Slide 1

The Choice Is Ours To Make

ROMANS 5:12-21

Introduction

1. All of us have been the recipients of grace at one time or another:
   a. Our parents
   b. Our teachers
   c. Our employers or supervisors
   d. A police officer
2. Hopefully, we realized the undeserved kindness shown to us and responded appropriately.
3. Those of us who are Christians here today are the recipients of the greatest kindness ever shown to any human being.
4. It is the salvation we have received because of what Christ did for us on a Roman cross outside the city of Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago.

Slide 2

5. The apostle Paul described this kindness in his second letter to the saints in Corinth (2 Corinthians 5:21).

   "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB95)

6. Likewise, the apostle Peter referred to it as our healing in his first letter to the Christians in Asia Minor (1 Peter 2:24).

   "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB95)

7. In our text this morning, Paul speaks about two men — Adam and Jesus Christ.
8. Through one, sin entered into our world and changed life as it was intended to be.
9. Through the other came salvation and the offer of life unlike any we have ever known, a life which is abundant and eternal.
10. As we look at what Paul has to say to us, I ask that you seriously consider what God has made available to us through His Son — nothing else will ever compare.

Slide 3

I. But For The Grace of God

A. THE STATE WE WERE IN

1. We were helpless (v. 6)
   a. Simply put, we had no strength to save ourselves.
   b. As I shared with you last week, Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus wrote that you and I "were dead in [our] trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).
   c. A dead person cannot raise him or herself — they are helpless.
2. We were sinners (v. 8)
   a. Our helpless state was the result of the fact that "we were sinners."
   b. What is sin?
      1) Failing to do something which God has told us to do.
         a) "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1).
         b) "Honor your father and mother" (Ephesians 6:2).
      2) Crossing over a boundary which He has set.
         a) "Do not lie to one another" (Colossians 3:9).

b) "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

3. We were enemies of God (v. 10).

a. It was James, the brother of our Lord, who wrote "whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

b. Why is this true?

Slide 4

c. It is because of what the apostle John wrote in his first letter.

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." (1 John 2:15–16, NASB95)

"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).

Slide 5

B. SOMETHING MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL THIS TO CHANGE

1. Christ died for us (Romans 5:6).

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6, NASB95)

a. Earlier, in Romans 4:25, Paul wrote that Jesus "was delivered over because of our transgressions."

b. In Romans 8:32, Paul will also inform us that God "did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all" (Romans 8:32).

Slide 6

2. We, as Christians, have been justified by His blood (Romans 5:9).

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be

saved from the wrath of God through Him." (Romans 5:9, NASB95)

a. Because we had all sinned we were destined to face "the wrath of God."

b. However, when we were baptized into Christ, His blood symbolically cleansed us from our sin.

c. Thus we were justified, that is, made just as if we had never sinned, and as a result saved from God's wrath toward our sin.

Slide 7

3. We have been reconciled to God (Romans 5:10).

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10, NASB95)

a. Because our sins separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2) we needed someone to restore our fellowship with Him.

b. That someone was Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

c. Not only have we been reconciled to God, we have been saved by Jesus' giving of His own life for us.

Slide 8

II. The Lesson of the Transgression and the Gift

A. THE TRANSGRESSION OPENED A PANDORA'S BOX

1. What is Pandora's Box?

a. According to Greek mythology, Zeus, the king of the gods, gave a beautiful woman named Pandora a sealed storage jar and told her never to open it.

b. However, Pandora's curiosity got the best of her and she lifted the lid.

c. As a result, all sorts of plagues, sicknesses, sorrows and vices where released into the world.

d. Today, the opening of a "Pandora's box" refers to an action which

unexpectedly introduces an untold number of troubles and sorrows.

2. Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden introduced sin into the world.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12, NASB95)

a. Some look at this verse and interpret it to mean that you and I inherited Adam's sin at our birth and that we are depraved at birth.

b. However, this is not what we find taught elsewhere in God's Word (cf. Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:16).

Slide 9

"Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39, NASB95)

"For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken." (Isaiah 7:16, NASB95)

c. In other words, you and I enter into this world with a clean slate in our lives, without the knowledge of either good or evil.

d. At some point we each make a choice to sin - to pass over a boundary which has been set or to refuse to do something which we have been told to do.

3. The death, which Adam's sin brings with it, is spiritual death, eternal separation from God.

a. As Paul states here, "so death spread to all men, because all have sinned."

b. You and I are not punished because Adam sinned, but because we each

made a conscious choice of our own to sin (Cf. Ezekiel 18:20).

Slide 10

c. Almost 800 years after God gave the Law at Mt. Sinai, He spoke to the Jews who at that time were living as exiles in Babylon and said to them, "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself." (Ezekiel 18:20, NASB95)

c. If you and I are born into this world with a clean slate, then we are personally responsible only for the guilt of our own sin.

d. However, if you and I are born into this world already burdened with the guilt of sins committed by someone else (i.e., Adam), the we are not responsible for our own spiritual condition — we are starting life behind the proverbial eight ball.

e. Just as it would be unjust for a judge to assign a penalty to one of us here today for something which someone else did several years in the past, so God does not place the guilt and responsibility for Adam's sin upon us.

f. Many of us here today have seen reverse peer pressure at work:

   a. An entire class is kept from going to recess because of the misbehavior of two or three students.

   b. A coach had the team run laps or perform some other punishment because of the attitude or lack of effort on the part of one athlete.

   c. An employer or supervisor puts restrictions in place for future employees because of a previous employee's actions.

g. Thankfully, God does not do this.

Slide 11

h. Each of us will give an account to God for what we, ourselves, have done (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10, NASB95)

Slide 12

C. THE FREE GIFT IS NOT LIKE THE TRANSGRESSION

"But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many." (Romans 5:15, NASB95)

1. The free gift and the transgression have something in common — we have a choice both to committing the trespass and to receiving the gift.
2. However, there is one important difference between them — while all of us have sinned, not all of us have reached out to receive the gift.

"For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17, NASB95)

Slide 13

3. Adam's sin introduced condemnation and spiritual death to all mankind.

"So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men" (Romans 5:18a, NASB95)

"For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19a, NASB95)

Slide 14

4. The free gift of Jesus Christ made justification and life possible for all mankind.

". . . even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men." (Romans 5:18b, NASB95)

"... even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19b, NASB95)

5. There is a night and day difference between our condemnation and our justification — one is deserved, the other is undeserved.

Conclusion

1. All of us were born into this world in the pristine image of God — we were sinless at our birth.
2. We defaced that image when we willfully chose to sin and thus violate God's will.
3. Our only hope is to turn to God in obedient faith so that He might . . .
   a. cleanse us of sin's stain
   b. heal us of our soul's diseases
   c. restore our spirit and regenerate our hearts

   . . . in other words, re-create us in His image.
4. Do you need our Lord to cleanse, heal, restore and regenerate you.
5. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus so long ago,

   "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."" (John 3:3, NASB95).

   "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5, NASB95).
6. Will you come to your Savior today?