

Preaching Copy For: The LORD Must Come and Restore Us-Genesis 3:7-9

1st Sunday in Lent
Sunday, March 1st, 2020

Text: Genesis 3:7-9

⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool 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 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

Exegetical Statement

Satan utilized the good gift of shrewdness that had been given to the serpent for his own evil plans and purposes when entered into and possessed it. He began by moving Eve to doubt the command that God had given Adam and had been told to her. Eve responds by going beyond what the actual commandment about eating was and includes touching as she begins to struggle with temptation. By adding her own twist on what God has said we can see the doubt entering in. Satan tells one big lie: "You most certainly not die!" and then one half-truth "Your eyes will be opened, and you will know goodness and evil." They had known goodness as they knew God's will and love perfectly. But God had withheld the knowledge of evil out of love for them. Eve succumbed to the temptation to be "like God" which was never God's design for them. He created them to live under His gracious reign and rule giving them all they could ever need. He did not create them to be His equals. That was what brought Satan down and condemned him. Eve's doubt turned to lust after what she perceived had been withheld from her and that lust turned into action. Adam standing there with her failed in his job to be the leader, the one responsible to keep God's command and teach it to Eve and their offspring sinfully failed by taking on the role of Eve's subordinate and following her into sin. The immediate result was they no longer could see their bodies as the perfect gift of God but instead to be lacking a covering. When the LORD comes and calls to them, since they no longer live in the perfect relationship of love and trust with Him react in fear and hide. The LORD calls to them not because He doesn't know where they are or what they've done, but as a way to teach and encourage what they will need for the rest of their lives: to confess their sin, turn away from the desires of their selfish heart, and instead follow the LORD's will that He now must reveal to them. Adam responds to God's questions with lies first saying he hid because he was naked, and then lying about the cause of his disobedience protecting his prideful heart by blaming his wife. She follows suit by blaming the serpent instead of confessing her part. The LORD curses the serpent and also the devil who possessed it. He gives to each Adam and Eve consequences so that they will learn what happens when they sin and to move them to repent and seek God's grace that He will offer in the promise of the descendant of Eve who will crush Satan's head. Eve is to be reminded of her sin whenever she gives childbirth. Adam is to be reminded as he tries to continue his call to manage God's creation which now will work against him and cause his provision of daily bread to be in pain and toil. Finally, they will both suffer what had never been a part of God's design: death. They will be barred from the Garden and the Tree of Life so that they might not make this now sinful and fallen world their future but would by faith hold on to the LORD's promise of a future restoration of all things. In love he cares for them through the first animal sacrifice to provide them with clothing.

Focus Statement:

God comes to us when we sin not to punish us but out of the same love He showed Adam and Eve. He calls to us and makes us see our sin so that He might restore us through heartfelt repentance that honestly admits the depth of our sin and clings by faith solely to the work that Christ has done to take away our sin and restore our knowledge of and will to obey God's commandments

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Like Adam and Eve when we sin, we cannot and will not come to the LORD for help or forgiveness but will hide from Him and lie to Him about our actions and our guilt

What the hearer should do as a result:

See rightly the reason for the Law in moving us to repentance and hold fast by faith to the complete restoration of all things on the Last Day including all of Creation and our own bodies and souls

Subject Sentence: We cannot choose to repent; He must call us.

It was during the summer when I was 16 years old that my parents and my best friend John's parents went away on a two-week camping trip. John was 2 years older than me and my parents thought it wise to have me stay with him at his parent's house so that he might provide somewhat adult supervision. Little did they know that it was by John's influence that I had tried some of the vices that teenagers my age at that time were trying: smoking cigarettes, alcohol, and as Kid Rock once sang "We were trying different things and we was smoking funny things and we was singing Sweet Home Alabama all summer long." Most of those two weeks life consisted of us going to work at our summer jobs and coming home to a party. John's parents had a pool, and he had a brother-in-law who provided beer and other things to get the party started. It was all fun until one morning he noticed that burn mark in his parent's new living room sofa. We had a brief moment of fear cross our faces, until he came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea: turn the cushion over so the burnt hole was on the bottom.

