Praise Jesus our Saviour!

*Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.*

 Luke 12:51

During Jesus’ first advent, He lived His life, spent a few years teaching and providing evidence that He is the Messiah, and allowed Himself to be the sacrifice, the propitiation for our sins. He returned to heaven to intercede on our behalf.

Jesus came to earth to preach and provide the Gospel. The Gospel is that by believing on Him for redemption and eternal life, we will have it. As beautiful as that message is for those who accept it, it is an offence to those who don’t.

For those who refuse the gift of salvation that Christ offers according to His terms, the Gospel is a restriction of living out their sinful desires and an affront to their desire for autonomy. They don’t want God telling them what they must do.

These who reject the Gospel will hate those who embrace it, thus, there will be division. Christ brought the Gospel, therefore He brought division.

But a time will come that He will bring a final peace to the world after His second advent. There will still be division, because the sheep will be divided from the goats and separated forever.

In Christ’s love

John

 2-13-22

Genesis 3:1-24 (2)

We began our study last week of the saddest day in world history. It’s important to keep that in mind; this is history. We are not reading myth or metaphor here; this is an account of what took place after God finished His work of creation. The Bible reveals what we need to know about these events. There may be some questions we have but we must be careful about speculation. In a nutshell, sin and evil came into the world because our first parents disobeyed God. Any disobedience toward God is sin; evil is anything that goes against God.

We considered that satan in some way used the form of a snake to come to Eve and speak with her. We saw how he subtly got her to question God’s command, how he flat out lied about the truth of what God said, and how he made her a promise that was another lie. Satan is crafty still today and we must always be wary of his tactics.

We also saw that there is lots of blame to go around. Satan, Adam, and Eve all did wrong. But we need to consider what each one did so that we are aware of what to watch for ourselves and to recognize the consequences that we suffer to this day.

Satan revealed many of his tactics that he still uses today; unfortunately, we still fall for them. But it is important for us to know his methods so we have a chance to avoid them. Satan himself is beyond redemption; in fact, he has already been defeated by the work of Jesus on the cross. But he is still dangerous; keeping many from the salvation offered in Christ and often successful in keeping those who are saved from being effective in helping to build the kingdom of God.

The first three verses of the chapter record the beginning of the conversation between satan and Eve.

*And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”*

We talked about the form of satan’s question: He formed it is a way that kind of sounded like what God had said, but was really not what God had commanded at all. The question also would have gotten Eve thinking about the command and questioning it. And the command had been very straight forward. Everything satan was doing was to get Eve off guard and get her into a position of questioning God.

We as Christians know that it is a bad idea to engage satan in conversation. We must swallow our pride and know that he is much smarter than we are and he can always out maneuver us in discussion. He always lies and his goal is to kill us. The stakes are way too high; we must not engage him in debate. Our wisest recourse is to rebuke him in the name of Jesus and to distance ourselves from any temptation.

We can give Eve some benefit of doubt. She was innocent in life and had no experience with sin or evil. But that is all we can do. She allowed herself to be drawn into questioning God’s command. And in her answer, we see the seeds of adding to and taking away from God’s word.

Eve began her answer, “*From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat*.” While this answer is technically correct, it neglects the sweeping generosity of what God had told them. He had told them they could eat “*freely*”, and He also used the word “*any*”; any with only one exception. Although these appear at first glance to be small things, it shows that Eve is following the devil’s leading that God might be holding out on them. It is bringing into focus the one tree they must not partake of instead of the many wonderful trees and fruits that were not off limits. They could freely eat all they wanted from all the trees save one; and somehow God is miserly for this one restriction.

When Eve continues to speak of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she adds to God’s restriction with “*or touch it*”. In chapter 2 verse 17, God had said nothing about touching the tree; He had simply told them not to eat from it. While not touching the tree might seem like a good idea, we must always be careful about adding to God’s word. The Pharisees were guilty of this in Jesus’ time. They added to God’s law, originally in an attempt to help people, but the additions became more important to them than the laws themselves.

It might be helpful in our own lives to set up boundaries for ourselves to keep us from sin; but we must always keep in mind that they are not part of God’s law and avoid trying to inflict them on others. Adding to God’s command, no matter how good intentioned, makes it easy for us to make further changes and we will eventually lose sight of what God intended in the first place.

Eve ended her answer by softening the consequences God promised for breaking His command. She said they were told not to eat of the fruit “*or you will die*”; another good translation is “*lest you die*.” Compare these with what God actually said, “*in the day that you eat from it you will surely die*.” God let them know that they wouldn’t eventually die, but that there would be immediate repercussions. It wasn’t that they might die, it was that they would surely die.

These may all sound like small things, perhaps even inconsequential changes; but look at what happened. This was the beginning of why the world is as it is today. This is the beginning of all the evil and sickness and heartbreak and tragedy that we live with now. This is a demonstration of how careful we have to be with God’s word. We can’t go about changing, or taking or leaving parts of the Bible. We must be very careful with what we read or watch or listen to when it is dealing with God’s word. Subtle differences can bring about significant costs.

