

MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH
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PASTOR LON SOLOMON

>> LON SOLOMON: It's great for the McLean Bible family to be together this morning.

You know, his name was Albert Schweitzer. He was born in Germany in 1875. And he won the Nobel peace prize in 1952. He was a brilliant organist and by the age of 21 he would become the world's foremost expert on Joe Hahn Sebastian Bach. But at the age of 30 Schweitzer decided to go back to medical school and to become a doctor. When he graduated in 1913, he went directly to French equatorial Africa, and there he opened his first medical mission in an abandoned chicken coop. I think we have a picture of that for you.

Over the year, he built a large medical center there where he treated tens of thousands of people free. And whenever he would run out of money, Schweitzer would come back and give organ recitals all over Europe to raise money and take that money back and fund his hospital in Africa. In fact he took the entire \$33,000 that he won for the Nobel prize and used it to open a home for people with leprosy there in Gabon. He died in 1965 at the age of 90, still active in his medical work in Africa.

You say, wow, what a wonderful guy.

I mean, this guy had to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Right?

Well, no. He wasn't, actually. He wrote a book entitled the quest of the historical Jesus, in which he says that he cannot support the Jesus of the Bible or the Christianity in the Bible the way the Bible presents it. In fact, he says in his book, and I quote: The Jesus which the Bible presents never really existed. End of quote.

Now, where is Albert Schweitzer today?

You say, well, Lon, he certainly is not in hell. My gosh, after all the good this man did. After all the love that he showed. After all the compassion and self sacrifice that he demonstrated.

I mean, when God put all of that on the scales and weighed the good versus whatever bad he did, there's no way God could have seen this man as a sinner and sent him to hell.

Well, friends this is what we want to talk about today. Remember, we're in verse by verse study in the book of Genesis. Today we're going to talk about Genesis chapter 3, where Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden and we're going to bring it forward and talk about, okay, what impact and what difference does that make in our lives today?

So here we go. We're getting ready to start Genesis 3:1.

Now, the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals that the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, did God really say "you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" And the woman said to the certificate pant, we may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, but from the tree that's in the middle of the garden God has said, you shall not eat from it or touch it or you shall surely die. And the certificate pant said to the woman, you shall not surely die, for God knows when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and this the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took

from its fruit and ate. And she also gave some of it to her husband, Adam, with her and he ate.

Then the eyes of both of them were open and they realized they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made covering for themselves. And then they heard the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden from the presence of the Lord. Then the Lord God called to the man and said to him "where are you?" And Adam said, I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid myself. And God said to him "who told you that you were naked? ? Have you eaten from the tree concerning which I commanded you not to eat? ." And the man said, the woman that you gave me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.

We're not touching that.

(Laughter)

>> LON SOLOMON: No, no.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, what have you done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate.

You say wait a minute, Lon, time out for a second. You're an educated person, Lon. I mean, do you -- you don't really believe, do you that there was a garden and a tree and a talking snake and an apple and two people ate it?

Well, friends, yes, I absolutely do believe this. Now, I'm not sure it was a red delicious apple, because all the Bible says is that it was a fruit. It could have been a Bartlett pear for all we know. But I absolutely do believe that Genesis chapter 3 is telling us historical truth, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

And here's the big thing that I want us to notice from Genesis chapter 3, and that is that as a result of what Adam and Eve did, their relationship with God was radically altered.

Let's go back, Genesis 3:8. And the man and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden from the presence of the Lord.

Verse 10, and Adam said, Lord, I heard you in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.

Hey, friend, Adam and Eve had never run away from God before. They had never hidden themselves from God before. They had never been afraid of God before. Something sinister had happened in their relationship with God.

You say, wow, Lon, I'm really sorry about that. I mean, I feel bad for them. Well, folks, I'm glad you feel bad for them, but I'm afraid it's a little more serious than that. Because what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden affects you and me and every other human being alive.

And the Bible explains this to us in great detail in the New Testament in Romans Chapter 5. Before we look at that, I want to say that you that I want you to listen carefully and pay attention to what we're going to talk about. Because what the Bible says in Romans Chapter 5 is some of the most important spiritual truth that you and I will ever learn. I want you to put your thinking caps on.