We did extensive cleaning of the house and fumigation to erase any sign of our activities. I remember going home feeling confident we were in the clear. Next thing I know my Mom and Dad are asking me all kinds of questions about what went on while they were gone. I couldn't understand how they could know and suspected they really didn't have any hard proof so of course I denied all knowledge of what they were talking about. But unbeknownst to me John eventually confessed to some of what we'd done; that there had been a party one night and some people we didn't know that well caused the damage to the sofa. And how did John's parents find out? It seems that turning the sofa upside down made the pattern on the cushion not match the rest of the sofa. I never did completely confess all that was going on at John's house or the extent of the decadent lifestyle we had engaged in. But Mom and Dad found out enough that I was effectively grounded for the rest of the summer. I'm not sure if they suspected the level of my involvement but were angry enough that I would lie to their face. But there was no way I was going to offer up any confession beyond what I had to. I had been an active participant in all that went on but I let my parents and his parents believe it was mostly John's doing. I let him take the rap for it out of self-preservation.

How many people do you know outside the Church who will willingly own up to the extent of their mistakes and trespasses. Take our nation's leaders for example who employ people for the specific task of spin-doctoring. And what would happen if they did honestly confess, they would be drummed out of office. Not much incentive for an honest confession.

But what about among us, the Church? How many of you have skeletons in your closet? Things that we haven't been exactly honest with our loved one's about. As we talked about on Ash Wednesday, when the Law begins to reveal our sin we begin to offer up excuses rather than a complete confession. We might concede that our anger against our fellow man is the same in God's eyes as murder, but along with that comes the excuses. They provoked us to anger. Yes, gossiping is breaking the command not to give false witness but I wasn't really the one gossiping. I was only listening, she was doing the gossiping. We conveniently forget about God's call to stand up for and defend our brothers and sisters. It's really not surprising since our forefather and mother were the original spin doctors

We can see this in action when the LORD came to confront his fallen creatures. **Genesis 3:1-3** (*Satan in the disguise of the serpent*) **said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”** ² **And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”** The LORD had provided all that Adam and Eve could ever want in the Garden. Only one tree was withheld from them. Every time they walked past the tree and in obedience did not eat from it, they were worshiping the LORD in perfect obedience. Satan is at work to move Eve to question why it was withheld, to question God's love for them. **Genesis 3:4-5** ⁴ **But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** Satan is accusing God of purposefully holding out on them. He made the tree off limits because He wanted to keep them under His thumb. Eating of the fruit of this tree would be a good thing. They could be like God. They could know what God knows. If God really loved them wouldn't He desire to give them this knowledge too? What Eve is about to lose sight of is all the other loving gifts the LORD had given to them, and that withholding from them the tree was also an act of love by Him.

Genesis 3:6 ⁶ **So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.** Eve desired what she did not have. No longer was the love relationship that they had with their Creator good enough. It was not enough to live in the perfect Garden under His reign and rule. They now desired to be like Him. To be on the same level as Him. They had been infected with the sin that brought down Satan, they wanted to take the place of the Creator in their lives

Genesis 3:7 ⁷ **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.** In listening to the devil, they threw it all away. Before this they did know what was good. They had an intimate knowledge of good because they had an intimate love relationship with God. They traded that for the knowledge of what evil is, what sinful disobedience is. They traded their love relationship with God for a lie. Their eyes were opened, but not to see things as God sees them. That's what they used to have. Before the Fall they were not ashamed to be naked. God had created them to have perfect bodies that were a thing of beauty. Now they no longer see themselves that way. Nakedness is wrong. Now they desire to cover up that which God had declared to be very good.

Genesis 3:8 **And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.** The loving perfect relationship they had with God is now gone. Now they are afraid of Him. Now they suspect He has come to harm them. **Genesis 3:9** **But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”** God was not asking where they were hiding at, as if He couldn't see them and didn't know what had happened. **Psalms 139:1-2, 7** ¹ **O LORD, you have searched me and known me!** ² **You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.** ⁷

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? The LORD knew exactly where they were hiding. His question "Where are you?" is addressing their relationship with Him that has been broken. The LORD has come to address this issue. Not to punish them. Not to wipe them off the face of the earth. But to call them back into relationship with them.

