

# Good News: You're Dead

Romans 5:18-6:11

*Romans (no. 14 in the series)*

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Peter Hiett

*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/good-news-youre-dead/>

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*This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!*

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## Message

I was sitting here this morning, looked up at the table and saw that someone put Wonder Woman next to Superman. That's probably good because we've been talking about Adam, out of Romans chapter five, and when Paul says Adam, he's not just thinking this guy, he's thinking these two because Adam means 'humanity.' I could tell the story of how this one body became two bodies and then how it becomes one body again, but I usually get in trouble when I tell that story in church. But this is just a good reminder that Adam means 'humanity.'

At the start, I'd like to show you one of my favorite movie scenes of all time. In this scene you'll see Dr. Malcolm Crowe, played by Bruce Willis in the movie *The Sixth Sense*. Ironically, he's a psychologist who makes his living by analyzing the psyches of other people. But he's been having trouble understanding his own. He's been obsessed with work and fears about himself. He's moved his office to the basement under the stairs where he thinks he'll get more done. Worst of all, he can't seem to communicate with his wife, Anna, who has fallen asleep on the couch, watching a video tape of their wedding ceremony.

Video clip: *The Sixth Sense*  
Buena Vista Pictures (1999)

*Malcolm (Bruce Willis) has just come home from working with a troubled boy, named Cole (Haley Joel Osment), who claims to see ghosts—dead people who don't know they're dead. At first, Malcolm doesn't believe Cole, but then discovers evidence to suggest that what Cole says is true. Malcolm suggests to Cole that perhaps his sight is a gift, meant to help people. So, Cole tells Malcolm that he ought to try talking to his wife, Anna (Olivia Williams) while she's asleep.*

Malcolm	Anna.
Anna (sleeping)	I miss you.
Malcolm	I miss you, too.
Anna	Why Malcolm?
Malcolm	What? What is it?
Anna	Why did you leave me?
Malcolm	I didn't leave you.

*Malcolm's wedding ring drops out of Anna's sleeping hand and rolls across the hardwood floor. Malcolm looks shocked, as if he is realizing something. Malcolm flashes back to a scene with Cole.*

Cole                    I see people. They don't know they're dead.

Malcolm             How often do you see them?

Cole                    All the time. They're everywhere. They only see what they want to see.

*Malcolm's flashes back to other scenes from earlier in the movie. Malcolm is realizing that he has been caught in his own world. He now sees that everyone except Cole was acting as if he were not there.*

Malcolm realizes that he's dead, and that would explain a lot:

- Why he's been having trouble communicating with his wife
- Why she eats her dinners alone
- Why she picked up the check at the restaurant
- Why she put the table in front of the door to the basement
- Why he couldn't get things done and seemed so stuck

He is a ghost. He then sees what he didn't want to see—his own death. And yet the Truth sets him free. It's the death of death. The Truth sets him free...and Cole free... and Anna free. In the next scene, as she's sleeping, he tells his Bride that he loves her and that things will be different in the morning, and in a flash of light his spirit leaves and yet somehow always remains. Everything—absolutely everything—changed when he saw what he had not wanted to see: that he was dead.

Gospel means Good News, and sometimes people will ask, and I will also ask, “What difference does it make?” If we ask that question, I think it means that we just don't believe that it's true. Sometimes people will say, “It's just too complicated to understand.” I'm coming to believe that it actually may not be complicated at all. But the lies we tell ourselves, so that we can believe what we want to believe, are as complicated as hell. Let us pray: Lord God, we ask that by the power of your Spirit, you would help us to believe the Gospel. We ask it in Jesus's name, Amen.

