

Trinity 1 (2020)

I want to begin this morning by asking some big questions. Questions which very likely *you* have asked at one time or another.

The first is: **Who am I?**

Am I chance, a mistake, a product of mindless evolutionary selection, an ape who can speak and has knowledge of his own mortality?

Or, am I a unique creation, someone who was loved into being by a personal God, someone who therefore has worth and dignity?

Following on from this one comes a second: **Why am I here?**

Is it just to consume and enjoy . . . to amass toys . . . to have a blast while it lasts?

Someone is supposed to have asked the oil magnet John D. Rockefeller: **“How much money is enough? His answer: “Just a little bit more.”**

No doubt, that is how many people think about and do life. Life is for getting and spending.

But is there some higher purpose to life, to *my* life? If so, what is that purpose?

We move now to a third big question: **What’s wrong with the world?**

Or, we might want to narrow that question still further and ask: **What’s wrong with humans, myself included?**

And finally: **How can what is wrong be put right?**

Today’s Old Testament lesson, Genesis 3, speaks to all these questions but in particular to the last two.

Indeed, this is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. If it were missing, we would have a hard time making sense out of the rest of Bible. Let me explain.

At the end of Genesis 1, God pronounces what He has made 'very good'. At the end of Genesis 2, we find humans living the life of paradise.

You almost expect the story to end with the words, "And they lived happily ever after."

But it doesn't. Fast-forward to Genesis 4 and you are in very different world.

From here on out, the trajectory is downward. We find the most appalling accounts of disharmony, alienation, estrangement, envy, hatred and murder.

And, these things continue right down to this present day.

A recent example would surely include the murder of David Dorn, a 77-year-old retired St. Louis police captain.

Dorn, a black man, was helping a friend patrol a store when some looters, following a so-called peaceful demonstration, assaulted him and left him lying in a pool of blood. Some bystanders even took videos with their phones, but refused to render aid.

What's wrong with the world. What's wrong with people?

Can hatred, distrust and inhumanity be cured. If so, how?

By more and better education?

I like what President Theodore Roosevelt had to say on the subject:

"A man who has never gone to school may steal from a freight car; but if he has a university education, he may steal the whole railroad."

This is the problem Genesis 3, the great transitional chapter of the Bible, identifies and addresses.

Here we discover not only the root of our problem but what is required to put it right.

We learn that the problem is found in the middle letter of that little word, sin, S-I-N.

Right from the start, humans have grasped at what was not theirs by right. 'I' replaced the Creator as the top authority, and it has been downhill ever since.

"Ye shall be as gods," was the serpent's bait to Eve, and she took it, and so has everyone who has followed.

Does anyone remember Frank Sinatra's swan's song? "I did it my way."

Well, that's the human problem in a nutshell.

Was what Satan promised Eve for real? Was there this great flourishing of the human race? No. The devil is a liar and a cheat.

He promises great things, but they are like those soap bubble you blew as a child. In the sun, they glimmer and appear full of promise. But, touch them, and they go away.

What in fact follows is alienation, guilt, disintegration, toil and sorrow.

The easy fellowship man once enjoyed with God comes to an end. Harmony is disrupted.

Enmity develops between the man and the woman. Harmony is disrupted.

Cain slays his brother Abel and has to flee into a far country. Harmony is disrupted.

Nature itself is affected. Weeds springs up. Life becomes hard and a struggle. Harmony is disrupted.

But, today's passage does not end without hope.

God says that the serpent will bruise man's *heel*, but the Seed of Woman will bruise the serpent's *head*.

There's a big difference between the two. Having your heel bruised is painful, but having your head bruised is fatal.

And this is exactly what Jesus – the Seed of Woman – does on the cross. He strikes a death blow to the devil and all his works.

Death itself is now a defeated foe. Because He lives, we shall live also. That is His promise.

More than that, now that He has come, we don't have to make up our own answers to life's big questions.

Who am I?

If I have died and risen with Christ in baptism, I am a child of God and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. What Adam lost, Christ has reclaimed, and more.

Why am I here?

To be one of His agents in putting a world torn apart by sin back together. Are you doing your part? Am I

What is our problem as humans?

I have already told you. It is that 'I' in sin. But, Jesus has struck a line through that 'I' and has turned it into a cross. By the cross we are healed.

If you have not already done so, make what Christ accomplished on the cross real in your life. Say: "Have thine own way, Lord, while I am waiting yielded and still."

Let Him deal with past mistakes. Let Him give you a new purpose for getting up out of bed each morning. Let Him unleash His power in you. Let Him make you an agent of reconciliation, a peacemaker.

Let me close by saying: Be encouraged. A light that will never go out has been turned on. Christ is that light.

Know you are God's dear child, not a chance or mistake. Know you have a purpose and a destiny. Know Christ died for you. Put your hand in His nail-scarred hand and go forward.

