

Sermon for June 14, 2015 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 3:8-15 (NIV84)

Theme: Listen, The LORD is calling!

- 1) *He is showing us our sin.*
- 2) *He is showing us our Savior.*

*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. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "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." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 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. 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."*

What is our knee jerk reaction when we do something wrong and it gets found out? We try to hide either our sin or ourselves. If we can't do that, we will try to rationalize our actions, or blame someone else. One of the last things we want to do is take responsibility for our wrong. Why? Because we are afraid of how weak and vulnerable admitting our guilt makes us.

Hiding, blaming, accusing and excusing – this is how our selfish, human nature wants us to deal with sin. But this is not what the LORD desires. He wants us to confess our sins to Him. Why? Because it is only after we take ownership of them that we will look to God for mercy and forgiveness. If, however, we refuse to admit our sin, we will always remain afraid of God's righteousness – running away from the only one who can save us.

Using Adam and Eve as our example, let us review how the sinful nature reacts when confronted with sin. More importantly, let us see learn the LORD invites us to acknowledge our sin so that we might receive the forgiveness He so graciously offers; under the theme: **Listen, the Lord is calling!** 1) *He is showing us our sin.* 2) *He is showing us our Savior.*

Part One: He is showing us our sin.

God created Adam and Eve perfect, holy and with a will that was in complete harmony with His own. Whenever they sensed the LORD was near, they would run up to Him full of love and confidence – just like little children might run up to their father or mother when they come back from work.

The LORD had only one command for his created children: "Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam and Eve were happy to keep this command because it allowed them to express their love, thanks and trust in God.

One day, however, this all changed. The devil (in the form of a serpent) promised our first parents that they would become like God if they ate the fruit God forbade. Instead of trusting their LORD, they trusted the lying snake. Instead of divine wisdom, they were now filled with guilt and shame.

*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. Instead of hurrying to meet Him as they had done in the past, they scurried around and hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Just think: Him whom they once ran to in childlike confidence and love, they now hid from - terrified of His righteousness and convinced of His wrath.*

*But the LORD God called to the man. Just as every good parent gives his children an opportunity to come clean after their disobedience is discovered, so also the LORD wanted Adam and Eve to realize and confess their sin.*

God called out: *"Where are you?"* What a question! The moment Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they were no longer perfect and holy. The harmony that existed between themselves and the LORD was ruined. Hiding from the LORD shows that they had separated themselves from God – something the Bible describes as spiritual death.

But no one can hide from the LORD. This is why Adam answered: *"I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."* Adam thought that He could cover up his sin from the all-knowing God by telling this half-truth. But Adam was never ashamed of his nakedness before and there was no reason for him to be ashamed of it now - except that sin made him ashamed.

How foolish sin makes us! How often don't we act as if God is blind, or that we can fool him with half-truths. But can we ever really hide the intentions of our heart from our all-knowing God? Do we actually think that He doesn't know what we do in secret? Having created us, the LORD knows us better than we know ourselves. He is even able to search the deepest recesses of our hearts.

The LORD, therefore, cuts right through Adam's lame excuse. Desiring his repentance, the LORD asks Adam directly, *"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."* Then the LORD God said to the woman, *"What is this you have done?"* The woman said, *"The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Yet again we see the sinful heart's stubborn refusal to admit its wrong. Rather than admit responsibility, it looks for someone else to blame – even if that someone is the person we hold most dear. "That woman over there - she is the one who tricked me." What an example of selfishness! Eve was Adam's greatest joy outside of God himself, but now she is junk - the reason why he sinned.

But did you notice something else about Adam's response when he shifted the blame on to Eve? He was actually accusing God of causing his sin, saying, *"The woman YOU PUT HERE with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."* In other words Adam was saying, "God, if you hadn't given me that woman, I would be fine and dandy. My sin is your fault, God, not mine!"

Hiding, blaming, accusing and excusing – ever since Adam and Eve's fall, this is how the selfish, human nature wants us to deal with sin. Oh how wretched we are! Our natural inclination is to run away from God when He calls out to us through His Word. We don't want to own up to our sin because we are terrified of his righteous wrath.

Oh how pitiful we are – doing all we can to avoid God, when the whole reason he calls out to us after we sin is to help, and not harm. It is true – God hates sin. But what displeases Him most about it is how sin separates us from His love. God knows the horrible effects sin has on our nature and wants to rescue us from it. This is why He uses his condemning law so that, after looking into the mirror of his Ten Commandments, we might see our need for His salvation and repent.

Listen, the LORD is calling. Out of love and concern He shows us our sins. More importantly, He shows us our Savior.

Part Two: He is showing us our Savior.

What wonderful patience the LORD has with man! Even after Adam and Eve did all they could to hide their sin – even going so far as to blame God for their wickedness - the LORD would certainly have been justified in sending them to hell that very moment! But instead of showing his anger, the LORD reveals His wonderful, forgiving love. Even before He even mentions the consequences Adam and Eve would have to face because of their sin, He promised them a Savior.

*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. The fact that God cursed the serpent shows that he was talking to more than just an animal. He was talking to Satan, that fallen angel, who used the snake to tempt Adam and Eve into sin.*

The snake, however, would be a reminder for all people of all times of what happened in the Garden of Eden: of how Adam and Eve fell into sin but, more importantly, of how God promised to rescue them from the devil's power.

Yes, even though the devil thought he was victorious, the LORD decreed his defeat: *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."*

The animosity the devil brought about between God and fallen man would soon change. Because of the love God showed Adam and Eve in promising them a Savior, their hatred would turn against the devil. They would once again trust in the LORD and through that faith receive eternal salvation.

But this faith in God's forgiving love would have consequences. The devil would continue to rage against all those who, like them, would trust in the LORD's forgiving love. History records how unbelievers (who are described as the devil's offspring) would rage against believers (the offspring of Eve) all in an effort to thwart God's gracious plan to save us. But all this raging would not work. One great descendant of Eve would crush the head of the serpent. i.e. defeat the power of the devil once and for all.

Who is this great descendant of Eve and how would He win victory over Satan for us? He is Jesus, the Son of God, who took on human flesh and blood in order to win our salvation. By living a perfect life of obedience to the LORD's commandments in our place, He was able to take away the devil's power to accuse us of sin. Having thus won our righteousness, He took our sins upon himself and went to the cross to pay for them all. The suffering and death Jesus experienced on our behalf is the bite the serpent gave Jesus' heel, and in doing so the Christ was able to crush the devil's head. Through His death on the cross, our sin has been paid for in full. Satan no longer has the ability to accuse the believer of sin before God. It is finished. We are free. Jesus resurrection proves it

Listen, The Lord is calling you! He has shown you your sin; now He shows you your Savior. Because Jesus has paid for our sins in full, there is no reason to be afraid of God. He doesn't want to harm us, but desires to have a restored relationship with us so that we can be the dearly loved children that He intended us to be at creation. Don't hide your sin and run away from God – this is exactly what the devil wants you to do for your damnation. No, listen to the LORD's call and don't be afraid to repent, for *if we*

*confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (1Jo 1:9, NIV84) This is how the LORD crushes the devil under your feet (cf. Rom 16:20) so that you can live as his dearly loved child on this earth – unafraid of God and (by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel) able to keep His commandments out of love. No, we won't be perfect in this life, but we will always be forgiven as we hold onto our dear Savior in faith.

Listen, the Lord is calling. He has shown you your sins. He has shown you your Savior. Trust in His love and forgiveness so that you might always remain His dear child and under his protective care.  
Amen.