Everybody got your thinking caps ready to go?

I want you to stick with me. You going to stick with me?

Yeah? All right. And let's launch in and look at this.

Romans 5:12. Therefore, the Bible says, as by one man sin entered the world. Who was that? Adam. And death through sin, as we just saw in Genesis chapter 3, so death passed on to all people for all sinned.

We'll come back to that.

For if by one man's trespass, that is Adam's in the garden, death reigned, how much more will eternal life reign in those who receive God's gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ?

Therefore, just as one man's trespass, Adam's, brought judgment to all men, so one man's act of righteousness, that is Jesus Christ' death on the cross, brings justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience, Adam in the garden and just like that made many that is every member of Adam's race remain sinners in God's sight, so also by one man's obedience Jesus Christ on the cross many every member of Jesus' race, will be made righteous in God's sight.

You say, Lon, what in the blazes is this talking about?

I mean, I heard all the words you just read, but I don't have the slightest idea what this is talking about. Okay. Let's break it down and see if we can understand this.

In these verses the Bible is explaining to us the basis upon which people go to heaven and people go to hell. And what the Bible is telling us is that this basis has nothing to do with some sort of cosmic heavenly scales that weighs our good deeds versus our bad deeds, but rather this basis has everything to do with what spiritual race we're in.

You say, Lon, I'm sorry, I still don't get it.

Okay, listen, Romans 5 is teaching that the whole story of the human race can be summed up in terms of two men: Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ, each of whom is the head of a spiritual race. Another way to put this is to say that in God's mind there are only two races of people in the world. There is Adam's race and there is Jesus Christ's race. This is why 11 Corinthians 15:22 says, in Adam, there's race number one -- so in Christ, there's race No. 2, all shall be made alive.

The Bible is telling us God sees every human being alive as a member as being in one of these two races.

And so you, me, here today, listening, sitting here, every single one of us in God's judicial sight is either in Adam or we're in Christ. There is nothing in between. And even though it's true that God knows us as individuals and God cares about us as individuals, and God understands us as individuals, that doesn't change the fact that first and foremost God sees us as part of a race and he treats us accordingly.

Now, you with me so far?

Yes?

All right. All of you at Loudoun and Prince William and everybody? You with me?

Let's follow the Bible one step deeper. There's more here. The Bible goes on to say in Romans 5 that as members of a spiritual race, each of us has a union, we each have a connection, we each have -- if you can put it this way, we're each joined at the hip, so to speak, with the head of our race.

We call this the doctrine of federal headship. Adam is the federal head of his race. Jesus Christ is the federal head of his race, and Romans 5 makes it clear that whatever each head did -- dad Adam, Christ -- whether it resulted in curse, each member gets credited with what they did and lives with the consequences of what they did.

Every one of us here understands the concept of federal headship. You say no, I don't. Yes, you do.

Say, Lon, I don't.

Yes, you do. You say, Lon, I don't.

Friends, if you're an American, you understand this. And the reason for that is our nation is set up, our government is set up around this very same principle. Here in the United States our nation, the way we're set up, is that the president of the United States is the federal head of every American citizen. What that means is that when the president makes a statement, when our president makes a decision, when our president signs a treaty, when our president authorizes a course of action, he does so on behalf of every American citizen, and every American citizen lives with the consequences of his actions because he is the federal head of America.

A few years ago Jimmy Carter, our federal head, gave away the Panama Canal. Nobody asked me if I wanted to give away the Panama Canal. And if they would, I would have told them, I don't want to give away the Panama Canal, I like the Panama Canal. I think we should own the Panama Canal. I think it's a bad idea to give away the Panama Canal. But what I thought didn't matter. And once that action had been taken, every American citizen for the rest of time is going to live with the consequences of that decision. Why?

Because our federal head made a decision that every one of us is bound to as American citizens, whether we like it or not, whether we agree to it or not.

Now, if you understand that -- and you do -- then you understand the doctrine of federal headship. The doctrine of federal headship, my friends, is what forms the basis of the Bible's teaching here in Romans Chapter 5. Romans 5 is teaching us -- listen -- that because Adam is the federal head of the human race, whatever he did in the garden of Eden, whether -- whatever blessings Adam earned before God, whatever curses Adam earned before God, as members of his race every human being inherits and lives with the consequences of Adam's action just like the Panama canal. And what did Adam earn for the human race in the Garden of Eden?

