

**Genesis 3:8–15**

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." <sup>11</sup> And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> 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.' <sup>15</sup> And 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."

**Prayer of the Day:**

O God, the strength of all who trust in you, mercifully hear our prayers. Be gracious to us in our weakness and give us strength to keep your commandments in all we say and do; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Alleluia. 2 Corinthians 5:19 cf. RSV

**Sermon:**

I think I'll start to our sermon today with an admission. I haven't always loved the book of Genesis. Going through school, Genesis provided a wealth of quiz material, endless lists of names and family lines, it was a lot to remember. It wasn't until Professor Daniel Deutschlander challenged us later on to find out all the scriptures in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis that it all really started to blossom and explode with meaning for me, moving far beyond the lists of facts and figures and unearthing Biblical doctrine and truth in every page.

Why am I bringing this up right now? Well, today we'll take a look at one of the saddest sections of Scripture: the Fall into sin. As we do, I challenge you not to simply see some old account of Adam and Eve who ultimately blow it for the rest of us and plunge the world into sin. And instead see God's love, His infinite mercy and grace that instead of wiping out fallen mankind He would promise a Savior. Instead of annihilating sinners, He would seek them out and save them. Instead of interrogating them, He would provide one of the treasures of Christianity as He seeks the confession of their guilt that He might announce the absolution (the full and free forgiveness) of it as well. As He does for them dear Christian, so He does for you. Today He calls out to us all **"WHERE ARE YOU?"** Are you **HIDING WITH THE ONE WE SHOULD BE AT WAR WITH** or are you **STANDING WITH THE ONE WHO SAVES US FROM SIN?**

Any Sunday school student knows what has happened as our lesson begins. That sly serpent Satan hissed his temptations into Eve's ear with precision and she sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit. Adam shamefully abandoned the role God had given him to lead and protect His family and instead of ending the snake the moment it spoke to his wife, he listened and willingly followed Eve into the evil that lay before them. It is a complete mess as the only two human beings in existence, forget the fact that God has given them everything and somehow fall for the temptation that He is holding out on them, holding them down, not allowing them to become all that they can be. They buy the lie, bite the fruit, bid farewell to the perfection they had enjoyed as they gain a firsthand knowledge of the evil that up until now was only hypothetical.

That's where our lesson begins and perhaps, the reaction of God is as equally unexpected as the illogical sin which has reared its head. Adam and Eve, expect that the promise of God that *"if you eat of it,*

*you will surely die* (Genesis 2:17)” will now come to fruition as well. Little do they know that it already has. Faith doesn’t hide from God. Unbelief slithers away from Him at the sound of His footsteps. Spiritual death which ultimately leads to the eternal death of hell has already laid claim to them even if physical death only stalks them at this point.

However, instead of simply rendering the human race extinct, God comes with His question, “**WHERE ARE YOU?**” Now it is always important to note that God knows very well where they are. In fact, though He, for their benefit, takes a visible form, He is still everywhere and therefore right beside them as they hide, so far have they fallen in the mere moments that have lapsed. God is not therefore asking because He seeks the answer. He asks in order to provide the opportunity. This is a loving God reaching out in His grace to fallen mankind. Here is a chance for Adam and Eve to humbly confess their sin before their God.

What does He get? A bunch of childish finger pointing! Adam blames Eve, and listen closely to those words, “*The woman YOU put here*” is he blaming God? And Eve? Well she quickly deflects the accusation her husband sent her way with an equally quick flick of the finger, “*The serpent deceived me, and I ate.*” Ah but do you see it? It’s almost as if as God progresses that they are all there together in the bushes hiding from Him. Adam, Eve, and the Serpent How could they? Hiding with Satan instead of earnestly seeking their Savior?

Does any of this sound familiar? It probably should. As human beings we are pretty good at this blame game Adam and Eve played in the garden. Everyone else is going to slow on the road, it has nothing to do with the fact that I’m in a hurry because I left to late, because I dilly-dallied far longer than I should have and the rest of the world should now part like the Red Sea before Moses. It’s never my fault, in fact as an only child, with no one else to point the finger to the poor dog often got the blame. No, it’s always the ineptitude of someone else. The inconsiderate nature of the world in which I live. The millennials blame the boomers and the boomers blame the millennials and all they while the hiss of the serpent can be heard as we hide in the bushes from the only real solution to the problem.

So of course, God puts an end to it. He fills Satan’s mouth with the very mud he has been flinging and promises all-out war between Satan and the Son of God. Between those who would hide in the bushes of their sin and those who would stand in the light with Him. Oh, the victory is certain. God will not be overcome. Satan will draw blood as He strikes Christ’s heel on the cross, as Jesus makes full payment for all of our sin, in His death there we live forever, in His resurrection we find reason to hope in perfection restored, unending, divine. Satan’s head will be crushed, trapped in the bushes forever until burns in the fires of hell.

But then something that isn’t recorded in our immediate lesson. Adam and Eve stop pointing fingers and come out of the bushes. That first Gospel promise has awoken the faith that had all but died in their sinfulness. Oh, there are consequences to the sin they brought into the world, the garden is gone, weeds and worry, toil and pain they are all in existence now, but God has not abandoned them. He replaces the tattered fig leaves they had crudely sown together with leather clothing. He has given them the hope of heaven and the promise of perfection restored in heaven with Him.

Brothers and Sisters, from time to time I hear rumblings of how Lutherans always seem to talk about sin. We start our services out with confession. It always seems like such a downer. My response is always the same, keep listening the Law always exposes the hissing of the serpent with whom we hide in our wretchedness but after confession is the absolution, forgiveness, the love of God who is far more patient with me than I could ever be in this life and it’s that Gospel that calls us away from the serpent and his lies that we might stand with God, with the very One Who saves us from sin.

I’ve learned to love the book of Genesis. Not for it’s lists of names or it’s abundance of quiz material. No, instead because it turns out I’m not so much unlike my greatest of grandparents and thankfully over the thousands of years of existence, God hasn’t changed a bit. In our sin God calls out to us all “**WHERE ARE YOU?**” may we not be found hiding **HIDING WITH THE ONE WE SHOULD BE AT WAR WITH.** But in faith, created and sustained by God, may we be found **STANDING WITH THE ONE WHO SAVES US FROM IT?** Amen!