This is where satan comes back with an emphatic, blatant lie: “*You surely will not die*!” Notice that he uses the same strong definite word that God had used: surely. Eve has wavered and softened God’s word, and satan responds with a strong rebuke of that word. Now he adds the lie that builds on Eve questioning God’s generosity toward her. “*For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*.”

This got Eve really thinking. Before, satan had gotten her considering that God was keeping her from some good tasting fruit; now he has her thinking that God is holding out a lot more. God had given
Adam and Eve free will. They could freely think and make their own decisions; and deal with the consequences of those decisions.

*“[T]he woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise*.” Eve looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. More than looking, she gave it deep consideration and came to believe what satan had told her. She succumbed to three forms of lust that have plagued mankind ever since.

First John 2:16 tells us, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world*.” Eve saw the fruit of the tree was good for food and she desired to eat it, even though it was against God’s command. This is lust of the flesh. The fruit was a delight to look at; it became something she wanted. This is lust of the eyes. Eve knew that the fruit would make her wise. Wisdom is something that God has, it gives power, and she wanted it. This is the lust of pride.

We can see from Genesis that these things were stirred up in Eve by the devil who is now the prince of this world. So, as John tells us, it didn’t come from God the Father; but it is now a part of the world and the world chases after these things.

The fateful moment came and “*she took from its fruit and ate*.” Yes, satan tempted her, satan twisted God’s words and lied to her; but she ultimately made the decision. Eve chose to do what God had commanded not to be done. She chose to disbelieve the consequences God had warned her of and follow her desires. It is tempting to be angry with Eve and blame her for all that is wrong. But we must consider that each of us is every bit as guilty of making choices daily that defy God.

Well, what about Adam? Verse 6 tells us Eve ate and finishes with, “*and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate*.” Those words “*with her*” are devastating. He apparently stood there beside her and watched the whole thing; silently. The woman had been made from the man; she was a part of him. She had been created to be his helper and to be one with him; but he had great responsibility.

One of the main things he was to do was to protect her. Another was to teach her. God had given the command to the man that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not to be partaken from. It was his job to impress this upon his wife. He had obviously told her the command, but here he should have helped her obey it.

Adam failed in his responsibilities right from the start. To begin with, he should have grabbed the snake by the neck and flung it out of the garden. Barring that; he should have intervened when he saw satan tempting Eve. As the man, being the head of the family, it was for him to love and care for his wife. The Bible tells us that is still the man’s job, and his model is Jesus Christ with the church. When you love and cherish someone, you don’t let them fall.

Eve ate of the fruit and then offered it to Adam. Why did she do this? Maybe she thought she would be doing him good by giving him what would make him like God. Maybe she realized her wrong and wanted to bring him down too. We don’t know, the Bible doesn’t tell us, and it is futile to speculate. The lesson for us it to not judge the motives of other people. God lets us know that’s His prerogative. We can judge the actions of other people. We can judge her action and say that it was wrong; but we also judge Adam’s action of taking the fruit and eating of it himself; that it was wrong.

Adam may have heard all that the devil had said, and it may have been hard for him to resist his wife, but ultimately, he still made his own decision to disobey God. I spent a lot more time on Eve than I did on Adam. That’s because there is more information on her; she is the one who had the conversation with satan. But with that, I don’t want to give the impression that she is more guilty than Adam. The Bible lets us know that he holds the greater responsibility; not necessarily the greater blame, but the greater responsibility.

Verse 6 tells us Eve took of the fruit and she ate. Notice what happened when she did: nothing. Nothing happened when she ate of the fruit. She ate and then gave some to Adam. Notice what happens in verse 7 as soon as Adam ate: *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked*. As the head of the family, the one to whom God had given dominion, his disobedience brought immediate noticeable consequences.

The difference can also be seen in the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 2:14 Paul writes, “*And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression*.” So, Eve is assigned blame and shares guilt, but consider what Paul says about Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*” Adam is recognized for his headship of the human race and it is because of his action that death is in the world, indeed, that all living creatures die. Adam’s guilt is like Eve’s, but his responsibility is greater.

How precious is our mighty God, who sent His only begotten Son, that by His sacrifice the effects of Adam’s transgression can be done away with, and we can be restored to eternal life and communion with our Father.

Prayer

Thank You Lord, for Your word, so that we know how sin came into the world. By this revelation we can understand why things go wrong, why bad things happen, why there is death. We also know that You are all good, and You do not cause these things; for You cannot be tempted by evil. Nor do You tempt us Lord, for it is not Your desire that we fall.

Thank You for the certain hope that is given in Your word through Jesus Christ. He is the One who has overcome man’s folly and satan’s rebellion. Jesus is the One who brings life to us because there is life in Him. Though we are stained with evil, He has covered us in His righteousness so that we can stand before You. We praise You for these things.

Blessed Lord, make us more like our Saviour every day. May the Holy Spirit form us into His likeness, conforming us to Your will. Thank You for salvation, which can only come from You through Jesus. May You receive glory and honor and worship forever and ever.

In Jesus’ name we pray

Amen