

Sermon for June 9, 2024 – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 3:8-15 (EHV)

Theme: **Listen, The LORD is calling!**

- 1) He is showing you your sin.
- 2) He is showing you your Saviour.

⁸ They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ The LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.” ¹¹ God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” ¹³ The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.

Picture the scene: a mother warns her young daughter not to play with a special, heirloom jewelry box she inherited from her grandmother. But the daughter plays with it anyway when her mother isn't looking. All seems to go fine for the young girl until she accidentally drops it. Out of fear and shame, the daughter foolishly tries to hide the broken box from her mother.

Her mother, however, is not stupid. She calls her daughter – hoping the young girl would admit her guilt and remorsefully ask for forgiveness. The young girl, however, doesn't do that. Instead, she initially denies knowing what happened. Upon further interrogation, she blames a sibling. Finally, after even more interrogation, the daughter feels compelled to admit she broke the box, but only after insinuating that her mother is at fault for leaving the box out in the open.

The scene I described well illustrates the process we are tempted to go through every time we break one of God's precious commandments. Instead of humbly admitting our guilt, fear or pride moves us to try to hide our sin or blame someone else. How sad it is that we act in such a way. The whole reason God wants us to confess our sins is not to punish us, but that he might heal our broken relationship with Him that our sins have caused. He wants us to confess so that he can forgive us for Jesus' sake! Let us consider that truth, under the theme: **Listen, the Lord is calling!** 1) *He is showing you your sin.* 2) *He is showing you your Saviour.*

Part One: He is showing you your sin.

God created Adam and Eve holy with a will that was in perfect harmony with His. They loved and trusted God so completely that they ran to him every time He made His presence known.

God had only one command for Adam and Eve: a way they could express their trust in Him: “Don’t eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest you die.”¹ Because Adam and Eve experienced nothing but good from God, they happily obeyed His one command.

But that all changed one day when Satan appeared as a serpent and promised our first parents that they would become like God if they ate the forbidden fruit. Instead of trusting God’s warning, they believed the devil’s lie and sinned. Did they become more like God? No, rather, such great guilt and shame filled their hearts that the thought of God terrified them because they had broken the special relationship they had previously had with him.

Shortly after that realization, they heard God walking in the Garden during the cool of the day. Instead of running to him in joy as they had in the past, they scurried away to hide.

⁹ *The LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”* Let us be clear: God knew where Adam was and what had transpired. The reason God called out to him is that He wanted Adam to know that He still cared for him. He wanted his children to confess their sins to Him so that God could forgive them and restore the relationship with Him they had just lost.

“Where are you?” God asked. What a question! These words show precisely what happened when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit: they died spiritually; that is to say, they separated themselves from God. They were no longer united with him in righteousness; their desires were no longer in harmony with God’s will. Instead of wanting to please Him, they became selfish – just wanting to please themselves.

Faced with the fact that they couldn’t hide from God, *the man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”* Doesn’t that seem like a lame excuse? Adam was never ashamed of his nakedness before, so there was no reason for him to be ashamed of it now, except that sin had made him ashamed of both God and his creation.

Oh, how foolish sin makes us! Even we Christians fall into the trap of thinking that we can trick God with half-truths. But can we ever cover up the intentions of our hearts from our all-knowing God? Do you really believe that the searcher of hearts cannot know what you do in secret? How often we forget that God knows us better than we know ourselves.

But the LORD cut right through Adam’s excuse. Even though He knew why they hid, the LORD wanted Adam to confess his sin to Him so that He might heal him. ¹¹ *God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”*

But, instead of confessing their sin, Adam and Eve shift the blame. ¹² *The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”* ¹³ *The LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”* *The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

Yet again, we see the sinful heart’s stubborn refusal to admit wrongdoing. Backed into a corner, Adam had to confess his sin. However, instead of expressing regret and sorrow, he admits to his deed, yet pins the responsibility on someone else. “That woman over there, that evil thing, she is the one who tricked me.”

What an example of selfishness! Eve was Adam's greatest joy outside of the LORD himself, but now he considers her junk - the reason he sinned. And Eve's response was no better. Instead of confessing, "Yes, LORD, I did it. Please forgive me," she shifts the blame onto the serpent.

But did you notice something else about Adam's response when he blamed Eve? He accused God of being responsible for his sin. "*The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.*" In other words, Adam was saying, "God, if you had not given me that woman, all would be well. My sin is your fault, not mine!"

