

**THE CURSE UPON ALL**  
Romans 5:12; Galatians 3:13

— **Intro:** The word “curse” evidently was first expressed by Robert Kennedy, Jr. after his father was assassinated in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968. That word has been revived since the plane accident a week ago Friday when John Kennedy, Jr., his wife Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, were killed. Robert Kennedy’s statement in 1968 was, “We’re all marked by a curse.”

This was the latest in a long series of tragedies involving various members of the Kennedy family.

The first was the death of Joseph Kennedy, Jr. in a plane crash in 1944 during World War II. A sister of his, Kathleen Kennedy died in a plane crash in 1948. In 1963 President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles in 1968. Mary Jo Kopechne died in a car driven by Edward Kennedy when he ran off of a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island. An accident in 1973 involving Joseph Kennedy who was the driver, left a young woman paralyzed for life. Edward Kennedy, Jr. had his right leg amputated because of cancer.

— David Kennedy died in 1984 from an overdose of drugs. And throughout the years others have been involved in various scandals that have made the news.

The U. S. News magazine for this July 26, came out with a picture of JFK, Jr. and his wife on the front, with the caption, “The Kennedy Curse.”

It is interesting that this word “curse” should be circulated around the world. With many the word “curse” has superstitious overtones, and perhaps you have heard it explained in different ways by different people. A curse is a tragedy, a misfortune that comes upon someone. One reporter described it as fate. The dictionary speaks of times when people have prayed for a curse to fall on someone. But the circumstances in the Kennedy family which have affected all of us in one way or another over the years, have formed a strange serious of events which have the world talking.

— We would all agree that the death of JFK, Jr., his wife, and his sister-in-law was a great tragedy. They were off to a wedding which was canceled, and instead of a wedding, the family was involved in hours of anxious waiting which was to climax in funerals.

I was especially struck with the word “curse” because it is a Bible word. And it is a word which affects every person who has ever been born in this word. It describes the judgment of God which has fallen on the whole human race, and no one is exempt. And this “curse” from God is the basic cause of all of the evil, and heartache, and tragedy which has characterized every age from the beginning of time. And this is by far the worst curse that has ever fallen upon man. It is the curse of sin, and the ultimate curse which sin brings into the lives of people who die without having their sins forgiven. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:23,

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The death that the Apostle Paul was speaking about was not just physical death, but eternal death, eternal judgment for all who do not receive the gift of eternal life.

Death itself is a solemn reminder to people in every generation of God’s curse upon sin. And yet sin is a word which we have tried to eliminate from our vocabulary because the very mention of sin ultimately leads to God, and people do not like to think of God as righteous, and holy, a God Who cannot look upon sin, and a God Who judges sin. In fact, in all that has been said during these recent days there has been practically no reference to God. And if there is any reference, it almost conveys the idea that whoever we are, when we die things will be all right. The events surrounding the death of these three people have certainly revealed how pagan America has become.

In a case like this another tragedy which has hit the Kennedy family, this raises a question which people were talking about when our Lord was here on earth, and undoubtedly has been discussed from the beginning of time. Let me read to you the passage that I am thinking about. It is found in Luke 13:1-5:

1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise

perish.

There is no question but that God has been dealing with the Kennedy family. But does that mean that they are the worst people in our country because they have suffered so many tragic events? It is up to them to determine what all of this has to do with their relationship with God. But the fact that all of these things have happened to such a prominent family is another way in which God is speaking to the people of the whole world. And the message for today is the same that it was in our Lord's day, and that is, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5).

I have been reading a book called, "God's Terrible Voice in the City." It was written back in the 1600's when a great fire destroyed much of London, and at the same time there was a great plague of sickness which killed thousands of people. And it was looked upon by godly people as the voice of God, seeking to awaken people to the many ways in which they were sinning against Him, and this was undoubtedly the climax of many lesser things that God had been doing to awaken people to their sins, and the consequences of their sins.

God has spoken again. He speaks in natural disasters (and our country has had many of them recently). He speaks when crime gets to the point that it is out of control, and there appears to be no human remedy. He speaks when we see, as we have seen, the tragic events which have taken place in Kosovo, and now with the Serbs themselves. We have religions of various kinds not only around the world, but right here in America as this nation which once was pleased to say, "In God we trust," which now has become to a great extent God-less, and where we have legalized sins which are abominable to God. It is not possible for a nation to survive having taken the course which we have taken. We feel just as smug about ourselves as the Egyptians did about themselves, and as the Babylonians did about themselves, and as the Romans felt about themselves, and yet one by one they all fell under the judgment of God. But God has warned us in His Word, and God warns nations by providential events which shock us and grieve us. And the message, loud and clear, is, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Of all of the Kennedys, it appears that John Kennedy was one of the best. At least no scandal that I know of had touched his life. And his wife and sister-in-law seem to have been good people from the world's viewpoint. God alone knew their hearts. And God knows the hearts of all of the Kennedys. But for those of us who are looking on, the voice of God is

