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Genesis 3:1-15¹
The devil tempts Adam & Eve to sin.
3rd Sunday after Pentecost
Supplementary Lectionary Series “B,”
Old Testament

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^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals of the field the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Indeed, God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the Garden!’”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the Garden, ³ 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.’”

⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. 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.”

⁶ 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 man, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings (loin cloths) for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his woman 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.

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ [The man] answered, “I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹ And [the LORD 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 put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then 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,

“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.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity [hostility]
between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN

- I. THE DECEPTION
- II. THE DISCOVERY
- III. THE DELIVERANCE

In the Name of Jesus who delivers us from sin, death and hell, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

Our text this morning records the facts of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. This is not a parable. If it were a parable, it would state something like, “The fall of man and woman into sin is like” There are no such words used here. The fall of Adam and Eve into sin is not a myth, legend or made-up story. It is fact.

Up to the time of their fall into sin, Adam and Eve had perfect freedom. They had joy and happiness in their freedom, as they trusted and loved the LORD God and did what he wanted them to do to please him. That was lost when Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation and fell into sin. From that time on, all mankind became a prisoner and slave to sin, death, hell and Satan (cf. 5:3; 6:5; 8:21b; John 8:34&44; Romans 5:12; 6:23a). But by his grace – his undeserved love for all mankind – the LORD God provided deliverance. Therefore, we examine the fact that MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN. MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN ... we look at ... I. THE DECEPTION; II. THE DISCOVERY; and, III. THE DELIVERANCE.

MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN

I. THE DECEPTION

3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals of the field the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Indeed, God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the Garden!’” (3:1).

Most translations take this to be a question: “Indeed, did God say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the Garden?’” That may be correct. There is, however, no punctuation that indicates that this is a question. Given that Satan, the Accuser, is speaking through the serpent, it could well be an accusation as Satan is perhaps watching the woman eat fruit from one of the trees in the Garden that was not forbidden. “Hey! Wait a minute. God said that you must not eat from any tree in the Garden!” Either way, we note immediately the change, which the serpent, Satan, makes to God’s Word. “You must not eat from any tree in the Garden.” (Here is the way that Satan continues to work today, by subtle changes to the Word of God.)

Now, God had told the man, recorded in Chapter Two of Genesis, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:16b,17). At the beginning of this temptation, the woman correctly states God’s Word and holds to it.

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the Garden, ³ 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’” (3:2,3).

The woman adds, “you must not touch it,” not as a change to God’s Word, but as an indication that they were to have nothing to do with that particular tree.

⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. 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” (3:4,5).

The serpent, Satan, calls God a liar and accuses him of being selfish. He slanders God. (As you recall the Scripture Lessons this morning from Revelation 12:7-12 & 20:1-6, we are not dealing with just a serpent or snake. Snakes cannot talk. They were not created with that capacity. Rather, we know that the Devil was using the serpent. Thus, the Book of Revelation talks about the Devil, the Slanderer; Satan, the Accuser; the Tempter; the Dragon; the Deceiver.)

The Devil slanders God by saying that God does not want the man and the woman to be like him; and he impugns – calls into question – God’s motives. [In reality, however, the man and the woman were already like God. God had created them in his own image of holiness, righteousness and knowledge of God and his will, and the ability – the freedom – to do God’s will (cf. 1:26,27; Ephesians 4:23,25; Colossians 3:10).] So, what happens next?

“The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (3:6a). The temptation works on the woman’s mind and heart. The fruit of this tree looks good for food. The fruit of this tree is pleasing to the eye – good to look at. The fruit of this tree, moreover, is good for gaining wisdom and insight – something that the serpent said God did not want them to have. God must be selfish to keep this from them.

So the woman “took some and ate it. She also gave some to her man, who was with her, and he ate it” (3:6b). It should be noted that the woman’s man, her husband, Adam, was “with her.” He knows what is going on. Moreover, the woman, who is supposed submit to the man, has usurped his authority. She has gone ahead on her own. But ... but, the man knew what was going on and permitted his woman, his wife, to take this authority upon herself. The man does not exercise his God-given responsibility. The woman abandons her God-given status of submission. Thus, sin comes into the world.

APPROPRIATION

How good and pleasant, how tasty and succulent, how beneficial and wise – temptation looks, when we are thinking about it or involved in it. There is that gratification. 🎵 “It can be

wrong 'cause it feels so right!" "Yes, there's a little bit that's contrary to God's Word, but that will be okay."

