

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024 - Day 1 of Lent

Open in Prayer:

Lord Jesus, Thank you for suffering for me. I am eternally grateful. Thank you for your gift of salvation. Guide me in the way I should go. Lead me on a journey of growth this season, and along this journey, fill my heart with abounding joy! May I never grow weary of rejoicing in your goodness, and may I never forget your love and sacrifice. Amen.

Read Genesis 3:14-19 (ESV)

The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on 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 your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have 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; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Answer the following questions:

Genesis 3 brings us face to face with a God who curses people. God responds to Adam and Eve’s disobedience decisively. God responds to the serpent’s deceptive ways quickly. In the judgment of these statements, we see God almost reversing that which his creativity and mercy brought into being. The crafty serpent is now humiliated and seen as lowlier than all other livestock and beasts of the field. Eve, who was created out of Adam and proclaimed “very good” is now under the rule of her husband, will not have the same desires as her husband, and will experience pain as she brings forth children. And Adam, who was created by God from the dust of the earth, now finds he will return to that same dust.

This passage from Genesis speaks about our desire to overlook our sin.

1. In what areas or ways do you find yourself overlooking your sin?
2. How is that different than your desire for others who sin against you?
3. Why is there a difference?

4. What else entered into Creation as a result of this sinful disobedience?
5. Read Galatians 3:13 and reflect on how it speaks about this curse.

Read Psalm 32

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*

Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Close in Prayer

Holy God and Father, I know that you cannot take the sins that I commit lightly because You are God, and You are Holy. I know you cannot overlook sinful disobedience because You are God and You are Holy. You love justice and cannot allow evil to go unpunished. As such, thank you for putting into place a plan, before the foundations of the earth, which would allow the curse which was rightfully mine to fall upon Your Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ's name I pray, Amen!