

June 7, 2015
Genesis 3:8-15

Pentecost 2 (Proper 5B)
The Blame Game

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

If I had to guess, you all like to play games. Whether it be Monopoly, Uno, Sheephead, Euchre, Chess, baseball, basketball, hockey, or hide-n-seek. Those are just a few of the game people play, out of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of different games. There's one game that's been going around since the time that Adam and Eve spent in the Garden of Eden. That game would be called "THE BLAME GAME". It sounds like something you could have as a title to a gameshow on TV. This is no reality TV folks, it's not Survivor, Big Brother, or the Amazing Race. This is by far...real life. This is what you and I live. We are participants in this Blame Game, we are also participants in the grand game of hide-n-seek.

Let's journey back to the Garden of Eden, to the place where Adam and Eve once lived. Our text starts at verse 8. It starts with them walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Before this happened, we need a little background. The serpent came to Eve (Adam was with her), and the serpent deceived Eve and she ate from the tree that God commanded them not to eat from. Eve then gave some to her husband Adam and he ate. Remember the serpent told Eve that if she ate of the tree, she would become like God knowing good and evil. The Serpent used the tactic of deception as a way to promise liberation to Eve, but now all they got was shame. The Serpent promised that they would be like God, but now they find themselves hiding from God.

In "Opening up Genesis" the author writes "Sin's seductive promises always turn out to be a mirage! Those relationships we enter leave scars that may never fully fade. Those extra trips to the buffet leave us miserable for the rest of the day and some of us on operating tables. And what about the nicer car, the bigger TV, the latest gadgetry, and younger wife. All those things grow old and outdated—leaving us just as empty as we were before. Selfishness and sin never keep their promises." Isn't that so true? The promises that sin offer aren't real. They never come through. It is exactly like a mirage. You're in a desert and thirsty and you all want is water, and that is all you see, but you never receive.

Because of sin, we may have broken promises and broken dreams, but that's not the worst consequence. Worse than those is the broken relationship with God. They knew it immediately in the garden. They realized they were naked and tried to cover themselves and even hide from God as He is walking in the garden.

As we jump into our text right here in verse 8, as K.A. Mathews states in his commentary: "They are pictured in the narrative like children hiding in fearful shame from their father." Their father though is a loving God and all He wants His for his children to admit their sin and He'll forgive them. Mathews says, "God is depicted as a gentle father seeking out his own."

On this side of heaven, earthly fathers aren't always the greatest, some even abandon their children. God asks a very good question, wanting what's best for his children, "Where are you?" It's rhetorical, God knows where Adam is, but yet wants Adam to consider his guilt, his shame, and his sin. As fathers (and mothers) we want what is best for our children. Yes, sometimes our children go off and do evil things, things that aren't safe, and perhaps we too ask them, "Where are you?" Maybe your teenager has bolted herself in her room and won't come out. Perhaps your son locks his phone, tablet, and computer whenever you are around. We want our children to come clean with their sin, so we can forgive and get them the help they need. That's what God wants to do with Adam and Eve, that's what he wants to do with us.

Maybe you remember your parents asking you, "Where are you?" And sometimes we'd be afraid, because we didn't want our parents to see us in our shame.

Adam does this, Mathews adds, "Actually his fear was his response to the presence of God in the garden; he did not want to appear before God in his nakedness." Upon hiding and then the questions of God, Adam invents the first ever "BLAME GAME". Adam does admit that he does something wrong...and then points directly at the woman that YOU gave me God. Adam doesn't take responsibility for his sin, he points directly at God through the woman. Eve did the same thing when God looks to Eve... "The devil made me do it."

Sounds familiar doesn't it. The author of "Opening up Genesis" writes these words, "Blame-shifting is a universal human disease. Ever since Adam and Eve, it has been part of our sinful human nature: "I know I sometimes lose my temper. But that is just the way God made me." "I know I shouldn't talk to my wife that way, but I'm under a lot of stress at work." "I know I shouldn't read these racy romance novels (or watch the racy romance movie...like 50 Shades of Grey)ⁱ, but my husband isn't exactly a knight in shining armor anymore." But anytime we begin a sentence with "I know I shouldn't...but," we are on a dangerous ground."

