

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church  
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz  
Lent 1 February 10, 2008 Romans 5:18,19

**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.**



People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Two years after I was born – a man named Theodore Geisel wrote a book called Horton Hears a Who! That was a long time ago – 1954. Horton is an elephant – with very big ears that look like angel wings – and a trunk that is very small at the end. Horton has very happy eyes and a little tuft of hair on the top of his head. The story takes place on the fifteenth of May in the jungle of Nool. Horton hears a small speck of dust – talking to him. This little speck of dust is in fact a very small planet – home to a city named Who-ville – inhabited by microscopic creatures called Whos. The Whos are in danger of being destroyed – plunked into beezlenut stew! The little Whos cry out desperately to Horton for help. Horton keeps saying, “A person is a person no matter how small!” Finally little JoJo – the littlest Who of all – joins his voice with all the Whos to cry out. And at last the whole world must understand – a person is a person no matter how small! Although Mrs. Geisel has said – again and again – that Horton Hears a Who! – has nothing to do with little unborn babies – being people from the moment of conception. Has nothing to do with little unborn babies – being people that Jesus made with body and immortal soul – it is true. Unborn babies are people, too – no matter how small. And the precious good news of the Lent and Easter Gospel is – Jesus came to save them too! Today – as we continue to prepare our hearts to celebrate Good Friday and Easter – God’s Word encourages us:

**One Person Changes Everything!**

- 1. Adam plunged the world into sin.**
- 2. Jesus rescued the world from sin.**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on – is part of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the believers in Rome. The People’s Bible Commentary on the letter to the Romans was written by President Armin Panning. President Panning taught Greek here in Watertown at Northwestern College. He taught the Gospel of John. The disciple Jesus loved – was an eye witness to all that Jesus began to do and to say – as he did everything required to redeem us. The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Romans during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. Paul has been gathering thank-offerings for the relief of needy Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Paul spent about 3 years in Ephesus – in Asia Minor – present day Turkey. Now he sets out overland through Macedonia and Greece, intending on the way to pick up the thank offerings that had been collected in various congregations. The last stop on his swing through Macedonia and Greece would be Corinth. Most likely – Paul wrote from Corinth – to the believers in Rome.

The letter to the Romans is one of the most profound in all of God’s Word! My father gave a copy of the People’s Bible Commentary on the letter to the Romans to one of his neighbors – a man who said he wasn’t sure about all that Jesus stuff. My Dad asked his neighbor what he thought about Romans. The neighbor said – there’s a lot of righteousness in that book. That’s

right! He didn't miss the point! *Romans* is about the righteousness we have for Jesus sake! *Romans* contains powerful Law and Gospel. It announces a law that tolerates absolutely no excuses. When people stubbornly reject Jesus as their Savior – people **become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.** *Romans 1:29-32* There are such powerful Gospel promises in *Romans* that we read at funerals – when we are confronted with the most painful heartache of all. **“The wages of sin is death – but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** And again, **“What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that **neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** *Romans 8:31f*

The part of God's Word we are concentrating is from *Romans* chapter 5. God's Word says, **“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men...** You don't have to be very old – to have nurses writing down your medical history. You don't have to be very old – to have nurses asking about family history. Like allergies. My dad is violently allergic to turkey. Something about the chemicals – the growth hormones that they give to turkeys to turn them into butterballs very quickly. My little sister is allergic to turkey and chicken. I mean she is really allergic. If you put a can of chicken broth in your mashed potatoes to make them moist and delicious – a spoon or two of those spuds and she doesn't feel well. There was a time – when the little people in my house were very little – like just walking and talking. We were guests and were served chicken and little people got very sick! I knew a man who had a father and uncles and brothers who all had heart attacks on or around the day of their 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was convinced that within a day or two of his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday he would die of a massive coronary! You can inherit all kinds of physical weaknesses and problems. You can inherit all kinds of personality traits and emotional qualities. The fact is – we have all inherited sinfulness from Eve and Adam. It was passed down to Cain and Abel. Noah handed it down to Shem, Ham and Japheth – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah – Jesse, David, Solomon and Rehoboam and Jeroboam all had it. And we do too. Original sin – through and through sinfulness that we inherited from our parents is just part of the reason we baptize little babies – little babies – part of all nations – are born sinful. When we baptize them – simple water – made powerful by the Gospel promises of God – washes away sin – adopts us into the family of God – and makes us heirs of Heaven.

