

Our God is a God of love. Our God is a relational God. Judaism and Christianity are the only faith traditions which formulate everything they believe and do from this premise. Over the next few weeks we're going on a tour through Genesis and Exodus, taking a good look at some of the lives the Lord touched and what kind of difference his hand in their lives made. This morning we're going to study God's relationship with Adam and Eve and what that relationship means concerning our walk with him and with one another.

OPENING PRAYER

GENESIS 3:6-9

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. ⁷Then 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. ⁸Then 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. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

I read a science article in a secular magazine a few weeks ago which reported that there's now evidence that millions of species of life on earth may all have formed together in one giant cataclysmic event. This, of course, flies in the face of Darwin's idea that everything emanated from an amoeba in the sea which mutated into thousands of different species over billions of years. I'm telling you this because it lends evidence to the Genesis account that when God created Adam and Eve, they were perfect. They didn't evolve from chimpanzee-like creatures into apes into hairy humanoids into hairless, upright bipeds.

According to the Word of God, God made man and woman in his image, perfect in their bodies and in their minds.

One reason we come to church is that we want to know what God wants us to do. That doesn't mean we're going to do it, of course. But we do believe we should at

least know what his will is. But it hasn't always been this way. When the Lord made man and woman, they reasoned like him, and they wanted what he wanted.

We see this in the creation story in Genesis, chapter 2: **“Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found” (Genesis 2:19-20).** From Adam's perfect knowledge of God flowed his perfect knowledge of all God's creatures.

Imagine the setting: serene and peaceful; no disease, no turmoil; springtime all the time. And man had work to do—he tended the Garden—and it was a pleasure; it brought him joy. Every day was a day of discovery and adventure. It was a life that reflected God's life, a life of joy, a life of love.

As Adam named the creatures, he discovered that not a single one was made like him, and he recognized the distinction between himself, a creature, and his Lord, the creator. God, then, in his love and mercy formed from one of Adam's ribs a suitable companion. And he called her “woman.” Why? Because when Adam saw her, he said, “Wo-man!” True story. She was perfect in every way.

One of God's gifts to his creatures is free will. Unfortunately, it hasn't always panned out the way the he intended. He had an angel who went rogue, and as we know it was downhill from there. We don't need to review the whole story of The Fall except to say that when the devil tempted Eve, he was directly attacking the very image of God in her, and, at the same time, he called into question the Lord's relationship with her, as in, “Can you trust God?”

When God created the world, the stars, the sun, and the moon; when he created the earth and separated the sea from dry land; when he raised up the mountains; when he created all the animals and man and woman, he did so with his Word. **“God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:3).**

It is this same Word which informs our hearts and minds of his will. This Word is the master of reason. It is the signpost to eternal life. This Word is the pure and holy will of God.

God gave his Word to his children, whom he loved, telling them **“you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17).**

When the serpent assailed the image of God in Eve and questioned the Lord’s love for her, she should’ve walked away. But she reasoned with him.

Luther wrote that “Reason is a whore, the greatest enemy that faith has; it never comes to the aid of spiritual things, but more frequently than not struggles against the divine Word, treating with contempt all that emanates from God.”

Which is to say, God’s Word must be accepted at face-value, and when we have a “bright idea” which calls into question our trust in the Lord, it probably ain’t so bright an idea after all.

When Eve decided to reason with the serpent, she disregarded God’s Word, and at that moment all was lost.

Did you notice how it was also with a “word” that Satan led Eve astray? But it was a perverse word. The devil is only an angel, also a created being. He can only imitate God. But his imitations are not light; they are only shadows.

Poor Eve: She lost faith in God’s Word for only a moment, as she reasoned in her own mind. She listened to Satan, whereby she counted God a liar, and then she ate the fruit she had been told not to eat! And then she led Adam to follow her into the darkness.

One sin followed another. The boulder had been pushed from the top of the mountain, and there was no stopping it from destroying everything in its path as it crashed down the hillside.

I don’t know if this has ever happened to you, but there have been times in my life when I’ve had a kooky idea which I drummed up out of spite or some other

defect of character. Once the kooky idea took root, we were off to the races! There was no pulling back. I hadn't acted yet, but it already had a root system and the results were inevitable. But that's me.

St. Paul wrote, **“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).**

God has given us Baptism and his Supper, anchoring and re-anchoring his Spirit in us that we would **“take every thought captive,”** using his Word to hold at bay all our kooky ideas that they would not take root and steal away our joy, leading us into the darkness.

God warned Israel **“If you will not believe, surely you shall not stand” (Isaiah 7:9).** We talk a lot about faith, but what do we mean by it if we do not believe God's Word, that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23),** that the Lord sent forth his son Jesus, **“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29),** that **“he who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16)?**

What do we mean by faith if we do not believe that we should bear our cross and follow in the footsteps of Christ (Matthew 16:24)? What do we mean by faith if we do not bear fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives (Galatians 5:22-23)? But the Lord has promised that if we do believe, if we have faith in his Word, if we wrap our lives around his will, his desire, we will stand, yea, we will stand and we will be victorious over the devil and the world.

Satan's goal was to destroy Adam and Eve by despair. And he nearly succeeded. They immediately recognized what they had done, and they were ashamed. They tried to hide their shame physically with fig leaves. But that clearly didn't work. For as the Lord strolled through the Garden, they hid from him. **“Where are you?”** he asked.

Many times I have spoken to Christians who have become strangers to God. They are ashamed of their divorce or a bankruptcy or that they had a falling out with another member. There are countless reasons. The devil has them by the throat, and he is killing them. He is filling their hearts with words like “shame,” “guilt,”

“hate,” and “resentment,” words that are replacing God’s Word, words of invitation and peace, words like “you are forgiven,” words like “you are my son, my daughter,” words like “you are a sheep in my pasture and I will care for you.”

When Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he discovered evil, indeed. And he sinned again. He said to God as he pointed his finger at Eve, **“The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (Genesis 3:12)**. When he did that he blamed God for his plight.

“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25).

Luther wrote, “Unless God helps the sinner, he will forever flee God, try to excuse his sin with lies, and add one wrong to another until he ends in blasphemy and despair.”

Thus we gather here this morning to worship the Word become flesh, our Lord Jesus who reconciles, redeems, and saves.

This week, friends in Christ, let us be in the Word that we may know God’s holy will and reason.

This week let us apply this Word to our daily lives. Obedience is a form of worship. Let us worship the Lord as we walk with one another in his light.

And this week let us share this Good News with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.