

Tragedy Reversed

Genesis 3:8–15



Dear friends in Christ

Our meditation this morning is based on the Old Testament reading of Genesis chapter 3, that if seen from a distance you can see a drama going on.

By the way our new pastor is trained in the arts of drama, and I'm sure he will be able to explain, or you know already of the various genres of drama.

The ancient Greeks developed theater in remarkable ways that have influenced Western civilization up to the present. One of the genres they are credited with creating is called "tragedy." Three authors—Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles—achieved greatness in this form of literature. They lived four hundred years before Christ, yet they influenced such writers as Shakespeare, who drew upon their work in his tragedies. The plot of a tragedy usually describes a central figure who exhibits many virtues, but, due to one flaw, ends up in a horrible state, therefore a tragedy. The figures the Greeks used, were either fictional or drawn from ancient mythology.

And the drama going on in chapter 3 of Geneses, describes the greatest tragedy in all of human history! It is not fictional or mythological but it is the reality, were even we still play a part in it, even today. The play goes from a blissful existence of unending life with God to the crushing reality of a fallen world and certain death, that is the reality! This is a real tragedy! And the consequences of tragedy is seen and experienced all over and over again, in natural disasters, like the volcano eruptions in Hawaii and Guatemala, but even in the personal disasters and hardship we experience.

I. You and I participate in the tragedy that turned God's gifts into self-absorption, self-will, and self-assertion.

Therefore that tragedy in Genesis 3, is not something that you and I can merely observe. The lesson in Genesis 3 is not meant to entertain and educate as were the ancient Greek tragedies. No, this real tragedy is one in which you and I participate! It is about Adam and Eve, but it is also about us. Quite simply, our first parents, in their desire to be like God, lost his gifts of innocence and holiness, lost the state of living in a continual and eternal blissful life.

Adam and Eve's identity was wonderful beyond our capacity to comprehend. God personally breathed into Adam the breath of life (Gen 2:7). He formed Eve in a very personal manner (Gen 2:22), it was so special. They were apex of God's creative work. Only they were created in his image and likeness (Gen 1:27), they were perfect. And everything else that we see God doing, creating and sustaining, all God's gifts were for the benefit and support of Adam and Eve. God gives and gives and gives, and gives.

He is the giver of the heavens and the earth. He is the giver of the sun, moon, stars, and seasons. He is the giver of the seas and all the life in it. He is the giver of

the land creatures. He is the giver of leadership over other creatures. He is the giver of language. He is the giver of marriage and family.

But if that wasn't enough, and in a remarkable act of giving, he gives Adam and Eve free will. That is, they had the capacity to turn from the one who had given them all things, or appreciate all what the Giver gives. But here is where the greatest tragedy occurs, for they turned away from God's gifts in their desire to be "like God." They turned to self-absorption, self-will, and self-assertion and all of that is the origin of sin.

This is where the tragedy becomes ours, for we all know our own will too, we know we become self-absorbed; we make it all about ourselves. Since Adam and Eve we turned to self-will and self-assertion at the expense of our relationship with God and our relationship with our neighbor too.

We, too, have wanted to do our own thing. We have seen it throughout history and we see in in our own current culture today, people have exhibited the same preoccupation with self, just as we too do so.

And what are the results of this tragedy? They are gloomy and unescapable. We need to realize that preoccupation with self at the expense of God and neighbor is more than breaking a rule, or good morals. Such prideful sin breaks down all that God so freely gave us.

It breaks our relationship with God. Just see it in the drama unfolding in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve must hide from God, that's what sin does. Why is it that we don't like to hear from God? Is not because there is no God, no, the reason is that we don't want to be confronted with our sin. But sin, also breaks our relationship with our neighbor. Just see what Adam did, he blames Eve for the tragedy. Have you ever been blamed for something bad that has happened? It doesn't keep a good relationship with the one who blames you, does it. It brakes apart. Mistrust sets in, division abound.

But there is more, for sin, breaks our relationship with the world. Now labor and toil will be required to live. The problem is that is not just labor and toil, there are consequences that brakes the relationship with the world. Think of the role of unions for example, why do they exist? Simply because fairness and is removed, motivated by greed at the expense of the human value.

And it also It breaks our relationship with our own being, that's why we are or get confused our identity in Christ, and about the reality that we were God's creation and that he wants a relationship with us again.

II. But in the "seed of the woman," Jesus Christ, the tragedy has been reversed.

But there is good news in the drama before our eyes, even there in Geneses chapter 3. It is wonderful, even above comprehension that God does not abandon Adam and Eve or us. Rather, he promises that the "seed of the woman" will reverse the curse that has now descended upon creation.

And his promises continue through Genesis and through all the Old Testament. In the "seed of the woman," our relationship with God is restored. As St. Paul so succinctly states in Rom 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

So yes there is good news in the drama before our eyes. The good news is that our tragic situation has been reversed by God's gracious will and the gift of His very Son. He is the "the seed of the woman," in whom our relationship with our neighbor is restored, as Jesus tells us: "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to

those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you” (Lk 6:27–28).

In Jesus, “the seed of the woman,” our relationship with the world will be renewed as well. As Isaiah looks into the future and promises: “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind” (Is 65:17).

In Jesus, “the seed of the woman,” we are forgiven; and our identity as God’s beloved children is returned, as the Scriptures promises us: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17).

So, today, dear friends, let us rejoice and be glad, because in Jesus Christ, the tragedy of our sin and self-will has been reversed. Unlike the Greek tragedies that ended in despair and death, our tragic situation has been reversed by the one who took all our sin—all of our selfishness—into his holy body on the cross. There God’s character as the giver of lavish love was again bestowed on us. Now he has given his very Son for our redemption and restoration. As the writer of Psalm 130 beautifully states: “O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps 130:7–8).

And now, as new creatures in Christ, we have the privilege of living and sharing the reality of new life in Christ. “Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, ‘I believed, and so I spoke,’ we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence” (2 Cor 4:13–14).

And so, our tragic situation has been reversed by God’s gracious will and the gift of His very Son.

The darkness and death that had confined us as children of Adam and Eve are now gone. The days and nights of our life are no longer limited by our self-absorption, self-will, and self-assertion.

Rather, the drama and the story of our lives—our identity—is defined by Jesus’ death and resurrection, to which we have been joined in the blessed Sacrament of Holy Baptism. And wonderful that is, as God’s words tells us: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).

So rejoice and live out the new life that is yours in Christ. From his throne at the Father’s right hand, he speaks to us: “I am making all things new” (Rev 21:5).

He is indeed, amen.