"Days of the Week" -- Sermon Series for Lent & Easter

"Day 6 -- Two Adams"
Genesis 1:24-31

Lent 5 Midweek -- March 24, 2004
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Boise, Idaho
Pastor Tim Pauls

Texts
Psalm 22:1-8, 25-28
Genesis 1:24-31
Romans 5:15-21
Mark 15:1-15

Suggested Hymns (TLH)
Savior When in Dust to Thee (166)
Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed (154)
On My Heart Imprint Thine Image (179)

I. For if by the One Man's Offense Many Died…

Two Day Sixes. Two silent men, two Adams. Two women, two mothers of us all.

One big difference: That First Adam is going to bring the curse of sin into the world. The Second Adam is come to reverse the curse.

Day 6 of Creation is the day of finishing touches. There's light and darkness, land and sea, earth and stars, plants and birds and fishes. So as Day 6 begins, the Lord creates all sorts of animals to roam the earth, the variety making creation all the more good. And then, once the animals are in place, there's one thing left to go. "Let us make man in our own image" says the Lord. He creates Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, and man becomes a living soul.

Adam is created in the Lord's image, says the Lord. But what does this mean? It's not a matter of physical appearance: Adam does not look like God. Rather, Adam shares the Lord's righteousness. Sinless, he has a perfect knowledge of God and His will, as well as perfect trust-there is no doubt within him, because he has no veil of blinding sin. He naturally possess a perfect obedience to His will, never hating or fearing to do the right thing. So, Adam is part of creation, but he's not like the rest of creation: He is created in God's image, and everything else that God has created is for Adam's benefit and enjoyment. It's all for him. This is why the Lord has created all things: Since He is by nature a servant, He wants to have someone to serve. The Lord elects that it is not good that He is alone, so He forms Adam out of the dust and puts him in the Garden.

But if Adam is in the image of God, then it is not good for Adam to be alone either; and among the animals, there is no suitable helper to be found. So the Lord casts a deep sleep upon Adam; and

while Adam sleeps, the Lord opens up his side, removes a rib, and creates Eve. She is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones; she has her life because God has made her out of Adam's body and blood. She's made in the image of God, too, and all of creation is for her as well.

So Adam has a helper, but don't get the wrong idea. It is not that the Lord has created Eve to be his slave; rather, as Eve serves and cares for Adam, Adam is also to work hard at serving and caring for Eve. In fact-and this is so important-even before Eve is made, the Lord gives Adam a priceless gift with which to serve his bride: God gives him His Word. He gives Adam the one command that will keep them in Eden forever: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:16-17). God gives Adam the Word to share-as Luther notes, the Lord thus makes Adam a pastor; and the greatest service that Adam can do for his bride-to-be is to tell her what God said about the trees; that way, they can stay in the Garden.

So let's review this perfect scene when God is finished on Day 6. He's made Adam in His image so that He can serve man. He's given Adam His Word of life to preach to whoever else shows up along the way. Then He's put Adam into a deep sleep, opened his side and created Eve out of him. There they are-the perfect couple, literally made for each other. They are to love each other and help each other; and part of that help will be that Adam will continue to tell Eve the Word of God: Eat the fruit of those trees all you want, but just don't touch that one tree there.

You know what happens: Tempted by the serpent, they both eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sin is in the world; and with sin comes thorns and thistles, pain and death. The Church is accused of blaming Eve in particular and women in general for the Fall into sin; but those who blame Eve have never read Romans 5. Sure, Eve bears some responsibility, as we hear in I Timothy 2:14. But Romans 5:12 declares unequivocally that "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin." Adam gets the blame there.

Why? Because of what Adam fails to do. As the serpent twists God's Word to mislead Eve, Adam stays silent. God specifically gives His Word to Adam to share; and when such loving preaching is needed, Adam stays silent.

And when God's Word is left unheard, death is shortly to follow.

So Adam and Eve are still alive, but they are now sinful. They were created to serve one another; now, thanks to sin, they will no longer naturally be servants. Rather, they will battle selfishness every day of their lives. Instead of helping Adam, Eve will naturally desire to manipulate her husband. Instead of serving Eve, Adam will naturally want to rule over his wife. Instead of rejoicing in God's presence, they're going to hide. Instead of desiring to hear His Word, they're going to want to shut their ears.

Adam names his wife Eve because she is the mother of all the living. And along with whatever DNA they pass along, they also pass along that original sin that clings to all creation. God created mankind to be righteous, to be servants; because of the curse of sin, man will be anything but. This becomes painfully evident with the first two sons of Adam and Eve. The Lord favors the sacrifice of Abel, but not that of Cain. In response, Cain kills his brother in selfish jealousy.

