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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
June 9, 2024
3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Revelation 20:1-6 Mark 3:20-35

Hymns: 234; 369; 413; 32:1

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Genesis 3:8-15

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

¹² Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

¹³ And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,

And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, The Promised Seed of the Woman, dear fellow
Redeemed:

INTRO: Just How Dangerous is the Devil?

Most of the time we don't give the devil much thought. That's the way he likes it. Many people don't even think that the devil is real. They write the devil off as being the “boogie-man” meant to scare people into obeying God. That's a bad mistake; we will learn from our text just how bad a mistake that is. In his first epistle Peter warns us of the devil in most serious terms. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1Peter 5:8) Lions are dangerous animals. They will kill you. A roaring lion is aggressive. A lion on the prowl should put us on our guard. We shouldn't consider this an exaggeration. Jesus' words about the devil reinforce the warning of how dangerous and destructive the devil is. *“(The devil) ... was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”* (John 8:44)

All this is confirmed by the Bible History account before us this morning. This is what actually happened! The devil murdered Adam and Eve with his lies and deception. He was instrumental in their deaths. While their physical death would happen later, their spiritual death was immediate. The devil is a real and present danger to any and all children of God. We are no match for the devil. We need a champion to defeat the devil. And that is what the LORD our God provided.

May the Holy Spirit open our hearts to comprehend the love of God for fallen sinners as we consider --

THEME: God's Plan to Destroy the Works of the Devil.

When we think of the devil's works we think of sin. We need look no further than Adam and Eve and what happened to them in the Garden of Eden to learn of --

I. The Devastating Effects of Sin.

We know what went on right before this. We know that Adam and Eve were walking in the Garden of Eden and that they encountered the devil who had taken on the body of a serpent, a snake. In the snake's body the devil had engaged Eve in a conversation about God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The devil lied and deceived them into thinking that they were missing out on something that was desirable, which the Lord had not given them. Seeing the fruit, that it was desirable to eat, Eve ate of the fruit and handed it to Adam who also went right along with the devil's lies and deception and ate of the forbidden fruit. And immediately they knew evil just as the devil had promised. They knew evil and they knew shame, and they felt a need to cover their nakedness.

This is where we pick up our text, and as we meditate upon these words, we will see just how devastating sin is.

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (v.8)

This was not something they had previously sought to avoid. They had been created in the image of God. They had possessed the best possible relationship with their Creator God. Suddenly, upon hearing the sound of the LORD, they endeavored to hide themselves from God. Doesn't that one fact alone reveal so much about the devastating effects and power of sin. In place of peace and love and harmony with God. Adam and Eve felt fear and guilt. In place of a perfect understanding of God and being in the presence of the LORD, now they thought they could hide from His presence; they no longer even understood the divine nature. God had warned them that in the day they ate of the tree in the middle of the garden they would surely die. (Genesis 2:17) They died that day. Their faulty understanding and ruined relationship with God

are ample evidence of their death. Yes, they were still standing and breathing and talking and sewing fig leaves together in a silly attempt to cover themselves. We are seeing what spiritual death looks like. The devil is a murderer from the beginning. With his lies and deception, the devil had murdered Adam and Eve.

The evidence of sin's devastation continues to be revealed in our text. *Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"* ¹⁰ *So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."* ¹¹ *And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"* ¹² *Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."* ¹³ *And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"* *The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."* (v.9-13)

Adam tried to hide. Adam was afraid. Adam knew He was naked and presented that as the reason he was afraid of being found by God. The LORD revealed that to be nonsense. When the LORD asked Adam if he had eaten of the forbidden fruit Adam didn't come right out and confess his sin. Adam didn't say, "I did it, I was wrong." No, he blamed Eve. He didn't call her by name or look upon her dearly and tenderly as he had done when Eve was first created and Adam professed, *"this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."* (Genesis 2:23) Now, she, this woman God had saddled him with, she was the cause of Adam taking and eating of the forbidden fruit.

When God confronted Eve, straight out asking, *"What is this you have done?"* She did little better than Adam. Some might infer she did worse. She didn't own up to her failing, to her sin. No, it was the serpent who had deceived her. Her excuse was, "The devil made me do it!" The serpent had lied, and deceived, but she wouldn't have been deceived if she had not listened.

That is what spiritual death looks like. It is devastating because it separates us from life, life with God, it has its ruination in the mind and body of man as well as man's soul. It is immediate, it is complete, and the devil's desire for you, for YOU is that this death

be eternal; that you spend eternity in the place God prepared for the devil and his angels, not for people.

