Lent 1 Genesis 3:1-15
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"It Is Written!"

I. To reveal the devil's lies.
II. To reveal sin's consequences.
III. To reveal God's grace.

Dear Christian friends,

"The serpent …said to the woman, 'Did God really say…?'" For many people the question is, "Did this **really happen**?" EVERYBODY knows that snakes **don't talk**. Many people see this not AS FACTUAL HISTORY but as a CUTE STORY than can teach us a **lesson**.

This did happen JUST AS it's **reported** here. GOD SAYS this is how it happened. Or to quote Jesus in the gospel reading, ***"It is written!"*** That settles it for **us Christians**. Who are we to **tell God** that HE DOESN'T KNOW what He's talking about?

SO IT HAPPENED just as ***"it is written."*** God had Moses write this 1)to REVEAL the devil's lies, 2)to **reveal** sin's consequences and 3)to **reveal** God's grace.

I. To reveal the devil's lies.

This ***"was written"*** to reveal the devil's lies. One of his BIGGEST LIES is that he is not real – or that he's this harmless imp **running around** with a pointed tail and a **pitchfork** in his hand. The truth – AS ***"it is written"*** – is that the devil is the leader of a **group of angels** who rebelled against God and were then condemned to hell forever by God. We're NOT TOLD exactly what their sin was or when it happened. It obviously happened **sometime** AFTER the 7th day when everything was **still perfect** and before he tempted Eve.

Some MORE TRUTHS about the devil AS ***"it is written"*** in God's Word. The devil is very sneaky and powerful. ***"It is written"*** that he can do ***"counterfeit miracles"*** and ***"masquerade as an angel of light"*** (make himself look really good). The devil is our worst enemy but he will act **as if** he's our BEST FRIEND who only wants us to enjoy ourselves. We can see that here.

The devil approaches Eve innocently enough. He just wants some CLARIFICATION. ***"Did God really say…?"*** The devil gets Eve to LET HER GUARD down. This ***"was written"*** to teach us that there's no such thing as an INNOCENT CONVERSATION with the devil. **When** the devil comes knocking LOCK the **door** – AND WINDOWS!

The devil used a snake to **approach** Eve. He's so sneaky he'll even USE OUR FRIENDS and family to **get at** us. He used Peter to get at Jesus. When our friends or others suggest doing something **God forbids** that's the DEVIL USING them. Then we need to tell them what Jesus told Peter, ***"Get behind Me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men."***

God had put two special trees in the Garden of Eden – ***"the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."*** Adam and Eve were free to eat from the ***"tree of life."*** But God had ordered them, ***"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."***

The devil tells Eve that God REALLY DOESN'T KNOW what He's talking about. God was actually lying to them! That tree wasn't bad for them but GOOD! God was DEPRIVING them of a **good time**. God didn't want them to ENJOY themselves and make their OWN DECISIONS. God was keeping them from MAKING THE MOST of their lives. The devil even promised them, ***"You will not surely die. When you eat of it …you will be like God."***

Eve took the bait. She looks again at the tree and now sees that ***"the fruit was good for food, was pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom."*** She took some – she ate it – she gave some to Adam **who also ate** it.

The devil still uses this BASIC TACTIC with **much success**. God doesn't know what He's talking about. God **really** doesn't love us. God's commandments TAKE ALL THE FUN out of life. We should TAKE CHARGE of our lives – make our OWN DECISIONS and not let God boss us around. The devil WON'T TELL you, "This will lead you to hell." **No**, that liar will say, "This is FUN – this is good for you!" How people fall for the **devil's lies**. How WE so often fall for **his lies**!

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened." This ***"was written…"***

II. To reveal sin's consequences.

What was the first sin? **Eating** the forbidden fruit? That was just the outward symptom of the sin **in their heart**. What did this temptation BOIL DOWN to? It was a CHOICE OF WHOM they would believe – obey – trust – **follow** – use whatever word you want. As in all temptations it CAME DOWN to this, "Do I believe God or the **devil**? Do I do WHAT GOD WANTS or what the **devil is telling** me to do?" Adam and Eve chose the devil **over God**. They did what the DEVIL WANTED instead of trusting and serving their **gracious Creator**.

That's why there is no such thing as a LITTLE sin. Behind every sin is the **attitude** of "God, I don't trust You. You can't tell me **how to live** my life. I'll do **whatever** I want." Sin – EVERY sin – is an act of defiance and **rebellion**. "God, I come first, **not You**! I'll use whatever language I want. God, Your Word is boring – **other things** are more important than **listening to You**." You can go on with **each** commandment. Every sin is a STINGING SLAP in God's face. That HAS ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The devil had promised that they would ***"be like God."*** He didn't keep that promise. He promised that they would ***"know good and evil."*** Now they knew GOOD as **something** they had lost – they knew EVIL by bitter, personal experience.

As a consequence of their sin Adam and Eve LOST ***"the image of God."*** They lost the holiness and **righteous** in which they had been created. EVER SINCE then all people – **except Jesus!** – have been born sinners with a **corrupt, sinful nature** that hates God – that refuses to **love or obey** God.

As a consequence of their sin Adam and Eve now knew and felt SHAME and GUILT. Their consciences had KICKED IN and were busy accusing and **condemning** them. They had defied God and were now IN BIG TROUBLE with God. **Now** they were afraid of God and wanted nothing **to do** with God. **As a consequence** of their sin they now thought and acted STUPID. They try hiding from God. They try lying to God. **How** do you hide from the God who is **everywhere**? **How** to you lie to the God who **knows everything**? They tried making excuses for their sin – ADAM BLAMES Eve – **Eve blames** the serpent and **finally** both blame God – it was ALL GOD'S FAULT that this happened. **Their sin** RUINED their perfect relationship with God – **ruined** the perfect marriage they had been enjoying – **ruined** God's PERFECT CREATION.

The devil can make sin LOOK SO HARMLESS but **sooner or later** come the BITTER CONSEQUENCES. It can seem so right to PUSH GOD OUT of our lives instead of centering our lives on God – to cheat instead of **study** – to lie instead of **being honest** – to live with someone instead of **first getting married** – to drink too much – the cheap thrill of **pornography**, etc. The devil won't tell you the CONSEQUENCES. But this ***"was written"*** to reveal the mess sin makes in our relationship with GOD, our personal lives, etc. And let's not forget the ULTIMATE consequence – ***"the wages of sin is death"*** – the eternal banishment and **punishment** of hell.

This ***"was written"*** so we clearly see sin's CONSEQUENCES. Then we'll treasure that this was also written…

III. To reveal God's grace.

God came seeking His **lost children**. He gave them opportunity to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY for their actions. But they wouldn't. God BLUNTLY CONFRONTED them with their sin. He knows what they've done. He knows what WE'VE ALL done. Learn **from Adam** and Eve that AVOIDING God – lying to God – making excuses – blaming **others** – NONE of that **works**. Honest confession is the ONLY WAY **to go**.

God had every right to DAMN Adam and Eve to hell just as He **had done** with the devil. Their sin was JUST AS BAD as the **devil's** sin. But **with Adam** and Eve – WITH US! – God acts differently. God shows us GRACE – **totally undeserved** love. God gives us the EXACT OPPOSITE of what we had coming.

God curses the snake. Snakes become a CONSTANT REMINDER of the **first sin** – a symbol of the devil's FUTURE CRUSHING DEFEAT. The devil and Eve **had become** GOOD BUDDIES. The **devil** had taken God's place in Eve's heart and life. God now breaks them up – He ***"puts enmity"*** – hatred – hostility between them. That ***"enmity"*** continues on **through the generations** between believers and unbelievers. That unbelievers can't stand **faithful** Christians – that the world ridicules our **Christian faith** and **morals** – that GOES BACK to God's action here in the Garden of Eden.

That ***"enmity"*** reaches its climax **between** the devil and ONE PARTICULAR ***"seed"*** of the woman – the Lord Jesus. ***"He will crush your head and you will strike His heel."*** This ***"Seed of the woman"*** is no ordinary person for NO MERE MAN could crush the devil. This ***"Seed of the woman"*** is God Himself COME TO SAVE us – the eternal Son of God born a true man to take the place of all people under God's law. **In our place** Jesus lived that life of PERFECT **love** – **trust** – **obedience** that we owed God. Jesus was ***"tempted in every way just as we are yet was without sin."*** We had an example of that in the gospel reading.

Eventually this ***"enmity"*** took Jesus to the cross. The **sinless Son** of God suffered the consequences – He was punished – for the sins of the whole world. Jesus endured the rejection – the hell – we had coming. Jesus shed His precious blood – sacrificed His **innocent** life – to PERSONALLY PAY for all sins **in full**. Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Easter morning PROCLAIMS and PROVES Jesus is the **winner**.

Grace is the only possible explanation for Jesus doing all this for us. This ***"is written"*** so we CLEARLY SEE and trust in God's grace. Trusting in Jesus we can BE ABSOLUTELY SURE that God has forgiven all our sins – that we are reconciled and reunited with our Creator – that we are going straight to heaven when we die. ***"Did God really say"*** that? YOU BET He did! He even proves us once again BY INVITING us to ***"take eat' take drink"*** the VERY SAME body and blood Jesus gave into death for our forgiveness. This ***"was written"*** so we could be sure of just that – of God's AMAZING GRACE in Jesus. Amen.

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