

Adam and Eve, Sin and Salvation

James 2:10, Trinity Sunday XII

September 3, 2006

Beloved of the Lord.....Sometimes in order to understand the teachings of the Bible, it is best to start at the beginning. This morning let us briefly consider just how sin entered into this world by looking at Adam and Eve.

We remember that on the sixth day of creation, God created Adam and Eve in God's own image. Having God's image, they were sinless and holy. Moreover God had literally given them paradise. They could eat of all the trees in the Garden of Eden,.....all trees but one. The Lord said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But Adam and Eve disobeyed. Eve was first led into sin by Satan. Adam came next. "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

That one sin opened up the grave before Adam and Eve, and also the gates of hell. They had ruined everything. Whereas before sin Adam and Eve communed with God, and knew His perfect love for them, now they had thrown it all away by disobedience! And it didn't stop there. One sin always leads to others. Now they suddenly felt the sting of a guilty conscience. They hid from the presence of God (which many still try to do today)! But God knew where they were and what they had done. When God questioned Adam, Adam blamed God and Eve for everything! "The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Note here he did not confess his sin. Eve was no better. Her line of defense was "The devil made me do it!" By this singular sin, Adam and Eve made themselves enemies with God and friends with the devil. They were now deceivers. Not only did Adam and Eve ruin the good life for themselves, but they ruined it for their children too, just as many parents still do today.

From that moment on, the world would never be the same. The Bible says "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5 Not only would Adam die, but death would pass upon Adam's children. All men would now be born in the image of Adam rather than the image of God. God would likewise hold all of Adam's children as being guilty of Adam's sin. This is called "original sin" or "hereditary sin". This means that through Adam's disobedience, all of Adam's children are charged with being guilty of Adam's sin. The Bible teaches, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" Rom. 5:18. You might say it this way: even though we did not pluck the apple off the tree and eat it, because we are children of Adam, God holds us accountable for the sin which Adam committed. This is why it is called original or inherited sin. It is the first original sin which brought all other sins into the world. We inherit the guilt of Adam.

When we hear this, it is in our nature to charge God with being unfair. But in doing so, we reveal that we are just like Adam, who blamed God for his sin by saying, "The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me...." Our nature is the same as Adam's. We both charge God with injustice. But does it make sense to say that God is unfair? Is God really the problem, or is the problem man? Our own conscience will answer that question. The Bible answers it as well. "God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace." I Cor. 14:33 Being God, God had every right to tell Adam and Eve not to eat of that one simple tree. When Adam and Eve disobeyed, the fault was their own. Therefore when we foolishly charge God with being unfair, or evil, we are like Adam Eve who backed themselves into a corner, hiding from God. There is just no way around the truth. God's presence will not allow it. And so we must admit that we are sinners. Instead of blaming God or someone else for our sin, we should from the heart admit our sin by saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

We should also confess that God is perfectly fair, just, and impartial in all His ways. The Bible says, "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." For where does truth and justice come from if not from God? How would we even know what truth and justice is, were it not that God had written His law into our heart? The Bible says, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: *he is* excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice." Job 37:23 God is not the problem! The problem lies in man's own heart! But let us go even further. Let us say we charge God with injustice. Let us say to God, "Lord you are not fair in charging me with original sin. I did not pick that fruit off of that tree! Adam and Eve did!" Let us say for a moment that we foolishly charge God with such things! How would God answer us? We have His answer in Romans 5:18 which says, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." So, just as by the sin of one Adam, all men were judged and condemned by God, so by the one man Jesus Christ, that Second Adam, all men were justified and given life everlasting! Therefore, if we sinners charge God with injustice, and say it is not fair that we are charged with Adam's sin, we must likewise admit that it is not fair that that one man Jesus Christ, took the sins of all men upon Himself. And so if we reject the one, we must naturally reject the other. And if we reject the free sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we reject our own salvation, and indeed we will perish!

But God does not want us to perish does He! Your beloved Father who lives and reigns in heaven sent His only-begotten Son to redeem you from your sin. Jesus, that Second Adam, undid and overthrew the evil of that first Adam. And even after that first Adam fell into sin, God with overwhelming grace, immediately promised to deliver Adam from all of Adam's sin. God gave to Adam and Eve the promise that the Seed of the woman, would crush the head of the serpent. The Seed of Adam and Eve would overturn and destroy the works of the devil. This Gospel promise originally given to Adam and Eve was fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, God's only-begotten Son.

