

February 2, 2020

Genesis 3:1-15

Parents are such fuddy-duddy, party-poopers. “No cookies before supper.” “Brush your teeth before you go to bed.” “Is your homework done? No Minecraft until you get your homework done.” “Cover your mouth when you cough.” “Don’t leave your snotty tissues all over.” “Set the table.” “Do the dishes.” “When you cross the street - look both ways, hold your brother’s and sister’s hands.” Really?! “Why do I have to take care of my brother and sister? Why do I have to be the slave and servant?” Parents are such fuddy-duddy, party-poopers, aren’t they?

Why is that? I think we all know the reason why. “They want to make us miserable. They want to be the big boss in control. They’re so old-fashioned.” It couldn’t possibly be because they might know something ... because they care ... because they want what’s good for us.

God is such a fuddy-duddy, party-pooper. “Do this.” “Don’t do that.” “Remember the Sabbath Day.” “Do not commit adultery.” “Love your neighbor as yourself.” God is such a fuddy-duddy, party pooper, isn’t he?

And we see that in our lesson. We’re in the Garden of Eden, God’s paradise for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve are living the life - no problems, no worries. They’re getting along with each other, getting along, walking and talking with God. They have love in their lives, a purpose in life - taking care of each other, taking care of God’s paradise. Sounds good, doesn’t it? And get this, they have a salad-bar buffet living all around them. Oh, but how could I say they were living the life, when there was that one tree they couldn’t eat from? How could I say they were in paradise, when God was limiting them: “Don’t eat from that tree in the middle of the garden”?

Satan knew what to do, didn’t he? Raise questions; create doubt. Make God look like a fuddy-duddy, a party-pooper. Make God sound like he’s holding us back from a better life. Make it sound like we’d have a better life if we did things our way instead of God’s way. Sound familiar?

What did Eve do with that? She started right; she started with God's word, God's life, God's blessing. But then she took her eyes off what God had for her. She listened to Satan's lies and she looked where God said: "NO." She listened to Satan's lies and looked where God said, "Don't." She listened to Satan's lies and soon she was lying to herself and to her husband.

You know how it turned out, don't you? God wasn't holding Adam and Eve back from a better life. He was giving them the best of lives. A life where they had a place with God their Creator and fit in with him. A life where they had a place with God and were blessed by him. Instead, they said "no" to God. They thought they knew better than the God who created them. They put themselves in place of God as master of their own destiny. And what did it get them? Shame and guilt. Fear and death.

Today we live in a world that thinks like Eve; that goes along like Adam. "I know God says 'no,' but it looks so good it just has to be good." We live in a world that rejects God's way and thinks, "My way is better." And it's not just the world out there that thinks that way. The world in here thinks that same way. Sometimes we think like Eve. Sometimes, like Adam, we go along for the ride. And what does it get us? Shame and guilt. Fear and death.

But don't say that. Like Paul said, the world out there (and the world in here) prefers to live in denial. Like Paul said, the world cheers itself on in its sin - denying the natural order of things, denying sin and shame, denying sin and guilt, denying God and the fear of God's judgment. Yet, it doesn't matter how much we live in denial. In the end, there will be no denying God will have his say.

Today, we see the world having its say. Just like in our lesson we see Adam and Eve having their way, and when it broke bad, we see them trying to cover up, getting all touchy, blaming, excusing - "It was the woman you gave me." "It was the serpent." Today, in our world we hear people getting all touchy: "My God wouldn't say "no" to me." "My God wouldn't judge like that." "Who are you to say anything? It's people like you who make the Church look bad."

If you were God and you saw what Adam and Eve did, if you heard them blaming and excusing, what might you be tempted to do? Turn your back and find someone else who listens better? If you were God and you saw what our world is doing, what our world is saying, how touchy we are, how touchy our world is about God's right and wrong, what might you be tempted to do? Turn your back and find someone else? And even though we're not God, when we hear people get all touchy about God's Word and his way, what are we often tempted to do? Turn our back and move on to something else else.

But what did God do with Adam and Eve? He didn't turn on them. He didn't lay down the law. He didn't write them off. He didn't do the three monkey thing - see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. Instead he reached out to them, calling them, inviting them. Even when they answered all touchy and bitey, blaming, excusing, he still reached out to them and promised them Jesus. And what about Jesus? We see Jesus reaching out to "sinners," sinners that proper people wouldn't have anything to do with. And today? We see how Jesus has called us. Even after we have done the Eve thing and decided our way is better than God's way. Even after we have done the Adam thing and gone along for the ride. Even after we have done the Roman thing and cheered each other on in our sin. Even after Jesus has heard us getting all touchy and prickly when confronted with God's right and God's wrong. Even after all that, Jesus still reaches out to us.

If anyone ever had reason to get touchy over God's way, it was his Son Jesus. Think of how God arranged things for Jesus. God sent his Son from heaven to earth to serve people who would just as soon spit on him. God judged his all-holy Son - who never even thought anything wrong - ... God judged Jesus guilty of your sin and my sin. How's that for fairness, for justice? And yet, Jesus didn't get prickly against God; he didn't get prickly against us. Instead Jesus took the place God gave him; he took on the role God gave him; he gave up "his rights" and his life, and he worked God's wonderful love.

With Jesus, it doesn't matter whether we've done the Eve thing thinking our way better than God's way; with Jesus, you have God choosing you - choosing to love you, choosing to forgive you, choosing to bless you. With Jesus, it doesn't matter whether you've done the Adam thing going along with sin; with Jesus, you have God reaching out to you, calling you: "Come along with me; let me make life right for you." With Jesus, it doesn't matter whether we've done the Roman thing cheering people on in their sin; with Jesus we have God cheering us on: "You are my son, my daughter whom I love, with you I am well-pleased." With Jesus, it doesn't matter how touchy we've gotten against God and his way; with Jesus, you have God reaching out to you, putting his arm around you, promising you: "I'm here for you."

What does that mean for you? It touches the heart, doesn't it? It touches the heart in a way that makes me less touchy, less prickly about God's way and God's say. It touches my heart in a way that makes me less touchy, less prickly with those who are fighting God's way and God's say. Yes, we live in a touchy, prickly world when it comes to God's way and God's say. With Jesus, we don't have to be touchy and prickly. Instead, with Jesus, we have what those who are prickly and touchy need. We have the love of God in Jesus! Let's share it and show it. Amen.