This is our 14<sup>th</sup> sermon in our series from the book of Romans. In our last two sermons, we talked about this amazing statement in Romans 5:14, where Paul tells us that “Adam (which is one man as well as every man and woman—humanity) is a type (a tupos) of the ‘one being about to be.’” And I made this “tupos” for you. If I take the Super Man, the Eschatos Adam, and I press him into some clay, the imprint that's left behind is called a “tupos”. Paul is saying that Christ is the Superman, the last Adam. And we are the tupos, the first Adam, who is like the presence of an absence, the shape of what is not, what is not the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Last week at our “Chew the Fat” discussion time on Zoom, Haziel from the Philippines, asked a great question, that's hard to answer. He asked, “If the Old Adam is a tupos, the presence of nothing, and Old Adam is me, how can I be aware that I am nothing and not something?” Well, this is my best shot at an answer: “I” am not nothing, but that's not true of “me,” for “I” am not “me.” Say to yourself, “I am not me.” You may think that's absurd, but maybe you are absurd. So, think about you, yourself, for just a moment:

- How do you look? Good, bad, in between?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What have you done? What have you not done?
- Think about your thoughts?

Now, is that you that you're thinking about? How could it be you?

- You are not the thoughts you think.
- You are not what you have done or haven't done.
- You cannot be the You that you observe.
- You cannot be the one the judges how you look.
- I cannot be the me that I am observing.

And as soon as I think I observe "I," it's no longer "I" that I am observing, for "I" has, in fact become "me," that which I am observing. Phenomenologists, like George Herbert Mead, have argued that every person is at least two things:

1. A "me" that can be observed somehow in space and time.

That "me" would include my body, which is made of clay and the things I've done or not done with my body, which would be my work. And it would include the judgments I've made, the experiences that I've had, the thoughts I've had, the feelings I've felt and those feelings I hope to feel or fear that I might feel; it would be that thing I call "my life;" what scripture refers to as my psyche, or my soul. That is my "me."

2. I have an "I" that observes "me." I have an "I" that is conscious of "me," that is "myself."

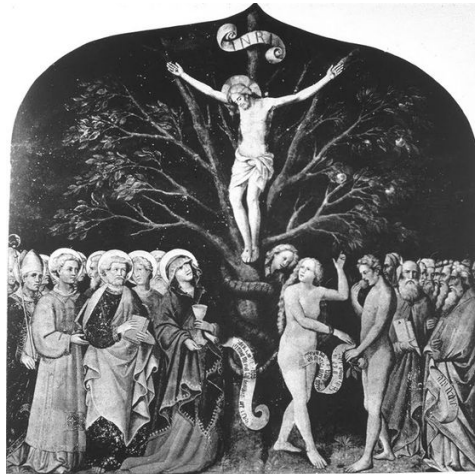
And "I" don't seem to change. Although "me" is constantly changing; but I am who I am, unchanging. "I" cannot be located in time or space, "I" can only observe when and where I was, but not when and where I am.

Philosophers, and now physicists, refer to this as "the hard problem of consciousness." The "I" that is conscious of me is not of this world of space and time. And yet, strangely I tend to think that "I" was created by "me." And I tend to think that "I" must be justified by "me," (the me I make). And I'm pretty sure that "I" must be saved by "me," (by what I have done and what I will do). I think Scripture would refer to my "I" as a spirit. According to Genesis, on the Sixth Day, God formed the Adam of the clay of this earth, (the dust of space and time}, and then breathed his breath, his spirit—and he is eternal—he breathed his spirit into that clay. And the Adam became a living soul—a living *nephesh* in Hebrew, a living *psyche* in Greek.

So, back to Haziél's great question. How can the Old Adam, be a tupos—the presence of an absence in clay and somehow be aware of himself? Well, Old Adam isn't only the presence of an absence in clay. For in every person there is a spirit but it's not of this world—you can't see it, touch it, or feel it because you are it. Freaky huh? I am not a person that has Spiritual experiences. I am a Spirit that has personal experiences.

And according to Paul, I'm going to experience two person, and Old Adam and a New Adam, a False Self and a True Self, an Old Psyche and a New Psyche. In fact, Jesus said that I can lose the Old Psyche and find it, as if the Old Psyche can be made new. Last time we read that the Old Adam is "a type of the one being about to be." Well, it was the Old Adam that sinned the archetypical sin. Evidently Adam was only partly created when he committed that sin. Adam was created without knowledge of the Good, and so of course he had no faith in the Good. So, he didn't know that the lie was bad, and the truth was good, when he took the knowledge of the Good from the tree—that is, when he took the law.

