Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- [13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. [15] 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. [16] And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. [17] For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] 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.

Because of the nature of my work, I spend a lot of time on the computer. And I've gotten fairly adept at navigating my computer and all the different programs and finding what I need to be able to find. But there is one *tiny* aspect of using my computer which has become my best skill, in fact, it has been taken into my muscle memory so that I can do this quickly without even thinking about it at all. And here it is: I click the little "control" button, marked "Ctrl" and then I click the "Z" button. That combination of buttons on a computer running Microsoft Windows is the universal hotkey for "undo." And I need to click that series of buttons *a lot,* because I make a lot of mistakes! When I accidentally delete a big portion of my sermon: "Ctrl + Z" and it all pops back up. When I'm working on the bulletin cover and make a *bunch* of changes to it that I find out I don't like: I click "Ctrl + Z, Ctrl + Z, Ctrl + Z, Ctrl + Z" until I've undone all the changes I've made. When I accidentally delete an important file: "Ctrl + Z" brings it right back. Yes, I rely on the "undo" button, because there is so much I need to undo.

Sadly, that ease of undoing errors only exists on the computer. How often I've wanted to be able to click a living "Ctrl + Z" when I've said some harsh and unloving words and seen hurt spread across the face of the recipient as my words hurled towards their target. How often I've wanted the ability to click "undo" when I've betrayed a friend's trust! But we all know from painful experience, it's not so simple; there *is no* undo button for life. And sin is not so easy to just "undo."

But there is a solution. And there is one who is able to undo all of the hurt that we have wrought. But it wasn't the matter of clicking a few buttons. It wasn't quick, it wasn't painless—undoing our wrongs cost the Son of God His life. But He *did* undo them. The theme we'll be considering today is:

Jesus Christ: Our Life's "Undo"

There was a TV show around the turn of the millennium called "The Early Edition." Perhaps some of you watched it. The show revolved around a man living in Chicago that mysteriously received his local newspaper, *The Chicago Sun Times*, a day early every single day. He'd read through the paper about the different accidents that were to take place over the next 24 hours and go and try to save those

people and prevent those tragedies. I remember watching a few episodes of that show with my dad, and I was always captivated by the idea of basically re-writing history. If *you* could go back in time, armed with the knowledge of what was about to transpire, what events would *you* try to change? I can think of a number of sporting events that I would try to change. Then there are accidents involving loved ones which you could try to prevent. And then there are even more impactful events like terrorist attacks, bombings, school shootings—it would be great if you could go back in time, knowing what you know now, and try to stop those tragedies from happening.

Of course, the truth is, there's so many senseless murders and tragedies that happen every day, that even if you spent your entire life trying to stop events like these from happening, you'd *barely* make a dent in the world's sadness. And if I recall, that was one of the themes of that show—sometimes there were too many people to save in a day that the main character had to make the painful choice of whom to save and whom to let die. But there is *one* event, which, if you could *undo* it, would make a real meaningful impact on all the other sadness that's transpired in the world ever since. That's the event that took place in the Garden of Eden. Have you ever wished you could go back in time to the Garden of Eden, stand guard at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and slap the fruit out of the hands of Adam and Eve? That's an "undo" that would make, literally, a world of difference.

Paul writes about that event and what transpired in the millennia since: ***"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."*** I wonder what was going through Adam's mind when he saw the damage he had done. You know that feeling when you've broken something, when you've caused some great damage? That's a sinking feeling, that's a terrible feeling. What was *Adam's* psychology like when he saw what he had done. Paul says that *through Adam* sin entered the world. And all the damage and the danger and the damnation has been there ever since. And we know that to be true because *we've all* added to it.

Of course, we do know the immediate reaction of Adam and his wife Eve. ***"The woman whom YOU gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate. . . The SERPENT***—that, by the way, *You* made, O God—***the serpent deceived me and I ate."*** (Genesis 3:12-13) They blamed each other, and also, primarily, they blamed God. And we're no different! How easy it is when we see the damage that *we've* done—when we utter a hateful word and so wish to "undo" it—how easy it is in that sudden wave of guilt to blame God. "God is the one that made me this way." "God is the one that allowed all the pain in my life which *is* the reason that I did this." "God's expectations are too high and unreasonable, of course I can't follow it all."

