

I.N.I.

3rd Sunday Pentecost

June 17, 2012

Genesis 3:8-15

In Christ Jesus, the Promised Seed who has come to crush the power of Satan, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

One of the first things our grandchildren do when they come to visit is to run into the basement. They do this for two reasons. One is that they do not have basements in Florida and South Carolina and it is still a novelty for them and two is they now get to play with toys they have not played with for some 6 months or more.

But one of their favorite games is played without a toy. They love to play hide and seek. They thrill to the prospect of quietly, secretly hiding from Grandma and Grandpa by squatting in the closet, or behind a door, or perhaps under the bed. Usually there are squeals of excitement when they are found and then they yell, "My turn!"

Well this kind of hide and seek is a safe, simple game little children play; but there is another kind of hide and seek that is far more deadly, that is very complex and very serious that many of us adults play. It is the kind of hide and seek game that people play with God. The kind of hide and seek game that we guilty sinners sometimes play with the Almighty. The kind of hide and seek game that Adam and Eve played with God in our text.

And that is our theme for this morning:

AN ALL-IMPORTANT ENCOUNTER OF HIDE AND SEEK

I: GUILTY SINNERS HIDE FROM GOD

II: A GRACIOUS GOD SEEKS SINNERS

Our text takes place shortly after Adam and Eve disobeyed God's Word, His clear command, by eating of the forbidden fruit. Even as a sunny early April day can so quickly change into a windy, cold, bitter reminder that winter is still around, so also we see in our text the sudden change from holiness to sin, from the warm promise of an eternal perfect future into the cold reality of a fallen sinful world. The stark reality of the effects of sin is seen in the very first verse of our text. Vs. 8 **AND THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF THE LORD GOD WALKING IN THE GARDEN IN THE COOL OF THE DAY, AND ADAM AND HIS WIFE HID THEMSELVES FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD GOD AMONG THE TREES OF THE GARDEN.**

Adam and Eve, who up to this time had a perfect, loving, peaceful relationship with the LORD God, their Creator, now are found cowering in the woods, hiding behind trees, not in playful fun, but in fearful worry, trying to escape the all-seeing eyes of God. In shame and guilt they sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. In fear and guilt they tried to run away and hide from God's wrath and condemnation. They knew what to expect and tried to get away from it.

But what do we read in verse 9? Instead of the dark clouds of God's wrath, there is pictured for us the sunshine of His forgiving grace. We read vs. 9 **THEN THE LORD GOD CALLED TO ADAM AND SAID TO HIM, "WHERE ARE YOU?"** What a remarkable statement of God's forgiving grace and mercy! God had clearly warned Adam of the consequences of his disobedience; **"YOU SHALL SURELY DIE!"** Adam knew this. He knew what he deserved and tried to hide and escape from it. Who would have faulted God for blasting Adam and Eve on the spot for such ungrateful defiance. God owed them nothing. He had given them everything. They owed God obedience. They gave Him rebellion. But God is a God of love as well as a God of justice. His love

which created man perfect and holy and put them into a perfect garden of paradise didn't desert them. God's love caused Him to seek and find the lost sinners who were hiding, who did not want to be found and face God. The Lord had a plan already from eternity: **FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON...**

Adam and Eve's consciences were at work. Ringing in their ears and hearts accusing them of wrong, of sin, telling them they were deserving of death and damnation. And so they hid!

But suddenly they heard another voice, the voice of their God calling out to them who were vainly trying to hide. Didn't God know where they were? Isn't He all-knowing? Didn't He know exactly what tree Adam was hiding behind? Yes, He did. The LORD God was calling out to Adam and Eve, the sinners, to teach these first rebellious children what all future sinners would also need to learn; **YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM GOD, and YOU SHOULD NOT WANT TO!**

Instead, sinners need to learn to come to God honestly admitting to their sin and guilt and repentantly pleading for His forgiving mercy. It was the LORD who called out to Adam, not Adam who cried out to God. Adam was filled with fear. Seeing and talking to His God was the last thing Adam wanted to do on that most tragic day. He thought he would have been content to hide from God forever, happy to avoid him always, but then he would have sealed his fate to eternal doom because of his sin.