“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Yes, it was through the sin of Adam that sin entered into the world. The LORD didn’t let Adam off the hook with Adam trying to blame Eve. Adam is held responsible, and all have been dead in trespasses and sin ever since. People still try to accuse God of messing up, asking why He made them so they could sin, or why God allows evil to happen, or putting it on God that there is sickness and sorrow and pain and evil in this world. God created a perfect world, and man brought about its ruination. Man brought sin into the world with all its devastating effects.

What we learn about God from these same words we just read is very different indeed. What we learn of God is how --

II. God Reaches Out to Deliver.

That God is reaching out in love to Adam and Eve is evident. The LORD called out to Adam, “Where are you?” If it were God’s intent to find them to do them harm, there would have been no purpose or need for the LORD to call out to Adam and Eve. He knew where they were. The LORD knew what they had done. He was reaching out to sinners who had just brought death into His perfect creation, the LORD was reaching out to them in grace, that He might deliver them from the ultimate, permanent, devastating effect of sin which is eternal separation from God in hell.

The LORD could have struck them dead on the spot. Perhaps that was what the devil was hoping for. All the evil that was happening was the works of the devil, the machinations of the devil’s twisted and evil mind. The devil is bent upon man’s destruction. The LORD God desires our deliverance from death. The LORD hasn’t yet brought this world to an end because of His patience, because *“God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Timothy 2:4) The Lord desires that we be saved.

We know that God sent His Son into the world, and Jesus revealed the heart of God when He taught Nicodemus: *“God did not send*

His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (John 3:17) That is the message that lies at the very heart of our text, even though it is found in the last verse of our text. God’s plan to destroy all this work of the devil was already in place from before the world began.

III. The Seed of the Woman Would Crush the Serpent’s Head.

So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” (v.14-15)

Our text reaches the climax of this dramatic scene. The LORD God addresses the serpent. At this point we need to appreciate that God reveals Himself as the “I AM” God, the covenant God of our salvation. This name was not revealed to the patriarchs. It was revealed through Moses. It is used here by inspiration of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit directed Moses to record these events for our instruction.

The LORD God addressed the serpent. We might think of the serpent as being a dumb animal. We don’t know how complicit the serpent was in lending its body to the devil, but the LORD God holds the serpent accountable for what happened that day and is cursed by the events of that day more than the other beasts of the field. More than other beasts because all of creation was cursed by the sin of Adam and Eve. All creation was changed and not for the better. All of creation was now subject to death. All the beasts of the earth were now subject to pain and suffering, but the serpent was cursed above all, subjected to crawling on its belly, being in dust of the earth.

Then the Lord turned His attention on the devil who, up to this point, was likely being rather smug and self-satisfied with all the evil he had worked against the God whom he despised and the crown of God’s creation, the people whom God had created in the

image of God. Now the devil had brought them under the curse of death and condemnation.

Then the LORD God announced His plan to destroy the works of the devil. The LORD God was going to put enmity between the devil and the woman. Interesting thought. After the fall into sin there was no enmity between Eve and the devil. He had won the day with sin establishing enmity towards God in the heart of fallen man. That work of the devil was going to be quickly undone and destroyed by God announcing the grace of salvation through the Seed of the Woman. The enmity would be between the woman and the devil, more importantly enmity would be established between the **Seed** of the Woman and the devil. Yes, they would be enemies, the one fighting for the eternal destruction of mankind, the other fighting for the eternal salvation of mankind.

The Seed of the Woman was to come into the world, and the devil would crush His heel. That sounds painful, but not so bad. No, it was to be extraordinarily painful, and indeed very bad for the Promised Seed. Jesus would be that Seed of the Woman. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, Jesus was not the Seed of Adam; He was born without the blot of sin. And yet Jesus as the Seed of the Woman came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. The LORD God declared that the Seed of the Woman would crush the devil's head. He would deliver a death blow to the devil, and indeed put his plan on the skids to drag all humanity into the fires of hell with him.

Jesus came and bore our sins in His own body to the cross where He endured not only the suffering of scourge and crucifixion, but the curse of God upon His soul, His holy soul. Divine Justice was satisfied, and the work of the devil which had been started way back in the Garden of Eden with the spiritual murder of Adam and Eve souls was undone forever.

With this first announcement of this glorious gospel of salvation Satan's undoing had begun. Adam and Eve were called to faith, given new life to their souls, and they lived to the praise and glory of their Redeemer God. God's great love had reached out to fallen sinners and in His divine grace and power, He saved them from the devil's power.

This is the gospel that has come to us by God's grace. This is the life we have been given so that we also might be free of the devil's power and live to the praise and glory of our Redeemer God and in the sure and certain hope of everlasting life.

AMEN.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.