



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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July 17, 2011
5th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Text: [Romans 5:12-15](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Jeremiah 20:7-13](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 31](#)
Second Lesson: [Romans 5:12-15](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 10:24-33](#)

The Christian Faith, One Word at a Time: *Reversal*

In announcements, in the Bulletin, in the Newsletter, written and verbally, over and over I've been encouraging people this summer to read through the Book of Romans again and again and again because I think you'll find great blessings in it. It's like sitting down at the feet of the apostle Paul when he first came into the city and hearing what he would teach to people when he was first wanting to make known to them who God is, and what they are, and what God had done for them. So over the summer now, over 16 weeks actually, we are going to be looking at the Christian Faith, One Word at a Time. Looking at really Paul's Bible information class. We looked at words that are good church words... atonement, righteous, reconciliation and words like that, words that have been in the readings that we've read from Romans.

This morning we look at it and we're using a word that isn't really mentioned in what I just read to you... reversal. But it certainly does describe what God has done for us. This incredible reversal that takes place. This reversal that takes place after the world was created. It came about by one man. And the reversal that takes place that makes an eternal difference for you and me is a reversal that takes place because of the one man. We always like to think that one person can't make a difference, but if you look at these words the Holy Spirit had Paul write this morning, you see how untrue that is. One person makes all the difference in the world. That's what we see.

This reversal that we are talking about is life changing. We talk about reversals in momentum of a football game. You hear announcers blather on and on and on about how momentum has shifted and what a difference this makes and things like that. Maybe that's what we think about with reversal. If you follow wrestling at all, high school wrestling or college wrestling, you know reversal, that turn around that wins two points. This reversal we are talking about is a turning around, but it's life changing. It changes everything. It all comes about just because of one man, both reversals.

Paul has shown how much we deserve God's wrath, and he's shown how Jew and Gentile alike are under God's wrath, and he's shown that it's only by Jesus that wrath is taken away and appeased. As he continues to talk about that, he uses this as an example to show how God's grace, God's undeserved love in Christ, is just so incredible when you stop and absolutely contemplate it. It's like C.S. Lewis said, "*Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance.*" There is no room in between to be indifferent towards Christianity or towards God's grace. If what

Paul says here today is true, it's of extreme eternal importance. If it isn't, it's of no importance, but to be indifferent toward it at all is not an option for us if we are honest with what is being said.

Look at the reversal that took place at the beginning of time through the one man, Adam. God created a perfect world. No suffering. No sorrow. No tears. No cancer. No disease. No earthquakes. No tsunamis. None of this stuff. Just perfection and joy and peace and contentment. Not a tear to be found. Yet, what did the one man do? Stood idly by while his wife talks with a snake and then disobeys God's one command. The opportunity that they had to say to God, "We love you. Thanks for this wonderful world you've given us" by walking by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil by not eating from it... they stood and looked at it. It looked tasty. It looked like it was going to give knowledge. They ate from it. Then what happens? What is the reversal that takes place?

Sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men because all sinned. Here's the reversal... peace, joy, contentment to misery, hardship, heartache and suffering. Life eternal to eternal death. And it comes to every last person that has ever been born ever since Adam. That's what he is saying. He's not saying it came to all men because all sinned by breaking a command.

Maybe you kids this morning, you fought with your brother or sister as you were getting ready for church, or you whined at mom and dad, "Do we have to go to church? It's hot. Can't I just sit in front of the air conditioner and the TV and rot my mind? I'd really love to do that today." Think of the sins we've committed already this morning. He's not saying it's those sins that lead to our death. It's saying the sin of Adam. That sin that is credited to us leads us to die.

Did you notice how he says that? He says even though all the people from Adam to Moses did not sin by breaking a command like Adam did, because the Law hadn't been given, there was no you shall not steal, you shall not do this or that given to them yet, so they couldn't sin in the same way that Adam did. They could sin against conscience I suppose, but they didn't sin by breaking a given command of God like Adam did. Yet, they still all died because the sin of Adam was credited to them all.

