



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

June 17, 2012

Pentecost 3

Sermon Text: [Genesis 3:8-15](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Genesis 3:8-15](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 51a](#)

Second Lesson: [Revelation 20:1-6](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 2:20-35](#)

### Where Are You?

Lost in sin

Found by grace

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

Parents often seem to be real concerned about the firsts with their kids, right? Their first steps, first words, first successful trip to the bathroom... we get all excited about that kind of first stuff, don't we? Today we celebrate Father's Day. I suppose for some of the dads they spend their time with a video camera stuck in front of your face as you are trying to see some of this stuff and you actually only see it later when you want to play it back because your wife made you videotape the first steps or something like that.

But as you were a kid growing up, do you remember any of your father's firsts? Do you remember the first words he said to you? Do you remember the first time he did various things? Probably not so much, right? We maybe don't seem as interested in fatherly firsts.

The First Lesson that I read to you from Genesis 3 this morning has a Fatherly first in it. Did you notice it? Do you know what it was? We hear God's first recorded question in all of Scripture. "Where are you Adam?" The first time he asks a question, it wasn't because he didn't know. Those of us who are fathers here probably have often hollered out that question, especially when it was time to do some chores, where are you, because they are all hiding. They are hiding I suppose for the same reason that Adam was... they are sinful and all of a sudden Adam was sinful. God knew where Adam was. God knew what Adam had done. What he had done now made him completely and absolutely lost in sin.

So when God asks this question "where are you," it's not for information like when I ask it or when you ask it of someone else. This question, God's first question, our Heavenly Father's first question of all the Scripture is a question that is completely and absolutely grace. Don't even underestimate how important it is that God's first question is a question that shows us the undeserved love that he has for you and for me and for everyone else. When Adam and Eve took that fruit from the tree, whatever kind of fruit

it was, and ate it, God would have been well within his rights to make a carbon spot on the face of the earth out of both of them right then and there, right? He had said "The day you eat of it, you'll die. You'll be lost." He could have done that, but he didn't.

What is amazing about the fact that he didn't do it is the change, the change that immediately takes place in Adam and Eve. They went from a perfect knowledge of God, a perfect knowledge of his will, unconcerned at all that they were walking around without a fig leaf on, and they went to people that are trying to hide from the Almighty God. Can you imagine that? Do you think they knew all of a sudden that "Gee, my brain is a little fuzzy. I can't quite think straight anymore." This is kind of like Albert Einstein working on the Theory of Relativity. He has the  $E=mc^2$  stuff and he's working all that out. He's working on it and he works a long day. He comes home and sits across the dinner table from his wife, and all of a sudden, in the middle of him talking about this Theory of Relativity and all these other things that are way above my head that his mind could think about, he all of a sudden starts saying to his wife, "You can't see me! You can't see me!" She would think he completely lost it, right? He's not talking to an infant. He is talking to another adult, and if all of a sudden he starts doing that, "you can't see me," just because his hands are in front of his face, she would have gotten the net and the people with those jackets that tie in the back, right?

Isn't that exactly what happened to Adam, only much, much more? Adam went from knowing God perfectly to going "Hey, you know what? That Almighty God who said 'Let there be light' and there was? I'm going to hide from him."

Look at what sin does to us. It does not make us smarter. It does not make us more intelligent. It ruins us. It ruins our abilities. It ruins our reason. It ruins everything about us. Whereas, before they knew God perfectly and could offer to God perfect praise, now, from that time on, all their praise is going to be ruined a little bit by sin.

Think of what we've done here this morning already. We've confessed our sins to God. We've heard his absolution. God has said to us "where are you" as he called on us to confess our sins. We said the words, but think of how imperfect our confession is. Think of how imperfect our song of praise is. Think of how imperfect our hymns are. We aren't putting our all into this. We aren't standing in awe of God as we do it because still, as sinners, our sin corrupts us. We are wandering around thinking about "Man, I hope he doesn't talk too long. I would really like to get to my Father's Day brunch a little bit sooner this morning." Or we're thinking about something else. That's just how we are. Our mind wanders. "Man, that person behind me is really off key this morning." We are just goofy that way, aren't we?

