

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, June 6, 2021

For some reason, this lesson from Genesis seems to cut to the heart more than ever this year. Maybe it is the fact that we are coming out of a pandemic and having to relearn how to be in physical community again? Or maybe with school ending, families need to find a new homeostasis in their homes? With all the change in routines, it can bring about more crabbiness... at least for me. Maybe we all just need a season of repentance after a difficult year.

Can you relate to the first humans in the Garden of Eden?

After eating fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, which God clearly told them not to do, they discovered that they were naked and hid themselves from God.

It's the opposite in our household, when I take my shirt off... say to jump in our inflatable pool... my teenagers run and hide. Ha ha.

Adam and Eve heard God walking around in the evening breeze, calling out to them as if they were playing a friendly game of hide and seek. "Where are you?" But like our 4 year-old who puts her hands over her face when she feels shame, the first humans felt shame too.

Adam said to the Lord God, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

You have to give Adam credit here. He did tell the truth of why he hid... he was naked and afraid.

But imagine how God felt. The humans whom God formed out of the clay and breathed life into, were ashamed of how they looked. They wanted to distance themselves from God. God, who is very intimate and present with the humans in this creation story, wasn't ready for this abrupt change in their relationship. God trusted the humans to obey God's command. For the first time, I actually felt pain in this text for God... and for all relationships when trust is broken.

God's anger or disappointment turns toward the instigator at first... the serpent. "Who told you that you were naked?" God wants the facts.

In the interrogation, things go from bad to worse for the humans. One sin leads to another. Adam threw Eve under the bus and blamed her, and Eve blamed the serpent. "The serpent tricked me," she said. The humans succumbed to temptation by the serpent. Then blaming others entered the world. Why do we do this? We do we want to blame others for our own mistakes or choices. This is part of our human condition... the fall... original sin.

Interestingly enough, God punished the serpent first. "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Then the woman's punishment would be pain in childbirth and the man's punishment will be to till and keep the ground.

But surprisingly, God doesn't give up on the humans. It seems God still has hope for the humans. God gets angry at our behaviors, but God continues to offer grace and new covenants with the humans in the Old Testament. After God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, God made garments of skins for the man and his wife. This reminds me of how forgiving and gracious our God is.

Finally, I am interested in this idea of "Who told you that you were naked?" Who or what makes you feel ashamed of who you are? Who or what makes you feel bad about yourself? God made us all beautiful and precious in God's sight. God doesn't want us to be ashamed of who we are or how we look, or the color of our skin, or what social status we are from. God doesn't want one human telling another they are less than.

The church is to be community where we must practice the theology of "enough". You are enough as is. All God's creatures are enough as is.

God clearly didn't give up on us humans. Humans broke one covenant after another. God made another covenant with us in sending Jesus into the world for all our sins and shame. Today, in the

Word and communion, we are reminded that we are enough, that we are forgiven, and that we are free to be the people God created us to be.

Amen!