

## “Greater Grace” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Lent 1 – February 22, 2026

- I. **Romans 5:15** – <sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one Man Jesus Christ abounded for many.
- II. **Is it possible to inherit the debts of our ancestors?**
  - a. Today’s laws prevent the average person from inheriting the debts or (penalties) that could be passed along from someone who dies.
    - i. A man who has loans and credit card debts and dies with that debt... his children are not responsible to pay that, because it is either settled with the estate or not.
    - ii. Yet, we all know that we pay debts from our forefathers in the form of less inheritance that is passed along.
  - b. Yet, even when laws protect certain things from being passed along, sometimes the debts go from generation to generation anyway.
    - i. Consider a wealthy business leader and entrepreneur who has a great reputation for supporting charities, the community, and his family.
    - ii. Then a deal comes along that he just cannot refuse... it’s risky... and his business sense tells him it’s probably a scam... but in his thinking, the upside is billions of dollars and a legacy to pass along to future generations.
    - iii. He goes through with it, even though he knows better, and sure enough the whole thing is too good to be true... and connected to a criminal enterprise.
    - iv. The result of his decision to get involved in this deal ends up costing him everything... his reputation... his entire life savings... his home... and the whole family is forced to move from a multi-million-dollar home to a run-down, spare trailer on his brother’s property.
      1. His children went from private schools and every luxury a child could have to losing everything... which, as they grew older, caused resentment that turned into drugs and alcohol, crime, and broken relationships.
      2. The family never recovered, and for generations to come, the children faced struggles and financial hardship that began with one decision... as debt collectors and others constantly harassed them.
  - c. On the other side of the story is a man who investigated criminal activity and recognized the pain and suffering this scam brought upon people.
    - i. He went about destroying the organization behind it, so they were unable to bankrupt and ruin families for generations.
    - ii. At great cost to himself, he spent all he had to clear the name and debt of the first man... in fact he died without a penny as he spent so

much energy and time to fix the situation his body couldn't hold up and he died.

- d. The situation with Adam is the first man who had the perfect life, all that he could ever need, and chose to reject the right thing that God commanded and take the "too good to be true" deal.
  - i. From that "one man's trespass" came the sin and brokenness that would impact all humans from that point forward.
  - ii. No, it was not financial, it was holistic – it was a brokenness that affects our minds, our bodies, and our souls.
  - iii. Our forefather Adam gave us Original Sin, and at the moment of conception, we are broken and sinful – which comes out in every kind of evil throughout our lives.
- e. Some people don't think that's fair that we have to pay for someone else's sin and choices... but we all know it happens all the time...
  - i. When our parents made bad choices, many of us are still impacted or dealing the effects of their decisions.... Whether it's financial, abuse, divorce, or the many sins parents commit...
  - ii. So you see, the environment we find ourselves in... it isn't always of our own doing... but we are struggling and suffering because of one man's trespass.

### III. **Genesis narrates the story of good and perfect to evil and broken.**

- a. As sin entered through Adam, the perfection of God's creation was flooded with brokenness...
  - i. This is why suffering... and disease... and death exists.
  - ii. This is why we have abuse... and injustice... and crime.
  - iii. The perfect kingdom God intended was ruined... and each of us are now born into a kingdom that is fallen.
  - iv. Every one of us have entered a world that is ruled by sin, death, and the devil... and it's plain to see nothing is perfect... including us.
  - v. Adam's sin passed on more than guilt... it passed on a broken world we must now navigate with all kinds of trials and tribulations.
- b. In this giant petri dish of creation, Original Sin was mixed in, and now we are all impacted... and affected.
  - i. The truth is that we can always get mad and think it's unfair that Adam gave us a bad deal... but we are all guilty of sinning too.
  - ii. The extension of living in a fallen kingdom is that we ourselves commit the very sins that brought us all this trial and tribulation in the first place.
- c. The very next chapter in Genesis 4 is how sin goes from the kingdom to the actions and choices of one of its people – Cain.
  - i. Cain is the firstborn child in the world... and Adam and Eve are optimistic that maybe this is the one who will crush or defeat the devil

as God promised... but he ended up being the first murderer as he killed his little brother, Abel.

- ii. The trouble is that we sin because it is our nature, as the sin of Adam corrupts our very being... and then comes out in all kinds of thoughts, words, and actions.
- d. You see, none of us can point to Adam who created this mess and say we aren't responsible for the bad things we do – or, we cannot say “the devil made me do it.”
  - i. Adam tried to point to Eve as the one who gave him the forbidden fruit – so it's nothing new for us to point to others as the reason for our behavior.
  - ii. In an age where wrongdoers try to shift the blame to things like their upbringing, or their environment, or any other excuse – we must stop and look at ourselves critically – we sin because of our own fault, our own most grievous fault.

IV. **However, we do not throw up our arms in defeat, we have a Savior.**

- a. Yes, we know that Adam caused us unbelievable harm, but let's hear what Romans says about the greater grace of God... so in response to Adam's trespass – God says, how much more...
  - i. “...the grace of that one Man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” (v 15)
  - ii. “...but the free gift... brought justification.” (v 16)
  - iii. “...the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Man Jesus Christ.” (v 17)
  - iv. “...righteousness leads to justification and life for all...” (v 18)
  - v. “...the many will be made righteous,” (v 19)
- b. For everything Adam did to mess up the goodness and perfection of creation and humanity, Jesus Christ came in order to undo all of that... and it was based on pure love and grace.
  - i. We are not left as angry children whose lives are turned upside down... no, as we come to faith and believe that Jesus died and rose again for our redemption... we inherit the kingdom of God and all the benefits that Christ offers.
  - ii. His victory over sin, death, and satan is passed on to us... and not only that... He forgives our sins of thought, word, and deed as He paid the price for them on the cross.
- c. When we compare the difference between what Adam passed on versus what Jesus passed on, the grace of God is greater than our wildest imagination.
  - i. As a child of God through the obedience of Jesus, we inherit the kingdom... the victory that includes the free gifts of the forgiveness of sins... a right relationship with Him... and an eternal home in the paradise and perfection of heaven.

- ii. Sin may have reigned through Adam, but through Jesus Christ grace now reigns... and grace... that “greater grace” reigns forever.