

November 4, 2017 Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Colossians 1:15-22: Romans 5:18 Christ Alone by Andy McDonald

This week at our worship service debrief and planning meeting Richard came in dressed in a robe with a mallet and 95 Thesis to nail to my door. It was October 31, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that fateful day when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Thesis to the Church door at Wittenberg.

For 5 weeks this year we are joining in honoring this 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary by looking at the five primary pillars of the protestant reformation. Here they are we are saved by grace alone, on the basis of Christ alone, received through faith alone, that we might live to the glory of God alone, with Scripture alone as our final authority in teaching these truths.

All across Christianity, common throughout the universal body of Christ, is our continual temptation to wander, to focus on secondary valuable teaching and let our attention slip from the foundational kind of things we are talking about here. To get these five right is to be like the wise man who built his house upon the rock, so that when the rains come down and floods come up this house of teaching this house of truth the doctrines we anchor here will stand because we build on this solid foundation.

Let's pray. Father your love for us, the desire of your perfect heart to have us in fellowship with you, your love that wants us is so incredible and unnerving. For all eternity you have shared a holy Trinitarian fellowship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You created us in your image because your heart wished to enlarge that circle of fellowship. I'm amazed you want to hang out with us. Today open our eyes of understanding to grasp how you make that possible and real. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

It's hard to watch TV and not see one of those ads. The subject says something like, "I had no idea about my family tree. I went on Ancestry and put in the name of my grandparents and soon discovered

I'm related to George Washington. The add ends with her holding a picture of our first president and saying, "This is my cousin George!" I guess more and more of us are curious about our family trees, or maybe we're just hoping to discover a rich uncle, but it does seem to be a popular pursuit.

Of course you might discover your related to some famous criminal too!

The Bible is big on ancestry. Maybe you are like so many others when you are reading through scripture and you come to what some call the begats. We called them the begats, because the old King James Version of the bible used that word in its genealogical lists: "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, etc. But whether it says begat or was the father of, I'm guessing that most of us want to move on to the stories.

Today in our more egalitarian culture family trees are interesting but we don't live and die by them. But there was a time and there are more family based cultures today where ancestry matters.

It mattered along the West Virginia and Kentucky border along the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River whether your name was Hatfield or McCoy. In fact in certain situations the feuds that went on and on made your heritage a matter of life and death.

There is a problem in our family tree. No matter how flattering, no matter how many nice or famous or rich ancestors you might find I have news: there's a fatal flaw in your ancestry.

I don't think Paul could have said it any clearer than he did in his letter to the Romans. Chapter 5:12 in the NLT "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned."

Whichever is the wrong side of the Tub Fork that's the side we're from

Which ever is the wrong side of the tracks that's our side.  
Wherever the quarantine is for those who are unclean that's our spot.

Our primal grandfather made it so.

God created us for fellowship. Gen 1:26 Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

C. Baxter Krueger writes: “The Father, Son and Spirit created us so that we could participate in their life together, so that we could share in their knowledge and laughter and fellowship, in their insights and creativity and music, in their joy and intimacy and goodness, so that all of it could be played out in us and in our ordinary lives.” Great Dance p.26

God has always existed in relationship. Fellowship, camaraderie, togetherness, communion have always been at the center of the very being of God. And after Adam and Eve say by their actions, not your will but mine be done the fellowship was broken, and not just for them but for all their kids.

Listen carefully, God wanted his kids back in the family circle. Some of you parents know exactly what I'm talking about. Somehow through something you did or something they did, somewhere along the way estrangement happened and that child you love is detached. And the ache of your heart is that there could be renewed fellowship, renewed connection.

Whatever that feeling is in you that wishes for unity that is from God because the goal of the divine Trinity is inclusion. God wants us all in his circle of shared life.

For all of eternity there has been this great dance of life shared by the Father, Son, and Spirit and like a couple wanting to partner with God to share life with offspring, the Trinity's shared life is the womb of

creation. They want to share their great dance with us. They wanted a larger family circle.

But the story went wrong. Even with the generous God providing all the fruit and all the nuts and all the produce of the Garden. With an abundance that was more than could be asked or imagined, still Adam and Eve were lead to believe that God's way is not enough.

The fall was simply and tragically man saying to God—I want my will not yours to be done. I have a better plan, a short cut to become like you, I can do it myself, my way.

Adam messed up the books of heaven, knocked everything crooked. I ME MINE rose up defeating US WE OUR.

When I'm doing pre-marital or pre-engagement counseling one of the things I cover is a change of pronouns. The longer each of the couple have lived independent single lives the more important this shift. If one has saved diligently and bought a house and begun paying the mortgage, they may refer to it as "My" house. And I explain that while that was ok single that now with marriage comes this what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine," new life, and so shift those pronouns our house, we prefer our way, what is good for us, not me!

Adam said "My will be done and with that comes death, not as punishment like a death penalty so much, but as a natural consequence. If we choose to separate from the very source of life the natural result is death.

