**“Because You Have …”**

Genesis 3:1-21

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Lent 1

To the serpent and to Eve and Adam, “the Lord God said: ‘Because you have done this …’’, and the repercussions are **with us today** …

… but, also, grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

We have ventured through the Season of Epiphanies. Bookending all of them were the two great ones in the Baptism and, then, the Transfiguration of Jesus, God’s Son. We noted those two bookends by the use of white paraments (where the rest in the middle we had green paraments). We move, now, to purple paraments to mark, not the **moments** of Epiphanies, but the **backdrop** for them … and the **afterwards**.

**Text**

Why Jesus was baptized was because of our Old Testament event, documented in Genesis, Chapter 3: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say , ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’? And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the fruit of the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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?’ And 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 of 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 of 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 deceived me, and I ate.’”

**Naked shame had set a course into which God’s Son became baptized**. **Lent’s start (on Wednesday) was a baptism by ashes to remind ourselves of the course set into which Jesus became baptized**. **We’d return to ashes in our flesh because of the fall of Adam and our own in sinning**. **Sin equals death and the “knowledge of evil” beyond naked shame which we’d notice, but the noticing is the least of the consequences**.

Last weekend, the **backdrop** for Jesus’ Transfiguration was Peter’s confession six days earlier. In a place swarming with unabashed evil (Caesarea Philippi), Jesus asked who **men say “He is”**. A prophet (at best) the general answer was agreed upon, but **Peter** answered the further question: “But who do **you** say that I am”, “the Christ, the Son of the Living God”, and then Jesus told them all of His upcoming suffering and death, and Peter **tempted Him from that thinking**, to which Jesus replied, “Get behind me Satan”.

The **afterward** **of Jesus’ baptism was temptation**. “Tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin”, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to **be tempted by the devil (that serpent) for forty days and nights, tempted to avoid the suffering and death for which He’d come (the cross and, for Him, extreme pain)**.

If you remember from last week, Jesus (at the end, after the event), **came down from the Mount of Transfiguration**. Lent is a Season in the **afterward** of the Transfiguration. “**BECAUSE YOU HAVE, God says:** “**I WILL**” **(and we have the details of that in God’s “putting of enmity between Satan and the woman’s Offspring”, Him “crushing Satan’s head)** …

… because **what God in Christ Jesus did** was **accomplish the task and save mankind from its own end result**. **“Because you have done this”**, God said to Adam upon his sin, “and eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” **Every challenge we continue to face is our own sinful making (in the sin of Adam and our own along our ways)**. And while the sacrifice of the Savior changes our eternal destiny, our earthly one is still of challenges.

**Application**

Ivi Niemann lent me the movie “Paul” to watch and react to. It was well done, I think, and very worth the viewing. Paul (in that movie) is depicted always plagued by the faces of the sins he committed, especially the early unrepented sins of murder, Stephen the deacon he’d stone then numerous men, women, and children because of their Christian profession. Faces he’d see in his nights dreams, he knew what he deserved in death, but that even for the seemingly simplest of sins, yet he knew his many.

He was in a Roman prison awaiting execution as the story recounts. Others (in that city) are shown burned alive for their profession, many just gathered into cells awaiting an unknown fate but told of it as entertainment in the coliseum’s “circus” of wild animal killings and eating of them. One scene has Luke (Paul’s friend) in that same prison explaining to the others that “It will hurt just briefly, then glory comes”. With the movie, you’re exposed to view what Christianity could yield in persecution through pain and temptation to avoid that pain.

Lent reminds of challenge, unto death, for the Lord who saves through His own, then ours even after salvation. It’s a walk of duty, with glory on the other side of challenge. Jesus looked **through** the cross, Peter would have his own to face and Paul laid his head for its sword edged cut.

The movie (“Paul”) ends with **that cut, brief but existing**. **Momentary pain (but anticipation and concern till that moment)** gave way (in the movie) to a glorious beginning after it. It ends after **the cut** with the faces of forgiving victims of his earlier cruelty, then Jesus’ overlooking approach to forgiven and greet Himself.

There will be an **Easter** after the Lenten Season and Good Friday. Those skipping much of the Lenten exposure will know less about suffering in this life, and struggles we’re apt not to avoid at all. Easter does come, and beyond it hope and promise, blessedness after pain. But **blessed knowledge in pain is our Lenten lesson**. May we remember **walking it with our Lord as we view Him in His … so that in any and all of ours (temptations, trials and tribulations, aging and dying) us with Him is known well as Him, then, with us**.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.