

## From Death to Life

- † **Down and dirty with Adam (vv.12-14)**
- † **Raised to new life in Christ (vv.15-17)**
- † **God's clear verdict for all (vv.18-19)**

In the Name of Christ-crucified and risen, dearly redeemed by God for hope and confidence in Him:

From what I hear there were plenty of fires this winter along with smoke and water damage from broken pipes and firemen's hoses. One of the saddest stories was about a boy playing with matches in his neighbor's house. He threw what he thought were burned out matches into a wastebasket, but they caught fire anyway. Used matches are sometimes still hot. Fortunately, the neighbors were gone, so no one was hurt – except the family pets. A cat and dog were lost in the fire. The boy felt terrible and his neighbor forgave him, but what a tough lesson to learn the hard way. Sometimes you don't get a "do-over." What's done is done. Yet that boy's experience was not nearly as traumatic as when we got....

### † **Down and dirty with Adam (vv.12-14)**

Let's put this in modern terms to bring today's Scripture lessons together. Risky neighbors are nothing compared to flying one of those long aluminum tubes with wings. If you survive the airborne diseases in that "flying petri dish," you're still trusting your life to whoever is up front behind the locked cockpit doors. You may hear a voice, maybe even understand it. But who knows their experience, frame of mind, care? Flying phobias, anyone? Doesn't it make a difference if you have confidence in the pilot?

To understand our text think of Adam as God's co-pilot. Creation was new, he and his wife Eve were a perfect ten, in the garden paradise alone with God and friendly animals. Dinosaurs must have made great pets – no danger, no sickness, no disease, no death. Every day payday because Adam's job was to take care of the Garden of Eden with no storms or chomping insects. His work was harvesting super food growing right from God's perfect soil. Payday at its best! What could possibly go wrong?

Now imagine Adam in the cockpit of humanity's jumbo jet with God showing him all the controls: "Adam, I have everything set for you to fly safely home to heaven with me. I've programed all these switches, pedals and hand controls to fly smooth and safe. Use any controls you want. Enjoy. But do not push that big red button in the middle of the dash. If you do, you will die."

All of humanity starts shouting from the cabin, "Why did you do that God? Why did you tell Adam he was free to eat from any tree in the Garden, but not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why did you let Satan tempt Eve?" Even folks who say they don't believe in God still blame God for everything. Adam hit that red button same as men do today when they listen to their wife instead of God's Word. Adam rebelled against God's direct command and took the whole human race down with him. Yet all blame God and give no thanks for His goodness. Death was king for centuries because of God's curse on Adam: "*Dust you are and to dust you will return.*" (3:19) Passengers cry, "No fair!" but we prove by our sins from womb to the tomb that we are **Down and dirty with Adam.**

### † **Raised to new life in Christ (vv.15-17)**

God could have let humanity crash and burn. That's what you would do. Someone does you wrong, your anger flares up. Has anyone ever hurt you so bad that you don't even want them to repent

and recover their relationship with God? Like the older brother in Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son, or like Jonah preaching to the hated city of Nineveh, we are merciless to other sinners like us.

If you were paying close attention to the First Lesson (Genesis 2:7-9,15-17; 3:1-7), maybe you noticed it's about ***"the LORD God."*** The Savior-God has such a kind heart that He does not want sinners to destroy themselves. Multiply all the dirt done on us and it still cannot compare with one day of our sins against God. Good deeds left undone, kind words unspoken. Treating worship and Bible study like a burden. Too tired to watch one hour with Jesus in His Passion. Where is our love and loyalty to God?

Now here's what's so amazing. God sent a Second Adam. God gave His one and only Son Jesus with His whole life of perfect service to God as a ***"gracious gift"*** for us. ***"It is even more certain that God's grace and the gift given by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many!"*** (EHV) Since He's been talking about how ***"death spread to all people because all sinned,"*** ***"the many"*** in this context means *all people*. We are all guilty of ***"many trespasses"*** when we have stepped over the line of God's holiness. But after all these ***"many trespasses"*** God still brought us **From Death to Life**. In Romans 6, you can find many details of how your Baptism makes you **Raised to new life in Christ**.

God saw Adam push that button, but refused to let us plunge headlong to certain and eternal death. The LORD God sent His Son to take over the controls, to do what neither Adam nor any of us passengers could ever do. Christ brought that crashing jet of humanity out of its nose dive. We trace Christ's heroic rescue through the Passion History, Wednesday evenings to Easter, His cost for our **new life in Christ!**

### † God's clear verdict for all (vv.18-19)

God only knows how much heartache you've suffered this past week. Maybe you made a mistake or said something you thought was cool, but hot matches instead. Fires can start so easily – like a hot coal I sucked up a vacuum cleaner as a kid. Smokin! Fastest I ever emptied a bag, right onto the cement floor. More often our suffering is from sickness or just frustration with life on this sin-cursed earth. We eat our food by the sweat of our brow and finally return to the dust. But this is not *The End*.

The LORD God wants you to know that the worst of what Adam brought on our human race is nothing compared to what Christ brought on Satan our worst enemy. ***"It is written..."*** Jesus keeps saying in today's Gospel. (Matthew 4:1-11) He swings the sword of God's Word, then He puts it into our mouths and the mouths of our children. We are weaponized with **God's clear verdict for all**. The righteous Judge gave His Son to pay for all our crimes with His holy, precious blood. Not a spot of guilt remains. God showed He's satisfied by raising Jesus up. Receive God's ***"overflowing grace of the gift of righteousness [in] Jesus Christ!"*** Only stubborn unbelief wants to jump out the back of the plane.

In God's courtroom, one sin of Adam brought ***"a verdict of condemnation for all people."*** Then came Christ so God's ***"one righteous verdict led to life-giving justification for all people."*** (EHV) One ***"disobedience"*** of Adam, one ***"obedience"*** of Christ – we're ***"righteous"*** in **God's clear verdict for all**.

"On January 15, 2009, the world witnessed the 'Miracle on the Hudson' when Captain 'Sully' Sullenberger (Hanks) glided his disabled plane onto the frigid waters of the Hudson River, saving the lives of all 155 aboard. However, even as Sully was being heralded by the public and the media for his unprecedented feat of aviation skill, an investigation was unfolding that threatened to destroy his reputation and his career."<sup>1</sup> If you were on that plane and escaped death because of Captain "Sully's" skill, you'd tell everyone how great he was. Sadly, some will not receive the truth of far greater skill in **God's clear verdict for all**. They keep jumping out the back of the plane, plunging into the water, refusing to take orders from God no matter how clearly He has proven His love for us all. But don't stop telling His-story, your story. Keep singing His praises. Learn all you can this Lent about what Christ has done for you, for me, for all. And as the saying goes, "If God is your copilot, trade places." Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://itunes.apple.com/US/movie/id1145038137>