**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.** Just as Adam ruined everything by his one trespass – so Jesus' **one act of righteousness** brought

**justification and life for all people!** Because Jesus died and rose again – we are declared not guilty! Sometimes – news that good – seems hard – almost impossible to believe! A lifetime of sins and mistakes washed away. How can that be? Sometimes close to 100 years of kind and good and thoughtful deeds left undone – all forgiven? How can that be? They say there are a growing bunch of people trying to do away with Valentine’s Day. They say they can’t take the pressure of having to do something thoughtful and loving this coming Thursday. How do you know when you have done enough? Is a card enough? How about if it has one of those little computer chips – so it plays their favorite song? Is a card enough – or do you need chocolates, too? Card and candy enough – or do you need flowers, too – or do you need jewelry – one of those necklaces with all the little diamonds in a row – representing the different stages of our life? The pressure is just too much! If we fail again and again – to show love to our family – how much more have we failed to love our Savior – with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind? Still Jesus loves me, this I know – for the Bible tells me so. Jesus washed away the sins that trouble my conscience in the wee hours of the morning when the snow plow outside wakes me up. Jesus washed away the sins I did without even know it. Jesus died for them all and rose again Easter because His payment was complete!

**For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners,** Adam sinned – and it snowballed. Adam talked back to his Heavenly Father. Adam blamed God for giving him Eve. Eve blamed the Serpent for seducing her. It wasn’t long before Cain was offering vegetables as a whole burnt offering. He burned up the fruits of the field. But his heart wasn’t right with God. And the next thing you know – he murders his brother Abel. By Genesis chapter 4 people like Lamech married two women. That wasn’t God’s plan either. The next thing you know Lamech is boasting – **I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged 7 times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.** By Genesis chapter 6 people are choosing their spouse – not on the basis of a common faith in the Gospel promises of God. They are choosing their spouse on the basis of who is cute and pretty on the outside! People had been living 700, 800, even 900+ years – the better part of a millennium. But they squandered that time – fighting tooth and nail against everything God had wanted. To the point God finally said – people will live 120 years. That’s how long I will endure your wickedness, rebellion and sin. The situation was so bad God’s Word says, **The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them”** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. The flood was coming! And yet – in spite of the violence that was everywhere – in spite of the fact that **every inclination of the thoughts of people was only evil all the time** – the LORD would wait 120 years for people to repent and turn from their wicked ways! And they didn’t! They squandered even that time of grace. How tragic is that?

**So also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.** Jesus never ever did anything wrong – not once – not even for a moment. The writer to the Hebrews say, **“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”** *Hebrews 4:15,16* We are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. We will be strong against temptation for Jesus’ sake! That means we can line up at school – and little boys don’t have to kick their neighbor or push them. We can sit in class and listen to the teacher quietly and respectfully – always raise our hand and wait to be called on before talking. We can

sit up in our desk – not put our head down like we are falling asleep. We can be cheerful driving to work – not taking the bait and being angry when other drivers are all upset because we are driving too fast or too slow for them. We can treat our boss with respect – not just to his face – but when he isn't looking. We can be patient with customers who are unreasonable and sometimes even abusive. We can be strong against temptations to be frustrated and impatient when things don't work. We can come home at the end of the day – and have a family devotion. We can have supper together and encourage one another. We can go to sleep at night – and sleep well – because we know angels are keeping watch over us – for Jesus' sake. We can sleep the sleep of the righteous – because Jesus took all our sins away.

One person changes everything! I heard the other day about a man named Jerome Kerviel. He was a banker in France. Some time ago – he started trading stocks – quite a bit of money – and then as things went horribly wrong – he spent more and more money – to try and cover up the original losses. Looking back – people said Jerome was a quiet person – kept to himself – didn't say much – answered mostly yes or no. People should have discovered his fraud – but they didn't. And when they finally did – Jerome had single handedly lost some \$7 billion – with a "B" – billion dollars! They say Jerome had – on his website just 11 friends. Within a day or two – he was down to 4 friends – then over night he was down to none! None – that is – save just one. That would be the Lord Jesus! No matter what we have done. No matter what we have become. No matter how terrible our sins might be – Jesus paid for them all – with his innocent life and his tortured death. Jesus washed away all our sins. One person changes everything. Jesus changes everything – today and forever. Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**

*Rev. Anthony E. Schultz*