

IN NOMINE JESU

THE GARDEN AS IT SHALL BE

Hear again the Word of God for this seventh Sunday after Trinity:

And commanded YHWH Elohim upon the Adam saying, "From every tree of the Garden you shall eat; but from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat: for in (a) day you eat, dying you shall die."¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

This morning you have heard God's eternal plan for humans who are in perfect communion with Him. The construction of the text itself shows the wonder and order of God in creating. The text is best divided into three sections. The first and last sections teach of God and His work on day six of creation. They consist of three verses each. The second, five verse section, describes the geography and some topography of the central place in creation. The entire passage is one of order and unity. It is beautiful to behold in the original language. It contains words and patterns that even an untrained human eye can detect and wonder at. Such was done by the hand of Moses at the inspiration of God. All recipients of the Word have the ability to understand that everything described in Genesis existed in time, place and reality before Adam sinned and death entered into the reality of human existence. Hear again the words of God:

And YHWH Elohim planted (a) Garden in Eden, from (the) East, and He put there the Adam which He formed.²

The Good News of this day's Old Testament narrative is: God's Garden as it was portrays the Garden as it shall be. This is displayed for those who will hear, in the very construction of the text. In the ancient inspired Hebrew, each of the first three and

last two sentences of the Genesis text begin with an action word. (I am speaking here of sentences, not verses as we number them). The actions of the Divine that begin the sentences are translated in order: “caused to form;” “caused to plant;” “caused to grow;” “caused to take;” and, “caused to command.”

Immediately following the action words, each of those five sentences reveals the Name and Title of God. All the creative action of the text is God’s. God is the Actor: Creation is the Actee. God acts: Creation responds. What this means is that God is the effective and efficient cause of all that happened for man’s benefit. Hear Moses’ words that declare that statement to be true:

And commanded YHWH Elohim upon the Adam saying, “From every tree of the Garden you shall eat; but from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat: for in day you eat, dying you shall die.”³

God spoke to His good creature, who was man alone, words of Gospel and Law in that command. The Gospel was that God had created all the trees of the Garden of Eden so that Adam would be sustained in his body and life from their fruit. The Good News was that God Himself had caused to plant those trees pleasant in appearance, and good for eating. God had made special provision for the man He had created. Everything that was given by God for Adam to consume was for his benefit.

And, by that statement I include God’s provision of the Tree of Law. Even that Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was given by God to Adam for his benefit. Though God commanded Adam alone not to eat of its fruit, God planted the Tree of the

¹ Genesis 2:16-17.

Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the beautiful Paradise so that Adam would know, forever, that God desired him never to taste death, decay and sin with all its effects. Hear again the Gospel and Law of our theme text:

And commanded YHWH Elohim upon the Adam saying, "From every tree of the Garden you shall eat; but from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat: for in day you eat, dying you shall die."⁴

In that literal sixth day of existence in God's marvelous creation, no effects of human sinfulness existed. Adam, at the point of today's report, was the perfect man, fully human, created by the hand of God unlike any other being in that good world. God had formed Adam Himself, and not merely commanded the earth to produce him as He did with all the other creatures.

All that wonderful creation was corrupted, changed, disrupted, broken and removed from human the realm of human existence sometime between the seventh and 270th days, give or take a few, of creation. (I contend that Adam sinned by eating of the fruit handed to him by his wife on day seven of creation. That is my opinion, in that you are free to disagree). What is not disputable is that, in that eating, Adam, who from our text we know had received the direct command of the Lord before the woman was created from his side, Adam broke his fellowship with God, stopped his pure and perfect worship, and lost full communion with the Creator. That came after the events of today's text, which concludes:

² *Genesis* 2:8.

³ *Genesis* 2:16-17.

⁴ *Genesis* 2:16-17.

And commanded YHWH Elohim upon the Adam saying, "From every tree of the Garden you shall eat; but from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat: for in day you eat, dying you shall die."⁵

Those of you here who are used to hearing the declaration of the Word from this pulpit likely have noticed something fairly unique about the Genesis reading for today. In it there is no clear, or even veiled, reference to Christ-crucified for the forgiveness of sins. Does that mean that there was at one time in all of history no fault or guilt in man that caused God to become one with us, to take on our flesh, to bear our sins, to carry them into death, and to rise from the dead?

From the human point of view there is a resounding, "yes!" in answer to that question. In this text you have heard that one man, Adam, was present. A good Creation is recorded for all time in the text. Gospel and Law are there. God is present in the text.

Hear the Word of God:

And He caused to grow, YHWH Elohim, from the ground, every tree pleasant for seeing, and good for eating, and Tree of Life (was) in midst of the Garden, and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.⁶

From all the descriptions like those in the text, sin is not revealed as an effected and enacted reality. Words describing the beauty and pleasantness of the creation abound in this part of the Book of Genesis. Since sin is not present as anything but a potential in the good Creation at that point in history, there was no need for a Savior. That means that a genuine historical time without sin truly existed for a brief while.

⁵ Genesis 2:16-17.

And it will exist again. That will be when the Lord re-creates, from the fire-purified remains of this fallen creation, the New Heavens and the New Earth. What was just declared is why this week's Old Testament narrative is fitting when coupled with the other readings you have heard. For, when one places all these texts side-by-side, beginning from the Psalm and ending with the Gospel, one is able, by the power of the in-dwelling Spirit of the living God to see Him at work both in creating all things good in the beginning, and re-creating all things good in Christ. Hear this clearly: God's intent and revealed Will is that His creation be and remain good, pure, holy, spotless, sinless, without containing a hint of death and hell.

That was the case at the point of time recorded in Genesis for your hearing today. And it was shown to be the case when the Creator, in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Man and Son of God restored creation for his human creatures in the arid wastes. You are to grasp in the feeding of the 4,000 men God's feeding of Adam in the Garden of Eden: at all times, from the perfect through the broken and into the perfect God acts on His highest creatures' behalf. God takes the brokenness of His Creation, and He, out of His good and gracious will, restores it for the benefit of those who follow Him. Have you grasped that reality from what you have heard today from the beautiful texts read here?

To restate what our texts declare in the simplest manner:

- God created all things good for the benefit of His highest creature, man.

⁶ *Genesis 2:9.*

- God placed man in the midst of the most wonderful part of creation to participate with Him in the on-going care of His good creation.
- God caused all things to work together for man.
- God gave man, in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, reason, and means, to respond to God's good gifts.
- When man rejected the pure response to God's good by sinning, God took it upon Himself to restore Creation.
- God continued His restoration of Creation in the Person of Jesus Christ.
- God broke the brokenness of His Creation in breaking death with the death of Jesus.
- God's restoration of Creation will be fully revealed on the Last Day as the followers of Jesus will witness His taking sin, death, the devil, his minions, and all evil people, and casting them permanently into His eternal fires of purification.

With that summary, you dear followers of Jesus, have been taken from Day six of the Creation that God declared to be good to the Last Day of this fallen Creation when God will finish His re-creation to declare all things good again. Then, and may it be soon, Creation will never fall. Good will never cease for those who are in Christ.

Our text makes it very clear, as I have maintained earlier, that all its realities happened on the sixth day of the divinely-declared "good Creation." This day of

Creation has its events proclaimed in the most detail. There is so much yet to reveal that an hour-long sermon could not contain it.

But, we who are accustomed to five to ten minutes of programming with regular commercial interruptions are not conditioned to sitting for an hour-long sermon. We are, after all, children of Adam after his Fall into sin. We have natures clinging to us that have no desire to hear the fullness of the Word. Each of us, if pressed just a little bit, could come up with any number of things we could do with our time rather than sit here and listen to some man proclaim to us our sinfulness and our Savior.

Yet, you are here. That is because, whether you think it so or not, God brought you here to hear His Word proclaimed. That is God's reality, and it is not dependent upon your accepting it as such. God uses means to accomplish His will in people to give them what they need, just as He used the means of bread and fish in the wilderness distributed through the hands of men to satisfy the bodily needs of thousands of men, women and children.

In the proclaimed Word of God, He re-creates to declare "good" those, we, you, who are, by nature, fallen creatures. In the declared Word, God takes you from the world and places you in Paradise. In the revealed Word, God grants you forgiveness, life, and His New Creation. In the mysteries of the Word, God feeds you His gifts, touches you with His flesh, and breathes the breath of eternal blessed life into you. That takes us back to the beginning of our text, as God declares what makes you, dear creature, the most special beings of His creation:

Then formed YHWH Elohim the Adam from (the) dust from the ground, and breathed in his nostrils breath of the life, and the Adam was a living soul.⁷

From that day, the way of continued human procreation changed. Only one man was formed directly from the dust of the earth. Only one woman was molded by God from that man's side. All others became products of that one-flesh creation.

What this means is that God formed you in the flesh of your mother's womb. God molded you into His sinless Image with the Water and Word of Holy Baptism. God purifies you through His Word of Holy Absolution. God forgives you and feeds you the fruit of the Tree of Life, the Tree of the Cross, with the Sacrament of the Altar. And, God, through the proclamation of His pure Word, wills to keep you safe from eternal cleansing fires of perdition until the day when He places you in a perfect, resurrected, and spiritual body on His New Earth. Then the eternal Paradise that was reflected in that which once was, will ever be. You, dear Christians will dwell in everlasting righteousness and purity, just as God meant it to be. Amen.

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Trinity VII (*LSB* One-year series)

Genesis 2:7-17; Romans 6:19-23; Mark 8:1-9

July 26, 2009

Pastor Michael L. Merhouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

⁷ *Genesis 2:7.*

SECOND DRAFT TRANSLATION:

Then formed YHWH Elohim the Adam from dust from the ground, and breathed in his nostrils breath of the life, and he was, the Adam, for soul to be.⁸

And YHWH Elohim planted Garden in Eden, from East, and He put there the Adam which He formed.⁹

And He caused to grow, YHWH Elohim, from the ground every tree pleasant for seeing, and good for eating, and Tree of Life in midst of the Garden, and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.¹⁰

And River flowed from Eden to cause to water the Garden, and it divided there to be four heads.¹¹

The name of the Pishon was, the one flowing to all the land of Havilah, where there was gold,¹²

and gold of the land there good, there the bedellum and onyx stone.¹³

And the name of the River, the second, was Gihon, was the one flowing to all the land of Cush.¹⁴

And the name of the River, the third, was Hidekel, was the one flowing East of Assyria, and the River the fourth, was Euphrates.¹⁵

And took YHWH Elohim the Adam and caused to put him in Garden of Eden to till it and to guard it.¹⁶

And commanded YHWH Elohim upon the Adam saying, "From all tree of the Garden eat into eat;¹⁷

but from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil not to eat from it: for in day you eat from death into death."¹⁸

⁸ Genesis 2:7.

⁹ Genesis 2:8.

¹⁰ Genesis 2:9.

¹¹ Genesis 2:10.

¹² Genesis 2:11.

¹³ Genesis 2:12.

¹⁴ Genesis 2:13.

¹⁵ Genesis 2:14.

¹⁶ Genesis 2:15.

¹⁷ Genesis 2:16.

¹⁸ Genesis 2:17.