Our sinful nature grasps temptation and sin. "Cursing is just part of shop-language; nobody means anything by it." Husband and wife separate and divorce contrary to God's Word, because "God wouldn't want me to be unhappy, would he?" Children are left on their own and not disciplined because "It's not right to spank your children." "My grownup children no longer come to church, but I know deep down they believe in God." "So I get into a little trouble now and then, God knows I'm not serious about it, and, basically, I'm a good person. I'm not as bad as those other people over there." Do not think for a moment that God is not angry when you and I sin against his will and his Word.

God is angry with sin and sinners every day (cf. Psalm 5:4-6). He uses a person's own discovery of sinfulness to reveal this.

MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN II. THE DISCOVERY

The man and woman have now eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They have transgressed the one command that God had given them. It was a command by which they, in freedom, could reveal their love and trust in their LORD God. Now they discover their sinfulness.

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings (loin cloths) for themselves (3:7).

They were naked before and not ashamed. Moses records at the end of the previous chapter in Genesis, "The man and his woman were both naked, and they felt no shame" (2:25). But now, they felt shame; now they were conscious of their nakedness, and they responded with the feeling of shame and guilt. Next we see them attempt to justify themselves by their works.

The man and woman sew together fig leaves in a feeble attempt to cover what now to them is shameful. The New International Version translation says they "made coverings for themselves." A better translation is that they "made loin cloths for themselves" – a woefully inadequate covering. These loin cloths do nothing to hide their shame, only heighten it and call attention to it. Their good works of sewing fig leaves together do not remove their shame and sin. Moreover, the wonderful fellowship they once had with the LORD God is now gone.

⁸ Then the man and his woman 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 (3:8).

The description is that of something the LORD God had done habitually and previously. He had come to them in joyful, happy fellowship. They had loved and trusted him. They had enjoyed companionship and fellowship with the LORD God. Now they hide.

Their hiding from the LORD God is described as a “scurrying away” from him. (Often when we walk into the garage south of this building, we open the doors, and sometimes you can see a little mouse scurrying for cover. That is what is happening here.) But they cannot hide from God.

⁹ ... the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” (3:9).

Take note of the fact that it is the LORD God who calls. He is still the God of free and faithful grace and love. Even though the LORD God knows where the man and woman are hiding, he gives them an opportunity to come out and admit and confess their sin. Moreover, note also that the LORD God calls “to the man.”

It is the man whom the LORD God created to be the head and the woman whom the LORD God created to be the man’s suitable helper and submit herself to the man. Instead, the woman has seized authority for herself, and the man has let her do it, abandoning his God-given authority over the woman to whom he was to show love, concern and protection.

The LORD God calls to the man and the man answers,

¹⁰ ... “I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid” (3:10).

The man and his woman have tried to hide from God. They have been given opportunity to admit and confess their sin, but they do not. The pleasant and happy visits they had formerly with the LORD God are now over. Instead, both the man and woman react with fear – “I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

The man and the woman have not taken advantage of the opportunities that the LORD God had given them to confess their sin and admit their disobedience. So, the LORD God now confronts, first of all, the man with two direct questions:

¹¹ And [the LORD God] said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” (3:11).

Once more, the LORD God gives the man opportunity to admit his sin and confess. But he does not. Instead, the man says,

¹² ... “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (3:12).

What a change this is from the delight and happiness the woman had brought to the man on the sixth day of creation. Then the man had said,

***“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man” (2:23).***

Now the story has changed. Instead of showing love, concern, and protection for the woman, the man points his finger, exposes her, and tries to free himself from blame. In the context of this, we also note that the man blames God, for “the woman you, God, put here with me – gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. It’s not my fault, God! It’s this woman’s fault! And by the way, God, you were the one who put the woman here in the Garden with me, so it’s your fault, God!” The man has not taken advantage of the opportunities to own up and take responsibility for what he has done. Now God turns to the woman and gives her the same opportunities.

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” (3:13a).

Note again that Moses records that “the LORD God” speaks to the woman. The God of faithful love and grace, is giving her opportunity to admit and confess her sin. But, the woman does not take this opportunity.

¹³ The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (3:13b).

The woman blames the serpent. “And, by the way God, you were the one who made the serpent, so it’s your fault, God!”

And so it goes. The discovery of sin, the exposure of sin, leads to more sin.

APPROPRIATION

We see in the responses of the man and the woman the same things we too often see and do today. It is called “self-justification”; it’s called “CYA” – cover your ... butt.

