



# Sermon

Sunday, September 16, 2018

Charleston, SC

8:00 am & 10:30 am Sermon ~Genesis 3;1-20, Mark 3:20-35

*Not All Heroes Wear Capes*

The Rev. Al Zadig, Jr.

Isn't it nice to come to church and not be tempted to turn on your TV for yet one more weather report? As Tropical Storm Florence continues to dissipate, let me take you to last year's Hurricane Harvey that nearly one year ago to the day, dumped 50 inches of rain in Houston claiming the lives of nearly 100 people. One of the stories that wasn't widely told was that of Dr. Annie Smith and her doctor husband Greg. At the peak of the flooding, Annie was at the peak of her pregnancy. And wouldn't you know it, Annie goes into labor as the waters reach unprecedented levels. Thanks be to God a fire truck arrives to take her to the hospital, but the water is too high to get Annie from the apartment to the truck. And that's when the rescue of rescue happens. Neighbors come out to form a human chain in chest deep water to rescue Annie, who later would say: "I just kind of held onto them, one person at a time and crawled along their arms until the firemen helped me up the ladder onto the truck." From the human chain, the Smiths are whisked away to the hospital where their daughter is born and nicknamed "Little Hurricane." Her real name is Adrielle. A name meaning "I belong to God."

We all need to hear a good rescue story, don't we? As we continue our Gospel Project dive into Genesis, we come to the great Hurricane in Eden. As we turn from Genesis 2 last week, to Genesis 3 today, we come to the most lethally painful story in all of Scripture, the Fall. That moment in time when original sin is introduced into the world. But in a couple of minutes, when we look closer, what we will see is that embedded into the fall, this lethal hurricane is the rescue of rescue plans.

But back to the Fall I'm calling Hurricane Eden. The fall actually can't be compared to anything earthly because it has so

terribly affected humanity ever since. In fact, Boston College Theologian Peter Kreeft says a nuclear holocaust is a minor inconvenience compared to the fall, the fall from all our joy, goodness, peace, and wisdom. The fall is that moment when Satan comes into the Garden of Eden in the form of a serpent. Where did Satan come from?

Before Genesis 3, Satan was an angel who rebelled against God and is thrown out of heaven in a scene depicted in our window above the Altar, Archangel Michael hurling Satan to earth. Therefore, Satan appears in Genesis 3 with cruel rage to coerce Adam and Eve to go His way, not God's way, by eating the forbidden apple. Adam and Eve fall into this temptation, and as soon as those bites are taken, all hell breaks loose, making a Category 5 hurricane look like a summer breeze. You see, up until now Adam and Eve were perfect and sinless. Eden was a perfect and sinless place. But Satan changes everything with 4 simple words: Did God really say...?

"Did God really say you shouldn't eat from ANY OF the trees? You won't surely die." Which is a lie, God never said that. God actually said you must not eat from the ONE tree. Satan is a lying, one trick pony whose trick leads Adam and Eve into the very first original sin. Eve eats the apple. Adam eats the apple. A Sin that explains the evil we see in the world today. As the old New England Primer taught, "In Adam's fall, we sinned...all."

You might be saying Al, are you asking me to believe that a talking snake, and crazy apples explain all the evil in the world today? Yes. Fundamentally, God wants us to know we have a sine nature and it comes from Genesis 3. You want proof? Here it is. Satan is using the same lying strategic temptations today! How many

times has he pulled his lying one-trick pony jaunt on you? Bob...Did God really say Jesus is the only way to salvation? Sarah...Did God really say you could be forgiven? Edward...Did God really call you to love your neighbor and all your enemies? Sue, you will never be able to pull off that ministry, you don't have what it takes. Satan is a liar and a relentless tempter. I think of Irish poet Oscar Wilde who said, "I can resist everything except temptation." And did you know that the temptation to go our own way, without God, is the besetting satanic sin of humanity. It's actually what the term sin means. Sin comes from a German word meaning separation. Sin is simply anywhere in our life, any-decision in our life, any-relationship in our life, and any-temptation where God is not. Sin at its most basic form is the absence of God. For instance, not involving God in our decisions, jobs, marriage, or children is SIN-FUL.

This deadly hurricane of sin is our ancestral inheritance and I don't care how good your family line is! We sin because, thanks to Adam and Eve, we are sin-ners, just as we sing because we are singers! Which means when people say, "I was born a certain way, it must be good." No, we all have inherited a sin problem that leads to inherited self-centered sins, addiction sins, emotional and personality sins. Thanks to Adam and Eve. Just because we are made this way or that doesn't make it correct! As that great hymn goes, "Prone to wander Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart O' take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above." And looking around the world today, no one could doubt that this increasing separation from God is causing world-wide chaos, and pain. Temptation is Satan's invitation to give up on God's life,

to follow our own gut, a gut that gets us into trouble every time.

The result of Adam and Eve “Falling into temptation” has unleashed one central consequence - death. God said if you eat of the tree of good and evil you will die. You might say, but Adam and Eve didn’t die. What we have to understand is that Adam and Eve were supposed to live forever in Eden. The original plan was all life and no death.

Due to original sin, Adam and Eve would physically die, as has every human since. But as Adam and Eve also found out, it’s possible for part of us to die while we are alive. Giving into sin brings death to our relationship with God, giving us a godless earthly life.