Oh, how damnably blasphemous our sins make us. As demonstrated by Adam's response, our sinful pride causes us to view God as our enemy. Like Adam, our sinful nature is unwilling to admit wrong. It wants to blame everyone else – including God – instead of taking responsibility for our actions and asking for forgiveness.

And don't think to yourself, "I'm not like that, pastor." We all are! For example, what is your first inclination when you accidentally scrape someone's car when getting out of your vehicle? "Oh, that scrape isn't so bad. He will not notice if I don't inform him." What lies and half-truths come to your mind when you get pulled over for speeding? When called out by a boss, parent or teacher for something you did wrong, don't you feel the powerful urge inside of you to defend yourself to the bitter end instead of apologizing and moving on in peace?

And how often doesn't our blame-shifting strain our relationships with friends and family members, just as it ruined Adam and Eve's relationship with each other? And did you also know that every time we shift the blame onto someone else, we are inevitably calling God a liar? Oh, how stupid our sinful pride makes us – deserving of God's everlasting wrath in hell! I do not know about you, but realizing these things about myself makes me want to cry out, "LORD, have mercy on me, a sinner!"

And mercy is precisely what the LORD wants to express to us, which is why he confronts us with our sins and their everlasting consequences. Yes, unless God confronts us with our sins, we won't recognize the danger we are in because of our broken relationship with Him. God has no desire for anyone to die apart from Him.ⁱⁱ He loves us too much, wanting everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.ⁱⁱⁱ That is why He did not only confront us with our sins but promises a Saviour to forgive them so that we might be restored to the perfect harmony He intended us to have with Him and each other.

Part Two: He is showing you your Saviour.

The devil must have thought he had won. He got Adam and Eve, the crown of God's creation, to turn against Him. Knowing God's justice, he must have imagined that God would have to damn His creation to hell, and oh, did that give Satan pleasure: thinking about the pain God would feel when seeing His beloved creatures, created in His image, suspicious, fearful, and rebellious against Him.

Therefore, the LORD directed His attention to the snake. ¹⁴ *The LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.*

The fact that God cursed the serpent shows that he was talking to more than just an animal. He spoke to Satan, the fallen angel who used a snake to tempt Adam and Eve into sin. Snakes, however, would become a reminder for all people of all times of what happened in the Garden of Eden. From now on, whenever someone would see the leg-less critter, they would be reminded of how Adam and Eve fell into sin. More importantly, they would also be reminded of the LORD God's gracious promise to defeat the devil.

¹⁵ I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.

The separation that Satan brought about between God and His fallen children would soon change. God would now put hostility between Eve, the first believer, and the devil. Through faith in the promised Saviour that God created in Adam and Eve's hearts, they would once again love and trust the LORD. Their hatred would turn against the devil. This animosity would also be for future generations between the devil's spiritual seed (unbelievers) and those of Eve (believers).

Jesus, the great offspring of Eve, would crush the head of the serpent. How? By taking away his power to accuse us of sin. Jesus accomplished this by living a life of perfect obedience to God's law in our place. He was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet remained without sin.^{iv} More than that, He took our sins upon himself and went to the cross with them – suffering the punishment that we deserved. When he cried out from the cross, “It is finished,” the devil's head was crushed: his power to accuse and condemn us before God because of our sins – was gone. Why? Because Jesus paid for our sins in full – satisfying God's justice to such a degree that He had to forgive us. The devil, however, did get in a heel strike on Jesus - causing him to suffer and die. But God raised Jesus from the dead – thereby proving for all time that we are forgiven! And how do we receive this forgiveness? By repenting of our sins and believing that God forgives them all for Jesus' sake.

Listen, The Lord is calling you! He has shown you your sin; now He shows you your Saviour. Because Jesus paid for your sins in full, there is no reason to be afraid of God. The LORD is not some mean dictator intent on harming you. No, he is your almighty Father who loves you so much that he took it upon himself to save you, even when you wanted nothing to do with him. God doesn't want you to die in hell apart from Him. No, He wants you to have a restored relationship with him through faith so that you can be the dearly loved child He created you to be. Yes, look to Jesus in repentance and faith, and He will restore your relationship with God. He will send the Holy Spirit to create a new spirit in your heart – one that calls out “Abba, Father” to the LORD in childlike love and faith.^v Then you will see the God of peace soon crushing Satan under your feet^{vi} as you live your life in the peace of the LORD's forgiveness. Amen.

ⁱ Cf. Genesis 2:17

ⁱⁱ Cf. Ezekiel 18:32

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. 1 Timothy 2:4

^{iv} Cf. Hebrews 4:16

^v Cf. Romans 8:15

^{vi} Cf. Romans 16:19