We see it in our government today. There was the abandonment of our representatives in Libya. There is the IRS targeting special groups of people based on their legitimate political affiliation. There is the eavesdropping and recording of phone conversations. There is the snooping into emails. There are those who “plead the fifth.” “It’s someone else’s fault, not mine. Blame someone else, don’t blame me.” But before we get too carried away by accusing our government, we are compelled to look at ourselves.

When you and I are caught in a sin, when we are caught doing something wrong, our immediate response is to blame someone else or, like Adam and Eve, hide. “It’s somebody else’s fault not mine.” We are prone to refuse responsibility for our own actions. We look around for someone else to blame: “It’s my wife’s fault!” “It’s my husband’s fault.” “It’s

my parents' fault." "It's society's fault." In the words of the musical *Westside Story*, "We're depraved because we're deprived!" "It can't be my fault!" And, since it is God who set up this whole mess, ultimately "It's your fault, God!"

What ought God's response be to all of this? You know! Death, damnation, destruction, torment, torture, hell. Instead, God promises deliverance.

MANKIND FALLS INTO SIN III. THE DELIVERANCE

The serpent used by Satan is cursed.

¹⁴ 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" (3:14).***

Whether or not the serpent walked upright before this is not the issue. Whether or not he had legs – like a dragon – before this, is not the issue. His curse is to crawl on his belly with the dust of the earth accumulating in his mouth and nostrils. His curse is to crawl on his belly – a sign of abject humiliation and defeat. Of course, the LORD God is not speaking just to the serpent but to Satan, the one who had used the serpent (cf. Revelation 12:7-12 & 20:1-6). But now, comes the promise of deliverance for the man and the woman.

***¹⁵ "And I will put enmity [hostility]
between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel" (3:15).***

The woman and all her seed, her descendants – those who would be of the faith of the woman – would be at enmity and hostility with the seed, the descendants of Satan – Satan himself, his demons and all those people not of the faith of the woman. That the woman believed this promise of the Savior, is noted later in the chapter when "Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living" (3:20). The Hebrew term "Eve" means "living" or "alive." This "being alive" is true only of believers among whom Eve was also numbered. But, then, there would come that special "seed" or descendant of the woman.

The special seed of the woman, the woman's special descendant, would crush the head of Satan. This would mean utter defeat for Satan and his kingdom. In doing this, however,

the special seed of the woman would suffer, for Satan would strike the heel of the seed of the woman. While this “striking of the heel” would be painful, it would not be fatal. For the seed of the woman would triumph and be victorious over the seed and descendants of Satan.

APPROPRIATION

The LORD God, the God of free and faithful love and grace, has kept his promise. He sent into the world the seed of the virgin woman, Mary. Jesus, Mary’s Son and God’s Son, kept perfectly all of God’s Commandments (cf. 1 Peter 2:22). His death on the cross – his heel being struck – was the punishment the entire world deserves. But by his death, Jesus crushed the head of Satan. The writer to the Hebrews notes,

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14,15).

Jesus has destroyed the devil and his power. Jesus is the embodiment of the love and grace of the LORD God. This deliverance is for all and applies to all; but only those who grasp it by faith enjoy the benefits.

Faith in this Jesus, God’s Son and Mary’s Son, is created in our hearts through this Gospel message. God’s Son from eternity and the seed of the woman, has won the victory and shares the victory with those who believe in him as their Savior. No longer are you and I, as believers in Jesus, servants and slaves of sin; rather we have been freed to serve our LORD God (cf. Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). We have freedom now to do what our LORD God wants us to do – follow his commands.

Daily, the devil will try to take away that freedom the LORD God has given us in his Son – just as the devil took away the freedom of the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden. There will be a daily struggle. But the victory is ours through faith in Jesus our Savior – our Redeemer and Deliverer.

CONCLUSION

The fall of Adam and Eve into sin affected all creation. All people now are by nature sinful from the time they are conceived. All things, man and woman included, are subject to death and decay – all because of sin. But the LORD God has remembered his gracious promise and faithful love.

In his grace and love, the LORD God sent his Son into the world to suffer the penalty of sin. God’s Son, Jesus, has delivered mankind. Only by faith in Jesus, does a person benefit from that deliverance. Therefore, continue to believe in Jesus as your Savior through the message of deliverance – the Gospel of Jesus – for your ultimate deliverance into heaven. Amen.