

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

May 9, 2024

Peace Ev. Lutheran Church - King of Prussia, PA

Genesis 3:8-15
Rev. Roger W Huffman, *Vacancy Pastor*

God the Father's mission is clear: Reclaim his beloved children.

- Do you grieve like I do when someone says, *The God of the Old Testament is bloodthirsty and vengeful. Nothing like the God of the New Testament.*
 - ♦ Do they pick Bible Stories like they pick movies? The more violent the better?
 - ♦ Do they only know Genesis 3 for the *punishments* to Eve and Adam?
- Let's mine the real riches of these words:
 - ♦ to establish Yahweh's real reputation and
 - ♦ to equip us to share the real nature and reputation of the God of the **whole** Bible

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- ❖ The Living God, the LORD God - *Yahweh Elohim* - is fully revealed in the Garden.
 - *Elohim*: The name for God used in the Genesis 1 creation account.
 - ♦ His power, wisdom, creativity, perfection, and eternal character are revealed.
 - *Yahweh*: God's name used in retelling the account of Creation focused on God's special attention for humans - his creatures made in his image - his children
 - ♦ A very personal, caring, attentive God lavishing the best on Adam and Eve
 - ♦ Providing a perfect home, a perfect relationship, purpose, and a loving warning.
 - *You may freely eat from every tree in the garden, ¹⁷ but you shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die.* Genesis 2
 - This invitation and warning is **pure love**. To say otherwise is self-willed.
 - The Tree's fruit didn't kill them. Disrespecting God, his love, and his word did.
 - *Death* is revealed in the changed state of Adam & Eve after rejecting his word/love.
 - ♦ *Shame* - exposed - seeking to cover their nakedness and hide from God
 - ♦ Separated from Yahweh - reverence, love, and trust **replaced** with fear and dread
 - Clothed before each other - a separation and distance replaces pure love
 - Clear: *The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree...*
 - Clear: *The serpent (one of your creatures) deceived me...*
 - ♦ Death = separated from God and his perfect blessings - that is the loss of full life
 - ♦ The perfect relationship between the Father and his children was broken = dead!
 - Reconciliation **wasn't** on Adam & Eve's radar. But **it was** on the Father's!
 - Look how the Father gently pursued reclaiming his beloved children!
 - ♦ He could have said, *After all that I have done for you! How dare you treat me this way! You ungrateful brats are toast.* Justice and vengeance right then and there.
 - ♦ But **that is not the heart** of our Heavenly Father - thank God!
 - ♦ He lets them hear his voice as he walks about seeking them out in love.
 - Giving them time to respond - to see how different they are now
 - In love: *The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*
 - The LORD God seeks to expose the **dominion of deception** with the **truth**.
 - Both Adam and Eve seek to hide the **truth** with their **lies**.
 - Finally the truth comes out, *I ate*. The LORD God lets the **truth** echo in their ears.
 - The **truth** is critical. Satan is the Father of all **lies**. He murdered them with **lies**.
 - They trusted **lies**, not God's **truth**. The child/Father relationship: trust **truth**

- ◆ Our Father still pursues us, calling us back to live with him, trusting the **truth**.
 - Covering up our failings, by blaming others for our guilt, leaves **lies** intact. Lost
 - We can only be set free from the *dominion of deception* when **lies** don't reign.
 - Be open to humble yourself and say, *I ate*, so God can set you free.
- ◆ Confessing our guilt is critical to seeing sin & Satan as the real problem.
 - However, confessing our sins does not in and of itself reconcile us to our Father.
- The Father promises to turn the tables on Satan, reconciling his children to himself.
 - ◆ *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.* Genesis 3:15 EHV
 - Often memorized after John 3:16. *The First Gospel* - first good news ever spoken
 - **Not good news for the Ancient Serpent Satan.** Head = leadership, destroyed
 - Where's the good news for Adam and Eve and all their children?
 - Satan rules: sinking sins' fangs deep, crushing with guilt, terrorize with death
 - Deceiving us with false *benefits* of sin and denial - the **lie**: he's our *friend*
 - ◆ This **lie** is boldly proclaimed today, saying God deprives us of *fun*.
 - God's good news: *I will put hostility between you and the woman*
 - **God promises to do this.** To turn people against Satan, reclaiming for God
 - How? The virgin born *Seed of the Woman* crushing Satan's power
 - ◆ Jesus' full payment of sin - guilt removed and conquering of death
 - The LORD God fully directs his vengeance on Satan to rescue people!
 - Through this **truth God restores our trust in him** - restores relationship/life
- What Yahweh establishes as his reputation here, he later declares to Moses proclaiming his name - its meaning: *Yahweh, Yahweh, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth...* (Dt 34:6)

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- ❖ Let our Father's reputation be his reclaimed children's reputation.
 - Christians who advocate justice and punishment to uphold *truth* missed the message
 - ◆ Those who live for justice and vengeance show a lack of knowledge of our God
 - ◆ *Lock 'em up and throw away the key* is hardly the heart of our heavenly Father.
 - He only does this to those who remain hostile to him and his people.
 - ◆ Seeking obedience from our children or anyone under our authority with threats:
 - drives people away, teaches them to hide and deceive, not a restored relationship
 - Love does apply **disciplines** to teach and bring people to see the **truth**.
 - ◆ The goal is not vengeance and fear, but to release from lies and deception.
 - ◆ The goal is to seek the ultimate good of the law breaker - rehabilitation.
 - This has value even in a civil context, where the state doesn't have the gospel
 - Among Christians it serves the higher, eternal purpose:
 - rescuing God's children from the *dominion of deceptions*
 - sin's false promises of "*the life*" that actually delivers death - separation from everything that is genuinely good
 - ◆ The disciplines God pronounced on Adam and Eve - see the need for reclamation
 - The more we know our Father's reputation and take it on as his children:
 - ◆ The more others will see that our God is not what some slanderously say.
 - ◆ Our God is love - pure love made known and modeled.

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