Last time we read that "the law came in to increase the trespass..." And what was the trespass?



*"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena*

Well, the snake tempted Adam and Eve to take fruit from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, in order to make themselves in the image and likeness of God. But "I" can't make "me" into the image and likeness of God, who is Jesus—the perfect image of God. In fact, apart from Jesus, I can do nothing; that's what he told us. And yet, I think that apart from him I can do something.<sup>1</sup> I think I can do something that is actually nothing, and the bible calls that sin. It's choosing nothing and thinking it's something.

I can create "a body of sin;" I can create "a false self," an old Adam, maybe kind of like the human ego—that's the tupos. You see it's as if God creates me and then he allows me to attempt to create myself, just so I can see that I didn't create myself and can't create myself. It's as if a father and mother were to create little children, and then allow those children to attempt to create themselves, save themselves, and justify themselves. It's as if the Father allows his children to run away from home and break his heart, just so that he can find them, reveal that his heart has willingly been broken for them, and then, into them, bleed a river of life-giving mercy. So that in the place "where sin increased, Grace might abound all the more."

The place where sin increased is us—the old Adam. We took knowledge of the superman to make ourselves into the superman. But instead of Super Man, we only make an "Old Man," that is, "a false self." It's knowledge of what we should be, and pretend to be, but are not. The law tells me what I should be, and so I pretend to be, but must confess that I am not. If I think "I should love," it simply reveals that I don't love, but it doesn't give me the power to love. It

reveals that I'm not the Superman, but the tupos of the Superman in a vessel of Clay and the Superman is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So the law reveals that I am lost without the way, a lie without the Truth, and dead without the life. The law reveals that I can do nothing except observe that I'm not something. I'm a ghost, trapped in an illusion, that is crumbling before my eyes. I'm dying, but seem to have forgotten, I am or was already dead.

**Romans 5:18-20:**

[The portion in brackets is the more literal translation.<sup>ii</sup>] **Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where [the] sin increased...**

Paul includes the definite article ("the"), but translators often take it out, for in English we don't normally include the definite article with abstract verbs. But Paul includes it for a reason. He wants us to think of "the sin" that is the root of all sins. He wants us to remember the sin in the garden at the edge of spacetime and eternity.

**Romans 5:20-21:**

**...the law came in to increase the trespass, but where [the] sin increased... [the] grace abounded all the more [hyperperisseuo: literally, "super" "abounded," as if the Superman literally bled his Life into the empty space that had once been our tupos, the Old Man], <sup>21</sup> so that, as [the] sin reigned in death, [the] grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Now if we're preaching the Gospel and following Paul's train of thought, it should naturally lead to this question.

**Romans 6:1-2:**

**What shall we say then? Are we to continue in [the] sin that [the] grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died ["to," "in," or "by"<sup>iii</sup>] [the] sin still live in it?**

I used to think Paul was just being snarky but now I think he's being sincere. How can we who died to, in, and by the sin, still live in it? Well, only by believing we didn't die. But how is that possible? How could "I" be dead and yet conscious enough to deny my own death? "I" who died to, in, or by the sin, the sin of Adam. "The day you eat of it dying you will die." Said God.

So, are we dead? According to Paul, every person that knows the evil from the good, is "dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of their flesh"<sup>iv</sup> until Jesus makes them alive. Jesus delivers "all who through fear of death were kept in lifelong bondage." That's Hebrews 2:15—so just the fear of death is bondage to death.

**Romans 6:3-4:**

**Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into [the] death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

If we were dead, and then with Christ we did die, that would be the death of death which is Life—eternal life: life that is always new and never old.<sup>v</sup>

**Romans 6:5-7:**

**For if we have been united** [*sumphutos*: “begotten with” or “born with,”] [And remember that Jesus is “the firstborn from the dead,” according to Paul, which would make us “the dead,” being about to be born.] **with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self** [*Anthropos*: man] **was crucified with him in order that the body of [the] sin [the sin body] might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to [the] sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free** [*dikaiotai*: literally—“justified”] **from [the] sin.**

“Justified” and remember, we’ve been keeping track: We’re justified by:

**We are justified (made right) by:**

3:24 *“Grace as a gift.”*

3:26 *“The Faith of Jesus.”*

4:25 The Resurrection of Jesus: *“raised for our justification”*

5:9 The Blood of Jesus: *“We have now been justified by his blood.”*

5:18 Life: *“justification of life”*

6:7 Dying: *“One who has died has been justified from sin.”*

How weird is it that we’ve taught people that Jesus died, so they wouldn’t have to die, when Paul is saying that you cannot live until you’ve died? Jesus came to help dead people die, so that we might live and never die.

