



GENESIS 3:4-7, 13-15 | You Will Not Certainly Die!

Sunday, February 22, 2015 – The 1st Sunday in Lent

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ 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. ⁷ 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...

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."

Things really haven't changed, have they? Oh, the scenery certainly has. The circumstances certainly have. But the characters are still the same. The attitudes haven't changed. And the results remain the same.

It's true! There may not be a garden, but there are offices and cubicles, truck cabs and school hallways. There are still people wishing to be like God. There is still a snake slithering around looking to lead someone from the truth. And the ultimate lie is still being used. "You won't die from this...it's *your* life, *your* decision. After all, God is just trying to keep you from having fun."

We do it so often, don't we? We try to sell ourselves that lie, or we allow Satan to sell us the lie. "It was only one night with him or her. It wasn't like we had sex. We may have pushed the line a little bit, but what fun is there if we're not pushing the line, right? It really isn't that big of a deal." "I don't always cheat or cut corners, but I've had a really hectic week and things at home aren't that great. So I'll just copy his work and take the credit. It's not that big of a deal. I could have done the same work anyway, so it's basically the same thing." "I really don't feel like church is that important. I have so many other things in my life that are pressing: bills, sports practices, recitals. Plus, I'm usually pretty good the rest of the year, so this week really isn't that big of a deal."

Such a little lie with such huge consequences. You can imagine Adam and Eve having the same conversation next to that tree in the garden. "It's just a piece of fruit, Adam. What's the big deal? We've lived in this garden for how long and this is the only thing we've even considered doing for ourselves. It's not that big of a deal." And it was then that mankind fell. It wasn't because of a "huge" sin. It wasn't because of this massive battle of disrespect and disobedience. It was because of one self-centered,

selfish sin. It was because of a dismissive desire to do what pleased them. And, as we heard in our second lesson this morning, such a small sin had such significant consequences. All mankind fell. Hard.

You see, the consequences of this sin are not a small deal. They really are a big deal. They're eternal and severe. There was an angry God seeking vengeance for this sin walking through the garden. And you can almost hear God trying to hold back his anger as he pronounced judgement on the guilty parties. "To the serpent he said, '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.' To the woman he said, 'I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.'" (Genesis 3:14, 16-19)

It was a big deal. As you hear the initial consequences your sinful nature might not even quiver. Eh! It doesn't seem like that big of a deal. So I'll have to work a little bit and I'll sweat. So there will be weeds and thistles. So I'll have pain in giving birth to a child. So what! So I'll have to be dependent on man for my lifetime It's not so bad. And it's true! To you and me, we can't fathom what not having sweat and work and weeds and pain feels like. We have no concept of perfection. But to Adam and Eve, this was essentially a death sentence...they hadn't had to toil and labor once in their lives. Their lives had been perfectly peaceful and painless. And now their lives would be nothing but pain and labor.

But it was so much more than just an "inconvenience." It wasn't *essentially* a death sentence—it was a death sentence. "You will return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." They—and you—would die because of their sins. Again, our sinful nature cries out: unfair! For such a petty thing? For such a small sin that wasn't that big of a deal you're going to take our lives? The answer: yes.

Yes. Your sin deserves death. Even the small ones. Even that sin of going too far on that date or visiting that risqué website. Yes. Even that sin of cutting corners or cheating. Yes. Even that sin of poor priorities and a neglect of God and his word for such "important" things as sports, family, or recitals. Yes. For the one time you did it. Yes. For the accidental times you did it. Yes. For the times you couldn't help it. Yes. The lie of "you will not certainly die" is absolutely true.

But it didn't end there. God certainly didn't leave Adam and Eve wallowing in their misery for very long. In fact, before he even pronounced this judgement on them, God gave them a promise! "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." (Genesis 3:15) God knew what mankind would do. In his foreknowledge he had planned for this event. He had already set into place the thread that would run through history so that when the "time had fully come, God would send his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law, so that they might the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:4,5)

And so the threat of imminent and eternal death was gone. What an amazing and gracious act! Mankind had done the most selfish and self-centered thing they could do in that garden, and our Triune God did the most selfless thing to account for it—he gave himself. Our second lesson sums it up

well: "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

So have hope, dear Christian! Christ has done more than just appeared on this earth. He's done more than just die. He has conquered sin and Satan. He has ripped open the grave and came out alive. He has perfectly and completely kept the law. For you! Fear of death and hell is no more. A life worth living is what lies in store. A life made new through Christ.

Oh, you can be sure we will meet Satan again. You'll meet him again today. In fact, you may meet him again before this service is even done. But now you know who he is. He has no power over you. His work is in vain. The battle has been won! You can now look to Christ for strength. You can find guidance in his word. You can resist sin because Christ has already defeated it for you. Now, dear Christian, you can live, and not certainly die! Amen.



Soli Deo Gloria!

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