

Beginning in Genesis 3:15 and in all of the 39 books of the Old Testament, there is a theme that everyone in the Old Testament looked forward to seeing happen and fulfilled. All of the Law, the prophets, and the books of poetry all point to a Savior who would come to save us from our sins. Thirty-nine books proclaim loudly a Messiah to come. Almost every generation had an expectation of the Messiah to come in their lifetime. The promise was given to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and Sarah and all the patriarchs. It was given to Moses, David, and to all the prophets. You can find hints of the coming Messiah in every single Old Testament book. In my Christmas Eve sermon, I will speak of how Jesus came at just the right time, the best time, in the fullness of time for all of human history. Please be ready to listen Christmas Eve.

The worst mistake ever made was when Eve took a bite from the forbidden fruit and gave it to Adam to enjoy. More than likely Adam had been with her the entire time and heard the tempting words of the devil. Both are equally guilty and at fault. Both share the blame equally. Their act of sin against God has touched every human being born after them. Since the time of Adam and Eve's most terrible decision of the universe, every single human being has been born with a lethal condition called original sin. We have inherited a sinful human nature from the first parents, Adam and Eve. It is in our DNA. Our very bodies suffer from this. Before Adam and Eve sinned there was no sickness, disease, evil or death within the human race. Now our human bodies suffer in all sorts of ways. People may even be correct to blame their genetics for their behavior or lifestyle for sin impacted every cell in our bodies. I have a genetic disposition toward cancer and Alzheimer's. It is part of my DNA. Every illness, every disease, even every unhealthy addiction and lifestyle all stems back to the moment Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. Sin, evil, disease, and death in all its ugly forms entered the human race and will be so until the day Jesus comes again. In our nation today we see the power of sin working at a high pitch level harming the most basic of human relations. Neighbors beating up neighbors, people killing people from coast to coast, political fights turned into people's lives being at risk, and votes not being counted or counted more than once. This is all the result of that terrible decision that took place thousands of years ago when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. We call it the fall of men and women and it touches everything we do from the time we are

conceived to the moment we breathe our last. The Bible tells us that we are conceived in sin which means the sinful nature is right there within, even at the moment of conception, passed on down from Adam and Eve. The sinful nature stays with us until we are finally released from these human bodies when we breathe our last. The choice that Adam and Eve made so every long ago is why this world is in such a mess today. We see the power of sin in all its ugliness, terror, hatred, murders, lies, divisiveness, and self-righteousness to the max. One of the ugliest of sins that I see when watching people spread their venom on the news, is there is no self-examination at all. The opinions expressed blast those of the opposite point of view without any self-reflection seeing how one's personal actions are also doing great harm to our national discourse. It is called blaming and shaming everyone else and never looking in the mirror and seeing how you yourself are contributing to our downhill spiral of this nation. Putting it bluntly, we are seeing the depravity of the sinful human condition. It began with that terrible choice of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit in direct rebellion against God's Word.

Romans 7:15-19(NIV) ¹⁵*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.* ¹⁶*And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.* ¹⁷*As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.* ¹⁸*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.* ¹⁹*For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”* This my friend is the struggle that we all have every day, wrestling within ourselves, wanting to do the right thing yet falling short, not wanting to do the wrong thing yet we find ourselves falling into sinful patterns that we hate. We try to do right yet find ourselves eating the forbidden fruit, disobeying God. The power of sin is very real indeed. It has infected all of us.

Dr. Wayne Grudem, who taught at our Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for 20 years, wrote this about the problem of sin. “It is not just that some parts of us are sinful and others are pure. Rather, every part of our being is affected by sin – our intellects, our emotions and

desires, our hearts [that is] the center of our desires and decision-making processes, our goals and motives, and even our physical bodies” (Dr Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 1994, pg 497.

I want to make the point perfectly clear. The problem of sin entered the human race with that fateful decision to disobey God in the Garden of Eden. Another point I wish to make is the decision to sin against God did not surprise God at all. God knew exactly what the first couple would do. God still chose to create them knowing what a mess they would make of things. God the Father also knew the price it would take to resolve and conquer sin, the death of Jesus on the cross. Before they took the bite into the fruit God’s plan to save the human race from the eternal consequences of sin was already in place.