again being heard, and we all had better listen. Those of us who know the Savior need to take stock of our own lives to make sure that we are living according to the Word of God. If we have grown careless about our relationship with the Lord, if we are reading the Bible as just a habit without any real desire to know our God in a better way, if we have compromised in any way with the world and its ways, it is time for us to repent and turn to the Lord for His forgiveness and cleansing. Sin in any form is a terrible thing, and it is only by the blood of Jesus Christ that any sin can be forgiven.

But these events should make those of us who know the Lord conscious that we have a lot of work to do in spreading the message of salvation. People are not saved just because they pray. They are not saved just because they go to church, or because they have joined a church. They are not saved because they give to the church. And they are certainly not saved even though they give their time to charitable works to help those who are in special need. Those are all good things, and they are things which true Christians will do. But there is only one way of salvation, and that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in what He did when He died on the Cross as the sinner's substitute. Our sins are so terrible in God's sight that nothing man does could ever atone for them. He sent His only begotten Son into the world as a Man, to die for sinful human beings because that was the only way our sins could be forgiven so that we could have the gift of eternal life.

We are all born under the curse of God. Men continue to ridicule the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and how they ate the fruit which God told them not to eat, but that is where sin got its start in the human family, and that is what has affected every human being who has ever been born. The Apostle Paul said so in Romans 5:12:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: That "one man" was Adam. And when he sinned, he brought sin upon all of the rest of us, and with sin came death, just as the Lord had warned Adam that it would come.

In Genesis 3 where we have the account of man's first sin, we see that there were three ways in which death came to Adam and Eve. The first was that they tried to cover their nakedness, and yet they hid from God when He came to meet with them as He had previously done. The second way in which death began to work in them was through physical death. And then God put them out of the Garden of Eden before they could eat of

the Tree of Life and live forever in their sins. God was gracious in doing that, but it showed that they were under an eternal penalty.

— Sin came by one man, and so death passed upon all men. “The wages of sin is death.” Adam and Eve’s first son became a murderer. He killed his own brother. And the tragic record of human sin has left its mark upon human history right down to the present hour.

Now when people begin to realize that they are not right with God, the first thing that they do is to try to do whatever they can to make God pleased with them. God gave the nation Israel the Law, not to show them what they must do if they were to save themselves, but to make them even more conscious of their sinful condition. The Law demanded that they be punished. It showed man how really hopeless his condition was. And here we come to the word we have been talking about: the word “curse.” The Law never saved anyone. It made God’s curse upon us even clearer than before. So we have to look elsewhere for our salvation, if indeed there is any other place where we can find how our sins can be forgiven.

— And we find in Scripture that this is the reason that the Son of God became a Man. He came to save us from our sins, but He had to die in order to do that. As I reminded you in the beginning of this message,

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

And how He did it is found in Gal. 3:13-14:

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

— If the judgment of God is upon the Kennedy family, is not for you or for me to say. But there is a far worse curse that rests upon any of them who are not trusting in the saving grace of God. And it is a curse which rests upon all who are not trusting in the shed blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Being Catholic or Protestant is not the answer. Our good works are not the answer. It is only by the precious blood of Christ that we are redeemed from eternal judgment, forgiven of our sins, and blessed with the gift of eternal life.

Apparently it is the Kennedy family who have resurrected this word

“curse.” Those of us who know the Lord need to be praying that the Holy Spirit will awaken them to their personal need of a Savior that they might be delivered forever from the curse of sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we pray for them, we need to be praying that God in His grace will touch the hearts of people throughout our country who are thinking about “the Kennedy curse,” not realizing that they too are under a far greater curse because of their sins, and that God would grant many repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it was the Apostle Peter who, when speaking to a crowd of religious Jews, told them that their religion with all of its sacrifices and holy days was not enough, for, as he said,

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

God is a God of love, or Christ would never have come to save us in all of our unworthiness and sin. But He is also a righteous, holy God, and I can say the same thing here – or Christ would never have come to save us from our sins. And let us remember that salvation does not come to families. If we are to be saved, individually we must come to God through Christ, and each person must believe in Christ. A parent can’t believe for his child, nor can a child believe in Christ for a parent. One friend can’t believe for another friend. A husband can’t believe for a wife, nor can a wife believe for her husband. We all stand before God individually, and each one must come for himself to be saved.

Make sure that Christ is your Savior.