**Romans 6:8-11:**

**Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to [the] sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to [the] sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

So how can we who died by, to or, in the sin, still sin? Well, maybe because we don’t consider ourselves to be dead. Maybe we don’t know that we died, the first death when we committed “the sin,” when we took the life from the tree. And we don’t know that we died the second death, when Christ gave his life on the tree; we don’t consider it, reckon it, we don’t believe it.

We don't know, in the words of verse 6, that our old Adam was crucified with Christ in order that the body of the sin might be brought to nothing. I think Paul refers to your body of clay as the body of sin, and in the next chapter he'll refer to his body as a body of death. So, how can "I" be conscious of the death of "me," that is "myself," that is "my old Adam." Well maybe "I" really am a spirit, but my body is comprised of the dust of space and time, or to say it in old English: Maybe I am a ghost.

But we were all brought up to believe that there's no such thing as ghosts. And so, it always freaks us out when old folks mentioned the Holy Ghost in church. But now, even physicists are perplexed and flummoxed by ghosts. But of course, they don't say "ghost;" they say "consciousness." Philosophers have always been flummoxed by consciousness. And now Physicists are even more flummoxed.

They argue incessantly over the implications of quantum mechanics and what it means that an observer collapses the wave function of quanta, such that they are no longer probabilities, but actualities called matter. And we are all fascinated by the possibility of mind over matter—that consciousness could move matter—for we've been told that all there is matter, we've been told that only matter matters.

The other day it hit me: Of course, mind can move matter, I can move matter with just a thought, and so can you, and now I'm going to prove it to you. Oh hey! Look at that! Just look at that! [Pointing to the back of the room.] I made you look, didn't I? To look is to turn your head and it's made of matter. But it wasn't matter that moved your matter. I spoke Word, that you understood. It was your spirit that controlled your matter, and we have a name for that matter—the dust that your spirit controls; we call it your body.

Don't freak out, but you're a ghost, in a meat wagon, called your body. "I" control the body that I refer to as "me." Or, I should say, I think I control the body that I think is me. You see, I didn't create the dust that I refer to as "me," and I'm actually losing control of me; I'm getting old or, I should say, "my body" is getting old. My body of sin and death is made of flesh. And soon Paul will start referring to the flesh.

Now, to understand your flesh, just pinch your flesh. Did it hurt? Yeah, a little. Now, pinch your neighbor's flesh. Did it hurt? It hurt them, not you. See for Paul, the problem with the flesh is not that it enjoys physical pleasure and is bothered by physical pain. The problem is that the flesh enjoys only its own physical pleasure and is bothered only by its own physical pain. The problem is that I am self-conscious and only self-conscious.

The problem is that your body is like a universe unto itself. That's why your so worried about your lunch, your money, and your vacation, but not about your neighbor's vacation, her money, or his lunch. The problem is that your body is cut off from every other body. If you cut off a member of your body—like a finger—and laid it on the table, it would look alive for a time, but you'd know that it was dead and dying. So, what if my body is to be the member of another body? It might look alive and yet be dead and dying.

Maybe your body is dead and dying and yet it grows—how does it grow? You know the answer, but you constantly deny that it's true. Your body grows by taking life and pooping death. We call it eating. The only time that your body grew by any means other than taking plant life or animal life and killing and consuming that life. The only time was when you received your mother's life through an umbilical cord in the womb, and when you drank her life as milk from her breast. You could only take that life because she first gave you that life.<sup>vi</sup> And yet, you did not know that she was giving you, her life. Psychologists say that a baby is not conscious of the self as separate from the mother who nurses that baby in her arms. But no mother is satisfied until that baby becomes self-conscious, and then, eventually mom-conscious—at least conscious enough to say, “Thanks Mom.”