Romans 5:12 says he earned death for us. 5:18 says he earned God's judgment for us. And Romans 5:19 is that because of his actions, we were all made sinners in the sight of God.

You say, Lon, wait a minute. Are you sure this is right?

I mean, are you sure that God sees us in this race thing? Are you absolutely sure that I inherited all of Adam's curses?

Does the Bible say anywhere -- anywhere else anything about this that would prove to me that you got this right?

Absolutely. Right -- let's go back to Romans 5:12. Here we go. It says and so death passed on to all people for all sin. God, the Bible says here, sees every human being as a sinner. Because we're part of Adam's race and he was the head of that race. And when he became a sinner, God sees every one of us that way. And here's the proof. Want the proof?

Okay. Verse 14. Here's the proof. Here's why I say this. The Bible says, this is why death existed from the time of Adam 'til the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam did. And how did Adam sin?

He sinned by breaking a direct commandment of God.

Friend, the Bible tells us in the thousands of years between Adam and Moses that there were no formal laws, no written rules, there were no ten commandments or anything else like that that God gave the human race. And so let's follow the Bible's logic here.

You still with me?

You're awake. You're tracking. Okay. Let's follow the Bible's logic here.

If -- follow me -- if the only way to become a sinner in God's sight and to earn the penalty of sin, which is death, if the only way to do that is to disobey one of God's laws, like Adam did, is to break a direct commandment of God, like Adam did in the garden, then between Adam and Moses when there were no direct commands of God, nobody could become a sinner in God's sight. And therefore nobody should have died. You understand?

But the Bible says in spite of that, everybody did die. Which proves that there's another problem at work here. There's another reason why these people died. And this problem is that God regarded them, all those people between Adam and Moses, he regarded every one of them as sinners from the moment they were conceived from -- they were under his judgment from the moment they were born because they were all members of Adam's race.

Got me?

So let's summarize. What makes Albert Schweitzer a sinner in the sight of God, in spite of all the great work that he had done, all the great deeds that he had performed?

And what makes you and me sinners in the sight of almighty God is the fact that we've broken God's laws?

Nope much even though we have.

Is it the fact that we've all done wrong things and thought evil things and said slanderous things about other people?

Nope. Even though we all have.

Folk, what makes us sinners in God's sight from the moment our little lungs take their first little breaths is that we belong to a race whose federal head, Adam, is a sinner. Do we get this?

You say all right, Lon, I do. I get it.

And now I need to tell you that I am thoroughly depressed.

No. Okay.

Well, don't be depressed. Wait a minute. We're not done yet. There's more to come. We're not stopping here. Because the Bible's got some really good news. And friends, we don't appreciate the good news the way we should if we don't first understand the bad news. And the good news of the Bible, the great news of the Bible is that in his mercy God has created another race. A new spiritual race that you and I can transfer into if we want, a race whose federal head -- praise God -- is not Adam, but whose federal head is the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why 1 Corinthians 15:45 calls Jesus the second Adam. Because there was a first Adam. He established his race. Now there's a second Adam who established a new race. Do you understand?

And we get into this new race by trusting Christ as our savior, and once we're in this new race all the blessings that our new federal head earned before God now we inherit those. And now we live with the consequences of them.

And what are some of these blessings?

Romans 5:18. Jesus earned justification for us, acquittal of sin on the cross.

Romans 5:19. Jesus Christ on the cross made us righteous in the sight of God.

Romans 5:21, Jesus Christ purchased eternal life for us on the cross.

And friends, this is the dynamic principle that underlies God's plan of salvation in the Bible.

Federal headship.

I want to repeat that -- is the dynamic principle that underlies the plan of salvation in the Bible.

Listen to me carefully. It isn't the plan of salvation isn't about God turning his head and pretending like we didn't sin. God is a holy God. God is a righteous God. God is a just God. God can't do that, and God didn't do that.

The plan of salvation in the Bible is all about God birthing us into an entirely new spiritual race where the blood of Jesus covers our sin and where the righteousness of Jesus absolves our sin forever.