Well, what if God's expectations *were* lowered, in fact, what if God had never given us His Law at all? Would that then mean that we would no longer be sinful? That's actually what Paul addresses in the next few verses: ***"For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come."*** Paul says that even before the law was given so that you could keep score—before there was even a law so that you could keep the tally of how many sins you'd committed—he says death was there anyways. In fact, death was the king. ***"Death reigned from Adam to Moses."*** When Adam was alive, there was one specific law: do not eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When Moses came

some 2,500 years later, more Law was finally given on Mt. Sinai. But what about that time in-between? Between Adam and Moses is this unique period of human history where there was no Law. During that time period, if *anywhere*, there should have been some sort of brightening of man's dark sky, a breaking of the stranglehold of death against mankind. And yet, when you look at that time period, what do you see? ***"All the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. . . all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died. . . all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died."*** (Genesis 5:4ff) Death remained in charge of those centuries. And the history of each life ever since ends with one word: "death." And death is the ultimate proof that we are *all* guilty, that we are *all* sinful. And this is a big reason that God gives us His law, not to *make* us sinful, but to *show* us that we are sinful. To show us that the reason that every baby who is born will also one day die is because all have sinned, and ***"the wages of sin is death."*** (Romans 6:23)

The Law of God shines a light on our sin to expose it for what it is, and *death* is that constant reminder of our sin and what it deserves. And *we* are left with death. We know it. We feel it. We mourn it. You know, there was probably some decent sized chunk of your life when you couldn't really even imagine any of the people that you love one day dying. You knew that it had to happen eventually, but it seemed so far off in your mind that it was basically not even real. And then, one day, you noticed that grandpa wasn't breathing so well anymore. One day, you noticed that grandma was having a hard time remembering your name. One day, you noticed that dad, who always seemed so strong and invincible in your mind, started losing his hair. And then you realized that one day these people will die, and it might be soon. And maybe that time has already come and gone in your life. This is what sin does: sin brings its sickness, death brings its damage—and that's what the first Adam did. And *to* that work we have all added our part. And we would *love* to undo all of it, but we cannot.

But, it's not *all* bad news. Here's your opportunity to admire and to be grateful and to praise. Because Jesus Christ *is* the *Second Adam*, and He has done what we cannot do. He has *undone* the work of the first Adam. Here's what Paul says: ***"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. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 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."***

All of that is to say, that even when death separates our loved ones from us, *in Christ*, death does not separate them from God. All because through Jesus, God undid the damage that Adam brought and in which we joined. And now, where there *was* God's righteous condemnation, now there is vindication, innocence, freedom, restoration, and a *place* to live God. Even while we were still sinners, even though we are still sinners, this is what Christ has undone! How great is that!

In the place of our guilt there is innocence. In the place of punishment, there is release. **Jesus Christ is Our Life's "Undo."** He undid the damage. Adam was disobedient. Jesus Christ was obedient. Perfectly

obedient to the Father's plan. And He lived for you and He lived *with* you in His heart. And He suffered in your place to reverse your fate, and He died. Jesus died.

Adam #1 dragged us down into sin and death, but Adam #2 *went* down, Jesus *went* down into death. And in doing that He undid the condemnation, and He reversed the curse. And now He takes sinners like us to *set* us in the sight of God and He stands us on our feet. And He makes us to be righteous and holy and blameless in the sight of God. *You* measure up now. *You* are *now* what God desires in Jesus Christ.

And there's more! Jesus also undid *death*, both your death and mine. He did it by doing it—by dying Himself and by overcoming it Himself. He conquered death, He made it weak and powerless, He made it disappear. He died. But He rose. And He will never die again. Death is undone! And because of this, and because of Your baptismal union with the Second Adam, *your* death is undone. As Paul writes in the next chapter: ***"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into 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."*** (Romans 6:4) How great is that!

Now, I know, it's *in* the future. It's something to look *forward* to. In the meantime, we still face the sorrow and anticipate the death that entered the world through Adam. But the day will come. The day will come when God comes calling for *you*, and we can look for it with longing. We can look forward to that day with a certain and sure hope. Because our sin is forgiven now, our curse is removed now, and *your* death itself, God will *undo* in your very body.

All the damage of this world came by means of the sin of that one man, and death *has* ruled. But *now*, by ***"much more,"*** Paul says, ***"much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."*** With Jesus, *we* now reign in life over death, because God has removed its sting! And not our sin, and not even death itself can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (cf. Romans 8:39) Because **Jesus Christ is Our Life's "Undo."** Thanks be to God, in Jesus' name. Amen.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amen.