

## First Sunday in Lent [a]

Trinity Lutheran, Alamogordo

February 22, 2026

### Genesis 3:1-21

<sup>1</sup> 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'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> 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.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that 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. <sup>7</sup> **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.** <sup>8</sup> **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.** <sup>9</sup> **But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"** <sup>10</sup> **And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."** <sup>11</sup> He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> 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." <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup> 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; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

**In the Name of Jesus.**

The kindness.

The kindness of a Lord who sees the sinner and wants not to destroy, but to restore.

The kindness of a Lord who sees the sinner covered in shame, and wants not to add to the shame, but to cleanse and cover in honor.

The kindness of a Lord who sees the sinner hiding, and who then, in love, calls out in invitation.  
Genesis 3:9:

**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?"**

*"Where are you?"*—not a question of fact. The Lord knew where they were. He created them. He created the bush they crouched behind. He no more needed to find out where they were than he needed to find out the color of the sky he had created.

*Where are you?* A kind question eliciting a reply from two sinners too afraid to even face themselves up to their Creator. A question of kindness by which he is placing himself in conversation with them so they could hear his voice and could speak to him. A kind question establishing that he was their God: even after the sin, he didn't depart the scene and act like he didn't care—but he was still their God and he would speak to them as his people.

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*Where are you?*—to two sinners hiding in shame.

Sin does that.

They had eaten the fruit. The Lord had given them that tree. He had given it to them to look at, to care for, and to not eat of. But they ate.

They took the tree and its fruit not as a gift to be received in the way it was given, but as something they could grasp and control themselves.

That's rebellion against the giver of gifts. That's enmity with the Creator of life. And to be at enmity with the Creator of life is death, Romans 5:12:

**Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.**

Our Lord did not create us for death. Death is not natural to us. It's not part of nature. It's alien to nature. Death is against our creation.

But sin does that.

Sin is not just an outward action which can be corrected, like a high school quarterback learning to correct a bad throwing motion. It's not just cosmetic, like a rash, that can be chased away with the right ointment.

Sin goes to the depth of the soul. It cuts to the heart of the person.

This sin, this refusal to receive gifts from the Lord, this rebellion of Adam against his Creator, it is a sickness penetrating to the very being of the person. It is death to Adam, who now finds himself just waiting around to die. And it is inherited by the children of Adam, by you and me.

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*Where are you?* Our Lord's kind invitation to us.

The Lord knows where we are. That much is obvious. He's our Creator, after all. He continues upholding his creation, including giving us our every breath.

He knows where we are. He sees how we treat the gifts of creation.

Our neighbor? Is our neighbor not a gift of creation? Our neighbor, along with us, is created by the Lord. Our neighbor, too, was knit together by the Lord in the mother's womb, and is now sustained by the Lord with food, with oxygen, with the hours of sleep, the hours of waking—all of it. It's all gift from the Lord. Who else would it come from?

He sees how we treat our neighbor. The lack of love, the whispered conversation behind the back, the quick words to tear down or plant doubt, does our Lord miss any of this? The thoughts kept secret, the veiled hatred, the accusations implanting distrust, will we think we keep any of it hidden from the Lord who gives us every breath of our life?

He sees us behind our own little bush, whatever that bush may be.

*Where are you?*, he says, finding us in our shame.

The kindness of his invitation. The kindness of a Lord who sees the sinner and wants not to destroy, but to restore. The kindness of a Lord who sees one covered in shame, and wants not to add to the shame, but to cleanse and cover in honor. The kindness of a Lord who sees the sinner hiding, and who then, in love, calls out in invitation. Genesis 3:9:

**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?"**

He came to them in that Garden. He presented himself in a way they could see and hear, and he walked into the Garden.

He had done it before. But before they weren't hiding. Before, they had welcomed his walking into the Garden he had created for them. It was his day to be with them, his day of Sabbath, day of rest and peace and fellowship.

This time, they are hiding. That's what sin does. It cuts to the heart.

He came, though, not to judge—they already knew the judgment, that's why they're hiding. He came not to judge, but to save. [John 12:47]

From Eve's seed, from her offspring, will come the Savior, he tells them. This one, of the lineage of Eve, Satan will strike him on the heel, but he will strike Satan on the head.

Salvation. It will be salvation from sin, from the devil, from death. No more hiding. This Lord is life, and he speaks life. The shame is removed. The sinner is cleansed and covered in honor.

He does it with his Word. His Word promising the seed of Eve, this descendant who would crush the head of Satan, this Jesus, through whom we receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness which now reigns for us. [Romans 5:17]

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This world we're in of sin, of death, of people hiding in shame—the people of this world, will they hear this word of kind invitation?

They will know what they expect from the Church. At least they think they know what they should be expecting from the Church.

From the Church, from the voice of the Lord's people, the people of the world will expect to hear shame heaped upon the shame they already try to hide; our neighbor will expect to hear from the Church voice of the judgment of death. Our neighbor will expect to hear words by which they will be not good enough for the Church, will be chased from the Church.

Then comes the Lord's voice of kind invitation. He loves the sinner. He loves us. He loves our neighbor.

For those hiding, he doesn't depart the scene. The Lord engages, he speaks, *Where are you?*

It's his voice of kind invitation inviting the sinner to his cleansing word of Gospel, inviting the sinner to hear the free justification spoken in the Church from the throne in Heaven, inviting our neighbor into the fellowship of those restored to the grace and peace of Sabbath rest with God.

The kind invitation of the Gospel—calling out of guilt, into grace, out of death, into life, out of this world of sin, to the Table of the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:17:

**For if, because of one man's trespass [Adam's], death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.**

**In the Name of Jesus.**