

Third Sunday after Pentecost – June 10, 2018
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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Genesis 3:8-15 (NIV)

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. **(9) But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" (10) He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (11) And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" (12) The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."** (13) Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (14) So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. **(15) 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."**

Friends in Christ,

Do you know what the oldest game in the world is? You could make a pretty good case that “hide and seek” might be the oldest game in the world based on our text. We are told that Adam and Eve hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden and that the Lord came looking for them, calling “where are you?”

I know what you’re thinking! You’re right this wasn’t a game. This was a bit more serious – Adam and Eve were hiding from God because they felt guilty. Who of us hasn’t tried to do the same thing? It’s painfully obvious that trying to hide because of guilt doesn’t work out that well. Sooner or later we will be discovered. Our text for today reveals a there’s a better way to deal with our guilt. So let’s use it to discover the answer to the question:

Theme: What Should I Do With My Guilt?

1. Don’t try to hide it
2. Confess it to God
3. Receive God’s promise of forgiveness

Perhaps we should back up just a bit to put this section of God’s word into perspective for ourselves. The Lord God had created all things including Adam. He made Adam a wonderful place to live – the Garden of Eden and filled it all kinds of wonderful things to eat. He also planted two special trees in that garden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; (17) but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."** Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)

With this command, the Lord gave Adam a wonderful opportunity to show his love and trust in God. Sometime later, we are told that Adam and his wife Eve disobeyed God by eating fruit from the forbidden tree. They consciously choose not to worship the one who had been so generous to them and had done so much to make them happy. The consequence was that now they had separated themselves from God (they died spiritually) and now one day they would experience physical death. Their disobedience was an act of unbelief – they doubted what God had told about himself and his love for them.

Another consequence of their actions was that they felt guilt – they had lost their holiness and goodness. They were controlled by evil. They felt shame. In their sin and shame, they were not looking for God. But the Lord God came looking for them. And what was their response? The “first game of hide and seek.”

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. Previously the Garden had been a joyful, happy place – now it became a scary place. When they heard the sound of the Lord God – fear led them to run and hide. They foolishly thought that they could protect themselves from God’s punishment. They tried to hide themselves, their actions, and their guilt from God. But there was no need for them to do that and there’s no need for us to do that either. It’s true that God came to confront Adam and Eve for their sin and to show them their guilt. However, he also had another reason for seeking them out. He came as the Lord – the Savior God to reveal his faithful love to them.

But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

When Adam and Eve heard God walking in the Garden, their consciences began to afflict them as it reminded them of God’s words: “you must not eat or you will die.” Those words ringing in their ears were suddenly replaced by the Lord’s question, “Where are you?” The Lord was calling to teach Adam and Eve what all sinners need to learn: “you can’t hide your guilt and sin from God.”

Adam was afraid to approach God because of his guilt; yet that’s exactly what he needed to do. He loved Eve more than he loved God. He listened to his wife instead of listening to the Lord. He joined Eve in her sin and now he despaired of the Lord’s love and forgiveness. Sin erected a wall between Adam and his Lord.

With his loving call, the Lord God was coming to tear that barrier down. “Where are you?” God asked the question not because he couldn’t find Adam but so that Adam could find the Lord.

[Adam] **answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."** Adam was trembling with fear, but failed to confess the reason for that fear. It was his shame and guilt that filled him with fear, not his nakedness. Adam is still trying to hide his guilt rather than confessing his guilt. The Lord God will not accept this silly lie. He patiently leads him to make a confession of his guilt with his questions. **And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"**

With his questions, the Lord is seeking to lead Adam to confess the reason for his fear and trembling – to acknowledge his guilt and his sin. Did you do what I told you not to do? Did you eat? The Lord asks. Adam continues in his efforts to hide his guilt from the Lord. He refuses to accept responsibility for his actions – he attempts to pass the blame onto his wife and onto God who had provided her to him. **The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."**

There – he said it! “I ate.” No one force-fed him. He ate. The truth is out. He was trembling with fear and guilt because he ate. The confession has been made. But Adam wasn’t the only one who needed to stop hiding and to confess his guilt. Eve had also had fallen in sin and unbelief. And so the Lord reached out to her. **Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."**

Like Adam, Eve tried to excuse her actions and to shift the blame. “I was deceived,” she said. “The Devil made me do it.” Then, finally, “I ate.” When God confronts us with our guilt – he’s not looking for an explanation as to why we did what we did. He’s interested in leading us to confess what we did. He wants us to acknowledge the sinful attitude that prompted the sinful action.

Once the confession has been made – then we are able to receive the Lord’s promise of forgiveness. There is one more culprit the God has to deal with. After leading Adam and Eve to confess their sins, God turns

his attention to Satan and the creature he used to trick Adam and Eve. Here there is no mercy – no attempts to solicit a confession – only words of condemnation and a promise to sinners that “Satan will bite the dust.”

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. (15) 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."

These words were spoken in the presence of Adam and Eve not only to the serpent but more importantly to the one who used the serpent to bring sin into the world. With these words the Lord God was promising Adam and Eve and all sinners that although the Devil had won a battle he would not win the war. His victory would not be a lasting victory – in fact he would be crushed and overcome by the son of a woman.

The words that the Lord spoke in these verses are pure Gospel to our ears – the good news of deliverance. They are words of promise for us to ponder, believe and to receive in faith.

Ever since the Devil had rebelled against God he felt enmity(or hatred) toward God and his creation. His murder of humankind was an act of that enmity. Since enmity and hatred was the devil’s calling card – the Devil would receive enmity in return.

The devil had come to Eve pretending to be her friend – he still does that today. If God had not come to find her and to save her, she and everyone else in this world would have lived forever with her “friend” – separated from the Lord God and his blessings under the curse of death.

God’s promise to send the offspring of a woman (a Savior) to crush Satan’s head created faith in Eve’s heart. The friendship she once had with Satan was replaced with enmity or hatred. The same is true for every believer. What a blessing it is that we have learned to look on Satan as our enemy and to trust in God’s promised Savior and the forgiveness he offers us.

God spoke of enmity between Satan’s offspring and Eve’s offspring. This is the hostility that exists between God’s believing children and the unbelieving world to this day.

This hostility or enmity against Satan would reach its climax when one of Eve’s descendants would crush his head. We know that descendant as Jesus Christ. Satan did his best to defeat Jesus – but his best wasn’t good enough. It’s true, Satan struck his Enemy’s (Christ’s) heel that resulted in Jesus spending three days in the grave – but that victory was short lived. On the third he rose again – crushing Satan’s head and destroying his work. God conquered sin, death and the devil for our benefit – that we might enjoy his forgiveness and a blessed relationship with him.

Adam and Eve received God’s promise of forgiveness with faith and lived in hope. That promise would sustain them throughout the difficulties of their lives in this sinful world. Eating the forbidden fruit would not be their only sin. But the Lord had given them his promise of a rescue from sin. That promise would lead them to confess their future sin and guilt and not to try to hide it.

And that’s the lesson that we want to take home today. Like Adam and Eve – we have sinned. Our consciences often accuse us. Sometimes we futilely attempt to hide from God rather than to confess our sin and guilt. Thankfully, when we do that the Lord comes to us through his word to seek and to save us with his wonderful promises – which were fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

What should you do with your guilt? Don’t try to hide it. Confess it to God and receive God’s promise of forgiveness with joy and faith. Amen.