

Apostles Anglican Church

The Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

25 June 2023

Fr. Rob Goebel

Main Text: Romans 5:15-19

Supporting Text: Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 3

Title: The Divine Undoing: God's Reversal of the Fall

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, you gave your Apostles grace truly to believe and to preach your word: Grant that we might love what they believed and preach what taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Introduction:

When I was a young boy, probably 6 or 7 years old, a family friend gave me a small toy construction crane. It had a magnet on the end and toy cars you could pick up and move with the crane. I loved that toy. I loved it so much that I wanted to know how it worked. So I snuck a screwdriver from my dad's tool bench and took it apart. But I couldn't figure out how to put it back together, and I was afraid to tell my dad what I had done. I was crushed! I had made a mess of it. For years it lay in pieces in a shoebox under my bed until one day, I tossed it in the trash. This treasure was given to me from a heart of Love, and I had destroyed it.

Transition: Genesis chapter 3 finds Adam much in the same place but with much higher stakes.

Point #1 – Screwing it all up

Let's take just a few minutes here to stop and consider what exactly happened in the first few chapters of Genesis.

What we see unfold in these pages is God preparing a beautiful and perfect home for humanity.

Genesis tells us that the,

“ . . . earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.”

God brings this home into existence out of nothing so that when He creates man and woman, he can set them down in the midst of it. He places the Sun and the stars in the sky as a kaleidoscope of wonder, reflecting the radiance of His glory.

Then, after He has made humanity and placed them in their new home, He does something unexpected . . . He gives it to them to be its rulers.

Genesis chapter 1, verses 26 thru 28 says:

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

*27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

What an amazing gift!

The gift of life! A beautiful house! AND it's all theirs to rule over!

And they didn't, they could not possibly have had anything to do with making this all happen. It's just a free gift from God.

Wow!

Ok, so far so good.

Let's skip ahead just a bit to Genesis Chapter 3.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

Oh no! I got a bad feeling about this.

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

That went off the rails fast, didn't it?

The serpent gets them to compare themselves to God. "Look," he says, and I'm paraphrasing, "God has knowledge you don't have. "He's holding back."

He convinces Adam and Eve that they can't trust God because He doesn't really want what's best for them.

So, they trespass. In other words, they go beyond the boundary God had set for them. And they eat from the tree they were told not to eat from.

And then comes one of the most ridiculous (and tragic) things ever to be recorded in scripture.

Genesis chapter 3 says:

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Literally, the solution they came up with to the mess they created was to cover themselves with leaves.

That's ridiculous. That is never going to do! We laugh, but the truth is we come up with even more ridiculous solutions to our brokenness all the time.

We're right there with Adam. Holding the broken pieces of our toy crane.

Adam was deceived into believing he knew better than God. He believed he knew what was best for him, but in the process, he utterly destroyed the gift that was been given to him and all humanity.

In our passage from Romans, Paul lays out the consequences of Adam's mistake.

Paul writes in verse 15:

*“... many **died** through one man's trespass ... “*

Verse 16:

*“... the judgment following one trespass brought **condemnation** ... ”*

Verse 17:

*“... because of one man's trespass, **death reigned** through that one man ... “*

Here's the Fr. Robbie rephrase:

“Man! Adam really screwed things up for all of us.”

Paul writes that through Adam's transgression, sin entered the world, bringing with it death and condemnation. Adam, as the representative of all humanity, acted as a pivotal figure in God's plan, and his disobedience had far-reaching implications for every generation that followed.

The repercussions of Adam's sin were severe. Sin's corruption spread like wildfire, infecting the hearts of all humanity. Death, both physical and spiritual, became an unavoidable reality for every person. We were all trapped in the bondage of sin, separated from God and destined for eternal separation.

Transition: But thanks be to God because he doesn't leave humanity in the misery of our trespasses. He sent a second Adam—a perfect God-Man.

But here's the thing, Jesus Christ **was never** and **is never** Plan B.

He's not the last hope for humanity, He is the only Hope for humanity.

And He always was and always will be.

Point # 2 – The Reversal

In our reading from Romans, Saint Paul holds Adam and Christ up next to each other not to compare them but to show there IS no comparison.

God doesn't come down to Earth and simply take the preverbal broken pieces of our toy crane and put them back together.

No! He shows up on the scene not as a secondhand Adam but as The God-Man—the perfect person.

God's solution to our brokenness is no bandaid. It's a permanent solution.

God in Christ has performed an absolute reversal.

Consider this,

Adam was given the free gift of life but he squandered it; Christ gives Humanity “the free gift of righteousness.”

Adam was charged with ruling over creation, but because of his disobedience, death reigned. But Paul tells us, “much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness **reign in life** through the one man Jesus Christ.”

In Adam, one man's sin brought many more trespasses;
In Christ, one man's obedience brought justification to many more.

Adam brought death;
Christ brought and brings life.

Transition: Is this all Paul wants us to take away from this? That Christ is better than Adam? Well, that is part of his message, but it's not the fullness of what he is laboring to say.

Point #3 Let go and let god / The sufficiency of Christ

Let's look back at Genesis chapter 3 for a minute.

So Adam and Eve disobeyed and ate the forbidden fruit and verse 8 says,

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

Adam and Eve became afraid of God, and so they hid themselves from God in the trees of the garden. They hid in the shadows of the trees. They literally tried to hide in the darkness from God. It's laughable, isn't it?

But frankly, since then, humanity has been using the same solution. We don't want to admit our wrongdoing, so we hide our brokenness from God and others. Of course, this doesn't work, no matter how much we try.

But what does God do when He returns to the garden after the fall? He calls to them, where are you? Come out from the shadows. Stop hiding. Step into the light. Set aside your solutions and your fig leaves and come to me.

Their solutions were insufficient, incomplete, and disastrous.
Our solutions to our brokenness are insufficient, incomplete, and disastrous.

Christ calls us to come out of the darkness, stop hiding and come into the light.

He calls us to let go of our solutions. To surrender. He calls us to trust Him and embrace His Solution, the solution – Christ and His cross.

Transition: This is what Paul trying to convey in this passage from Romans. He emplores them and us to embrace Christ and thereby experience the reversal of the Fall.

Conclusion: He longs for us to find the solution to our brokenness. The solution that comes only thru Christ's perfect obedience that brings restoration, justification, and life to all who trust in Him. The sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross calls us to let go of our futile attempts to fix ourselves and embrace His grace. Today, let us surrender our inadequate solutions and step into the light of Christ, experiencing the triumph over tragedy that He offers. In Him, we find hope, redemption, and the fulfillment of God's reversal of the Fall in Christ. **Amen.**