Jesus is the Second Adam, who overthrew the serpent by way of the cross of Calvary. Satan's head was crushed under the heel of Christ when our own sins were paid by Christ. The Bible says, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Now when the devil accuses you of sin, and says you are going to hell when you die because of your sin, you can proudly defy that devil and say to Him, "Be gone evil foe, the Holy Ghost has revealed unto me the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the Second Adam has redeemed me from all sin, and given me heaven in place of hell. His blood is more powerful than any of my sins, or any accusation you can throw against me. Everlasting life in heaven has been given to me by the blood of Jesus Christ, my Savior!"

Beloved of the Lord we give glory to Christ Jesus, when we defy Satan with this Gospel truth! This truth should not only live and reign in our hearts, but our lives should reflect this very grace of God. And just as we have slowly been reviewing the Ten Commandments, let us complete our study today of the Ten Commandments, with the last two, namely the ninth and tenth. They say, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. And Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.* These two commandments are a bit different from the others in that they point to the source of all sin, which is the heart and soul of man. We covet, that is we sinfully desire from the heart, what doesn't belong to us, but to our neighbor. Therefore if we, "I have never stolen from another man, these hands have never picked a pocket or robbed a bank"..... if we say, "nor have I ever committed adultery!" If we or any other man dare to say such things, this commandment condemns us in that it points to our heart. Therefore even if these hands have never been used to steal, our heart has often stolen by sinful longing or desire. In the same way, though we may never have abused our body by way of adultery, our heart has abused our own soul by way of lust through the eyes.

God wants us to take a deep look at ourselves. We are to look beyond the surface of things.....we are to look beyond what we do or do not do with our hands. We are to take a deep look at our internal soul, and see his spiritual sin. When God uses that little word "covet" in these commandments, He teaches us that it is our internal heart and soul from where each sin originates, whether or not a sin manifests itself on the surface. Like an earthquake which first erupts deep under the sea, its destructive energy is not at first seen on the surface of the waters. In like manner, God does not want us to look on the surface of things, but God wants us to look to the very bottom of our heart. And at the bottom of our heart there is no good to be found, but only lies, hypocrisy, and hatred. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." "No one keeps or can keep God's law from the bottom of the heart, for everyone finds in himself displeasure in what is good and pleasure in what is bad." (Luther)

And so the Bible says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all." God does not write these words because there are a few men on this earth who have kept most of the commandments. He writes these words so that we understand to even break one

commandment, to even commit just one sin, makes us totally different creatures before the Lord. For even if only one single solitary sin were committed by one single solitary man, that single sin makes that single man a spiritually wicked and corrupt soul. God's law then is spiritual. The first sin was not the exterior action of picking the fruit off the tree. The first sin was committed deep deep within Adam's very soul, when Adam chose to rebel against his own Creator, and do that which is spiritually EVIL. That evil motion of movement of Adam's heart, totally changed Adam into another creature altogether. By sin, Adam had cast off and despised God's image, and now the devil was Adam's friend!

Dare I say.....dare I ask the question..... are we any better than Adam? That is why dear friends, I urge you this day to turn to, and focus upon that Second Adam who is named Jesus Christ. Unlike the first Adam, the Second Adam came without sin. Remember the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Almighty God was in that lowly child Jesus. Though Mary was a sinner, her original sin was not passed on to Jesus. Jesus was born holy, separate from sinners. Moreover that Second Adam did not live the same way as the first. Jesus never coveted His neighbor's house or wife. Jesus was spiritual, not carnal. The Second Adam was "made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law." Jesus did what we could not do, namely live a perfect, righteous, sinless, and holy life. And Jesus gives that perfect, righteous, sinless, and holy life to you, if you will have it. But there is more. Our own sins, the very evil which we have uttered from the bottom of our own hearts, such sins Jesus willingly placed upon Himself. Saving you from your sin would make Jesus happy! His joy would be your salvation. The Bible says, "For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2 Christ is at the right hand of His Father because His Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son. Jesus rose the third day from the dead. Trusting in Him, you too shall rise from the dead and ascend up into heaven. And even while you continue to live in this vale of tears, God will continually feed your faith by the Gospel of peace. For He has given to His Church, the treasure of Holy Communion. God has placed into Holy Communion, the treasure of His grace and forgiveness. His gives this treasure to you through His own body and blood. Through the same the Holy Ghost will strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith. Therefore be at peace dear child of God, for though the sin of the first Adam was passed on to us, the sinlessness of the Second Adam becomes our own through faith. By His stripes we are healed. Praise God for His abundant mercy! Joyfully receive His grace daily. Amen.