

Introduction

Welcome to St. Peter's Lutheran Church Estevan. Pastor Kleemola here to bring you a partial service for Good Friday, 2020.

Readings

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm: 22, 31
Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
Gospel: John 19:17-30, 18:1-19:42

Text for today's Sermon is taken from Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7

then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 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.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God

knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 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. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Sermon – Putting Humpty Together Again

Dear friends in Christ Jesus; One pastor tells this story that illustrates pretty well our theme for this day: A few weekends ago, my wife and our eldest daughter drove to Jo-Ann's Fabrics to buy fabric for a seventh-grade science project my daughter had dreamt up. She would cut 4-inch squares of different-colored fabric, stain the squares with various kinds of solutions, and then wash them with different kinds of laundry detergents in order to determine which detergent got which stain out of which colour best! A pretty good science project, I thought!

So there they were, eighteen brightly colored fabric squares neatly lined up on our dining room table. Time to introduce the stains. Chocolate syrup, spaghetti sauce, and red wine poured on the samples. Once the stains had dried, the different wash cycles in the different kinds of detergents could begin. All was going according to plan, a well thought out and executed research project. What the budding young scientist in my family had not considered, however, were the research anomalies that would occur the moment a hungry beagle was introduced into the experiment.

I was reading a book in our family room when my youngest daughter wandered into the dining room and I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Bad dog! Bad dog! Bad dog!" My wife ran to the dining room door and swung it open. The room was in shambles. The carpet was a sticky mess. Out walked Buford, our fourteen-year-old beagle, with a guilty look on his face and two of the fabric squares still stuck to the bottom of his front paws. He had been caught red-handed, so to speak.

The budding young scientist was the last to arrive on the scene. She looked out over the destruction and began to panic. She peeled off the two squares still stuck on the dog's paws and tried to reorganize things. But it was too late! She began to cry.

"Oh, honey," I said as I tried to comfort her, "it's not so bad. Think of it this way. On Monday you can go to your teacher and probably be the first student ever who was honestly able to say,

'The dog ate my homework!' Or," I continued, "if you want, you can follow Buford around for the next few days and I'm sure he'll present you with a way to broaden greatly the research parameters of your experiment."

Well, neither of these options seemed workable to my daughter. What she wanted was for me to kill the beagle. What could I say? I could try to defend him by explaining that he was only doing what came naturally, and that being a willful and stubborn glutton was just a part of his nature, but she was of no mind to listen to me lecture about natural law, instinct, or the inbred characteristics of hounds. She wanted justice, and she wanted it now! "He is bad," she said. "He should die!"

And it *is* true. *If* he is bad, then he *should* die! That's the way perfect justice works. That is what perfect justice demands. "**The soul who sins shall die,**" (Ezek 18:20) the Bible says. "**The wages of sin is death.**" (Rom 6:23) In other words, the inescapable consequence of sin is death. It has always been that way. Remember the words of our text from Genesis 2:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:15–17)

Sin always, always, always brings death.

But in Genesis 3, the serpent tempts the woman. "**Did God actually say,**" he begins. (3:1) "Did God actually say you would die? That's baloney! You won't die. On the contrary, your eyes will be opened and you'll become just like God, knowing good and evil! Yeah, that's it. That's the ticket. God doesn't want you to be like Him! He wants to keep you down. He wants to keep you stupid! He doesn't want any competition from you."

It was an insidious temptation because it wasn't completely false. There was just enough truth in it to get the woman to doubt God's Word and to doubt God's goodness. So she stretched out her hand, and all of creation has never been the same since. She ate, she gave some to her husband and he ate, and their eyes were indeed opened! Now they realized a whole bunch of things! They realized that they were naked. They realized that they had rebelled against God. They realized that their relationship with Him was busted and broken. Satan had been half right! They now knew good *and evil*. They knew that God was good, and that they were now evil, so they ran away and hid.

