

## **2 Pentecost**

### **5 June, 2021**

#### Gen 3:8-15

**8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool<sup>[c]</sup> of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"<sup>[d]</sup> **10** And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." **11** He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

**14** The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

**15** I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring<sup>[e]</sup> and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel."

#### Psalm 130

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD; LORD, | hear my voice;\*  
let your ears consider well the voice of my | supplication.

<sup>2</sup> If you, LORD, were to note what is | done amiss,\*

O LORD, | who could stand?

<sup>3</sup> For there is forgive- | ness with you;\*

therefore you | shall be feared.

<sup>4</sup> I wait for the LORD; my soul | waits for him;\*

in his word | is my hope.

<sup>5</sup> My soul waits for the LORD, more than watchmen | for the morning,\*

more than watchmen | for the morning.

<sup>6</sup> O Israel, wait | for the LORD,\*

for with the LORD | there is mercy;

<sup>7</sup> with him there is plen- | teous redemption,\*

and he shall redeem Israel from | all their sins.

2 Cor 4:13—5:1<sup>13</sup> Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, <sup>14</sup> knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup> For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self<sup>[d]</sup> is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. <sup>13</sup> Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, <sup>14</sup> knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup> For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. <sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self<sup>[d]</sup> is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal

weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

### Mark 3:20-35

<sup>20</sup> Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. <sup>21</sup> And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

<sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." <sup>23</sup> And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— <sup>30</sup> for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

<sup>31</sup> And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers<sup>[c]</sup> are outside, seeking you." <sup>33</sup> And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

## **Message: Back in the Garden Again!**

With all the special festivals now behind us, the church settles into the liturgical season of 'Ordinary Time'. The lectionary texts take us back to the beginning – back to the Garden, and back to the early events recounted in Mark's gospel.

One of the purposes of these scriptures occurring at the beginning of Ordinary Time is to remind us that they are more than just myths of an ancient people. They are not tales about some fictional characters; they are real descriptions of you and me. They are mirrors being held up to our faces by the Holy Spirit as he calls, enlightens, and gathers us around Word and Sacrament.

And so we find ourselves back in the Garden again! The original transgression of our First Parents has taken place – what we have come to refer to as The Fall. But in many ways the event was not so much a "fall" as it was and continues to be an Uprising. In the face of God's Word that seeks to guard and protect us, the Old Adam and the Old Eve within each of us continues to desire to take it upon ourselves to decide what is right and wrong, what is good and what is evil. And we discover that we, too, have been deceived! We have gained new knowledge, but not as the Serpent promised! Far from becoming like God, we have discovered the death of which God warned us!

Like the sound of the Lord moving in the trees, his Word confronts us, too, asking, "Where are you?" This is a rhetorical question! God knows full well what is done amiss, where the man and woman are hiding, couching in the bushes, unable to stand; he knows full well where you and I hide as well! The question is an opportunity for repentance and confession so that he might bring the dawn of his mercy and plenteous redemption to bear.

But, again like our ancient parents, we most often stubbornly dig in our heels and embark on playing the blame game: "The woman you gave to be with me – it's her fault!" the man objects. "The serpent deceived me – it's his fault!" cries the woman.

In the ensuing misery of their expulsion from the Garden, I doubt that the man and woman were really aware of the protection afforded them by God; the coverings of fragile fig leaves they made themselves are replaced with garments of skins made by God himself. And I doubt they caught the significance of the faint glimmer of promise He proclaimed in his curse of the Serpent: "He shall bruise your head...".

That bruising of the serpent's head was eons in the future, but Christ Jesus brings the promise back again when he points out that there will be One who will enter the house of that strong man, Satan, and plunder his goods!

I have encountered people who worry that they may have committed what Jesus called the 'eternal sin' for which there is no forgiveness. Perhaps it was some fleeting curse of the Spirit in a moment of anger or despair. Or maybe it was some youthful indiscretion which continues to prick the conscience. More than likely, it is some guilt-trip that some overly pious modern-day Pharisee has laid on them! Should you or someone you know ever feel burdened with this concern, here's something important to keep in mind: if someone is worried that they may have committed this unforgiveable sin, then they haven't! If they had, they wouldn't care less!

So what is this unforgivable, eternal sin?

In the Garden, God asked, "Where are you?", opening the door for repentance. That same door is opened for us in the warning that Jesus gives us about forgiveness. The Holy Spirit holds that door open for us for *any* sins we might commit. It is the Holy Spirit who calls us through the gospel, enlightens us with his gifts, makes us holy and keeps us in the true faith! When we claim to be able to do that for ourselves, that is the blaspheme of which Jesus spoke. Because as long as we persist in that endeavor, we reject the Holy Spirit who longs to bring us to repentance and forgiveness.

Jesus' teaching concludes with a delightful irony that reminds us that we are not so far out of the Garden as we supposed! While some have great curiosity or even grave concerns about who might be the blood relatives of Christ, Jesus redefines the concept of family by declaring, "Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother!" The irony lies in having begun our worship with the confession, "We have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves", we now want to jump up and declare, "That's me! I'm Jesus' brother/sister because I try to do God's will!"

Identifying who constitutes his family serves the same purpose as God asking our Parents, "Where are you?". The Holy Spirit uses both to call us, enlighten us with his truths, make us holy, and keep us in the true faith.

Thanks be to God!

## THE PRAYERS

Let us pray to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the Church, the world, and one another.

*A brief silence*

Father, thank you for having mercy on us, even when we rebel against you. Thank you for sending us your dear Son, to free us from the devil's tyranny. Thank you for preparing us to bear the weight of your glory in our bodies, hearts, minds, and souls.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Purify and renew your Church. Strengthen all who are baptized to do your will, speak your word, care for your people, and live as true sisters and brothers of your Son.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Cast out the forces of evil which torment and seek to destroy your Church. Gather in your care all who are persecuted for naming Jesus as Lord. Soften the hearts of their enemies, so that they repent and strive to do your will.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Renew the people of this congregation day by day. Give us generous and willing hearts as we seek ways of serving you and sharing your love with those around us.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Strengthen bonds of affection, respect, and care in all families. Heal those afflicted by discord, abuse, or grief. Help us to believe that in loving you, our heavenly Father, we also draw closer to one another.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless and guide the elected and appointed leaders in our nation and communities. Despite the brokenness of creation and the suffering inflicted by sin and evil, give your people a foretaste of the freedom, justice, and peace that only you can bestow.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Equip those who stand harm's way on behalf of others with courage, wisdom, and skill. Bless all they do which is in accordance with your will. Shield them when they fall, and give patient hope to their loved ones. Bring them home swiftly and safely when their task is done.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember before you all who suffer, especially Randy Chevalier, Charles Green, Dean Puffett, Mary Rathe, Mary Ann Helmrich, Johnny Feulner, Delores Rodela, and the VansCoy family. Refresh them with the healing power of your life-giving Spirit. Help us to minister to them with compassion and patience. Restore them to fellowship with all who love them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, we thank you for the lives of our loved ones who have died in your embrace. Grant comfort to all whose grief runs deep. Keep us safely in your Son's faithful care. Cheer us with your Holy Spirit. Guide our steps and shape our lives in accordance with your will. And give us a joyful reunion with all whom Christ claims as sister and brother, mother, and friend. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**