

The First Sunday in Lent

March 9, 2014

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church - Pastor Chip Wilke

Genesis 3:1-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 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." (NIV)

Have you ever heard of a man by the name of Leopold Trouvelot? He was a Frenchman who fled to North America when Napoleon rose to power. He was fascinated with silkworms and began to rear them. He even made a trip to Europe and imported a few gypsy moths to this country to crossbreed them with silkworms. One night, in 1869, a few of those gypsy moths escaped from the cage at his house in Melrose, Massachusetts. He was terrified and notified the neighbors and the city officials of his alarm. But they laughed at him and ignored him. About 10 years later every bit of green plant life for miles around Melrose was devoured. They should have listened to Leopold's concern for it was no laughing matter. We still spend tens of millions of dollars every year just to keep the gypsy moths under control in New England. Who knew one act would cost so much?

As we turn to one of the most important chapters in all the Scriptures perhaps we find ourselves asking the same thing: Who knew one act would cost so much? If you have been sick, or hurt, or in any kind of pain lately you can trace it back to Genesis chapter 3. If you recently received bad news, had an unpleasant day or week at work, or have had problems in your personal relationships you can see the cause back here in Genesis chapter 3. If you have suffered the sadness of laying a loved one into the grave you can find the source of where such sorrow started in Genesis chapter 3. If you have questions about why there is so much suffering, so

much pain, and so much evil in this world the answer is found right here in Genesis chapter 3. This is not some cute story about how the first man and woman ate some forbidden fruit. This is God's true account about how sin entered the world. I pray we realize this is not something to laugh at nor is it something to ignore. Instead, listen to God's Word as we consider this heart wrenching question: **Who knew one act would cost so much?**

It is difficult to even imagine what this world used to look like before Genesis chapter 3. God simply calls all that He made in those six days of creation "**very good**." That's kind of an understatement! The world and everything in it was perfect. There was no sin. Man and animals lived in harmony together. Animals lived in harmony with other animals and get this - husband even lived in perfect harmony with his wife. Most importantly, man lived in harmony with God. God made man and woman different than the rest of His creation – they were given body and soul - they were made in God's image. They were holy and able to walk and talk with God. God gave them a paradise to live in and placed them above all the other creatures He had made. Adam and Eve were special to God – the crown of all His creation we might say. God also gave them one command to keep, one opportunity to obey, and one way to show their love and thanks to a God who gave them everything. They were not to eat from the fruit of one tree in the middle of the garden– the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Now we come to the one act that changed everything or the account known as "*The Fall*." ***Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.***

The devil in disguise tempts Eve and she takes the bait and so does Adam. Yes, the serpent was crafty, and yes he was a liar, but it was Adam and Eve, who knew what God, their loving Creator, had said, who disobeyed - who rebelled – who sinned. We could spend a lot of time debating over what was actually the first sin. Was it Eve overstepping her role as servant helper or Adam not stepping up into his? Was it the coveting of the heart when the fruit looked desirable for gaining wisdom? Was it the act of taking the fruit and eating? In the end we might be splitting hairs and miss out on what is most important here – sin entered the world and many dreadful results with it. Who knew one act would cost so much? Who knew how it would happen so quickly?

Things changed immediately! Adam and Eve lost their innocence and recognized they had no clothes on so they made coverings. Their perfect relationship with God was destroyed. They heard God's voice and they hid because they were afraid. Now look at their relationship with each other. When God asks Adam about his sin Adam says it is Eve's fault: "***The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.***" There goes the perfect harmony between husband and wife. There also goes truthfulness and accountability. When God asks Eve what happened she says the devil made me do it. ***The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*** Suddenly, it was out with perfection and in with ruin, out with holiness in came sinfulness, out with harmony in with chaos, out with perfect pleasure and happiness and in with pain and sorrow, out with good and in with evil, out with the image of God

and in with children born in the sinful image of their parents, and worst of all out with life eternal and in came death. Who knew one act would cost so much?

As we consider what sin brought into our world what is our reaction? I hope we do more than blame Adam and Eve for all our problems. A much better reaction is to first of all see the seriousness of our own sin. I believe we have a tendency to take sin way too lightly. We may even laugh at it. There are times we foolishly ignore it. The devil still deceives us much the same way. Satan tries to tell us God is keeping something from us. The devil lies to us. The examples are many. *“Everyone else is doing it why can't you? More money and possessions is the key to life. You will find more happiness from a bottle or in the bed of a woman who is not your wife or a man who is not your husband. Live how you want and don't worry about the consequences for you will not surely die.”* How often have we taken the tempter's bait? Then our sins only bring the same thing Adam and Eve's did – more pain, more suffering, more trouble, and more sorrow. Although sin entered the world through one man, I pray we never forget the truth that death comes to all people because all sinned.

Who knew one act would cost so much? I'll tell you who knew my friends! God knew. Yet, the gracious Creator who warned His rebellious children was not ready to immediately throw Adam and Eve into the fires of hell with the devil like they deserved. Instead, God gave them an amazing promise. He told the devil: ***“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.”*** Here we have the very first promise of a Savior. Who knew one act would cost so much? God knew and now He promised to pay the cost – it would be a terrible painful strike to the heel. Follow Jesus this Lent to see just how painful. Follow Jesus this Lent to see how much He would suffer. Follow Jesus this Lent and see Him die. Follow Jesus to Calvary's hill on Good Friday, look at your Savior with outstretched arms nailed to the cross, see Him paying for all sin, and with tears of repentance and tears of joy ponder that question: Who knew one act would cost so much? Your Jesus knew and was willing to pay the price!

It is something to look back on how a few gypsy moths escaping could cause so many problems and cost so much money for so many people down the line for years to come. How much more did this one act in the Garden cost all people? But that's not the act that gets the last word today or any day for that matter. Think of what the act Jesus did for all people. Think about what that one act of your Savior means for you. It cost a whole lot because not all the silver and gold could buy forgiveness for a single sin - only the precious blood of Christ. But in paying that price Jesus crushes Satan's head. Jesus undoes the devil's work and leaves him powerless. Jesus did that by resisting every temptation the tempter threw His direction. Jesus did that by taking our place, suffering our hell, dying our death, and then rising again with a victory that will last an eternity for us. Now our paradise awaits us. Who knew one act would cost so much? Amen.