SUNDAY - November 22, 2026

UNASHAMED: Romans 5:12–21 - Evil's Answer

SERMON SUMMARY:

Romans 5:12–21 traces the spread of evil and the greater power of God's grace. Evil did not begin with Adam; rebellion against God preceded the human story. But sin entered the world through Adam, and its poison spread to all humanity. Adam's failure was not only that he sinned, but that he failed to take responsibility. Though Eve also bore guilt, God called Adam to account because the responsibility entrusted to him came with his place in the first family. Passivity in the face of evil and aggression through blame both reveal sin's damage.

The effects of this poison include judgment, condemnation, trespasses, and death. Shame drives people to hide; condemnation can foster self-hatred, fear, and harm; and death separates people from God and one another. Yet the reach of Adam's sin does not exceed the reach of Christ's gift. If one man's disobedience brought sin and death to many, the obedience of Jesus Christ brings grace and life. The free gift does more than cancel guilt: through Christ, grace enables people to reign in life.

God's law cannot make sinners righteous. It exposes sin, and its commands can awaken the rebellious desires already within the human heart. The law therefore reveals the need for grace rather than offering a path to self-made righteousness. As sin increases, grace abounds all the more; grace does not excuse evil but overcomes its rule and produces eternal life.

This grace also reshapes daily conduct. A single cruel act can linger in another person's memory, while one generous act can bring lasting encouragement. Small acts of kindness can spread outward, just as sin's effects spread. Each person can carry the poison of blame and harm or reflect the goodness of Christ by serving others. The shared meal at Christ's table rests not on anyone's deserving, but on grace—and that grace gives life marked by hope, generosity, and abundance.

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 5:12–21, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28:13-15, 1 John 3:8, Genesis 3:6, Leviticus 11:22, Psalm 36:7-8, 65:4, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:13, 1 Corinthians 2:9, John 10:10, Proverbs is 4:18

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to Romans 5:12, how did sin enter the world, and what was the consequence for all people?
2. What are the four symptoms or effects of Adam's sin listed in verses 16 and 17?
3. Verse 20 contains a surprising statement about the purpose of the law. What does it say the law does, and what is the result?
4. What is the ultimate outcome, according to verse 21, when grace reigns through righteousness?
5. The passage contrasts the actions of "one man" (Adam) with the actions of "one man" (Jesus). In what ways are the outcomes of their actions similar, and in what ways are they vastly different?
6. Why might the law, which is good, actually cause sin to increase in a person's life instead of making them more righteous?
7. The idea of "reigning in life" is presented as a result of receiving God's grace. What does it look like for a person to "reign" in their daily life, as opposed to just surviving it?
8. If condemnation leads to self-hatred, fear, and hiding, how does receiving God's gracious gift free a person from that cycle?

9. Responsibility is described as a trust from God, separate from personal guilt. In your family, workplace, or community, where has God entrusted you with responsibility? Is there a situation where you have been passive or aggressive (blaming others) instead of faithfully owning that responsibility?
10. A single act of cruelty or kindness can have a lasting impact, spreading like radiation or an antidote. Recall a recent small interaction. Did your words or actions spread poison or reflect Christ's goodness? What is one practical "random act of kindness" you can do this week to spread grace?
11. The law exposes our inability to be righteous on our own. Where are you most tempted to try to earn God's favor or prove your own goodness through rule-keeping? How can you actively remind yourself this week that your standing before God rests entirely on Christ's obedience, not your own?
12. Grace is meant to help us reign in life, not just endure it. What area of your life feels most characterized by survival mode—drudgery, fear, or condemnation? How can you take one step this week to live in the abundance and hope that grace provides?
13. The shared meal at Christ's table is based on grace, not deserving. How does remembering that you are an undeserving recipient of grace change the way you view and treat other people who also don't deserve it?