

“Good News – A Savior Covers Our Sin” – Pr Jim Sprengle

Ash Wednesday – March 5, 2025

- I. **Genesis 3:1-13, 21** – Previously read
- II. **Ash Wednesday is a good day to remember the story of sin.**
 - a. Most of us have read the Genesis account many times, but the word genesis means origins.
 - i. It not only gives us the origin of all things that God created and made good... but also something called Original Sin which was not from God.
 - ii. Adam and Eve, created in the image of God, were in the perfect place and had full access to Him.
 - iii. Somewhere along the line they decided that was not enough, because they disobeyed the only command God gave... do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - 1. Yes, it was a temptation of satan, but the decision to disobey was their own... and it changed everything.
 - 2. From that Original Sin, the door was opened for brokenness and evil to spread throughout all creation... and through the generations of people... to all of us sitting here today.
 - b. Going back to the beginning reminds us that we have an innate brokenness... something that cannot be fixed by our own power.
 - i. Many people don't understand why Christians are so fixated on our unworthiness before God... because they believe we are by nature good and worthy... we are wonderful just the way we are.
 - ii. This thinking is faulty though – the truth is we come from sin... separated from God, and we are by nature sinful and unclean.
 - iii. In many places the Bible tells us this very truth:
 - 1. “The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:2-3)
 - 2. “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5)
 - 3. “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.” (Isaiah 64:6)
 - 4. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)
 - 5. “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12)
 - 6. “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the

prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)

7. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

iv. Of course, it's fine to have a healthy confidence and self-worth... but it must always be filtered through God... because only through His saving grace can we be freed from eternal separation and wrath.

III. **Sin is incredibly deceptive.**

- a. It's similar to those who struggle with alcoholism, because a wall of denial keeps them from realizing alcohol is destroying their life.
- b. In the same way, sin deceives us into believing that we aren't *too* bad...
 - i. It's strange, but even though we know the story of sin, along with all the Bible verses that remind us about our sinful condition, and we still believe that we are somehow better than others.
 - ii. We look to other sinful people as our gauge rather than looking at God's standard and how we measure up to His desire in our lives.
 - 1. We see the person with addictions... maybe living out on the streets, and we feel better about our own condition.
 - 2. We see the troubles other people have being honest or trustworthy, and we puff up our chest because we don't see that in ourselves.
 - 3. We hear about someone who struggles with pornography or adultery... and we can't imagine how others can stoop so low.
 - iii. However, just as the next person deals with sin and brokenness, God always reminds us that we also have no standing or worthiness before Him – as our sins are exposed by His Word.
- c. As Adam and Eve sinned against God, they ran for cover... sewing fig leaves and realizing they were naked.
 - i. As we sin against God, we run for cover.
 - 1. Usually, it means that we find the cover of self-righteousness or pride and downplay our sins rather than own them.
 - 2. It means that we run for the cover of denial and act like we haven't sinned that bad, or we don't even want to recognize our failure in God's eyes.
 - ii. The Word of God will strip away any false pride and self-righteousness... and then we are just like Adam and Eve... naked, ashamed, and guilty.
 - 1. We realize that we came from dirt... from the dust of the ground... and we are all equal when it comes to offending God.

2. We are all sinful and unclean, without standing before a perfect, holy God.

- d. When we have ashes on our head... when we own our brokenness and sin... we are like the tax collector in our Gospel reading who cannot even raise his head, but instead is crushed by the weight of his own sin...
“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13)

IV. **We have nowhere to hide... nowhere to go... except to Jesus.**

- a. As Adam and Eve ran for cover when they realized they were naked and sinned against God, an amazing set of events happened.
- b. First, God sought them out rather than abandoning them.
 - i. He calls out, “Where are you?” – not because He didn’t know, but because by His grace and mercy He wanted Adam and Eve to return to Him.
 - ii. And even after they had to face the consequence of their sin, it says that God covered them with garments of skins. (v21)
 - 1. Instead of starting over and crushing them with His wrath, God covered them.
- c. The beauty of this picture is that God does the very same thing for us... He covers us with a robe of righteousness... through faith and baptism.
 - i. Before faith and trust in Him, we were lost without hope, but as God’s Word came to us and the Holy Spirit sparked that faith within, we became children of God... heirs of the kingdom... and covered by grace.
- d. Jesus, the answer to the sin and brokenness unleashed by Adam and Eve, would break its power over us by becoming sin and dying on the cross...
“so that we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - i. In that great and horrible day, Jesus paid for all those places we rebel and reject God’s will in our lives... and we hear the words of Jesus Himself, “I forgive you.”
 - ii. Now, we receive the holiness, the blessing, and the perfection of God which transforms us into something altogether different than the person we once were... we are covered by the righteousness of Jesus.
- e. Let the mark upon your foreheads remind you of your sinful condition yes, but also let it remind you of your baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - i. You once received the sign of the cross on your forehead and on your heart... which was the sign to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.
 - ii. He has washed away all your iniquity.... He has cleansed you from your sin... and now you are free to walk in the light of His salvation.

- iii. And even better yet, we can now look forward to joining all the others saved by grace who are wearing white robes and standing before the throne of God in paradise – praising Him for saving us.
- iv. All glory, honor, and praise be to him, now and forevermore. Amen