

## The First Sunday in Lent

### Text: Genesis 3:1-21 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”  
<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”<sup>4</sup>“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. <sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”<sup>10</sup>He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”<sup>11</sup>And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”<sup>12</sup>The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”<sup>14</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> 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.”<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”<sup>17</sup>To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”<sup>20</sup>Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup>The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.



### Theme: God’s Answer to our Sin

The story of the fall into sin tells us a lot about ourselves, but especially about the grace and mercy of our Lord. There are many things that we could look at about this text including how the devil tempts us or that we should always flee temptation, but once we do fall into temptation, what is the answer? Today I would like to look at both our answer and God’s answer to our sin.

#### I. Our answer to sin.

There are three things that we notice in this text.

The first is that we try to **hide** from the consequences. This was Adam and Eve's first response. They covered themselves with fig leaves. When God came to them, they hid. Little children do this when they do something that they know is wrong. Suddenly, they are no where to be seen. It gets no better as we get older. King David tried to cover up his adultery with Bathsheba in several ways so that no one would find out. In John 3 Jesus told Nicodemus, "*People loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.*" (Jn 3:19,20) Our first answer to sin is to deny it and cover it up.

When it is exposed, our next reaction is to **blame** someone else. Adam's response is very revealing. He said, "*The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.*" God gave Adam this wonderful, beautiful wife, and Adam blamed her for what he had done. But notice that he goes even further. He said, "*The woman who you gave me...*" In the end, he blamed God. He basically told God, that if He had never given him this wife, this whole thing would have never happened. The same is true for us. The Bible is full of examples of people who looked for someone else to blame for their sin, such as King Saul when he said that he was afraid of the people. In our lives we are always looking for someone else to blame. We will confess, "I did it, BUT..."

-“I raised my voice, but you can't imagine how that person got on my nerves.”

-“I hit him, but he hit me first.”

-“I stole that thing, but what else was I supposed to do. I didn't have the money.”

Whenever we blame someone or the circumstances, ultimately we are blaming God. We are telling him that if He had only arranged things differently, I would have never done it.

Our final reaction to sin is to **excuse** it. The Lord turned to Eve and asked, "*What is this that you have done?*" She answered, "*The serpent deceived me and I ate.*" Those of you who are my age might remember that Flip Wilson did a character named Geroldine based on this response, "The devil made me do it." In essence Eve said, "I couldn't help myself." The other evening we had leftover pizza on the stove. I'm wasn't hungry anymore, and I know that I shouldn't have anymore, but every time that I passed it, it was like that pizza was calling me, "Just one more piece." Eventually, I took one. Eve said that she couldn't help herself, but do you know what she should have done? She should have gotten out of there. The devil planted the seeds of doubt with the words, "Did God really say?" Right then and there, she should have gotten out of there, but she listened to the devil's reasoning. She even took a good look at the fruit. She thought that she could withstand the temptation. That's why she should have run! She thought that she was stronger than she was. We aren't any better at battling temptation. Last year I preached on the Gospel lesson on the theme, "When it comes to Temptation, we are not Jesus." He battled temptation because He is strong, but we are weak and need to run. When we don't run, it will get us every time. "I was too weak." is never a good excuse. We should have gotten out of there.

## II. What is God's answer to sin?

He begins by **confronting** it. He asked Adam, "*What is this you have done?*" He got to the heart of the matter right away. You might remember how the prophet Nathan was blunt with King David when he said, "*You are the man!*" God's commandments show us in no uncertain terms that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed. If you think that you have no sin, you need to read those

commandments and meditate on them again. John writes in his first letter, *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*

Notice that there are some **consequences** for our sins on this earth. The woman would now bear children with pain. Her perfect relationship with her husband would be broken. There would be times when he is harsh with her. The man would no longer go to work singing, “Hi Ho” everyday. There would be thorns and thistles. His work would be toil. We don’t have to look far at all to see all the brokenness that sin has brought into this world. It is no longer the perfect paradise that God created in the beginning. In the end, every living creature will die. That is put bluntly in Romans 3:23, *“The wages of sin is death.”*

But God’s response does not end there. He promised Adam and Eve a **Savior**. The devil must have been proud of himself for ruining God’s good creation. He had succeeded in bringing sin, evil, and death into the world. But then God turned to the devil himself and foretold a Savior who would defeat him and all the evil that he brought into this world. God said, *“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 seems difficult to understand at first, but it promises a descendant of the woman who would defeat the devil, while the devil would wound him. The picture is of a man who stomps on the head of a snake to kill it, but in the process the snake bites him. This is the first promise of the Savior who would be born of a woman and redeem us by giving His life for us on the cross. God’s answer to our sins was to send us a Savior, His own Son, who was born of a woman to redeem us sinners. In Romans 3:23 it does say that the wages of sin is death, but then it goes on to say, *“But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus our Lord.”*

We see two responses to our sin in this text. Our response is often to cover it, blame someone else or excuse it, but God confronts us with our sins and calls us to confess them. When we do, we find his grace. He has given His own Son, born of a woman, to redeem us from our sins by His innocent death for us on the cross. His answer to our sin is ultimately to save us from it with the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

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