

Genesis 3:8-15

Dear friends in Christ of Calvary Lutheran Church,

Greetings to you all in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I am sorry that I have to be away from you all today and that I cannot worship with you nor lead you in worship today. Know that you are in my heart and in my prayers even though I am away from you. This morning as you read about the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, we would do well to reflect upon the fallen nature of humanity and how similar we all are to those first two people.

You all know the story. Eve was there in the Garden and Satan, as a serpent, lied to her to get her to eat even though God had specifically forbidden such action. Now of course, we should rightly say that he lied to her, not tricked her. He said that she would not surely die and that she would be like God, knowing right and wrong. Neither she nor Adam dropped dead

the moment they ate. They did know good and evil. The lie was that they still had to pay the heavy price of spiritual death and the onset of mortality, something that they had not experienced before this. Though they did know good and evil, they were far from being like God. This is why Christ referred to Satan as a liar and the Father of lies.

Sadly, though, this liar continues to torment you, God's people even to this day. There are many ways that Satan would attempt to hurt you, but they primarily boil down to one thing; lying. He plays games with the truth, turning things inside out and upside down, taking a small grain of truth to create a horrendous lie around it. A lie that leads to death. His desire is to see you fail and to die just as Adam and Eve did.

What's worse is that this same matter of seeing something as true only from a certain perspective rather than true in and of itself has become a hallmark of all fallen human reasoning. We

even use this to our own advantage not just to lie to others, but to lie to ourselves as well. We rationalize to ourselves the reasons for why we should use illegal drugs or abuse prescriptions, why we should ignore certain laws that we don't like, why we should treat this person better than that person, and why we should go out and buy that new thing. We tell ourselves lies to soothe our consciences for when we fail to do what we ought to do, or for when we have done what we ought not to do. But at the heart of it all, is lies.

But the trouble is, we know it to be a lie. We always know it's a lie and so we run. Just as Adam and Eve hid themselves from God after their sin, we often try to cover up our own sins and mistakes. Our first response is to cover up our misdeeds. Then if that fails, we will often go the route of "admit nothing, deny everything, make counter accusations." This is what we

see happen when God finally confronts Adam and Eve after they fail to hide.

Adam blames God for giving him such a foolish and easily misled wife. Eve blames the serpent for deceiving her. There is no one willing to take responsibility for their action. Such as it is yet today among us. It is always far easier to blame someone else than to take responsibility for our actions, isn't it? Of course, the more virtuous amongst us might dare to take responsibility, but to pretend to be victims is far more enticing.

But there is one who is different. One who took responsibility for your sins and mine. One who would bear the weight of all people's deeds. One who became a true victim because of this action. Your Lord Jesus Christ is the one who is the fulfillment of God's promise to the serpent that, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring

and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Satan would see to it that more than Jesus’ heel was bruised, as you well know. It was his head, his hands, his side, his back, and his feet that all were wounded for our transgressions. Jesus was beaten, pierced, and executed as a sinner though he was not one. The sins that he died for are your sins. Our sins have been paid for by Christ and so we are not victims of our actions. Rather, Jesus calls upon us all to repent of our sins. Repentance requires us to take responsibility for our sins and to admit our fault and sin. We cannot turn away from something that we refuse to admit is even there, after all.

Indeed, it is the blood of Christ Jesus that has made you clean. You have no need to hide from God because you are not naked before him. No, you have been clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, a pure righteousness that is brighter than

the sun itself. You have been made clean in the blood of the Lamb of God because he has taken away the sins of the world, including your own.

And in Christ, you are loved. He delights and rejoices in the chance to give you the forgiveness that he has won for you. There is no need for us to cling onto our sins or try to hide them from our God. There is no need for us to rationalize or explain away your troubles and misdeeds because Christ forgives them all just the same for all who are truly repentant of sins.

And so with this in mind my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, remember to forgive and love another as you have been loved greatly and have been forgiven much. If we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord who stepped up to take responsibility for all of our actions, how much more so should we be willing to take responsibility for our own actions? There is no need to give false or flimsy rationalizations or try to act as

though our sins were not our fault. If we have a Lord who is willing to suffer and die for our sins, how much more is he willing to forgive us our sins when we confess them to him?

Indeed, Scripture tells us that God is faithful and just, and that he cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Just as it was true for those who received John's letter, so it is also true for you today. When we see the true weight and magnitude of what Christ accomplished for us at the cross, it makes all of our attempts and delusion laughable. There is no need to hide, or to lie, or to rationalize our sin. The only solution available to us is to simply repent. That is what you have been given in Christ.

This truth then also spurs us on to love our neighbors. We are called to show love and forgiveness for each other.

Remember that the same Jesus who died for your sins also died for the sins of your neighbor. This to their benefit that they hear this truth. But it can only be delivered through gentleness and

love because that is how our Lord comes to us. Thanks be to God that though we may be very much like Adam and Eve, we are still forgiven by the new Adam, the greater Son who has redeemed us all through his blood. Amen.

Now, may the peace that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord to life everlasting.

Amen.