Adam was afraid to approach God because of his guilt. Yet that is precisely what he needed to do. Note that God took the first step, the first step toward man. God asked, **"ADAM, WHERE ARE YOU?"** He did this not so that He might find man, but so that man may find Him. God still wanted that perfect, loving relationship, but the barrier of sin cannot be ignored, it must be recognized and then removed. Man needs to recognize it. God through Jesus removes it.

So what was Adam's answer? Vs. 10 **SO HE SAID, "I HEARD YOUR VOICE IN THE GARDEN, AND I WAS AFRAID BECAUSE I WAS NAKED; AND I HID MYSELF."** Adam trembled with fear, but he failed to tell the whole truth about the reason for his trembling. It was not because he was naked that he trembled with fear before God, but because of his sin. By admitting to the shame of nakedness, he was also admitting to the fact of his sin. It is most interesting and most distressing at the same time to observe how completely and quickly the perfect knowledge of God is lost by Adam. Even though Adam knew God was omniscient, knew that God knew what he had done, he still tries to con God, tries to hide from the God he knows will find him, in fact knows where he is and what he did.

God confronts Adam again. We read in verse 11 **AND HE SAID, "WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED? HAVE YOU EATEN FROM THE TREE OF WHICH I COMMANDED YOU THAT YOU SHOULD NOT EAT?"** In other words, "why is it that you are now trembling with fear before Me? You were naked before and you were not afraid. What have you done?" God wants Adam to confess the reason for his fear. The knowledge and shame of his nakedness are inseparably tied to his sin.

Unfortunately Adam does not take full responsibility for his sin. He finds two scapegoats. One is his loving wife. The other his loving God. **"THE WOMAN WHOM YOU GAVE TO BE WITH ME, SHE GAVE ME OF THE TREE, AND I ATE."** Adam's response was something like this, "she sure wasn't the helper You promised me, God. Its her fault, and its Yours as well because You gave her to me." Man in his denial of sin loses the appreciation of both God and the gifts of God. In fact, even blames God for his own misbehavior. But now the truth is out, for Adam did admit; **"AND I ATE!"**

Even as Adam tried to shift the blame Eve does the same. Its not my fault it is **"THE SERPENT WHO DECEIVED ME, AND I ATE."** She too admits **"AND I ATE"** but her confession also tries

to exonerate and excuse her by placing the blame on someone else. Yes, Eve had been deceived, lied to and conned but that was not an excuse. She knew better. The bottom line for Adam and Eve was not “WHY” but “WHAT.” Not “WHY” did you do what you did, but “WHAT” did you do? That is God’s concern.

Solomon said it many years ago, **THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.** What Adam and Eve uselessly tried to do in the Garden of Eden, mankind has been attempting ever since: to hide from God; to cover up their guilt; excuse themselves; blame others and ultimately blame the very One who is there to help, God! So **WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY GUILT?**

First of all, **DON’T TRY TO HIDE IT!** What clearer picture can be drawn for us to see the foolishness of finding excuses for sin, the futility of blaming others, the wickedness of finding fault with God, and the useless attempt to try to hide from God. As sinners we need to admit to it. We need to be honest with ourselves by realizing that our sin is our own, no one else’s. We, in thought, word and deed are guilty of breaking all of God’s commands.

From the treatment that the LORD gave to Adam and Eve, we sinners can well learn to run to God instead of away from Him, to expect gracious good from God rather than the deserved punishment. Don’t hide your guilt, but instead confess it to God. But even this we cannot do by nature. It is the Lord’s call through the Law that must crush our hearts. Must convict each of us of our own sins and lead us to repent of them. Then the power of the Gospel works in us a confession of sorrow and desire for forgiveness only through Jesus Christ.

Adam and Eve at first were unwilling to do this. By nature, now dead in their sin, their first instinct was to run away, to hide from God, to be afraid of the One and only One who could help them. May we not play this deadly game of hide and seek. May the Holy Spirit lead us to admit that we are lost in sin, guilty sinners before God, owing a debt that we cannot possibly ever pay and then cling with all of our heart to the gracious **PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS IN JESUS.**

The LORD God declared in verse 15 **AND I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN...** Literally that is **WARFARE.** Since his rebellion against God, Satan felt only hatred toward God and His creation. In his hatred, he murdered the human race as Jesus tells us in John 8:44 **HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING.** Now that Adam and Eve had experienced his hatred, his enmity, that enmity would become mutual. There are two things we as Christians are to hate, **SATAN and SIN!**

But this hatred toward and opposition to Satan is not a natural condition of man at birth. By conception all people are in league with the devil, under his control. All people are by nature children of wrath, enemies of God, blind to him and His grace. By God’s grace, and His grace alone, some are born again, spiritually reborn through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel in the Word and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. In the offspring of the woman, the believers in Christ, there will be a hatred, a warfare, an enmity. This seed of the woman refers to the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, all believers in Christ. God puts into our hearts a hatred for Satan and all that is evil.

But there is another offspring, the seed of Satan. This refers to both the innumerable evil spirits in this world as well as all of the unbelievers whom Jesus calls **SATAN’S CHILDREN.** In John 8:44 Jesus says, **YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL, AND THE DESIRES OF YOUR FATHER YOU WANT TO DO.**

But in the very next line the LORD says, **HE SHALL BRUISE YOUR HEAD.** He, a male Champion shall be chosen from the seed of the woman. An individual offspring will come to bruise, literally “crush” Satan’s head.

This of course is Jesus, born of the virgin Mary. It is interesting to note that the same Hebrew

word is used for the wound Jesus is to inflict upon Satan and the one Satan is to inflict upon Jesus. The term means “to attack, to wound, or to bruise.” But in the context of this word we see that when a person bruises a snake’s head by stepping on it, it is a crushing blow and the snake dies; while the snake bite that results from it is merely a bruise, even if it is poisonous, it can be cut out or cauterized. A crushing head blow spells total defeat, while a bruised heal may be nursed till it is healed.

What a wonderful prophecy of Jesus’ work. He came into this world for one purpose. John says **TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL**. Death did come to Christ, however it was a voluntary offering up of His life to God as the **PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR ALL SIN**. In that death Jesus suffered the agonies of hell, of damnation for us. God’s wrath and hatred for sin was not placed upon man, who deserved it, you and me and all sinners, but upon Christ, our Substitute. This great suffering and death was the bruising of His heal by Satan. But it was only a bruise, because on the third day this crucified Christ rose triumphantly from the grave.

Satan was crushed. By Satan’s attack upon Christ, he merely brought about his own destruction and ruin. The shedding of Christ’s blood by the unbelieving Romans and Jews was all a part of God’s plan of salvation for all people. This blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, redeems us from death and the power of the devil. Therefore the devil’s authority and power over mankind has been destroyed, his head has been crushed. Our victory is guaranteed.

Contrary to modern psychologists and psychiatrists, to feel guilt is not bad or wrong, it is the natural feeling of sinful people, of people who have broken and continue to break their Creator’s commandments. Unfortunately to deny the guilt, to try to hide the guilt or shift the blame onto others is also natural and it is deadly. Yes, Adam and Eve and every single one of us have been deceived by Satan and led into sin and disobedience to God’s Law. But the final outcome has been reversed. Christ has come to crush the one who deceived and captured and spiritually killed mankind. The victory is ours, not Satan’s.

We live in a terribly sin filled world, which includes us. But we are not slaves to our sins, to our guilt, or to Satan’s temptations. We **ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US**.

May the Holy Spirit lead us first of all to acknowledge our sins in thought, word and deed, to accept the blame and realize the guilt is ours and ours alone and then be led to confess them before our Lord and look with repentant eyes and hearts of faith to our Savior Jesus and believe His promise of complete and full forgiveness. Only in Jesus Christ, the woman’s Seed, is there forgiveness of sins and victory over Satan. Praise God!

Amen.