

Sermon for Feb 21, 2021, “The Man and Woman Sin”

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3:1-7 ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² 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 middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not 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.” 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. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Introduction: The Saddest Story

Today is the first week of Lent. The center of Christianity lies in the resurrection. It can be said that the meaning of suffering that made the resurrection possible is also very important. In traditional Christianity, Lent is celebrated with a 40-day period from Ash Wednesday to Easter minus the Sunday. During this period, believers deeply realize the necessity of God’s grace towards human sinfulness.

Today's text is the saddest story in the Bible. This story is about human beings in a Garden of Eden that was abundant and peaceful, who are expelled from the Garden of Eden. The consequences of humans being expelled from the Garden of Eden are still with us today.

Today's story tells us how humans were cast out of paradise, thus bringing death into our lives. It also shows us the process of repetitive sinful temptations and teaches us how to fight those who deceive God's people.

In today's text, we will see the serpent's temptation process and the consequences of disobedience. We will also see the mercy of God who loves us despite our disobedience.

So I hope that through the lesson of the text, we will spend Lent in a deep relationship with the Lord.

Body: The serpent's temptation, the consequences of disobedience, and God's mercy

1. The Temptation of the Serpent

Today's text Genesis 3:1 says, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.”

Satan in the shape of a serpent comes to the Garden of Eden. This serpent rebelled against God before humans. Serpent was a fallen angel and cast out of a position of glory. The serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. So he comes to humans when they are weakest and attacks at the weakest opportunities.

Let's look at the words in the second half of **Genesis 3:1**. "He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, you must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

The serpent pretends to be unaware of God's Word about the tree in the middle of the garden, and asks questions as if for Eve. But the serpent already knows God's command. The serpent gives the impression of God to the woman as a god that limits human freedom and places a heavy burden on humans.

The woman said to the serpent. “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 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.'”(Genesis 3:2-3)

The woman thought that God was one who limits human freedom, not as a personal, intimate God who is with us. In addition, the woman changes the word of God before the man who eats the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden, from the words 'surely to die.' The woman adds her thoughts to the Word of God and instead says that if a human eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil the human 'will die.'

When the serpent finds out that the woman is not sure of the word of God, he asserts his thoughts more strongly to the woman. He says that the woman who eats the tree of knowledge of good and evil does not die. Let's look at **Genesis 3:4-5 in today's text. "You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

In this verse, the serpent does not directly say to the woman to eat the fruit in the middle of the garden, but says that eating it will open her eyes. The serpent says that if the woman eats the fruit in the middle of the garden, something better will happen to her and it will be safe to eat. The serpent is cunningly arousing the woman's greed.

What the serpent intends for the woman is to make her heart doubt the word of God and eventually deny it.

This Satanic intention is also experienced in our life of faith. Satan makes us doubt and deny God's Word by challenging our stand, our understanding, and our arguments. Also, Satan makes us complain about the Word of God and then resist God.

Therefore, if we do not stand firm in the truth, Satan tempts us more strongly.

Eventually, the woman falls for these intentions of the serpent. **Genesis 3:6 says, "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 husband, who was with her, and he ate it."**

A different emotion arises in the woman's heart when she sees another tree in the Garden of Eden. Greed arises from her mind. All other trees in the Garden of Eden were also good for food and pleasing to the eye. But there was no greed for another tree in the Garden of Eden to her.

When we look at what God has allowed, greed does not arise in our minds. But when we see something forbidden, greed arises in our mind. Why do these feelings arise?

Because greed is the desire to dominate and use what is not owned by us. The Ten Commandments command us to not covet our neighbor's house. This commandment prohibits our desire for possession of a neighbor's house that is not our own. When humans are not self-sufficient, greed comes. And when the fear of God's Word disappears, humans cross boundaries that should not be crossed. Eventually, the woman eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and gives it to her husband to eat the fruit. What did they experience after eating the fruits of the knowledge of good and evil? Could it result in not dying as the serpent said?

2. Consequences of disobedience

There are three things that come to them when the woman and the man cross the boundary that they should not cross. **It is shame, fear of meeting God, and breaking of horizontal relationships.**

Shame is a painful emotion we feel when our weaknesses are exposed. It's a painful feeling in response to the thought that we are not reaching our ideal state. When humans sin, they are separated from grace, and the difference causes them to suffer, and they endeavor to cover up any weaknesses. It's as if the woman and the man realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The second thing that came to them was to hide in fear of God. Genesis 3:8 says, “Then the man and his wife 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.”

The time has come to be judged by God as each person has done. They are afraid to meet God. If they had done something good, they would have longed to meet God. However, because they sinned, they broke God's Word, and they became afraid to meet God.

Last, our love relationship turns hostile. Let's look at **Genesis 3:11-12. God said the man and woman, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, the woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."**

Adam blames the woman for all of this and says that God is responsible for giving the woman to him. As the vertical relationship between God and man was broken, the horizontal relationship was also broken. This change was due to the fact that Adam and Eve followed in the direction of greed and arrogance. Now, for the first time, a world different from the world God created has been created.

3. God's mercy

In the new world, the serpent fights against the descendants of women and is defeated. (Genesis 3:14-15) Humans are punished, but they also experience blessings. And when a woman has children, she suffers greatly and is deeply frustrated with her existence. Men must work hard all their lives to eat the products of their labor. (Genesis 3:16-17)

However, the image and function God permitted to man remains the same. **Genesis 3:21 says, “The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”** Leather garments are long garments that extend down to the ankles and are much better and more durable than clothes made of fig leaves sewn together. God clothed Adam and Eve with leather garments. This is like giving servants the king's clothes to honor them. This means that although Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden, they can still worship God and live in the image of God. What we should not forget is that the God we believe in is not a God who limits human freedom and places a heavy burden on humans, but a God who has endless mercy and love.

Conclusion: Confidence in God's goodness

Now let's summarize today's sermon. How did Adam and Eve live outside of Eden? Genesis 4:1 says, **“Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.'”**

God helps Eve when she conceives. Eve gave birth to Cain and confessed that she had gained through the Lord. We can see a personal and intimate confession of Eve to the Lord God. Eve found the Lord God again.

Let us have confidence in God's goodness while living our faith. And let's have an accurate knowledge of God's Word. Furthermore, let's have a heart to trust and obey God's will. Then, even if lies and temptations come, we will pass over, keep all the relationships the Lord has allowed, and will always be ready to meet the Lord. I hope that grace will overflow into our lives.