Praise the Lord?

Huh?

You guys, that's worth clapping about.

(Applause)

>> LON SOLOMON: And look. You remember when Jesus met our good friend, Rabbi Nicodemus?

Chapter 3. He said, unless a person is born again -- now a lot of us have always said, well, to be born again, what does that mean?

It means to be saved. It means to get eternal life. It means to go to heaven. But why?

Now do you understand what Jesus was saying?

Unless a person is born again, unless a person allows God to rebirth them out of Adam's race and into the race of Jesus Christ, they cannot see the kingdom of God.

Do you understand what he was saying now?

We got to get out of one race and into the other race. We had our first birth in a race that is nothing but trouble. But we can get rebirthed into a new race that's nothing but blessing.

Do you understand what he was saying to Nicodemus now?

The bottom line is that salvation in Jesus Christ, my friends, basically is all about switching races. It's all about a race change operation, so to speak, that in his mercy God performs on every single person who embraces the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are no longer in Adam in the judicial sight of God much that's over forever. You and I are now in Christ. Praise God for that.

Amen?

Can we get a round of applause for that?

That's an amazing thing.

(Applause)

>> LON SOLOMON: Now, that's as far as we're going in our passage. We're going to stop now and ask our most important question. All of you at Loudoun and Prince William and in Bethesda and down in the edge and on the Internet, and here at Tysons, are we ready?

This is worth shouting about, friends. Here we go. 1, 2, 3.

>> ALL: So What?

>> LON SOLOMON: Yeah. Say, Lon, all right, that's great. So what? Well, let me tell you so what. Let me ask you a question first.

And my question is this: Why don't more followers of Jesus Christ share their faith?

You say, well, you mean with my friends, my co-workers, my relatives, my neighbors?

Yeah. Why not.

Well, you say, I think some people are scared.

Okay. Fair enough.

And I think some people are embarrassed. Okay.

And I think some people feel like they don't have enough training.

Okay.

But you know what, folks?

I don't believe that's the key reason why we don't.

I think the number one reason why we don't is because we really don't believe to the depths of our being that apart from personal faith in Jesus people are totally, utterly, hopelessly lost and headed for hell for all of eternity.

So why should I take the risk of my popularity suffering, of my inheritance suffering, my reputation suffering, my friendships suffering, my chance for promotion at work suffering?

Why should I do that to share with people information about Jesus that isn't absolutely necessary anyway?

Maybe they can get to heaven some other way. You say, but Lon, you just proved from the Bible that they can't. You just proved from the Bible that it's unequivocal that it's got to be through Christ.

I know. I know. But you see, we let our human logic get in the way. We say things like, oh, my grandmother, she was the most pious person I ever met. That woman went to church six days a week. There's no way in the world God could see that woman as a sinner and send her to hell much that's not the point. Whose race was she in?

Was she in Adam's race?

My grandfather was a huge philanthropist. Gave away thousands and thousands of dollars. He would have given you the shirt off his back. He was the sweetest, nicest man you ever met in your life. Wonderful.

But was he in Adam's race?

My girlfriend at work, she is the kindest, gentlest, most compassionate person you ever met. There's no way God can see her as a sinner and send her to hell.

But what race is she in?

That's the question.

What I'm trying to do here today is convince you from the Bible that people can do all these nice things and it's wonderful that they do. But it's -- as long as they're in Adam's race, none of this makes any difference.

And people can believe in Buddha and Mohammed. But God didn't start another race with Buddha or Mohammed, or Rabbi Smith or Confucius or any of these people. He started that race with Jesus Christ and raised him from the dead to prove it. You can believe in all these other people as much as you want, but you're still in Adam's race and you're still in big trouble.

To go out of this world in Adam's race is a disaster in eternity. A disaster. And all the good works in the world, even taking Albert Schweitzer times 2 doesn't get you out of Adam's race. Only faith in Jesus Christ does. Because it's a supernatural rebirth that only God can do.

And when we understand this, folks, if we really believe this, it must compel us to get out and share the information about Jesus with our friends, our school mates, our neighbors, our co-workers, complete strangers, and at least give them a fighting chance to get out of Adam's race.