God is talking to us and saying "Where are you? You're a sinner. You're lost. You're completely lost." Then he comes to us with his invitation to come to him, and our mind wanders. We've become accustomed to it. We've become used to it. "Yeah, yeah, I know God will forgive me. I know he loves me. I know Jesus died for my sins." The question "where are you" becomes more of an annoyance in our life at times instead of this act of God's love and grace of calling us to repentance. The reason we see it that

way is because our sinful nature has convinced us that our sins just aren't that terrible. "I can't be as bad as other people because I'm here. I'm here and my praise might not be perfect, but at least I'm here. Joe Blow and Susie Blow and the whole Blow family isn't here." That's how we are, right?

Our praise isn't perfect. Our confession isn't perfect. We are so lost in our sin even when we say "God have mercy on me, a sinner" we still probably at times in our minds have places where we are trying to excuse some of our sins. That just shows how lost we are, just like Adam and Eve trying to hide from God and trying to make excuses for sins. We do that. "Everyone was doing it. It's the 21<sup>st</sup> Century pastor." And on and on and on. We blame other people. "It was my father and mother's fault for the house I grew up in" and all these other things. We are great at all the rationalizations on why my sin isn't my sin and why it's your fault. We get that honestly I suppose in a sense because it's what we are born with.

It's exactly what Adam and Eve did. Did you notice who Adam blamed? All you women here this morning are saying "Yeah, he blamed Eve," right? That isn't the only one he blamed though, right? Did you notice who else he blamed? "How do you know you are naked Adam? Did you eat from the tree that you weren't supposed to eat from?" "Well, God, here is what happened. The woman you put here..." Who did he just blame? He blamed God.

This is what our sinful nature does. This is what makes us so absolutely lost. We point the finger everywhere else under the sun. Eve says "The serpent deceived me." They both kind of point their finger in other directions a little bit. But here is the good part. They both end up saying "I ate." They both acknowledged they did what God said they weren't supposed to do. God's reaching out to them in grace instead of simply destroying them, reaching out in love and mercy led them to see that they had offended a Holy God. I wonder if they knew just how much they had lost. I wonder if they had any inkling or remembrance of it.

You and I never have. You and I have never been perfect. Cute little babies like we have here this morning, even they are born in sin. Our God in his grace gives us ways to act with little children, with water and the Word. God in his grace acted with Adam and Eve in his Word and said to the serpent, "I'll put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. The offspring of the woman will crush your head and you will strike his heel." I don't think this is just God telling us why we are naturally afraid of snakes. I read that in certain commentaries today. That's how some people approach this... it's just here to tell us why we don't like snakes. I don't like snakes because I don't like snakes. Some people like snakes. I'm happy for you. That's not what this is about.

I believe this is about God telling us that the offspring of the woman, the descendant of the woman would crush Satan's head. He would do it by living perfectly because you

and I can't live perfectly. He would do it by taking all of our sins and carrying them to the cross. Then he would die and that would win forgiveness for all people that ever have lived or ever will live.

Then God, as he went on in the rest of Scripture and revealed to us the full details of this plan, showed us that it would be the Holy Spirit that would lead us to believe that what Jesus did for the world is ours personally through faith. We who were lost and completely had nothing to offer God, God reached out and found us. God found us with his Word. God found us with his Sacraments. God found us and showered us in his love and his mercy and his forgiveness. That's what our God has done for us.

Here's the thing... you and I know this. You and I, when we are at our best and when our faith's flame is burning brightly, we rejoice in this with all our being. But you and I still have a sinful nature. That sinful nature at times wants us to go "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Genesis 3... I know all that. God loves me. I know all that. Tell me something new. Tell me something different. Give me something more than just sin and grace. Give me something more that is going to make a difference in my life." This is your life. You are a sinner. The only thing that gives you life is God's grace. Everything else flows out of that. The day you start taking that for granted is the day you will start drifting away from your Savior. You need everyday to have God ask you "where are you". Then you need to take that good honest hard look at yourself and see what a sinner you are and then rejoice that Christ's cross still covers your sins.

Then you'll want to do the right thing for the right reasons. It won't be a "look at me" thing and "what I do for God, and everyone else should be more like me." It will be a "look at God" thing. "He is amazing and his love is just so incredible! I can't get enough of it!" That's what happens when we keep this spiritual corrective vision of looking at our God and seeing our sin and his grace.

If you are in there where you think you know that and you need something more and you need something bigger and you need something better and you need something else, then you need to repent for the sin of arrogance. If you are unwilling to do that, my heart goes out to you. Amen.