

**Sunday Sermon March 1, 2020**

**Sermon Text: Genesis 3:15**

**Sermon Theme: While the Battles Rages on, the War has been Won.**

*<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

I want to talk about history a little this morning. Put on your history hat and let's remember our grade school, high school or college history classes. When did the Civil War end? You might remember that the Civil War ended at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865 with the surrender of General Lee to General Grant.

When did WWII end? While the Germans had already surrendered, the surrender of the Japanese army was made official on September 2, 1945 aboard the USS Missouri.

While those agreements signaled the end of the war, it's interesting to note that these surrenders did not mean that the battles were done being fought.

It's interesting to note that the final regiment of the Confederate army surrendered on June 2, 1865, and the final naval regiment didn't surrender until November 4, 1865, 7 months after the surrender.

WWII was even worse. Lt. Hiroo Onoda continued to fight in the jungles of the Philippines until 1974.

Why would these people continue to fight, to battle, even though the war was over? They believed in what they were fighting for. They thought that by fighting they could make a difference, maybe change the outcome of the war. For these people the battle raged on, even though the war was over.

In our sermon text, we hear what seems to be the first battle in a war between God and the devil. Yet, we hear God declare victory. The outcome would not even be a question. The devil's power would be crushed, the devil would lose the war. Yet even though the war was already decided, the devil continues to rage on, battling to try to lead us away from our victorious Savior.

The fall into sin is a Bible story that we all are pretty familiar with. It is one that is in every Sunday School curriculum and it has been depicted many times in famous artwork. It is so easy for us to picture that serpent wrapped around a tree, with Eve holding a piece of fruit with Adam right behind her. When we think of this picture, we might forget that this is the very worst thing that ever happen to the human race. It may have been the greatest battle the devil ever won.

The war the devil was trying to wage began sometime between creation and the fall into sin. The devil did not want to serve God, instead he wanted to serve himself and be his own god. The devil and his evil angels tried to defeat God. Instead God won this battle and cast the devil out of heaven.

From that time on, the devil has tried to frustrate and destroy any of the good and gracious things that God wants for us. The devil wants to lead people away from the pure truth of the Gospel: salvation by grace through faith in Jesus. He does not want us to have the pure Gospel because he does not want us to be in heaven with Jesus. Instead, he wants us to follow something else so that we miss heaven and join him in hell.

Imagine how the devil felt after this battle with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve had walked into the devil's trap and had fallen into sin. As the devil watched, the perfection of God's world was gone. Adam and Eve no longer loved God, they feared him and the punishment he could bring to them for doing wrong.

Not only had they sinned, Adam and Eve continued to sin more. Even when God came in love to call them to repentance they hid from God, making excuses, blaming others and even God. The devil must have felt pretty good about how his war was going to turn out, because he done such a good job of destroying the perfection that God had created in Eden.

The devil also tried to take the battle to Jesus using the same kinds of temptations in our Gospel. He tried to make the bread the stones could be turned into look so good so that Jesus would abuse his power and go against God's plan, just as he made the fruit look good to Adam and Eve so that they would turn against God's plan.

The devil tried to twist God's Word with Jesus just as he did with Eve. Did God really say you must not eat of that fruit? To Jesus he said that God will always protect you no matter what.

He finally used the sin of pride. He tried to tempt Jesus to choose an earthly kingdom rather than the heavenly one. He used Adam and Eve's pride against them as well making them think that God was holding something back from them that they should be jealous of.

The devil lost that battle, but he continues to try to fight this war against us every day. He uses the same temptations against us that he used against Adam and Eve. He twists God's Words to make God sound mean and cruel, he uses our words against us to lead us down the path of doubt and misunderstanding, he uses our pride to question whether God's way or our way is the correct path, and he uses our own selfishness against us in that when God does not give us what we want he must not love us.

The devil continues to fight these battles every day because when we fall into sin, in some small way, he wins.