A couple years ago I was in Chicago visiting my son Justin. Brenda was there too. And one night I couldn't sleep. And I couldn't sleep. So I got up and I went out for a walk. It was summertime in Chicago. Beautiful.

And I had on red champion shorts, a green -- bright green, Krispy Kreme doughnut T-shirt and tennis shoes with no socks.

My son lives a block from moody Bible institute. So I walked up and walked around the campus a little bit and prayed for everybody there. Right out in front of moody Bible, on LaSalle Avenue there's a little bus stop that's like Plexiglas and whatever. It's 3:00 a.m. and nobody is anywhere. I'm sitting there praying and thinking. And I notice from my right here comes this young man walking down the street with a bunch of books under his arm. Obviously coming back from studying. He walks by me on his way to moody and goes about 30 feet past me and stops. And then he walks back and comes into this little bus stop and sits down next to me and says, sir -- I said yeah?

He said, I'd like to know if I can talk to you about Jesus Christ.

I said, well, sure you can.

He said, I'd like to know if you've ever accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior. And I said actually, I have.

And he goes, really?

And I said yes, really, I have. I accepted Jesus Christ 40 years ago into my life. And he said to me, it's been a long 40 year, huh, sir?

I said, no, it hasn't been a long 40 year, no, I just couldn't sleep. It hasn't been a long 40 years.

So I said as a matter of fact, I'm a pastor of a church. And he said, you are.

I said I am a pastor of a church. I just couldn't sleep. I'm telling you the truth.

So we talked for a minute. He walked on to go back to his dorm.

I still don't know if he believed me, honestly. Going back.

But you know, I thought has he walked off, I thought praise God for that kid. Praise God for that kid.

(Applause)

>> LON SOLOMON: Who sits down next to a complete stranger in red champion shorts at three o'clock in the morning in downtown Chicago and try to share the gospel with them?

I'll tell you who. Only somebody who believes that apart from Jesus -- that poor guy on that bench -- is utterly totally lost and there's no other way for him to be saved except to hear about Jesus Christ.

That's who does that.

And friends, I got to tell you, that's my heart and my passion for the people of McLean Bible Church. This is the -- how I want us to be. Just like that student. Would to God, we had 10,000 people in this city just like that kid. Because if we did, we'd shake, rattle and roll this city.

I'm not saying bust into people's lives and make yourself obnoxious. I'm just saying you see an opening, you see an opportunity, remember, if they're in Adam's race, I don't care how nice they are, they're lost. And only you have the information that can help them get out of Adam's race. We need to feel compelled. And if we did, 10,000 of us, 15,000 of us, 20,000 of us, we'd rock this city for Christ.

So that's my challenge to you. My question today, as we leave is as followers of Christ, do you leave your house every day actively looking

for, actively hoping for an opportunity to share Christ with every member of Adam's race you possibly can?

If God opens the door, are you just champing at the bit to go through it?

And if not, why not?

Paul said, Romans 1:16, for I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God to salvation. It's the power of God that allows people to switch races. To everyone who believes, everyone who believes. But you got to believe.

So I hope this week you'll go out there, and you see somebody in red champion, don't worry about it. Sit down and share Christ with them. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, thanks for talking to us today deeply from your word. And thanks for reminding us that it's not about how good we are, it's not about how compassionate we are. It's not about how nice we are. Lord, it's about what race we're in. And as long as we're in Adam's race, we're in big trouble. So Lord Jesus, thank you first of all for coming and dying on the cross so that there's an option, so that there's another race we can even get into. Thank you, Lord Jesus in your mercy for offering to transfer anyone who believes into that race. And to let us live with the consequence, the blessed consequences of what you did.

And Lord Jesus, those of us who are there, help us to really understand what this thing called salvation is all about, how it works. And the marvelous way in which you accomplish this. And then help us go out and tell others.

Lord Jesus, use us this week here in Washington, help us go out of our door saying, Lord, open an opportunity. And to the best of my ability I'm going to step through it with the gospel.

We pray these things in Jesus' name.

What did God's people say?

>> ALL: Amen.

>> LON SOLOMON: Amen. Hey, have a great week. God bless you.

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