Last week I heard Jordan Peterson, the psychologist, say that the story of the fall is the story of humanity, and each of us, becoming self-conscious. I think that's right. But our Father is not satisfied until we each become God-conscious and neighbor-conscious, and all come home for dinner, and say “Thanks Dad, for giving me your Life—I mean our life.” And Jesus isn't satisfied until we all become one body—his body.

Do you remember the thought that Eve thought once she swallowed the lie? She looked to the tree and “saw that it was good for food.” That's how we grow a body of sin and death, we take “the life” and eat it. And she looked and saw “that it was a delight to the eyes and to be desired to make one wise.” It was knowledge of Good and evil. She took “the law” That's how we grow an ego, a psychic body, that we call “our life; my life.” My psyche is the thoughts I've thunk, the feelings I've felt, and the judgments I've pronounced. All of which get recorded somehow in my brain. And yet I'm not my brain, I use my brain to think my thoughts.

Some philosophers and scientists, like Bernardo Kastrup, now argue that the universe is a manifestation of the consciousness of God. In the way that your brain is the manifestation of the consciousness that is your spirit. Which means that each of us is something like a dissociated consciousness in the consciousness of God. So, the person you think you have created is like a dissociated identity disorder in the mind of God—a rebel spirit, in the Spirit that is God. And I suspect that Paul and Jesus would basically agree.

Well, how does my dissociated identity, my psyche, grow in space and time? Well, it grows by consuming other psyches, that is beating my neighbor; I judge myself first by judging others to be last and least; I think myself best, by thinking the worst of everyone else.

That's what the Scribes and Pharisees were doing when they took the life of Christ on the tree in the garden. They were trying to build their psyches—they were jealous. You see: the biggest threat to “my psyche” is other psyches. And the biggest threat by far is the psyche of God, the logos of God, that is, Jesus.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). *The Passion of the Christ* [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

You know pain, both psychic pain and physical pain, is the realization that another psyche is violating your psyche. If someone punches you in the nose, it reveals that you have encountered another consciousness, in another psyche, manifesting in a body that doesn't do what you want it to do, what you will it to do. And so, of course, we're tempted to eliminate every other psyche. And yet if we're the only psyche, in our universe, we're utterly alone. And that's not heaven, that's called hell. "It's not good that the Adam should be alone," said God—before the fall.

How could you ever come to know that you're not utterly alone? How could you know that your reality isn't all an illusion that you have just created in your own mind? How could you be assured that you're not utterly insane and totally alone? Well, someone could punch you in the nose and it might hurt. Or maybe you could die, when you didn't want to die, which would reveal that reality is not simply whatever you want it to be. It would mean that you are not alone in a reality of your own making. It would mean that someone had just saved you from yourself.

It's horrifically ironic, but all my anxiety, fear, and shame, comes from trying to save myself from the Psyche of God. And the Psyche of God, came, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, to save me from myself, my psyche. I am, in the words of Paul in Romans 1:18, "imprisoned in the chains of my own unrighteousness."<sup>vii</sup> And now the Gospel: "the Truth (Romans 1:18) is imprisoned in the chains of my own unrighteousness" with me, by me, and in me.

How exactly that happens—whether he was there from the start, or whether it happened at the tree, or the cross, or whether all of that is exactly the same thing at the edge of time and eternity—I don't know. But I do know that in first Corinthians Paul writes, "he who is joined to the Lord, becomes one Spirit with him..." That's one consciousness. And you see: he also has a Psyche and according to Paul it's the entire creation—he's actually the head of the cosmos and we are his body. Well, that is an awfully lot to think about, and we will need to do much more thinking as we continue through Romans.



*"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena*

But for now, I just hope that you would see that this body of sin and death, my old psyche, the old Adam, the tupos, is something that God allows me, or even arranges for me to create, when I believe the lie, that I can take knowledge from the tree in the middle of the garden and justify myself. Paul seems to think that all sin is an effort to justify the self, that is, make yourself right. So, why do you take what you shouldn't take, drink what you shouldn't drink, and covet what

you shouldn't covet? It's all because you know somethings wrong, and you're trying to make it right. So, you take the money to complete yourself; you drink the drink to forget your sorry self; you covet your neighbor's wife, so you'll complete yourself, forget yourself and no longer be alone.

