

SPIRITUAL HEALTH CHECKUP:
Symptoms of Spiritual Disease
Matthew 4:1-11 & Romans 5:12-19
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Feb. 22, 2009

A woman took her husband to the doctor's office.
After his checkup, the doctor said, "Your husband is suffering from a very serious infection."
The husband, who was hard of hearing said, "What did he say?"
His wife said, "He says your sick".
The doctor went on. "But there is hope.
You just need to reduce his stress. Each morning, give him a healthy breakfast.
Be pleasant, nice, and kind. For lunch and dinner make him his favorite meal.
Don't discuss your problems with him, it will only make his stress worse.
Don't yell at him or argue with him.
And most importantly...just cater to your husband's every whim.
If you can do this for your husband for the next 6 months to a year,
I think your husband will have a complete recovery."
The husband said, "What did he say?"
His wife said, "He says, you're going to die".

Last year I did something I have never done before. I went to the doctors for a yearly physical. Now I did that for two reasons. One is, as many of you know I messed up my back and am in quite a bit of pain. The second reason is I am getting older. Next week I will be 50 and so I thought well maybe it is time I get checked out.

So I go into the doctor's office and of course the first thing they do is give you a dozen sheets of paper to fill out. They ask you everything from your name to the name of your favorite pet.
Actually the papers are quite necessary to help them treat you properly. These papers really ask you: what symptoms you experiencing that brought you in to see the doctor at this specific time in your life.

Well over the next few weeks we are going to do a series of sermons on a SPIRITUAL HEALTH CHECKUP. Just as we need a physical health checkup to make sure our bodies are healthy, we need a spiritual health checkup to make sure our souls are healthy.

This checkup is coming at a very crucial time in our lives also. It is coming right as we get ready to enter the Lenten season.

Lent will begin this Wednesday with Ash Wednesday services here in the sanctuary at 7:00 pm.

Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, that helps us prepare for Easter Sunday. It was historically a time of fasting and preparation by converts for baptism. Then it became a time of penance for all Christians. A time to reflect on our sins, our

great need for a redeemer, and the grace that is given to each of us. It is ended with the joy and celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

So we begin our series by asking: what symptoms are we experiencing that bring us here to seek the Savior at this specific time in our life.

Luckily we don't need to fill out a ton of papers because the Bible answers that question for us.

In Romans 3:23 Paul informs us: All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Look with me this morning at Romans 5:12-19 and let's see what else Paul has to say about sin.

Read 5:12-19

Paul uses Adam and Jesus to teach us some very important lessons about sin and grace.

The issue in this passage is that only two perfect men have ever existed: Adam and Jesus

Adam was created perfect but by the exercise of his free will sinned
Jesus existed in perfection, was born in perfection, and died in perfection

Each one has impacted the human race greatly in very different but related ways.

Vs 12 tells us that - Sin came into the world through one man.

Adam was a man of sin. He decided that he would willfully disobey God's command. In Genesis we see that God created man, Adam, and placed him in the Garden of Eden. God warns Adam, **"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."**

Adam was created good. He became evil or sinful when he disobeyed.

--Only then did he know the difference

Because of Adam's sin of disobedience, the judgment of both spiritual and physical death fell on him and all his descendants –

death spread to all men because all have sinned.

So all human beings have two characteristics in common –
all have sinned and all will die.

Before Adam's sin, the world was a perfect place to live.

After Adam's sin, the world became a fallen place to live.

Because of Adam's sin, God imposed condemnation and consequences that again you find in Genesis.

1. **Earning our living by the sweat of our brow**
2. **Instead of being able to partake of the tree of life, we now face physical and spiritual death.**

We have received an inheritance from our first parents (Adam and Eve)

...and its not a bunch of money.

It is Sin

Just as we receive the tendency for the color of our eyes, the color of our hair, our height, our build, and other physical attributes from our ancestors, so we receive the tendency for sin from our ancestor Adam.

We are, as the old song says, “born to be wild”

--unruly, disobedient, prideful, and cantankerous

Because Adam was disobedient, the propensity to sin is passed on to us.

And Now, because of Adam, instead of desiring to serve God...

we are born and grow...

desiring to do what WE want (just like Adam)

and left unchecked...

This is an infection that is fatal.

You see, once sin entered into the world, it was like a virus that spread.

A few years ago I read about an entire national forest in Oregon that has been infected by a fungus (The Daily News [8/5/00], from PreachingToday.com). This fungus started as a single microscopic spore, but it's been weaving its way through this forest for about 2,400 years, killing trees as it grows. Today this fungus has infected 2,200 acres of this national forest. Essentially the fungus is a gigantic mushroom you can't see from the ground, but it's killed hundreds of thousands of trees, all from a single spore.

