

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 7/14, 2015
Genesis 3:8-15
God's Seeking Love Saves All Hiding Sinners
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Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

Last week my granddaughters, with Nana's help, built a fairy garden. Their imaginations created a wonderful place for these little creatures even in a bucket of dirt.

Some of you have heard me tell about the pastor of another synod who told me some of his catechism students still believed Adam and Eve were real people and he did not discourage them. He believed the Genesis account that includes our text was only a story, a parable so to speak about the difference between good and evil.

For this sad man, Moses' account of the Fall with its consequences and God's miraculous solution, is no different than what three little girls did in their back yard. My granddaughters and we know the difference between fantasy and reality. For us, Genesis gives an historical account of a real Fall. That Fall brings real consequences for us. Thank God, he has provided in Jesus Christ the real miraculous solution.

God's Seeking Love Saves All Hiding Sinners. His love is gracious. His love is all inclusive.

At times in the Garden of Eden, God would take the form of a human for interaction with Adam and Eve. We call these appearances a theophany. God did not stop doing this even after Eve and then her husband, chose to live their lives independently from their Creator's love and will.

After the Fall into sin, the man and his wife no longer ran to God to greet him and listen to his Word. "They hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden." Their iniquity now separated them from God. This would be the case for all their children from one generation to the next until the end of time. Sin had replaced innocence and a longing to stand in God's presence with guilt and the longing to hide from God's wrath and punishment.

How foolish to think you can hide from God. Sin blinds us so completely that we become the little child who thinks because I close my eyes when I have been bad that mom and dad cannot see me or find me. Sin and guilt and fear also blinded Adam and Eve to the fact that they had not died immediately when they listened to Satan's lies and did not trust in their Creator's Word instead. Moses refers to "the LORD God." God's love for them already was being manifested in their still being alive to hide.

God's seeking love saves all hiding sinners. The LORD sought man out. God knew full well where Adam was hiding but gave him the chance to step forward and acknowledge his sin. Adam did step out but acknowledged only the consequences of his sin, "I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Fear, shame, and guilt. It is easier for us to try to live with those in hiding rather than to step out and admit our transgressions to God who knows them. Yet God's love is gracious. More than once God gave Adam a chance to confess. The second time Adam did not confess but blamed God, "the woman you put here with me." Then, Adam blamed Eve, "she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it."

Eve did not take responsibility either. She blamed Satan who had taken the form of a serpent. Eve tried to claim deception rather than her willingness to forsake trust in God and her desire to be in control of her life.

This is the sad real account of our daily lives according to the flesh. We would rather try to hide from God than admit our guilt. We would rather try to live with the fear, shame and guilt rather than acknowledge our sin. Yet God's seeking love saves all hiding sinners. It is gracious. It is saving love in Jesus Christ in the gospel. It is God's grace that calls us to faith.

God had planned and provided the solution to the Fall and its consequences of fear, shame, and guilt already in eternity. God's seeking love that saves all hiding sinners is all inclusive.

God turned to Satan and judged him and destroyed him with a word. We call that word the proevangel, or, first gospel. Adam and Eve heard God speak this forgiving life-giving Word. It meant for them and for all the generations of their children that through Christ we will not die but live.

God told Satan that the friendship he now had with Adam and Eve would turn again to enmity. This is what happens when the Holy Spirit calls us to faith. In unbelief we are friends with Satan and followers of his lies. As believers, we are at war with Satan. Enmity exists between the children of God, Eve's collective seed, her believing offspring, and Satan's collective offspring or seed, all the other demons and unbelievers.

One of Eve's offspring would come in the future with a special work. "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Jesus Christ, son of God and son of Mary, would destroy Satan's power by dying on the cross. His Father would declare that victory by raising Jesus from death. Satan would strike Jesus' heel in suffering and death but the Father would not allow those to continue.

How were Adam and Eve, real people with real sin, with real consequences of sin, and the real promise of a Savior saved? God's seeking love saves hiding sinners. It was theirs in the promise.

Salvation is yours and mine in the fulfillment that took place on Calvary. We are real people, with real sin. We must bear the real consequences of sin every minute of every day. We have a real promise in Jesus Christ who bore our transgressions. By his wounds we are healed. Because Jesus lives, we also live free from fear, shame and guilt. We will live eternally in heaven.

Sin and salvation are not general concepts pictured in a theological fairy garden someone's imagination created. Sin in Adam, salvation in Jesus Christ are real. They took place in a real garden and have real meaning. They mean I won't hide but will rely on Christ when I step out and fully trust in God's seeking love that has saved me. Amen. <SDG>