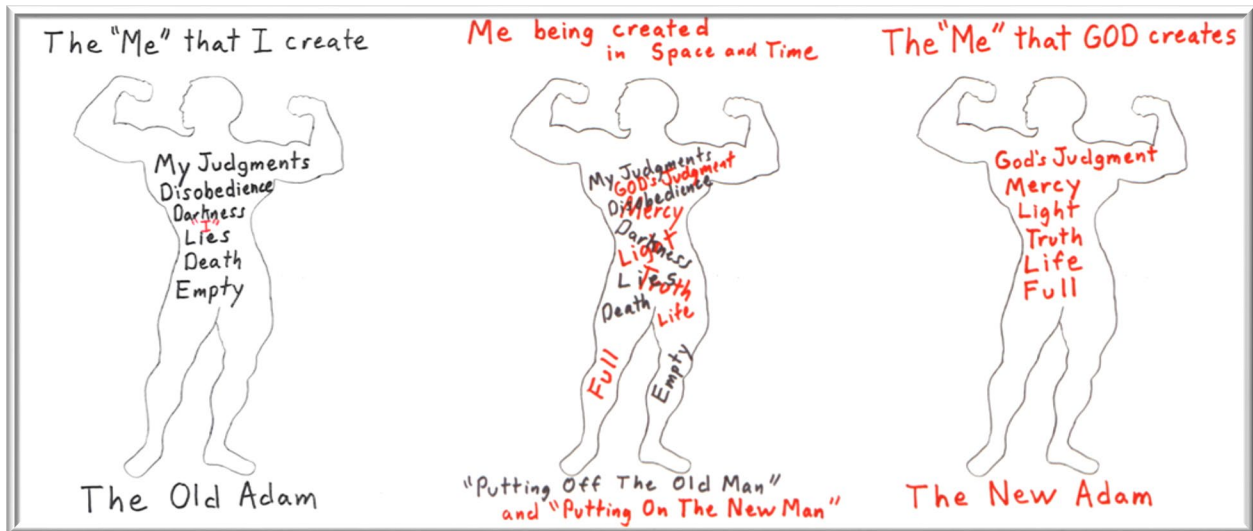
And then, when you see, that taking the right only made you wrong, you take knowledge of what's right, in an effort to will what's right. So, God will reward you with what you think is right, for you don't actually want what is truly right. So, you make yourself even worse: not just a tax collector or sinner, but a Scribe and a Pharisee that actively crucifies the Righteousness of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord

So, why do we sin? Well because we don't know that we're dead and unable to justify ourselves, and that any effort to justify ourselves only imprisons ourselves deeper within ourselves—A psyche stuck in space and time like a bad dream. But it's not just that we don't know that we're dead and cannot justify ourselves; It's that we don't know that we've already been justified. So, I am Adam: I come to the tree and take from the tree and become self-conscious—I grow a body of sin and death. One of these [Peter picks up the “tupos”] But then, by a miracle, I come back to the tree and see that what I too (“my life”) has always been given (His Life, Eternal Life, the Psyche of God). I wake from the bad dream that I thought was me, to the consciousness of God in Christ Jesus. [Peter picks up the Superman]

This is death (the “tupos;” the old Adam) and this is the death of death (the presence of the Last Adam) this is the Judgement of God and the Justification of “me”. [Peter places the Superman in the tupos].

- You can't justify yourself if you have seen, and so know, that you are justified.
- You can't judge yourself if your convinced that you've already been judged.
- You can't save yourself if you know that you're already saved.
- You can't create yourself if you believe you are already created.
- You can't pay for your sins if you believe you have been forgiven.
- You can't take the life from the tree if you know that you've already been given the life on the tree—Life eternal.

Once you wake from a bad dream, the dream loses its power. You won't choose evil, once you've seen the good. You won't, and yet you do, and you don't; You believe, but also don't believe; you're waking up.