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again." According to those who know about

such things, this piece of wisdom is a relic thousands of years old. Versions of it have appeared in eight different European languages. In its primitive stages, however, “Humpty Dumpty” was a riddle. It asked this question: What, when broken, can never be repaired, not even by strong or wise individuals? The answer, of course, is an egg. Regardless of how hard we try, a broken egg can never be put back together again. We simply have to learn to live with the mess.

So goes the Humpty Dumpty story in the Bible. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and had a great fall into sin, and no matter how hard they try, things can never be put back together again. It is a fall of epic proportions. Its repercussions echo through time and eternity. There are *ecological* consequences. God tells Adam: **“Cursed is the ground because of you;... thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.”** (vv 17–18) There are *sociological* consequences. God tells Eve: **“Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”** (v 16) There are *biological* consequences: **“I will surely multiply your pain in child-bearing,”** God says to the woman. (v 16) **“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return,”** (v 19) God says to the man.

All this is the result of the fall! And if this weren't bad enough, besides the ecological and sociological and biological consequences, the fall brought with it an even more serious set of *theological* consequences! Just look how far mankind fell in the fall!

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26–27)

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. (Gen 5:1–3)

Brothers and sisters, sin has changed and infected us all for the worst at the very core of our being. After the fall, our image and likeness is different than the way God intended. Our DNA is no longer perfect. We are infected with, we carry around, and we pass on to our children the disease of sin. And it is this disease that we all carry that makes us imperfect, unholy, and unacceptable in God's eyes. Sin is more than the bad stuff that we say or think or do! Those bad actions are just the results, just the symptoms, if you will, of the terminal disease that we

all carry. It is a disease that one day is going to kill every one of us, **“for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”** (Gen 3:19) Do you hear the sound of eggshells crunching under your feet? It is the sound of your brokenness, the sound of your natural condition. It is the unavoidable sound of your own fall from grace.

The completely holy, completely just, and completely righteous Creator of heaven and earth sees our disease. He beholds our corruption, and because He is completely holy, just, and righteous, He must pass judgment on us. “They are fallen,” He truthfully says. “They are fallen, corrupt, and sinful through and through. They are bad,” He says. “They should die.”

And all the king's horses and all the king's men could never put us back together again. Which is why, out of His great love for us, the King didn't send us His horses and He didn't send us His men. Instead, He sent us His only-begotten Son. He turned to the serpent and said, **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”** (Gen 3:15)

St. Paul says it like this: **“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** (Rom 5:6–8)

It is now the right time. Today the King's words to the serpent are fulfilled. St. Paul's words about the King's Son come to pass. The serpent does strike the heel of Eve's offspring, the King's Son, Christ Jesus. Strikes Him hard. And not just His heel, but His whole body – beaten, pierced, tortured, killed on a cross. God does show His love for us, gives Christ to die for us sinners. The King turns His back on His Son, leaves Him broken, leaves Him altogether. But by the Son's brokenness, we are healed. We are put back together again, back together with our loving Father, the King, who is now reconciled to us. The enmity is now between us and the serpent, where it should be, no longer between us and God. The serpent is crushed. And we are back together again. Today, this Good Friday, The King's Son Lets Himself Be Broken to Put Us Back Together Again!

We are bad. We should die, but we don't. **“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”** (1 Cor 15:22) So the King's Son comes. He comes personally. He comes physically. And He's here again today for this very important reason. We are put back together again! Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, worthy to be held in reverence by one and all, help us to rightly understand and take to heart the gifts You have given us in your only begotten Son. We thank You for the redemption He has won so we are restored to a right relationship with You. Give us grace we pray in the midst of this pandemic, to put our faith in You to deliver and preserve us. We ask Your blessing also upon all of the medical personnel who are helping and treating those who are sick and for scientists who are working to develop treatments or a vaccine for COVID 19. We ask also that would inspire all of our citizens to practice physical distancing, frequent hand-washing, and any other recommended measures to help curb the spread of this disease. All these things and whatever else You see that we need, we ask that You would provide in Your merciful goodness. Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.