judges you and me purely on the basis of what he sees in the One who represents us.

As Paul says in this passage from the Roman epistle:

“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.” (Romans 5:19) (italics mine)

The word here translated 'made' (as in “*made sinners*”) means: 'to put in the category of'. We were put into the category of sinners – pronounced a race of sinners - because of Adam's disobedience. But, praise God, we're put into the category of the righteous (“*made righteous*”) because of Christ's obedience!

9. Saved today – lost tomorrow: an impossibility

Now what should be inevitably emerging from this is a vital realization =- that the *very method that God has used to save us, has been designed to ensure that we can never lose our salvation!*

As the firstborn of a new, spiritual race, Christ stands in heaven substituting for us - a representative who is holy and acceptable to God. God looks at the one who *represents* us and in doing so, pronounces *us* to be holy and acceptable. Paul describes it as being: '*accepted in the beloved.*' (*Ephesians.1:6*)

In Christ - *incorporated* in him - bundled up in him - represented by him - we are fit for heaven in spite of the fact that we have no righteousness of our own! In spite of the fact that we often slide into sin! In spite of the fact that we so often 'blow it' in spite of the

fact that we are totally – totally unworthy! That is irrelevant because God doesn't look at us - He sees only His Son!

And so the Bible says that we're *justified* (legally declared righteous) because we've been given the credit for *Christ's* righteousness. Being incorporated *in* Christ, we are - in the eyes of God - as *righteous His Son is!*

It's as if Christ has said to each one of us: 'you're not righteous; you can never be righteous - but don't worry - I'm representing you and I'm righteous enough for the both of us.'

So, Paul says to the Corinthians:

"...you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1: 30) (italics mine)

Because our representative lives, we live. Because *he's* righteous, *we're* righteous. Because *he's* totally acceptable to God – *we're* totally acceptable. Because *he* can't change, neither can *we!*

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Isn't that a beautiful truth! Because *he's* the same, yesterday, today and forever, so are *we*. We can't lose our exalted position before God simply because *he* can't!

But it's all '*in Christ!*' The Bible says that we are "*accepted in the beloved.*" (see above) In him - not *by* him

"in him we have redemption through his blood - the forgiveness of sins." (Ephesians 1:7)
(see also *Colossians 1:14*)

- *You only die once!*

As Christ's death to sin on the cross was *our* death to sin, only if Christ died again could we die again - and that can't happen! *That's* how God *guarantees* our salvation!

"...since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died – he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:9-11) (italics mine)

In the same vein, the apostle Peter writes: "*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*" (*1 Peter 2:24*) (italics mine)

- *Born to die!*

So, let's recap the process! How did the *human race* fall into sin?

On account of Adam! No other reason!

How did each *individual* fall under the curse?

By being born!

You did nothing wrong to become a sinner. Simply being born into our race made you a son of Adam and therefore a sinner!

- *Reborn to live!*

It's therefore logical that the solution to the guilt of sin encountered at birth is another birth - a second birth!

It was the first Adam's disobedience that condemns you. In order to be saved and considered righteous before God, you *must* exchange your identity with Adam to an identity with Christ. That's what justifies us!

Natural birth was the source of our sin, so another birth is the solution! The only way a person moves out of Adam's headship and comes under Christ's headship is by being born into a new race - a *new creation*.

By the process of *natural* birth, Adam passed on his *natural* life to every member of his *race*. By the process of the *new* birth, Christ passed on his *eternal* life to every member of *his* race.

This is the point that Paul makes in his letter to the Corinthians:

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

How wonderful the plan of God! This is why He's always used the principle of Federal Headship! It was the only way He could save us!

All those who are in Adam (namely the entire human race) experience Adam's act and are declared *sinner*s solely on the ground of Adam's act of disobedience.

All those who are in Christ experience Christ's act and are declared *righteous* solely on the ground of Christ's actions

So, Paul says in his second Corinthian epistle, says this:

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

So, this is how it works. God looks at the 7 billion people who live on planet earth today - and the other billions who lived here in the past - and he sees *two people* who stand out from the rest of humanity.

They are representative men! The whole history of the human race revolves around those two men-what they did, and what flowed from what they did!

Augustine said this:

‘God has dealt with two people. He has dealt with Adam, and he has dealt with Christ. And the rest of us fall into the relationship that he has set forth in the Word.’

F.F. Bruce summed it up beautifully:

The law has no permanent significance in the history of redemption. There are only two things that have permanent significance - one is the act of Adam, the other is the act of Christ. For the act of Adam will be that which damns the lost forever. And the act of Christ is that which redeems the elect forever.

- *You couldn’t change - even if you wanted to!*

In Christ you can no more lose your place in the *new* race than can a human being move out of the *human* race. You might be a good person, a bad person, a selfless human being or a vicious self-centred psychopath - it doesn't matter - we're all equally human and condemned because of what our representative has done.

Similarly, born into the new race, you're not assessed on your individual worth - whether you're an obedient Christian, a disobedient Christian, a loyal follower of Christ or a rank backslider. In the eyes of God, it's enough that you've been born into the new race - and that you're now consequently represented by a new Federal Head!

If God sees you *in Adam*, then you stand before Him *condemned*. If God sees you *in Christ*, then you stand before Him as *righteous* - eternally secure!!

- *One final word*

Death came to Adam and to all men and in the old creation, sin ruled through death. From this we conclude that death only has any power *when sin is present*. Which is why Paul tells us that “*the sting of death is sin*” (1 Corinthians 15:56)

Therefore, where sin has been dealt with, the power of death is taken away - and this is what happened with the new creation in the work of Christ. Paul, writing to Timothy, his young son in the faith, speaks of

“..our Savior, Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the. gospel.” (2 Timothy 1:10) (italics mine)

So now, of course, death has no power and, Paul tells us that *“grace reigns through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5.21)*

The destruction of the power of death meant that Adam's headship could be overthrown or over-ruled - and we could be removed from its power - rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light *(Colossians. 1:13)*.

But the converse of this cannot possibly happen! Death has been destroyed - it is *powerless* to reverse what Christ has accomplished. Christ's headship can't be over-ruled because, in Christ, life has triumphed over death!

If *one* saved soul could be lost - for any reason whatsoever - sin would have triumphed again; death would have overcome life; Christ's work would have been nullified; our representative would have failed!

Your assurance of salvation comes not from your feelings, but from understanding your identity.

Look at yourself in Adam; though you had done nothing wrong, you were declared a *sinner*.

Now look at yourself in Christ; though you have done nothing right, you are declared to be *righteous*.

We must get rid of all thoughts of *our actions* as far as gaining or keeping salvation. We're made righteous because of the obedience of Christ - and Christ alone!

In Christ our salvation is secure - eternally secure!