

“The Devil Made Me Do It?”—Genesis 3:4-7

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “The Devil Made Me Do It?”, is Genesis 3:4-7 → *The serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 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. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

What do you think of when you think about a “satanic” experience? Do you think of the occult, weird rituals with human sacrifice, witchcraft, vampires and so forth? Such thoughts may be natural in light of the influence of media portraying evil in these ways. However, just as the Bible describes people sacrificing their children to false gods (cf. Leviticus 18:21; 2 Kings 16:3; Psalm 106:37-38) and sorcery (cf. Deuteronomy 18:10-14), it also describes the devil’s destructive work in our own personal lives in subtle ways which are difficult to discern. In our text we read about Eve

having the very first “satanic experience” of human history and she didn’t even realize that it was an experience of satanic proportions until it was all over.

The devil asked Eve about God’s Word which Adam had shared with her recorded in Genesis 2:16-17. The LORD told Adam: *You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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*. Eve stated that if they ate of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* they would *die*. She was right. Then the devil lied to her in two ways: Telling her that she would *not surely die* and that she would *be like God, knowing good and evil*. Tempting as it seemed to *be like God*, little did she know that *the knowledge of good and evil* was deadly for her because she wasn’t God. She was the creature, not the Creator.

All of satan’s lies in temptation are intended to lead us into idolatry. Idolatry is not simply trying to *be like God* but actually usurping His position as God! Idolatry is the springboard for all sin in our efforts to claim our own righteousness before God and others. The “fall” of Adam & Eve into the devil’s temptation produced the constant struggle with God for lordship and control in our lives.

In his temptations the devil appeals to our various senses as seen in verse 6 of our text:

- Adam & Eve saw that the tree was **good for food**. How easily we

give in to temptation simply to feed our physical desires through greed, sexual immorality, gluttony, coveting and so forth. This was the first temptation satan placed before Jesus when he said in Matthew 4:3 → *If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.* Mighty tempting after fasting for forty days and forty nights. Something may appear physically satisfying but can lead to killing relationship with God in time and in eternity.

- *They saw that . . . it was a delight to the eyes.* How easily we give in to temptation simply because it looks good and gives the hope of feeling good. So many of the addictive behaviors and unhealthy coping mechanisms in which we engage to escape from the darkness of sin in our hearts and lives are simply giving in to the devil's trap. They appear "delightful" but can lead to killing relationship with God in time and in eternity.
- *They saw that . . . the tree was to be desired to make one wise.* How easily we give in to temptation because it feeds our selfish pride and the desire to be "glorified" in the eyes of others as they witness our superior knowledge or skill. Scripture says that *knowledge puffs up* (i.e. makes one arrogant) (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1) and that *pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* (cf. Proverbs 16:18) Pride and wisdom governed by sin can lead

to killing relationship with God in time and in eternity.

Satan's main purpose is always to destroy a perfect relationship with Yahweh. He succeeded with Adam & Eve as can be seen in Genesis 3:8 when *they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden and hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden*. From this point on we sinners are prone to run away from rather than to God. Why? Because the devil makes us do it? Nope. Because of guilt in the midst of our own sinful choices.

All sin is a result of the devil's working. However, with Adam & Eve's choice of giving in to his temptation we now have to deal with our own sinful heart bequeathed to us by them. It is quickened to sin when the temptation is thrown our way from a world affected and corrupted by sin. Listen to how James 1:14-15 describes temptation: *Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death*. Remember what God said? *In the day that you eat of it you shall surely **die***. (cf. Genesis 2:17)

The devil tempts us to sin in an effort to separate and kill relationships on all levels. This why Jesus described him in John 8:44 as *a murderer from the beginning, having nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own*

character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. This sinful condition is so serious that no matter what Adam & Eve did in their efforts to rectify it they separated themselves even further. Along with trying to hide from Yahweh our text says they were ashamed of each other's naked presence and *sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.* Then Adam blamed God and Eve, while Eve pointed the finger and in effect said, "The devil made me do it!" Sin is a mess from which you cannot deliver yourself!

Thus, the LORD promised to deliver us from this sin by promising to send an offspring from the woman who would crush the devil's power. In Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, God took on our flesh and our sin so that we could be forgiven and the perfect relationship with Him could be restored. How? By confession of your sin in repentance and faith in the Person & Work of Jesus. Instead of saying, "The devil made me do it!" as an excuse to not accept responsibility for your sinful choices, you recognize your own sin and "satanic delusions" and confess that sin to God. In confession you also recognize the satanic nature of your sin **and** your complete need for the work of Jesus Who came defeat the power of the devil **for you.**

When Jesus endure His temptations "face-to-face" with satan He did not simply to leave you some kind of example to follow. Rather, His temptation over the devil in the desert was part of the victory over the

power of the devil which **He won for you!** You resist the devil's temptations by clinging in faith to the victorious work of Jesus over satan on your behalf. Thus, as a disciple of Jesus, you are not working **to gain** victory over the devil. That's impossible. Rather you are working **from** the victory already won for you by Jesus!

Contrasting the fall of Adam into sin to the work of Jesus Romans 5:15 says: *The free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, (i.e. Adam's) much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.* Faith in Christ would say: "The devil may have made me do it, but Christ brought me through it!" In Christ we resist temptation. In Christ we are also delivered when falling into temptation by His *free gift of grace!!*

Because of Jesus' victorious defeat of satan's power he has no power over us! The devil's power has been and always will be defeated for us in Christ! And so we confess with confidence in words of 1 Corinthians 15:57: *Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory **through our Lord Jesus Christ!*** Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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