The devil has been good at warping the story. Making it sound like, eat the fruit and I'll kill you! You step out of line and I'll zap you. Unless you can get some kind of go between some mediator to win me back over I'm gonna get you for your bad decision.

Instead might we have a more accurate picture of God warning them that choosing their own way over his way would be to separate from

him, and since he is the source of life that one of the results of their choice would be unplugging from life and result in death.

When we are locked to the angry God concept, the step out of line and I'll zap you, we may think of Jesus coming to appease God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus is coming to achieve the hearts desire of the Trinity to have us in fellowship.

What Jesus wants for us is not just for us to live moral lives, he does want that, but he wants so much more. It is a life full of what some call Trinity life made up of joy, and the fullness of love shared by Father, Son and Spirit for all eternity. It is their delight, passion, their togetherness and its intimacy, harmony and wholeness it is this full life of holiness that God wants for us. Don't think of holiness as not doing some bad stuff—it is so much more.

Kruger writes: "Jesus Christ was sent to find us and bring us home. And he did just that. He drew us within the circle. From this point on we must learn to think about who we are, not what we can be one day. Here in Jesus Christ we must re-think everything we thought we knew about ourselves and others, for he has done it. He has given us a place in the great dance. This is not something that we make true. It is the truth." *The Great Dance*, p. 28

Now lets return to Romans 5 and we pick it up in vs 15

"And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift. And the result of god's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but we have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins. The sin of the is one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's

wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

And then we come verse 18. “Yes, Adam’s one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ’s one act of righteousness makes all people right in God’s sight and gives them life.”

Why is it that we can more easily wrap our heads around everyone being condemned by one man’s sin but it is a struggle to let ourselves believe that all people are made right in God’s sight by one act of righteousness?

One man Adam says my will be done and all are lost

One man Jesus say your will be done and all are saved!

Maybe for you it seems to simple, maybe even simplistic. It isn’t. But it is amazing. The eternal God of the universe, existing from all eternity in perfect unity and harmony and joy and delight, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has, in Jesus, opened that inner circle to all humanity.

Jesus took on humanity, became human in the incarnation not as a play. Not as some temporary costume for the occasion. But forever he has united himself with humanity. At the ascension when he returns to heaven it is the 100% human and 100% divine Jesus that entered the holies of heaven.

And just like in Adam all sinned in Jesus all are made right.

Jesus came and retraced the steps where Adam fell without falling. He had it worse physically than Adam because the flesh he took on the body he became was a human body thousands of years removed from the perfection of Eden. Spiritually he was without sin, and he lives his life faithfully following a “not my will but yours be done” in the flesh of fallen humanity is part of the miracle of salvation.

Jesus came and stood in Adams shoes but refused to be Adam. He stood in Israel's shoes and refused to be Israel. He stood in your shoes and mine and refused to be you or me. His death wasn't the end of the relationship with his father and the spirit and us, but it was its final triumph, he is at one with the Father and he brings us into that same state.

Paul writes to the Colossians, "For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and by him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross...As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault."

So what difference does it make to believe that salvation is on the basis of Christ Alone?

First Jesus invites us to live now in the joy of his reconciliation. To wake up in the morning as God's beloved daughter Gods beloved son.

Second we live in freedom knowing that all our surrender to live a "your will be done life" isn't to better reconcile the books- they are already reconciled- we are made right by God in Christ!

Third is that while we live our lives getting ready to enjoy eternity- we want to tell people about their true status with God and call others to live in the freedom and good news that you have been reconciled and once aware of that you become ambassadors of reconciliation-God is not against you he is for you. Choose his will. What will this mean here in this life? I think it means that when I do bad stuff or when I do good stuff in my life there is, beyond me and my good days and bad days, a great future because of Jesus and my faith in him.

"The gospel does not leave you staring into heaven wondering how you are going to make it like Jesus did. The gospel does not leave you now with yourself and with figuring out how your human existence is going

to be converted, how you are going to gain victory over evil, how you are going to become a member of that new covenant fellowship that Jesus has with his father. The gospel is the news that Jesus Christ (ALONE) has done it. The gospel is not an invitation. The Gospel is a declaration of the truth.” Ibid 49

The gospel is the news that Jesus Christ has done it. Amen

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.” I Peter 1:3-4



What do you know about your family tree? Share about any interesting or famous ancestors.

How do you feel about celebrating 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reformation?

How do you resonate with the 5 “Solas”: grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone, for the glory of God alone, based on scripture alone?

How fair is it that we all “sinned” in Adam’s sin?

What do you think about God always existing in fellowship?

Why would you agree or disagree that God created us for fellowship with him?

What do you like or dislike about Jesus not coming to appease an angry God but to open the trinity to humanity’s participation?

What do you believe God wants for you beyond living morally?

What is your reaction to the statement? *The gospel is the news that Jesus Christ (ALONE) has done it. The gospel is not an invitation. The Gospel is a declaration of the truth.*



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