

**Advent Midweek Theme
Whose Son Is He?**

**First Advent Service
He is the Son of a Woman**

Text: Genesis 3:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Theme: God’s Gift of a Savior to Sinners

Last during during the Sunday School opening, I was looking at Luther’s explanation to the second article of the creed with the kids. We were looking at the words, “**who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature.**” The kids knew what the word “lost” means. They had all been lost at some time. One of them was lost once in the woods. Another had been lost at the Pick ‘n Save. But then I asked them what it meant to be condemned. They didn’t know. Then I said it is when your mom tells you to clean your room, and she catches you playing video games instead. It is when the time comes to turn in a home work assignment, and you didn’t do it. You are guilty. You either failed to do something that you should have or you did something that was wrong.

That is how Adam and Eve stood before God They were condemned. They knew it, and God knew it. When we consider the Ten Commandments, each one of us also stands condemned before God. They show us exactly where we have done wrong, and we realize that there is no place where we can hide from God. We stand before God, just as Adam and Eve did, as lost and condemned creatures. But the good news that we hear today is that God has a gift for sinners like us. That gift is the Son of the woman, our Savior Jesus Christ.

I. Adam and Eve’s answer to their condemnation.

They wanted to hide it or excuse it any way that they could. As soon as they sinned, they realized that they were naked. For the first time ever, they experienced shame. How did they respond? They sewed garments out of fig leaves. It was a sorry attempt at making clothing. They must have looked silly clothed in their fig leaves. Then God came, and they hid. They had never hid from God before. They enjoyed His presence and His glory, but they were now afraid of God’s condemnation, so they were afraid of Him. Those two things already showed their guilt clearly. Any other time they would joyfully meet their Lord, but both the funny clothes and their hiding showed that they had done wrong. It was Adam’s own response to God’s question, “*Adam, where are you?*” which condemned him. Adam said “*I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.*” He had condemned himself.

But then both Adam and Eve dug themselves deeper into the hole that they had made. God asked Adam, “*Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?*” Adam’s answer was, “*The woman you put here with me— she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.*” Adam blamed his wife. She gave it to him. It’s her fault. But Adam also

blamed God. He told God that it was His fault for giving him the woman. If God had never given him a wife. This whole thing would have never happened.

Then God turned to the woman. Eve said, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”* She was just like Geraldine in the old Flip Wilson sketch, *“The devil made me do it!”* She was deceived. How could she know that it would turn out this way? It’s not her fault.

Don’t we try to answer our condemnation in the same way? We try to cover it up. We hide from the consequences. We start to do that right away in life. When you find a little child under there blankets, they are either playing pee-a-boo or they realize that they did something wrong. Cover-ups and hiding are two of our natural instincts when we do something wrong.

But when we are found and our sin is exposed, we try to find excuses like Adam and Eve did. Like Adam we want to find someone else to blame, anyone else even if it is God. Kids blame their brothers and sisters. Husbands and wives blame their spouses just like Adam did. We will look for someone else as the cause of what we did wrong. Like Eve we will point out to God just how difficult this temptation was for us. We didn’t know what we were getting into. Our answer to our condemnation is to cover up, hide or excuse our sin.

II. God’s answer to our sin is to send a Savior.

God would give several consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin, which included pain in childbirth, a marriage relationship that would no longer be perfect, work would now be toil, and physical death. But God did something remarkable beforehand. He promised them a Savior. He told them, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.”* This verse is the first Gospel promise. The devil and the woman would not be friends or allies through this sin. God is going to make them enemies. He has a plan to save mankind through an offspring of the woman. There is one offspring of the woman whom the devil would especially hate. The devil would try as hard as he could to destroy this child. Tonight’s epistle lesson speaks of this in a vivid way when it says, *“The dragon stood in front of the woman who as about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.”* That verse reminds us how the devil used Herod to try to kill the Christ-child shortly after He was born. But Genesis 3:15 also speaks of offspring of satan in the plural, who would also be opposed to the one offspring of the woman. In tonight’s Gospel lesson Jesus showed that those who opposed Him, shouted *“crucify Him, and nailed Him to the cross were the fulfillment of this when He told the pharisees, “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.”* (Jn 8:44) God promised this one offspring of the woman whom the devil and those who belonged to him would try to destroy.

But this offspring of the woman would defeat satan. God told satan, *“He will crush your head.”* The image is on a man stomping on the head of a snake. This Savior would completely defeat the devil. Satan thought that he won when Adam and Eve forsook God for his temptation, but God promised that this Savior would defeat satan with all His power. However, God also said, *“and you will strike his heel.”* While Christ is crushing the devil’s head, he mortally bites the heel that is striking him. The Savior would give His own life in order to save us. Already in this first Gospel promise, we have a picture of the cross. Christ gave His own life in order to save us. He would die in our place to save

us from death, and His resurrection would be the assurance of our eternal life.

III. This gracious gift of God changes our response to God's condemnation of our sin.

As Christians we no longer cover it, hide it, deny it or excuse it. We confess it. When King David stood condemned for his sins of adultery and murder, he confessed, "*I have sinned against the Lord.*" (2 Sa 12) In Jesus' parable the tax collector would not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed, "*God be merciful to me, a sinner.*" We come to God with contrite hearts. We have hurt Him with our thoughts, words, and deeds, and that grieves us. God has blessed us in so many ways. We responded with ungratefulness and rebellion so often in our lives.

But we also come to God confident of His forgiveness through our Savior Jesus Christ. Christ had paid for our sins in full. Faith in Him washes us clean from all of our sins. We don't have to deal with our sin and condemnation because God has. He has given us the greatest gift of all. The blood of His own Son Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all of our sin.

Because of that forgiveness, we live thankful lives to God for His grace and mercy. We don't have to be afraid of God. He is our dear Father, the friend who loves us most. If He loved us so much that He gave His only Son to be born of a woman, we can be sure that He will give us whatever we need. He gave His own Son, so that we can have not just life to its fullest now, but also eternal life in heaven. We want to do good and follow His commandments, not because we are afraid of Him or because we fear His condemnation. We want to live our lives to the glory of Him who saved us, and we now realize that His ways, which are that we love as He has loved us, are really what are best for us.

Thanks be to God, that He has not dealt with us according to our sins, ever since that very first sin. He has redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with the holy precious blood and the innocent suffering and death of the promised offspring of the woman, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Who is Jesus? The answer is simple. Tonight we learn that He is my Savior, the promised offspring of the woman, who has saved me from all my sin.

Amen

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