

“Can trust be restored?” Genesis 3:1-16.

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” But 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.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

In this advent season we remember the first coming of Jesus and look forward to His return in glory. Meanwhile we meditate upon and rejoice in Jesus’ birth and consider what does it mean for us? During these three Wednesdays in Advent, we will reflect on three gifts He brings us, namely, trust, peace and hope. Today, let’s reflect on trust.

Can trust that is once broken be restored? What do you think? And what would it take to restore it? I guess, it depends on what kind of trust. What about our trust in God?

Let’s go back to the very beginning.

Our first parents lived in a wonderful communion and harmony with the Triune God. Walking in the garden of Eden. Enjoying the abundance of God’s creations. Conversing with their Creator face-to-face. We can’t even begin to imagine how good it was. Even our benevolent Creator gave His verdict that it was “very good”.

But this state of blessedness didn't last. The ancient enemy couldn't bear the blessings that God's favourite creatures were enjoying and being a liar and murdered from the beginning, he plotted to destroy us.

Not with open violence, but with lies and trickery that would separate our first parents from the most precious treasure they had, their fellowships with the very source of life, their benevolent Creator.

"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

The serpent just slightly twisted what God had said. Then Eve just added a little bit to what God had said. "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."

"Neither shall we touch it?" Adam just neglected a little bit His responsibilities of keeping and guarding the Word of God. And that was enough, the trap was laid. "You will not surely die. That's not what this is about."

There is something entirely different, something sinister at play. This God, He is not what you think He is. He is not as generous and gracious as you may think He is. He is not as caring as you believe. He is not as trustworthy as it may appear.

In fact, let me tell you. He is lying to you. He is hiding good things from you. The best things. He is keeping you down. He has put those restrictions on you. He has robbed you of your freedom. You could be so much more. You could know so much more. You could do so much more. You could be like gods yourself!"

"For God knows that when you eat of [the tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The same voice still speaks in our hearts. That is true. That is how we all naturally tend to think about God. Even today. "We can't trust Him. He wants to take good things from us. Our freedom, our choice, our autonomy."

Do you see what the enemy did? What he still does today? He breaks our trust. In that one person who is truly worthy of our trust. Whom we could trust with everything. Our God... our Creator.

And so... by speaking lies, by giving this false testimony trust was broken. Trust between our Creator and our first parents. What can you do when trust is broken? You can't just erase what has happened. You can't go back in time.

Think about relationships. Once you are told that someone has deceived you, robbed you of what could have been, even if all of that is false and comes from a lying heart... How can you fix it? Words will not do the job.

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Of course, you can say: "Yes, but that is not true. I am a good guy. I am doing what is best for you. The other one is lying, not me, I am honest and innocent." Words will not do the job. Not enough.

Our trustworthy God and loving Lord in His great wisdom knew this. More was needed. And that is exactly what He had planned to do. More. Not just words. He gave the ancient promise to our first parents.

That what was broken will be fixed again. That it will cost. The price will be too high for anyone to pay, but that He, the Son of God the Father will take care of it. Millennia later, in the fullness of time, He came to fulfill His promise.

As the Holy Spirit put it: "The Word became flesh." The eternal Son was born as a baby. The Almighty came to reveal just how much He values us, just how much He is willing to do for us, how far to go, how much to sacrifice to restore what was broken, just how much we can trust Him. He came to regain our trust.

The Son through whom everything was created, who walked in the garden, whose reputation was destroyed by the lying enemy, has revealed not with words only, but with His very actions, with His very life, with His very death that you can trust Him. He lays down His life so that you would trust Him and put your life in His hands.

Isn't this amazing?! "Hey, God, what will you do to convince me that I can trust you?" "I will come to you as a vulnerable human being, I will serve you, I will give up my life so that you can live, while you are still my enemy, this is what I will do to convince you."

This is what He did. For us. For you. So that you would trust Him. Completely. He is the Lord over everything; all authority is in His hands. We lost the life, true life in that wonderful garden, because we were deceived and lost our trust in our God.

Now He has lost His life, so that we can regain our trust and with this trust also true life, not in that gorgeous garden anymore, but in New Heavens and New Earth where our God Himself will again dwell among us.

This is more certainly true. You can trust the Triune God. You can trust Jesus. He has truly earned it, not with His words only, but with His actions.

Actions which brought you life.

Amen.