That's similar to how Adam's sin opened the door for sin and death to spread like a fungus through the entire human race.

Sin is the power or force that causes people to act independently of God.

Paul goes on to tell us in Romans that:

Sin was in the world from Adam to the time of Moses because people died, which God said was a result of sin.

They just didn't disobey a direct command from God as Adam had.

The law was given to Moses to help show us how sinful we really are, how serious our offenses are to God, and to help drive us to God, our Great Physician, for mercy and pardon.

The law acts like a magnifying glass. A magnifying glass does not increase the number of dirty spots, but it does make them stand out more clearly and brings to light some that the naked eye cannot see.

Sin is a deep rupture between who we are and who we were created to be. The law points out our sin and places the responsibility for it squarely on our shoulders, **but it offers no remedy- no cure.**

So what is the remedy for our Spiritual Disease, for our sin, or is there one?

The Bad News is that you can do absolutely nothing to help yourself.

The Good News because of God's grace we have a cure in Jesus Christ.

Where Adam sinned, Jesus lived a perfect life.

--Heb. 4:15 tells us that Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”

Matthew 4:1-11 tells us about the first temptations of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness. A few weeks ago I pointed out that those three temptations are

- 1. THE CRAVINGS OF OUR BODIES**
- 2. THE LUST OF OUR EYES**
- 3. THE PRIDE OF OUR HEARTS**

Jesus faced all of the same temptations that we face, that Adam faced, the temptations that lead to every kind of sin and spiritual disease.

The difference – Christ never sinned.

We sin when we give in to the temptation and disobey God.

There is a disease called SIN and it is fatal.

If this disease is left unchecked...untreated...it is a terminal illness.

But there is hope!

And that hope is found in Jesus Christ!

John Calvin said, “Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy.”

Paul compares Adam’s role in history to Christ’s role.

Adam was a representative of created humanity

And Christ is the representative of the new spiritual humanity.

Adam’s one act determined the character of the world;

Christ’s one act determined the character of eternity.

Where Adam brought condemnation, Jesus brought justification.

Where Adam brought death to all who were descended from him,

Jesus brought life to all who would place their faith in Him.

--Jn. 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that all who would believe on Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Where Adam was disobedient to the Father’s will, Jesus was obedient the Father’s will.

--Phil. 2:8 – “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”

Adam’s response to temptation to sin was, “My will be done.”

Christ’s response to temptation to sin was, “Thy will be done.”

Because of the gift of grace through Jesus Christ, we can trade judgment for forgiveness, we can trade our sin for Jesus’ righteousness.

We were born into Adam’s physical family – the family line that leads to certain death.

But Christ offers us the opportunity to be born into his spiritual family – the family line that begins with forgiveness and leads to eternal life.

Look at verse 17 – in the New International Version of the Bible that is read like this:

For if by the trespass of the one man (Adam), death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

The key word there is abundant.

Abundant grace.

As deep as sin goes, God's grace goes deeper. As wide as sin is, God's grace is wider.
When sin abounded, grace super-abounded.
God's grace is greater than all our sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned...it was like a virus that spread.
And it caused a fatal infection
We are all infected.
But there is hope... there is a cure.
And that cure is found in Jesus Christ.

If there was a person in the hospital who was deathly sick from an infection...
but then the Doctor came in to her hospital room and told her that a simple treatment
would cure her
Do you think she would say, "I'm not interested.
I realize that this treatment would save my life...
but I'm not worth it."
Or might she say, "I've never turned to a Doctor for help before...
I'm not going to start now."
Perhaps, "No thank you...I don't like needles."
Or, "No, I think I am going to wait for a better time".
Or even, "No, I think I am going to try to cure myself first...then I'll come to see you"
We would be pretty amazed at that.
we would probably do our best to talk some sense into her –
to encourage her to take the life-giving injection.
But the same thing happens in church nearly every week.
We share the Good News, we open the altar...just like we will in a few moments...
And people know they are lost.
They know they have the fatal infection.
And they know that Jesus is the answer.
But they say things like:
"I'm just not ready"
I'll wait for a better time
I don't like to go to the altar...
I might be embarrassed."
I'm going to try to clean my life up first...then I'll come to the altar and pray.
This morning, the altar is open.
This morning, There is a cure for your disease.
This morning, You don't have to carry that burden any more.
This morning, You can receive that abundant provision of God's grace.
The Great Physician is waiting but the choice is yours.