Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**First Sin – Nothing New!**

**Genesis 3:1-21**

Invocavit

02.20.2021

What was the first sin? Most people would say, “eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” But is that truly the first sin? Or was the first sin Eve’s doubt of God’s Word, which led her to the eating of that fruit?

Satan, disguised as a serpent, tempted her, “Did God actually say…” and then perverts what God actually said by adding to it, “you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?”

Satan’s modus operandi is to use God’s Word and tweak it just a little. He uses enough of God’s Word to make it sound believable – and either adds to it or subtracts from it. There is nothing new under the sun. There are many things out there that sound biblical but are not.

For example, God helps those who help themselves. It is plainly evident from Jesus word that we are not to worry about tomorrow – he feeds even the sparrows, look how beautiful are the lilies of the field – God cares for all His creation, you are worth more than they. Consider that Jesus died to save sinners because we could not help ourselves!

Yes, we are to use the gifts God gave us. Our various vocations are not given to us just to support ourselves. We have them in order to serve others. Yes, you may work to earn a salary, but it is first a service to others. You provide goods or services, and then care for your own family by your income.

Another falsehood is, God won’t give you more than you can handle. Too be fair, life is more than any of us can handle. But it is not more than Jesus can handle. It is why he declares, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28).

It is easy to say that in the time since the events of our text in the garden, things have not changed all that much. Satan still tempts mankind to doubt, “Did God actually say?” That is at the root of Satan’s lies. He uses it greatly to tempt those who claim and desire to be Christians. It is such a simple lie, but it is still a temptation to doubt God!

Did God actually say that the days of creation were 24 hour days? Did God actually say that drunkenness was sin? Did God actually say some people will endure horrific punishment for eternity in a place called hell? Did God actually say that there is no such thing as reincarnation? Did God actually say that Jesus is only way to heaven? Did God actually say that I have to forgive everybody who sins against me? Did God actually say that I must love everybody? Did God actually say that we should only marry those who have the same faith as we do? Did God actually say that Jesus died for all sins? Did God actually say that when people die they do not become angels?

The answer to all of those questions is, “Yes!” End game! End of discussion! And I did not even address the hot button topics of faith and life which God also addresses.

Did God actually say? You know other ways of saying the same thing. “That’s just one interpretation, the Bible can be taken many ways.” Or my favorite, “The Bible was written long ago, for different cultures and different times, we’re more enlightened now.” Really? Didn’t God declare, “I am the Lord, I change not!” (Malachi 3:6)

We use such Satanic inspired phrases to excuse our false beliefs and our sinful behavior. What we are trying to do is cover up our egregious violation of the 1st Commandment. We have our own God. We doubt God because we want it our way!

Satan brought doubt into Adam’s and Eve’s minds – “you will not die… you will be like God.”

So, Eve saw that the fruit of the one tree they were not supposed to eat from was pleasing to the eye – it looked tasty – and she’d be like God, so she took of the fruit and ate it. She gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

They had known only good, now they knew good and evil. There was nothing magical which suddenly expanded their brain power. It was just this simple. Evil is disobedience to God! The ate the fruit and guilt set in. They knew evil. They remembered God’s Word, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen. 2:16-17)

Satan leads us away from God’s Word, tempts us to doubt it. He appeals to us to see and feel with our heart. He tempts us to believe that whatever feels right to us, that’s good. Whatever sounds good to us, that is right.

Many have succumbed to Satan’s lies whispered in their ears. Their voices now joining His, echoing the beckoning calls of Satan’s whisperings in our ears. Yes, the temptation to doubt God’s Word grows stronger. He’s corrupted society and the world, and they tell us what we should believe. It all adds up, all opposed to the clear teaching of God’s Word, and we ask, “Did God actually say?”

Here is how it works. I personally know people who say, “As long as I love my wife and remain faithful to her, never touching another woman, then it is OK for me to look at pornography on the internet all day. As long as I am not hurting someone, it is not truly a sin. Since God never mentioned internet pornography in the Bible, I know in my heart that God is OK with it.”

What religion says that? Certainly not Christianity! Religion which claims to be Christian, yet sets the clear teaching of Scripture aside claiming, “I know in my heart what is true,” is not Christian. Such a religion would more correctly be called “Me-ism! Or Me-anity.” It is my own heart-felt religion. My version I could call Jerabekianism or Jerabekianity.

After Adam and Eve ate of the fruit in the garden they tried to hide. They tried to cover their sin with fig leaves. And just like little children hide from their parents when they know they have done something they should not have, they hid.

You cannot hide from God. He sees through lies because He sees all. He knew the answer before He asked it. He gave them the opportunity to come clean, “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

Adam ultimately blames God, because it is the woman He gave to him that gave him the fruit to eat. But the truth is that Adam was standing with Eve when Satan tempted her. He heard the lies and was also deceived. “Did God actually say?” had gotten into his head and he doubted God’s Word.

He sinned. Adam ate of the fruit – period. He would die. He had spiritually died, and his attempted cover-up shows that. Many years later, his physical life would also come to an end.

Doubt of God’s Word is sin in the heart. Those who act on their doubt of God’s Word, sin outwardly.

As sinners, we all fall into that same judgment, the soul that sins, it shall die. There were consequences which God declared to these two sinners in the garden. These consequences have affected the whole world – illness, death, even toil we must suffer just to eat a meal. You and I still suffer the consequences of sin’s presence in the world – it is why we treat one another so cruelly over masks.

But death is not God’s final Word to sinners. Instead, He proclaims that Satan’s head would be bruised Eve’s offspring, while Satan would only bruise His heel. What our text translates as bruised can also be translated as crushed. Satan’s head would be crushed.

Jesus crushes Satan’s head, his power and might. Satan’s power is sin and death. These are destroyed with the perfect and sinless life of Christ sacrificed upon the cross. You heard our Gospel lesson. But it was just in the wilderness that Christ overcame all Satan’s temptations – it was throughout His life. Even trying to do so with Jesus, Satan perverted God’s Word. When Satan bruised Jesus’ heel, when that sinless Son of God was put to death, sin and death were also crushed. The grave could not hold Jesus, He rose again the third day.

In what He did in the Garden, God points to what will be accomplished in Christ. God makes garments of skin to clothe Adam and Eve, to cover their sinfulness. There was no death yet. No, God did not pick up discarded road kill and makes garments from their skin to cover them. God kills an animal! Luther believes it was a lamb. I like that imagery, but we have no evidence of what kind of animal it was. It was innocent blood shed to make garments of skin to cover their sin. Blood was shed unto death in order that they might continue to live. Their sinfulness taints the rest of their lives. Their sinfulness touches and taints all of creation. They live however, because of God’s gracious intervention.

Do you see in this passage from Genesis that God is already prophesying? He is already pointing forward to Christ, the very Lamb of God who is sacrificed. Christ gives up His life unto death. He sheds His blood, that you might be covered with His righteousness. In baptism, you are clothed with Christ. In Christ, you have died to sin and have been raised to new life in Christ.

Hearing the Word of Christ, forgiveness flows over you. Your robes of Christ’s righteousness are laundered, made white in the blood of the Lamb. You are cleansed that you might stand again in the presence of God.

Satan still tempts us, but his head has been crushed, his power has been destroyed. In turn, Satan has only bruised the heel of your Savior. He died, but He was raised to life by the glory of the Father. Christ’s cross has become the tree of life from which we eat and drink. It is the sweetest fruit of life. The very body and blood of Christ are ours to eat and drink unto life everlasting.

That’s the final word from God. Amen.