While the devil must have felt very good on that day. God had something to say. Before God announced the consequences of Adam and Eve's sins to them, he tells the devil he cannot win this war. He announces that he has already won the war the devil was trying to fight. **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.**

**I will put enmity, (hatred), between you and the woman. Between your offspring and hers.** There is a natural hatred between what the devil wants and what God wants. The offspring of the devil is sin, death and hell. The offspring of the women is Jesus and the forgiveness and eternal life he brings. There is friction because they are at the opposite ends of the spectrum.

Because we are followers of Christ, there is a natural feeling inside of us because of the faith the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts between the sinful way of life that the devil wants us to pursue, which leads to hell, and the life of godly thanks and praise to our Savior for all he has done.

But there is a problem. We don't always hate the sins that the devil tempts us with. We don't always dislike those sins. Sometimes we like them and embrace them and even celebrate them as part of everyday life. We become callous to sin that we don't even recognize it in our lives as sin.

Sex is no longer saved for marriage. Pornography, prostitution and sex outside of marriage are mainstream and part of pop culture. Many times we view movies, TV shows, thoughts, images and many other things that sinfully embrace the sins of sexual perversion as another choice in entertainment or personal viewing pleasure. Sex is no longer a blessing of marriage. Instead it is what happens between two people.

Marriage is no longer seen as a life-long commitment before God. When we take God out of the equation of marriage it becomes something very different. There is no standard that God gives. Living together outside of marriage without that promise before God is seen as an alternative to God's plan. Marriage is only as long as it lasts and divorce is freedom from the confines of marriage and/or of another person.

We lie, cheat, covet and steal when it benefits us. We use these sins as tools to get our way, thinking that we are justified in doing so.

There is no fear in abusing drugs or alcohol. We call it spending a weekend in Las Vegas, loosening up, letting our hair down, or partying.

Murder has taken neat and tidy new names like: mercy killing, euthanasia, abortion or end of life solutions. We no longer value God's gift of life and pray for God to use that life in any way he can, for as long as he sees fit to use it.

The devil has made sin so commonplace that it no longer appalls us or causes concern. We do not hate these sins anymore and sometimes we even forget to repent of them.

Because of this we need our God's declaration of judgment on the devil to know that sin isn't good. But we also need to hear that declaration as a glorious promise to us that these victories of the devil will not lead to death and hell. God in the Garden said {Jesus} **will crush your head and you will strike his heel.** The devil would not win the war, our Savior would crush any power the devil had.

Jesus would crush the devil's head and destroy the devil's power in two ways. Jesus would defeat the devil by living perfectly for us. He would live under the Law and follow that Law perfectly for us, never once falling into the devil's trap. He did that for us because we could not do that ourselves. By his perfect life, he satisfied the Law so that the devil could not use that Law against us to convict us of our sins. Because Jesus is perfect, his perfection is given to us by faith.

He would also crush the devil's head by paying for every sin that we have committed. When he went to the cross he paid for our sins with his own blood. He took every sin of choice and of weakness to himself and

paid for them. There is no sin that Jesus has not paid for. The devil cannot hold those sins against us because they are forgiven. We no longer stand in sin, we now stand in the forgiveness that Jesus has won for us.

Jesus crushed the head of the devil on Calvary, destroying the power he had through sin and death, forever. But in doing so, the devil would win a small victory. Everyone knows that a snake can strike even after its head has been cut off. As the power of the devil, the head of the devil was crushed, he would strike the heel of Jesus who was crushing him. The devil would win a battle when Jesus suffered and died. For a moment the pain of sin and death would affect someone and it would be terrible pain and suffering. It would not be us, it would be Jesus. That victory would only be for a moment, only a small battle. Jesus would rise again to announce his victory to all people.

The devil continues to fight on like those soldiers who refuse to admit that the war has been won. He continues to battle against the Lord and against his faithful until the last trumpet sounds. As we continue in this world, we fortify ourselves in these battles as Jesus did, with the Word. Jesus is the offspring of the woman that God spoke of so many years ago that destroys the devil's power. Even though the devil may want to continue to fight the battles, Jesus has won the war.