

# **“The Good News of a Savior Who Conquers Evil” – Pr Jim Sprengle**

## **Lent Midweek 2 – March 12, 2025**

- I. **Genesis 3:14-15** – previously read
- II. **The story of evil goes right along with our Lenten journey.**
  - a. As we considered the story of Jesus being tempted by satan in the wilderness last Sunday, today we consider the story of evil as it unfolds in the beginning, or in the story of Genesis.
  - b. In fact, we need to use the words of Scripture to piece together the story of evil, because God doesn't give us an exact description.
  - c. As the Genesis story begins, all we see is the good creation that God provided, along with the first humans.
    - i. What we don't know much about is one of His angels, satan who rejected God and took others angles with him.
      - 1. Jude verse 6 says, “<sup>6</sup> And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, [God] has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.” (Jude 1:6)
      - 2. The fall of humans seems to have been preceded by satan and a group of angels who rejected the authority of God.
    - ii. Remember, God doesn't make robots who are forced to love Him... He loves His creatures enough to give them free will.
      - 1. Satan rejected the authority of God and evil came with him.
    - iii. After that, the devil went to work against his Maker and all that He created... including humans.
      - 1. It's an all-out war... and we are right in the middle of the battle.
  - d. Some of you might remember that World War I was called, “the war to end all wars.”
    - i. Unfortunately, we know that was not the last war, as they continue to this very day.
    - ii. We might even be a little cynical about the idea any war to end all wars, yet Jesus our Savior won the real war to end all wars.
      - 1. As I said this past Sunday, Jesus won the battle.
- III. **The war began in heaven, but satan brought it to earth.**
  - a. The devil expanded the war after he and his fallen angels started it.
  - b. Up to that time, everything in creation was “very good”... it was perfect... including Adam and Eve.
    - i. It's hard to understand, but they had a perfect relationship with each other, and a perfect relationship with God Himself.
  - c. But all that goodness, and love, and peace was in direct opposition to evil, so satan invaded God's good creation.
    - i. Hiding in the form of a serpent, the devil attacked this perfect relationship they had with the Lord.

- ii. Of course, he didn't attack with fear and violence... he was very subtle and twisted the truth... he invited them to question the motives of God... to question God's authority and His love for them.... He insinuated that God wasn't loving, He was holding them back.
  - iii. All they had to do was eat from the one tree God commanded them to stay away from... and they would be just like God too.
- d. We know the rest of the story... and we can even feel it today.
  - i. They lost... the battle was over in just a split second as Eve ate and passed it on to Adam who was just as guilty...
  - ii. I can only imagine what happened in their minds and their senses as the perfect place they enjoyed became broken and sinful... as their relationship with each other became a struggle... and God no longer was a loving God but one they feared.
  - iii. So, the war that started in heaven had made its way to the world... and the paradise God created had become a battlefield.

IV. **The devil's victory didn't last very long though.**

- a. After God found Adam and Eve hiding in the garden in guilt and shame, He immediately turned to the serpent... that satan used as a sort of mouthpiece... "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" (v 14).
  - i. Even though God talked to the serpent, it was a message to satan himself... from that time on the lowly status of snakes would be a sign of satan's lowliness... eating dust and sneaking around...
  - ii. God was giving us a preview... a sign that satan would eventually be defeated in the end.
- b. Right after that, we hear the "protoevangelium" – with proto meaning first, and evangelium meaning gospel... or the first gospel as God tells satan: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."
  - i. We know that this points to the coming of Jesus our Savior and His victory over satan.
  - ii. God will use the offspring of humanity... one of Eve's descendants would somehow win the battle against the devil.
- c. Eve was sadly mistaken if she thought her firstborn son would be this Savior God promised, because Cain murdered his brother and was exiled.
  - i. In the end, it would be the descendants of Eve who believed in a Messiah against those who would not have faith and become part of satan's army.
    - 1. This is the enmity that is between the followers of Christ and those who do not have faith.
- d. Consider the implications of this – as the Scriptures tell us that people are either believers in Christ, or they follow satan and are enemies of God.

- i. It doesn't mean that they will always be violently striking out at believers, but they may have a subtle impact by going along with the deception and lies of satan in the world.
- ii. No one is neutral, as Jesus says, "Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters." (Matthew 12:30)

V. **The Good News is that Jesus wins the day, and so do believers.**

- a. In the fullness of time, Eve's descendent would go directly into battle with satan...and He would crush Satan's head, and Satan would strike His heel.
  - i. The cost was high... it cost Jesus everything... but He would come out the victor and satan would lose the battle.
  - ii. In the words of our Epistle reading, Jesus came and shared in our humanity "that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:14-15)
  - iii. You hear this almost every time I preach, but it's the core of our faith that Jesus died for our sins on the cross and rose again in the greatest victory over satan – which He passed on to us by grace through faith... we win because Jesus won.
- b. No hell, no satan, no evil can ever rob us of the life in Christ and forgiveness of sins that we now have – we are free in the victory of Jesus!
- c. I guess you could say it was the real war to end all wars.
  - i. I know it may not seem like satan has been defeated as we deal with the trials and tribulations around us...
  - ii. But if we remember World War II... the D-day victory was the decisive blow as the Allied Forces would not be stopped on their way to Germany... although it took several months more.
  - iii. The enemy fought to the bitter end, but the war was already won.
- d. In a similar way, in His death and resurrection, Jesus has already dealt satan the decisive, fatal blow that guarantees the outcome of the war.
  - i. The only catch is that we need to wait for the Judgment Day, when Christ's victory will be complete.
  - ii. Always remember, satan has no power to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, because the battle is won.
- e. Looking back to the victory Christ won for us on the cross, we see the good news that Christ has overcome all our enemies in the true "war to end all wars"— so... "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57). Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on Concordia Pulpit Resources sermon series, *Good News from the Beginning: The Gospel in Genesis*, Copyright © 2025 Concordia Publishing House 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis