

Pentecost 3 sermon June 9, 2024

Today's lessons deal with relationships. In the Genesis passage, God interviews the man. Then God interviews the woman. The man confesses that he ate the apple, but he blames the woman. When confronted, the woman blames the serpent. So, what does God do? God punishes the serpent. "Dust you shall eat all the days of your life."

If you were the serpent, you would demand a recount. "Not my fault. Talk to those two people. What did you expect me to do?"

If you were the man you too would have an excuse. "She made me do it."

If you were the woman, you also would have an excuse. "The serpent made me do it."

Note that the man and woman have the same broad excuse. "It's somebody else's fault."

An observation: there is a lot of "somebody else's fault" going on in the world these days. The situation in the Middle East is a good example. And my guess is that we could probably cite a back and forth situation in our own lives. In other words, this lesson is for us.

Well, just what is the lesson? Here's a possibility. Put yourself in the other person's position. If you were the other person – the one you want to blame – how would you feel? In other words, does the other person have reason to blame you? And, if so, is there something you can do to lower the temperature? And, better yet, is there something both of you can do to lower the temperature?

That's what diplomats are trained for. And – here's the point for today – that's what God expects of you and me. Diplomacy. The ability, not only to see the other person's position, but to understand it, maybe even appreciate it. It is what we humans are trained for, after all.

Sometimes diplomacy doesn't work. Sometimes there is a dead-end to the relationship. Back to the drawing board, if you will.

Now, there's an interesting concept: the drawing board. A second chance to get things right. Not only with pencil and paper, but with a forgiving attitude.

Picture the drawing board. There is paper and there are pencils and there is a wastebasket. Sometimes second chances aren't enough. They wind up in the basket. Which leads to a third chance, and maybe more chances. We keep trying until we get it right. Whatever the "it" is.

And sometimes the basket gets full. And we need to empty the basket. In our setting here it's called forgiveness. God says, "Let me help. Give me the basket. I'll empty it for you. Now try again. And if the basket gets full again, I'll empty it again. Just keep trying.

And, so we do. We keep trying to get things right. And we do so with the understanding that God is there to help. Indeed sometimes the friends that we count on to help us are sent by God. They might not claim that role, but they just might be "instruments of peace."

And when we are helped by "instruments of peace," we see in ourselves the possibility of being such instruments. Yes, forgiveness is contagious. Both being forgiven and offering forgiveness.

One of the items that often accompanies a drawing board is a ruler, the purpose of which is to help draw a straight line. In human terms, it's called diplomacy. It minimizes the number of times that we need help. It frees us move along, including helping others. Can you say "best friends"?

Well, enough of the drawing board. All the help in the world, all the diplomacy if you will, won't change things if we don't want things to change or if others don't want things to change. And maybe that's a good thing. Maybe everybody needs a fresh start. Empty the basket and then return to the drawing board with a determination not to need the basket again, or at least not as often.

Too simple? Maybe impossible. Lots of reasons to give up, and let hurt feelings gain center stage. Which leads to war, the last thing we as a people, a country, a world need. It's not what God wants, and it's not what we want.

So, what's next? Well, somewhere in the "what's next" line is forgiveness. And it's forgiveness on the part of both parties. Diplomacy is the art of finding a middle ground, shared ground. It is at the United Nations. It is true in marriage counseling. Indeed, it is true in the struggles we, as individuals, have with ourselves.

I suspect that at some point you and I have entered this chapel, when no one else was around, and asked God for help. Maybe the ask is for help for ourselves. Maybe the ask is for others to help themselves. Maybe the ask is not an ask at all. Maybe we just want to take a break, when things that are troubling seem heavy.

When you think of conflict resolution, whether at the United Nations or within ourselves, a break is helpful. And maybe during that break, things that were cloudy come into focus. Think of the last time you entered this chapel during the week when no one else was around. That step, that decision, was probably helpful. You probably ended your visit with something like "Thank you, Lord, things are a little clearer now."

Exactly what the Lord wanted to hear. And exactly what we wanted to hear. It's at the heart of the expression "it takes two to tango." And it's at the heart of "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

Diplomacy is at the heart of religious conviction. And it's not automatic. It takes work. Which is a lot better than "it takes war."

Everywhere there is conflict, be it international or personal, an environment like this one is appropriate. People need to take breaks. On the world stage, taking a break can be a first step in conflict resolution. And, as is true in many situations, resolution begins with conviction. On the part of both parties. "Lord, we know that you are there for us. Help us please to continue to be there with you."

It's a choice on our part. Tough sledding? You bet. Worthwhile for combatants? You bet. What God wants us to do and expects us to do and is willing to help us to do takes a first step. To be a diplomat. To be a receiver of Good News and a transmitter of Good News. To be a bearer of Glad Tidings. "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." What a great relationship! Amen.

Morning Prayer – Pentecost 3 - Sunday – June 9, 2024

Hymn 290 – Come, ye thankful people, come

Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest-home:
all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come, raise the glorious harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit unto his praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown:
first the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear:
grant O harvest Lord, that we wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take his harvest home;
From his field shall in that day all offenses purge away;
give his angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store in his garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest-home;
gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin;
there, for ever purified, in thy presence to abide;
come, with all thine angels come, raise the glorious harvest home,

BCP - Page 39 – Greeting

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

BCP – Pages 41 – Invitation to Confession

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel or sit in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite good and mercy.

BCP – Pages 41-42 – Confession and Absolution

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.

BCP – Page 44 – Venite

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his, and he made it,
 and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.

let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,

O lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with you;

therefore you shall be feared.

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;

in his word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning,

more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the Lord,

for with the Lord there is mercy;

With him there is plenteous redemption,

and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

First Reading – Genesis 3:8-15

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Hymn 467 – Sing, my soul, his wondrous love

Sing, my soul, his wondrous love, who, from yon bright throne above,
ever watchful o'er our race, still to us extends his grace.

Heaven and earth by him were made; all is by his scepter swayed;
what are we that he should show so much love to us below?

God, the merciful and good, bought us with the Savior's blood,
and, to make salvation sure, guides us by his Spirit pure.

Sing, my soul, adore his Name! Let his glory be thy theme:
praise him till he calls thee home; trust his love for all to come.

Gospel – Mark 3:20-35

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

BCP – page 53 - The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

BCP – page 54 – the Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

BCP – page 55 – Suffrages A

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.

Give peace, O Lord in all the world;
For only in thee can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let thy way be known upon earth;
Thy saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collect for Pentecost 3

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that, by your inspiration, we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

BCP – page 57 – Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom: Defend us, thy humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP – page 58 - The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and
loving-kindness to us and to all men.*

*We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by
our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts we may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

BCP – page 59 – Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

Announcements and recognition of special occasions

Hymn 717 - America – portions of stanzas 1 and 3

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside
let freedom ring.*

BCP – page 59 – The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 620 – Jerusalem, my happy home

*Jerusalem, my happy home, when shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?*

*Thy saints are crowned with glory great; they see God face to face;
they triumph still, they still rejoice in that most happy place.*

*There David stands with harp in hand as master of the choir:
ten thousand times would one be blest who might this music hear.*

*Our Lady sings Magnificat with tune surpassing sweet,
and blessed martyrs' harmony doth ring in every street.*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, God grant that I may see
thine endless joy, and of the same partaker ever be!*

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Pentecost 3 Lessons – June 9, 2024

Collect: O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Genesis 3:8-15

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between our offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice;
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,
O Lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared.

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning;
more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the Lord
for with the Lord there is mercy;
With him thee is plenteous redemption
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture – “I believed, and so I spoke” – we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us to an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Mark 3:20-35

The crowd came together again, so that Jesus and his disciples could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.” Truly I tell you that people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” – for they had said, “He has

an unclean spirit.” Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.” And he replied “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him he said, “Here are my mother and brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise be to you, O Christ.*