Friends, you and I are still eating the forbidden fruit to this day. I recently had a conversation about the sin of pornography. Every time you push that button on the computer you are choosing to eat the forbidden fruit. Every time you choose to do anything that God forbids, you are caving into the temptation of the serpent. Sin looks so enjoyable, so fun, so delightful, so promising, and it always, always, always harms your very soul. You may think your sins are private and only affect yourself. You could not be more wrong. As Christians we are the Body of Christ. Whatever you are doing in the darkness affects every person you know and come into contact with. When you choose to disobey God, when you eat the forbidden fruit your fellowship with God is lessened, the light of Christ inside of you is no longer as bright, and you are harming not only yourself but the Body of Christ. We are all in this together. There is no such thing as private sin because all of our lives impact each other more than we know. God sees it all and yes, eating the forbidden fruit grieves God.

Friends, God always knows what is best for us. Anything God forbids, He does so because God know what is best for us and is protecting us from the harm of sin and its consequences. Yes, God wants us all to enjoy life to the max. The Bible says, “Delight yourself

in the Lord and He will give to you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:5). Sin looks so delightful but ends in an open pit full of guilt and shame. To delight in God is learning how to enjoy God, God's Presence, God's truth, God's blessings, God's love, learning to enjoy being with God more than anything else in this life. When God is your all, sin has less and less power over you. As a matter of fact, when you delight in the Lord God will give to you experiences and opportunities that cause you to enjoy life to the max. Adam and Eve chose to enjoy the fruit over enjoying God. Friends please know there is nothing at all ever that surpasses being close to God and enjoying God. Sin always falls short of giving to us what we really need and what we need the most is something that only God can give.

This brings us to the first time the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the Bible (Protoevangelium). Genesis 3:15b, "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Friends the cross of Christ was on the mind of God and He planned exactly what Jesus would do for us even before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The council of heaven knew the solution even before the problem. God gave to Adam and Eve a freedom of choice knowing they would use that choice to disobey. God chose the solution and knew to what extent the solution would be. The cross was the focal point thousands of years before it occurred and will always be the greatest act of love for all eternity. Without a key you cannot enter through a locked door. The cross of Christ is the key that opens the door of eternity into the fullness of God's Presence. For all of eternity we will be thanking Jesus for His finished work on the cross.

God is speaking. The solution is going to be told. The plan to save us from our sins is about to be spoken in one sentence, in one breath so to speak. And here it is. "He will crush your head." The word He is foretelling what Christ will accomplish on the cross and the resurrection will prove that it is true. Jesus nailed to the cross accomplished the greatest work of all. Satan had done all that he could do to trip Jesus up, to bruise the heel of Jesus and cause Jesus to sin. Satan wanted Jesus to eat the forbidden fruit just like the first Adam. Satan

wanted Jesus to worship him and disobey God the Father. But Jesus humbled himself and was obedient unto death, even death on the cross. Jesus gave the lethal blow to Satan the serpent. The way you kill a snake is to give it a lethal blow to the head and the snake is dead. Jesus accomplished this on the cross and completely defeated Satan. The great work of saving us from our sins was accomplished by Christ and Satan fought him the entire time trying to trip Jesus up. The word picture for this fulfillment is in Rev 12:9, "The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth with all his angels with him." The victory began when Jesus was born of a virgin at Christmas and will climax when Jesus comes again. Thus, the defeat of Satan promised in Genesis 3:15 took place at the cross but will not be fully realized until we hear the trumpet sound at the second coming of Christ. Christ gave the lethal blow even from the cross. The pain that Jesus bore on the cross was very real. He died all bruised and bleeding. Through Christ Satan has no power over us except the power that we give to him. Victory in Christ is ours and one day Satan and the entire demonic realm will be locked up forever and ever in the pit of hell itself. Genesis 3:15 is the Good News and promises us the victory of Christ earned and paid for in full on the cross.

Yes, as we enter the season of Advent I want us to see how the Old Testament tells us about the Messiah to come and what the Messiah would do for us. The sin of Adam and Eve did more damage than we might ever know. Sin, illness, death, and suffering entered into the experience of every human being. The obedience of the 2nd Adam, Jesus, did more good than we may ever know. We all need to hear the good news of Jesus year-round. God spoke the first Gospel of Jesus and the cross thousands of years before it occurred. These words are recorded in Genesis 3:15. It was on the mind of God before the creation. It was God's solution to the problem Adam and Eve created. We will be thankful to Christ for His work on the cross forever and ever Amen and Amen.