"Surely I am a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." That's what David wrote in the Psalms. That's exactly what Paul is saying here, the same exact thing. Because one man sinned, we all became sinners. And we all do what we are.

Parents... you guys like recording special moments in your child's life, right? Video taping this and that. Taking pictures. The first steps they take is pretty cool to watch, right? Riding a bike. Watching dad making a fool of himself running along behind the bike as he is trying to push it or something like that. You like to record all those kinds of things. Do you ever get out the video tape you made of the first time you sat down your children and said to them, "Okay guys, I know you are brother and sister" or whatever

the case may be, "You are going to have to learn to fight with each other because that's what brothers and sisters do." Do you remember sitting down and making a tape of that? Of course not! You never had to teach them how to fight, did you? They woke up and they could do it.

Adam sinned, and that shows us all sinned. We are born with a sinful nature. It's who we are. And because it's who we are, it's what we do. We sin. We think we cover it up and whatnot, but we are still filthy rotten sinners and we are destined for eternity in hell because of this reversal that takes place when Adam sinned. It's credited to us most certainly. And that original sin condemns us to hell. That's one of Paul's points. But we sin as well because that's what we are, and that should send us to hell.

But notice what he talks about then. He talks about another reversal. The gift is not like the trespass. The gift that God gives reverses the trespass. It comes not after just one act of disobedience. Think of the countless millions and billions of sins that had been committed and yet God, in his love and his mercy found a way to pay for every last one of them so that the holiness God demands of you and me would be provided for and the punishment that our sins deserve would be handed out so that God remains just. Yet he remains loving because he doesn't punish us.

This is what our God has done. He reversed this by the obedience of the one man, Jesus Christ. Christ obeyed in our place. That perfection that God still demands of you and me, he gives it to us. That punishment that our sins deserve, the wages of sin is death, God poured out not on us but on Jesus.

Sometimes you might run into people, or maybe sometimes you think this yourselves, that think they are kind of clever and think if God is a God of love, he could never punish anyone or send anyone to hell. If he's loving, he could never do it. God is loving, but he's also holy and just. So he has to punish sin. God doesn't speak and then not act. If he says the wages of sin is death, it is. But this is our God. He makes his holiness and justice meet in the one man Jesus Christ, who lived perfectly in our place and died in our place. Then God, through the work of the Spirit, gives that to us when he gives us the gift of faith. What Christ won for the whole world he gives to us personally. That's the reversal that has taken place in our lives.

Think of what that means. That's not something where you can say, "Oh, yeah, yeah Pastor, we know God took away our sins. Okay, but how does that help me? What difference does that make?" If you ever struggle with that, get over yourself. It makes all the difference in the world as you go through your daily life. Because we live in a world that has been reversed, we live in a world that now has all those things that Adam and Eve's world didn't have, we have heartache, sickness, disease, natural disasters and people that are sinners, and what do they do? They are going to sin. And it breaks up relationships and it hurts lives. Because we have all of that, we have to know that our God loves us perfectly and that our God met all of our sins. That reversal that takes place in us and through Christ changes how we can view the things we have to face every day. We don't have to just whine and complain about them. We can call out to

God and say, "God, you have done the greatest reversal of all. You've taken away my sins. Now help me to get through this. Don't let me turn myself back around and go back to sin. Don't let me turn myself around and go back to Satan. Lord, strengthen me and help me." Our God will meet all of our needs in Christ Jesus.

As we go to him in the Word and in the Sacraments, our God will pour out his love on us day after day. It will sustain us and it will strengthen us. That's why we come together in worship on a warm morning, because we need God's strength and help to get us through the rest of a warm week, or a cold week, or a lovely week. It doesn't really matter, does it? We need God, and this reversal tells us for certain he'll be there.