You and I are sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. And no matter our knowledge of right and wrong

and our intentions to be servants, we're terribly selfish people from day one. Forget helping and serving others: We want to be served by others. Babies will fuss needlessly when they don't get as much attention as they want, and this is selfishness. Some will object that they don't know any better, and that is precisely the point: We don't have to learn to be selfish-it's simply how we are. Every child at the birthday party wants to have the biggest piece of cake, and no child likes it when somebody else gets the presents. Education is no longer about wisdom and virtue in order to serve one's neighbor; it's about knowledge and power so that you can get ahead of other people. Too many sermons are not designed to bring you to repentance for such self-seeking, but to encourage you to feel good about who you are, sin and all. Within marriage, every day is a battle between selfishness and servanthood, and many bitter feelings arise from silly little things like who's going to fold the clothes, change the diaper or take out the trash. Church work suffers similarly, for our natural response is, "Let someone else serve in that position, because I have enough to do already." And while I am willing to admit that capitalism is probably the best economy for sinners, it is still based upon doing your best to succeed at the expense of the competitor.

Do you see? We prove our descendance from Adam and Eve. We're naturally selfish. We'd rather receive than give. We'd rather be served than serve. We'd rather have people working for us than be working for people. Rather than deal with the problems of others, we'd rather they go somewhere else because we've got enough problems of our own to deal with. And there is a reason why this selfishness is so prevalent with the curse of sin: Selfishness is the exact opposite of the image of God and His righteousness.

And because of this selfishness, there is no way that we're going to keep God's law and serve others. For all of our efforts at looking out for number one, we're going to end up dead and lost.

So if we're going to be saved, we must be saved by someone who comes solely to serve. We must be saved by someone who does not come for Himself, but One who is so righteous and selfless that He comes to bear the burdens of everybody else. One who comes not to be served, but to serve-and to give His life as a ransom for many.

If we are to be saved, we need one like Adam was before the Fall, back when God and man were at peace with each other. That's what we need: A second Adam. One who won't fall like the first. One who will reverse the curse of sin and death, restore us to righteousness and life.

There is such a one, says Romans 5. The Second Adam's name is Jesus Christ.

II. …The Grace of the One Man, Jesus Christ, Abounded to Many.

Day 6 finds the Son of God stricken, smitten and afflicted. He has been the perfect Servant throughout His life from Mary's womb-obedient to His parents and attentive to the rabbis during His youth. Since His Baptism, He's taught and healed and revived and restored others, miracle after miracle and wonder after wonder. He has been the perfect Servant. Now He is the suffering Servant, in order to reverse the curse.

Listen as He stands trial in the Gospel lesson this night. False accusations fly against Him, some ludicrous and all slanderous. Yet He remains silent, speaking not a word to defend Himself. Why? To reverse the curse. The First Adam stayed silent when he should have declared the Word to prevent transgression, and so sin came into the world-and death through sin. Now, the Second Adam

remains silent as He is accused of all sorts of sins. It is almost as if He is guilty of them all, the way He offers up no defense. It is almost as if He is accepting the blame and the guilt for any sin that anyone wishes to pile upon Him.

It is more than almost: It is exactly what He is doing. Speaking His holy Word, He can refute His accusers, destroy His enemies and free Himself from bondage. But He accepts all the accusations because He is taking on the sins of world. As evil men declare Him to be guilty, He accepts their guilt so that He can destroy it on the cross. They accuse Him of evildoing, so He accepts the charge in order to die for all evildoers. They accuse Him of blasphemy, so He accepts the accusation in order to die for blasphemers. Whatever sins are put upon Him, He will not refuse; because He is taking them all upon Himself so that He can die for them all as the substitute guilty One. To reverse the curse, He shoulders the sins of the world.

The First Adam willingly bypassed the Tree of Life and consented to the eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; his willingness brought death into the world. The Second Adam willingly goes to your Tree of Life; in fact, He drags it from the city as far as His failing strength permits, because He will not be denied your redemption. Make no mistake: That ugly, splintery cross of death is your Tree of Life, because His death is your redemption. That tree bears life-giving fruit for you. To reverse the curse, He goes to the cross.

By the will of God, the First Adam fell into a deep sleep; and as he slept, the Lord opened up his side to create his bride out of his flesh and bone. By the will of God, the Second Adam falls into the deep sleep of death on the cross; and it is then, courtesy of a Roman spear, that His side is opened up as well. What flows out, but blood and water? For, along with His Word, that is how His bride, the Church, is created and sustained. Christ is your Bridegroom who has washed you by water and the Word in Baptism, and who feeds you with His own body and blood to strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith unto life everlasting.

For now, your old sinful nature still clings to you, and it is called the Old Adam with good reason. With it comes selfishness and weakness, sin and death. And, reading through the First Adam's weakness and sin in Genesis 3, you understand that you come by such things honestly. So you rejoice this night that there is a Second Adam who has reversed that curse. He has suffered the judgment for your sin on that cross. He washes you clean in your baptism, and continues to feed you-His Bride-with His holy Supper. And until that marriage feast of heaven, the Second Adam-your Bridegroom-does not cease to tell you that you are His beloved; for you are forgiven for all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen