

Adam and Eve

This Wednesday, February 14th, is Ash Wednesday. It marks the beginning of Lent. Over the last few years, I have become aware how many denominations are including the season of Lent in their church calendars. Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) preceding Easter. It is modeled after 40 days Jesus spent in the Wilderness. The season of Lent is the time we confront our sinfulness in a very intentional manner. I really believe that without this time, we cannot appreciate the true meaning of Easter and our forgiveness.

So how do we start to confront our sins? Perhaps I can begin by telling how I understand the story of Adam and Eve. Let me begin by saying that some stories factually true and tell the truth. I am sure we all agree with that. But I also believe that some stories can be factually true but NOT tell the truth. I think that the Enron disaster, where the accounting results were twisted, is an tragic example of that. And some stories be true but not factual. Jesus' parables are a good illustration of this. For example, he told the Parable of the Good Samaritan to answer the question "Who is my neighbor?". It is in this category that I put the story of Adam and Eve. I believe that in the beginning God did create everything, seen and unseen. I believe that God created human kind. Indeed that is what "Adam" means in Hebrew. And I believe that humanity became aware of the reality of good and evil. Further I think that humanity was tempted to and did defy God. But I do not think it had anything do with a serpent. I think it had EVERYTHING to do with Evil and the God's loving gift of Free Will. So, while I may do not agree with all the facts of the story of Adam and Eve, I strongly believe in the underlying truth that we, as humans, have Free Will, have chosen evil, and continue to chose evil. This is what Sin is.

Having said that, we come to Jesus going out into the wilderness. He went immediately after Baptism and at the beginning of active ministry. Why did He go? We are told in Matthew that He was led by the Holy Spirit. I believe that he

went to confront who He was and to confront temptation. Jesus was human, just as we are, and was tempted - as we are. But, unlike us, He did not give in.

This brings us back to us and our Lent. We are tempted. We do sin. But we are told in Paul's letter to the Romans (5:12-19) that, while we are judged and found guilty, the sentence suspended due to grace of God. This Lent, let us confront our sinful nature. And, by the grace of God, let us resist sin. But let us do so, not out of fear of the consequences, but out of love for our God, who gave His only Son for our sins.

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