

AN ADVENT WALK THROUGH THE KERYGMA

Why is everything so obviously messed up?

With Christmas fast approaching, many people are out searching for a gift for someone. In some cases, it is simply to cross a name off a list; in others, it is the search for something perfect for a loved one. But somewhere, a truly treasured gift is being made by someone, crafted only for one special person and made out of love—a truly one-of-a-kind gift to be treasured.

Last week, we explored how incredible a creator we have who has worked on a scale that is entirely beyond our ability to fathom. Every atom in the universe, from those in the stars to those here on Earth, was made for us to be created, for we are God's masterpiece. We have been created out of love and for love. We are here because we are made to share love with our creator and each other in lives of comfort and joy.

But we look around the world, and while we may experience times of love and peace, comfort and joy – it is not our regular day-to-day existence. We see war and famine, waste and disease, jealousy and hatred, neglect and indifference all around us. Something is objectively wrong if we are not made for toil, misery, or suffering because, at times, that seems to be our lot. Somehow, the perfect world God so lovingly created for us is broken.

Chapter 3 of Genesis tells of mankind's fall. Our forebearers allowed themselves to be deceived into thinking that God did not truly love them and provide for them. This is the crux of the fall and our continued problem with sin today; we allow ourselves to be deceived into thinking that we know better than God and that we do not need God in any way.

Satan, The Devil, The Deceiver, The Evil One; he whispers the same deceptions into our ears as those of our forebearers, “You certainly will not die! No God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know...” Gen 3:4b-5a.

“Where are you?”

The fallout in the Garden is that Adam and Eve recognize their nakedness and are ashamed. There was no shame before they defied God. Not only do they attempt to hide their nakedness, they attempt to hide themselves from God. This is one of the biggest problems of sin; we foolishly believe we can hide ourselves and our actions from God. We sin, which separates us from God, but our reaction is often to further that separation, to hide what is wrong in us. And that is foolish because we cannot hide our sins from God any more than Cain could hide his brother Abel's blood in the ground.

All those names we used before, Satan, The Devil, and The Evil One, are all names for THE ENEMY. It is essential to realize that no other human is our enemy; THE ENEMY is the enemy. He works to separate us from God and from each other. And make no mistake, those sins belong to Adam, Eve, and Cain. Adam's sin doesn't belong to Eve, Eve's to the Serpent, or Cain's to THE ENEMY. In each case, the person chooses to sin; because of free will, we choose to sin, and another entity does not make the decision to sin.

The worst part of sin is that it entraps us. Fr. John Riccardo of the Rescue Project equates this state to being captured by a human trafficker. We are captured by sin and completely unable to escape on our own. You may have experienced this before, where you have sinned, then compounded the sin by attempting to hide it or sinning further to attempt to get out of the hole you have found yourself in, all the while making the hole deeper and deeper on your own. Eventually, the hole is so deep you cannot climb out, or perhaps the walls collapse upon you, burying you.

This entrapment, buried of our own accord, is genuinely terrifying. We cannot break this cycle of sin on our own. We live in a world that tells us we can do it all on our own, to be self-sufficient, that we can have it all, and that if things are bad, we can pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. I know that I am not self-sufficient (and very thankful to have Erin with me), I cannot have (and don't really want) it all, and I never worked out how I can physically pull myself up by grabbing onto my feet. I am captured, but I am not doomed. I am in need of something more...

If we are **CAPTURED**, then we need to be **RESCUED**

Dear friends, there is hope as we continue this journey together. In Christ's Love, Dcn. Todd