Genesis 3:10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." Adam didn't hide because he was naked. After all he had made a makeshift loincloth for himself. He hid because he was now afraid of His Creator. Because he knew in the depth of his heart that his relationship with the LORD was now broken. The LORD is at work to teach them the art of restored relationships. Truthful confession and repentance. So, the LORD asks Adam (**Genesis 3:11**) **"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"** The only answer Adam needed to give was, "Yes. I did." That's the only answer you and I need give when the Law shows us our sin. But instead of confession Adam dives into the excuses. (**Genesis 3:12**) **The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."** It was her, Lord God! That woman that you gave me. I may have eaten but she is responsible, and since you gave her to me so are you!" **Genesis 3:13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."** A simple answer was all that it would take. "LORD God, I disobeyed you." But instead, just as Adam did, dishonesty took over and she pointed the finger at someone else.

God's beloved creatures have disobeyed and then lied about it. Their relationship with their Creator has been broken. They deserved punishment. But that's not what they get. Punishment first fall upon the serpent. **Genesis 3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life."** The LORD is cursing both the created animal, the serpent, as well as the fallen angel who had taken possession of it. The angel once called Lucifer who was a thing of beauty and held a special high place among the angels would now be considered to be lower than any of the animals. The once proud Lucifer would now be made to grovel before the LORD whose creation he sought to steal. **Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."** The devil was cursed to be the enemy of God's creation. But he was not the only one to receive the curse. The curse that came about because of our sin would also fall upon one of the offspring of Eve. Satan would be allowed to hurt Him, to bruise His heel. But in doing so He would crush Satan's head.

This curse was prophetically looking forward to Jesus. Jesus is the culmination of God's promises to restore Creation after the Fall, in particular His fallen people. As Paul explains in **Romans 5:18-19** ¹⁸ **Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.** ¹⁹ **For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.** Jesus Christ was the human offspring descended from Eve-born of a virgin. He spent His entire life living in obedience to the will and command of the

Father as highlighted in our Gospel Lesson. Adam and Eve failed when confronted with temptation. So do you and I. But Christ's obedience was the power to restore us to the right standing with God that Adam had lost. His obedience which would culminate in His suffering and death on the cross removed the curse and the power of the devil from your life and mine. The curse for our sin fell on Him and He suffered what you and I should've but will never have to. Instead we receive credit for His obedience. We are declared to no longer be enemies of God but in right standing through our faith in Jesus Christ

The LORD came to Adam and Eve not to punish them but to restore them. To begin to teach them repentance by point out their sin, not to vent His anger at them. He came and showed them His continued love with the promise of the Savior to come. He did give them consequences for their sins. For Eve childbirth would be painful. And her relationship with Adam would now be filled with discord. Adam would have to sweat and struggle to provide for his daily bread. Creation would now work against him rather than for him. But God would still provide. He gave them these consequences for the same reason we give consequences to our children, so that we would see our sin for what it is, that it breaks and stands in the way of our relationship with the LORD. But as the Apostle John would go on to say **1 John 1:8-9** **⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** Lying to God and to ourselves about our sin kills our relationship with Him and with each other. But when we admit our sin and see it for what it is, we then can also see the great love of Christ in all that He has done to restore us to a right relationship with Him. Just as He came to Adam and Eve to restore their relationship, so also, He comes to us today to move us to confess. And His gift of grace and mercy in the Gospel is the power that restores us to a right faith relationship with Him

The LORD came to Adam and Eve after the Fall not in order to punish them, scare them, or cause them to suffer for their sins. He came out of love to call them back to Himself by moving them to see the extent of their sinfulness and then by faith to cast it upon the shoulders of the One to come who would remove that sin forever from our lives and replace it with His obedience. The LORD comes to us to restore our relationship with Him by moving us to trust in Christ alone and to cling to Him by faith through repentance of our sins and holding fast to all we have been given in the Gospel. We cannot and will not properly confess our sins but instead will hide them as long as possible. But through the work of the Spirit making Jesus love and redemption real in our lives we can confess that we are poor miserable sinners who have been given right standing now and eternally as the free gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Amen