Giving into this separation from God leads to the death of our created purpose, what God had designed us to do. Giving into this separation from God leads to the death of earthly relationships, in the form of estrangement and unforgiveness. But the most tragic consequence of sin is in the form of eternal death. If we keep God at bay in our lives, He will honor that eternally.

So, what do we do with this hurricane? One option is to live as victims. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the snake. And the snake didn’t have a leg to stand on! Passing the buck. Blaming Adam and Eve for the mess we’re in. It’s the same strategy a child might take who is born a drug addict because the mother took drugs during pregnancy. It’s all her fault! This approach only eats away and destroys us. We can’t live life blaming the addicted mother, or the first mother Eve. No, we are to blame for what we do.

Here is the inside scoop. The name Satan literally means thief, liar, and deceiver. Remember, Adam and Eve were created in the image of God and therefore had the authority and power over all the beasts of the field, which included the serpent and his temptation. They could have, should have said, “Serpent, be gone” and he would have gone. It’s not a sin to be tempted, we can’t control temptation any more than we can control bird droppings on our head. But Adam and Eve gave into that temptation and in doing so, abdicated their authority. Instead of ruling over the serpent, they chose to let the serpent rule them! They gave their authority and their power away. Which is why in the aftermath of this storm, God comes

walking in the garden saying, “Adam...where are you?” God goes to Adam first, because Adam had failed as an image bearer of God to protect his wife spiritually. God goes to Adam first holding him primarily responsible as spiritual head of the household. A rescuer is needed.

Thankfully, God’s love for us is more relentless than the rage of Satan. God’s love is more powerful and relentless than our sin! The rescue plan is found in verse 15, where despite the fall into sin, God’s grace, his one-way love is ever present. God says, “Satan, because you’ve tempted Adam and Eve, you’re cursed, I’m declaring war. He’ll wound your head, you’ll only wound his heel.”

What on earth did God mean here? The “He” here is Jesus. God says Jesus will wound your head Satan, while you, Satan, will only wound his heel. This is the first recorded promise of Jesus Christ in the Bible-Genesis 3! Yes, the very first promise of Christ that theologically is called the Proto-Evangelium! First Promise! Rescue plan underway, let me explain. The striking of the heel refers to Satan causing the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. Jesus wounding the head of Satan means Jesus rising from the dead on the third day that would foreshadow Satan’s defeat. Revelation 20 tells us that after the resurrection, Jesus will bind Satan and place him in the pit of fire where he will be crushed. To bruise the head is fatal. To wound a heel is neither fatal nor final. Jesus is God’s rescue plan, to reverse the Hurricane of Eden. Jesus did what Adam could not do—Jesus **withstands** the lying one-trick pony temptations of Satan. Remember Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness? Jesus simply bats Satan away. Get thee behind me Satan, in doing so, Jesus shuts Satan down. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, ate from a tree, and died. Jesus obeyed God by willingly dying on a tree for us, and lives eternally! Jesus felt the serpent’s bite and the poison of the curse so we could be released from both! Which is why the Bible refers to Jesus as the New Adam. Romans 10: “As sin entered the world through one man, Adam. How much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace through the one man Jesus!” 1 John 3:8: “The reason Jesus appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” Satan’s name means thief, but the name of Jesus means rescuer.

*Transforming Hearts Through Jesus Christ*

My friends, we have this inherited sin nature, but because of what Jesus has done for us, We have authority over Satan! Every time we call upon the name of Jesus, Satan is defeated. As we call upon the name of Jesus in our temptation, that old Adam in us, that temptation is defeated. It’s why Luke writes in Acts 2:21: *Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.* It’s why Paul writes in Romans 10:13: *Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.* Claim that authority. In the Name of the rescuer Jesus, Satan be gone and he will be gone. Yes, my friends, in calling on the Name of Jesus in our struggles. We win, every time!

Billy Graham once quoted a little girl who told him personally, “When the devil comes knocking at the door, I don’t answer it. I send Jesus to the door.” That’s the rescue plan of Genesis 3:15. We win every time we say, “Satan you are a liar. In the name of Jesus, temptation be gone.” Drugs, addictions, pornography, poisonous relationships, worry, anxiety, terror. Satan, you are a liar. In the Name of Jesus, Satan and your temptation be gone. My friends, do you believe this? Through Jesus, you have authority over the evil one! Reject him, stand firm in your faith!

Finally, this morning, thank God a woman named Rose knew this. Rose writes, “Years ago, I was taking a bus from the city about 7:30 pm over to see my parents. Ten minutes after I got on the bus, some men in the back row suddenly whip out guns and hijack the bus to a dark dingy dangerous slum area. They took everything we had – IDs, cash, jewelry, phones, and purses. I was terrified and even more so when they threatened the lives of the ladies on the bus. In my terror, I just started calling out “Jesus” over and over again. In the name of Jesus **be-gone**. By God’s grace, after 10 more minutes of terror, the hijackers get off the bus, and without explanation, give back our phones.” Rose would later write, “God is truly amazing. Who, dare I say, could say Jesus is not Lord?”

My friends, we win! Not only eternally, but now! And every time we call upon the Name of the Lord, we defeat that ancient hurricane of Eden.