Indeed we all fall into this BLAME GAME. We've done it before. My sister told me to do it. My friends pressured me into it. I'm sure we could all come up with specific circumstances where we've participated in the BLAME GAME. We are all guilty at it. As we look at the BLAME GAME we can note how selfish the sinner was then, always has been, and always will be. The sinner is looking out for himself. He tries to make himself look better than he actually is. The sinner actually is not comfortable confessing his sin. Sinful man hates to confess his guilt. Have you ever confessed your specific sins? If you have, you know how uncomfortable it is.

The other thing that was revealed in the BLAME GAME, is that they tried to find their own way to escape God's wrath. Their own self-seeking wisdom. Their own self-seeking salvation. It doesn't work does it? People still do that today as well, they try to cover their own sin. They put the blame on others. We try to cover our own sin. We put blame on others. It's not just them...it's you and me as well. As you continue to

read through Genesis and the rest of the Bible and the rest of human history even in the present day, we find that murder, rape, incest, disease, drunkenness, and death were further results of the sin of Adam and Eve. And the world we live in today is mixed-up and messy because of their original sin, because of your sin and mine.

As this happens God is still loving the Father that wants what is best for us, His children. When God turns to speak to the serpent. He doesn't let the devil speak for himself. All he says is "Cursed are you...on your belly you shall crawl, and you will eat dust all the days of your life." God places a direct curse on Satan, doesn't let him speak or defend himself. With this God shows that he deeply cares about mankind's relationship with Him. He goes on to tell Satan more. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed, and he shall bruise your head and you will bruise his heel." This is always considered the first gospel promise in the Old Testament, in all of Scripture. God indeed is going to make things right in his relationship with mankind. He is going to provide someone, the seed of the woman, who will bruise the head of the serpent. In other translations, He will crush the head of the serpent.

This is true. God is sending someone, who will be born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law. God is sending someone to step on the head of the serpent and win the final victory. There is indeed for the sinful world. There was hope for Adam and Eve, hope for the Genesis world, and there is still hope for you and me. As you read through Genesis, you come through a monotonous chapter, in chapter 5, but there is hope written into the text: "So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with; and he was not, for God took him. (5:23-24)." These are words of hope. Death will not be the final answer. Life will win. We will live again. Paradise will be reality again someday.

As we think of the promise of paradise again, in a world where paradise it lost, we journey back to Genesis 3 and this great promise of the Savior. This isn't the only gospel in chapter 3. If we were to read to the end of the chapter we read how God made coverings for Adam and Eve, coverings of animal skin. Fig leaves, just don't get the job done. Blood was shed to cover the guilt and shame of Adam and Eve. God made the first sacrifice out of his creation, God makes the last sacrifice in his creation. The last sacrifice that covers your guilt and shame. This sacrifice is that of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our only Savior. His blood was shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sin. Your guilt and shame are covered by the blood of Jesus. God isn't impressed with the religious fig leaves, God gives you the covering, the robe of righteousness that covers all your sin.

God provides you with everything you need to live. Forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. He even promises to destroy the serpent. As you read the consequences for the serpent. Hear Franzmann's thoughts on that, "God did this for the sake of all men living after the Fall. The serpent gliding in the dust is to remind them that, in seducing men to their fatal fall, Satan used this beast as his instrument. More than that. It is to assure his children that Satan will not prevail, but will go down in humiliation and defeat."

You see, Satan will not win. God has promised that. Satan thought he did when Christ was crucified, but Easter Sunday, after Christ's heel was bruised, He bruised the head of the serpent, he bruised the head of the Devil, and is coming again to finally and fully crush the head of the serpent and cast him out of creation forever into Lake of Fire.

Christ is the final victor of this Genesis battle. Adam and Eve ultimately win to, because they have been given forgiveness, life and salvation. As you walk through your life, living and participating in the blame game, know that that game will not go for eternity. That game will be crushed along with the head of the serpent. The consequences of sin will be undone, and creation will no longer moan. You and me, and the rest of mankind will live in creation restored. We will live in paradise again. Paradise that is promised through God's holy word. Paradise that is ours because of the waters of holy baptism. Paradise that we hear through the words of Absolution spoken into your ears as you confess your sin. Paradise that you experience and taste as you eat and drink of Christ's Body and Blood.

As you know, we all have our favorite games, some we are good and some we are not. We are all experts in the BLAME GAME, but Christ will walk you away from the BLAME GAME into His NAME where you can confidently confess your sin and receive forgiveness. You can receive grace in your time of need, in your time of sin and selfishness. Grace is there for you. Come and receive Christ and the forgiveness that He has for you

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

ⁱ Parenthetical added by me.