You see in Paul's thinking you are divided. You have a false self that believes he must justify himself and so damns himself. That's the "me" that I think I create; that's the old Adam. And you have a "me" that God creates, a true self, the new man who believes that he is justified. Because he is; she is; we are and I am. In space and time, they both—old and new—exist in you.

- Like goats and sheep under one shepherd.
- Like chaff and grain in a single kernel of wheat.
- Like tares and wheat in one single field of dirt or clay.

If you try to separate them yourself, you only make it worse. If you try to judge yourself, and so save yourself, you only create more false self and so condemn yourself. You, that is, your "I," can do nothing—"I" can do nothing. But perhaps "I" can watch something that is done to "me." "I" can observe myself being judged by the judgment of God. It destroys the old man, and so liberates the new, and creates the new. "I" can observe the creation of "me"—the image and likeness of God—the new "Me." Apart from Christ, I can "do" nothing. But in Christ, I will do everything.

About three weeks ago I was really having a hard week. And so, Susan prayed that God would tell her something for me. She heard that I was to read a certain chapter of Scripture.<sup>viii</sup> It's a beautiful chapter, it contains a beautiful affirmation, but it also contains some words that I took as condemnation. And Susan got mad, she said, "Why do you always go to the place of shame? Why do you always ask, 'what did I do wrong?'" (And believe me I can always find something I did wrong: a show I shouldn't have watched, some money I didn't give, someone I didn't call) She said, "Why don't you believe that he loves you; Why do you feel like you always have to pay?" And I said, "I'm not sure. Can you help me ask him?"

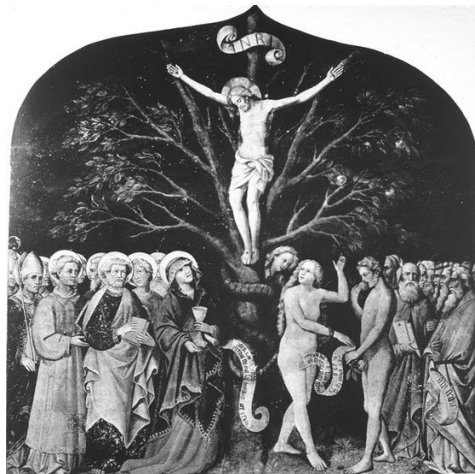
Well as I prayed, asking that question, and confessing how I felt, Susan said, "It's the other, it's the false Jesus." And you see I know who that is; I call him "me-sus." "Jesus" literally means "God is Salvation." That's Jesus. "Me-sus" is the belief that "me" is salvation; the me that I have created. I think John calls him the anti-Christ, which means imitation Christ. Paul calls him the false self, old man, or first Adam. It's what I think I should be but know that I'm not.

Well, as I told Jesus how I felt: responsible, weighed down, and unable to do what I thought I was supposed to do, Susan said, “Peter, I see him, and he’s like pathetic—he’s like a golem, (that’s Hebrew for unformed substance...) he’s like a golem, like Gollum in the movies.”

Now Susan was visibly disturbed by this; she was having a vision. That means that she wasn’t dreaming; she was waking to a higher consciousness. She said “Peter, give all your responsibility, all the heaviness, to that golem.” As I did, she said, “I just see him loaded down with all these chains.” Then she said, “Throw him in the lake of fire.” And I had a thought and so I said, “I’ll throw him in the lake of Love.”<sup>ix</sup> Then she said, “Oh Peter, he’s just terrified of the lake of Love.” So I stood up and motioned like I was throwing my golem into a Sea of Love.

After a moment Susan said, “Peter, I just watched Jesus walk over to that pathetic thing and pick him up and cradle him in his arms, and then I watched him walk into that lake of burning love. And yet, you were in Jesus, and Jesus was in you, and the two of you walked that sorry thing into that lake of burning Love until you all disappeared, immersed in that lake.” (To use biblical terminology—we were baptized.) “And then,” she said, “I watched Jesus, and you in Jesus, rise out of that Lake.”

Well, feeling rather insecure about all of this, and wondering if I had messed up God’s plan that is, feeling tempted to feel responsible for having felt so responsible, and not responsibly disposing of my golem earlier, I said, “Honey, would you ask Jesus if this happened at the right time.” She said, “Peter, Jesus just gave you this confused look, as if this has nothing to do . . . with time.”



*"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena*

See, I think this happens every time I come back to the tree and surrender to the judgment of God, it happens every time I believe the Gospel. And yet it is eternal; it’s the newness of life that is always now.

## Communion

And so, at the edge of time and eternity, the psyche of God [Jesus] took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body given to you. Take and eat and do this in remembrance of me.” And in the same way, after supper, he took the cup saying, “This is the covenant [which Scripture says is eternal] in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you and do it in remembrance of me—drink my cup.”

I think he’s saying, “Die with me—together we walk into the Judgment of God our Father: consuming Fire and absolute Love.” You are already dead, and terrified to die, and so trapped in a lie. But watch yourself die with me, and you will rise with me. And everything will be different in the morning.

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## Benediction

I’ve come to believe the Gospel is actually quite simple and you can say it in different ways. But right now, say it this way:

- This is a proclamation: You are the creation of Love.
- This is a prophetic word: You will love because you’ve been loved.
- This is a warning: When you hide from Love, you hide in outer darkness.
- This is your commission: share the Love of God with everyone you meet.

In Jesus’s name, Amen.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Ah, wretched sin! What are you? You are nothing. For I saw that God is all things: I saw nothing of you. And when I saw that God has made all things, I saw nothing of you; and when I saw that God is in all things, I saw nothing of you; and when I saw that God does all things that are done, greater and lesser, I saw nothing of you. And when I saw our Lord Jesu [this is the spelling in the book] sitting so gloriously in our souls, and loving and liking and ruling and guiding all that he has made, I saw nothing of you. And so I am certain that you are nothing; and all those who love you, and like you, and follow you, and choose you at the end, I am certain that they shall be brought to nothing with you, and endlessly overthrown. God protect us all from you. Amen, for the love of God.

- Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 35

<sup>ii</sup> I’m usually taking this literal translation from Young’s Literal or simply from one of several interlinear translations. I would encourage everyone to check these translations themselves using bible translation software. You do not have to be left at the mercy of a translator’s preconceived notions of what Paul is “trying to say.”

<sup>iii</sup> “To” is supplied by the translator, so this literally reads “died the sin,” but the sin is in the dative case in Greek which means that the phrase could be translated at least three different ways: “died to the sin,” “died in the sin,” and “died by the sin.” I think all three are true in slightly different ways. Adam was killed by the sin, Adam died in the sin—he became “dead in sin,” And Adam died “to the sin” on the cross with Jesus . . . who had been with Adam all along.

<sup>iv</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. – Colossians 2:13-14

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. -Ephesian 2:1-5

<sup>v</sup> But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way [literally “newness”] of the Spirit and not in the old way [literally “oldness”] of the written code (the letter of the Law).” -Romans 7:6

The human psyche always judges using knowledge from the past and so is in bondage to fear and shame, by the psyche of Christ is always in the now, with “I am.” Jesus only does what he sees the father doing.

Righteousness is trusting Spirit of God now. Sin is trusting knowledge about God, taken in the past, in order to apply in the future... it is a spirit in bondage to the ego.

<sup>vi</sup> In the wilderness, the Israelites ate manna—it wasn’t life that was taken but given.

At communion we eat bread and drink wine—if we believe it’s not life that was taken but given—it is forgiven and fore given.

<sup>vii</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth imprisoned in the chains of their unrighteousness.

<sup>viii</sup> 1 Peter 4

<sup>ix</sup> Later, a couple of weeks later, Susan and I got into a little argument about who said, “Lake of love.” She mentioned that that’s what Jesus called it. I said, “that’s what I called it.” She said, “I know, but that’s what Jesus called it first. He told you ‘Lake of love.’ I thought you knew that. I watched him tell you... and then you said it.”

I remember the thought popping into my head, but I thought it was my own. I wonder how many good thoughts come from him that we think are our own? I suppose all of them.