

Waiting for His Arrival and the Storyline of the Bible

"The Garden and the Fall Speak to the Hero's Arrival"

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

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Prayer:

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (<http://www.bcponline.org/>)

Read: Genesis 1:26-30; 2:15-25; 3:8; 15, 21

The Bible is a story written by God with Himself as the lead character. At the core of the Story is the relationship God has within Himself as a Trinity and His desire to share this relationship with that which He creates.

The Story is based on a simple, yet profound idea that within the Trinity there is communion and companionship. This relationship speaks of intimacy and transparency. It is marked by ease and freedom. There is no fear of discovery or exposure, only delight and knowing. There is a freedom within the Trinity that is incomprehensible to our fallen state (However, we will get to this in just a moment). There is no need of restraint or fear of exposure. There is only love, acceptance and service. The joy that marks this relationship is a result of complete harmony within oneself and with one another.

This same joy was the goal of God in creating. He created so that what He created might exist in harmony with Him. He chose to share this union, marking the Trinity with that which He created. The design of creating humanity was so that we might experience the consequences of unhindered fellowship with one another and with their God.

The opening scenes of Genesis 1 and 2 speak to this. Part of the image and likeness of God (1:26) is the joy of entering into unrestricted union with others. **God transferred this capacity to mankind so that they might know and experience what He already enjoys.** In those opening statements the Creator and created relationship is noted. God speaks and man is to listen and obey. His call for them to fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it (1:28) is a blessing from Him. As Creator, God transfers to His people the same rights His position gives Him. Notice how the *Good News Translation* captures this idea.

Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; **they will be like us and resemble us.** They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." (Genesis 1:26; *Good News Translation*).

Like God, we are to create, subdue and have dominion over that which is created. The Hebrew word for "dominion" occurs only twice in Genesis, and it means to rule over or to subjugate (1:26, 28). The clear meaning of this word is "to put in charge of."

And God blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. **I am putting you in charge of** the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. (8; *Good News Translation*).

All of this speaks to God's desire to share Himself with His people. As much as finite humanity can process the infinite God, God "blesses" them so that they might know Him and enjoy Him forever.

When God calls Adam to express his dominion over the animal world and subdue it by naming each of the parts, at the end of the process there is something that is empty within him (2:18-25). It becomes evident there is nothing created that corresponds to Adam's essence. This deficiency within non-personable creation is notable. God allows Adam to experience this solitude of being so that he will come to comprehend just how wonderful relational intimacy can be. For humanity to fully grasp the degree of intimacy enjoyed within the Trinity God creates for Adam a counterpart who is like him in every way . . . but uniquely different (2:20). All of this is a shadow of something greater. The shadow gives him a taste of what awaits him in his relationship with God.

The relationship humanity has within the context of marriage and with other image bearers, shadows the larger truth. It is to provide a foretaste of something far more glorious. The greater truth and more glorious experience can only be satisfied by and in God. **It is the itch that must be scratched, and only God can do the scratching.** It is what Augustine called, "Restless." Consider the larger context of His statement, "Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

"Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end. And man, being a part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee, man, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that Thou "resistest the proud, " - yet man, this part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee. **Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.** Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first, to call on Thee, or to praise Thee; and likewise to know Thee, or to call upon Thee.

Oh! how shall I find rest in Thee? Who will send Thee into my heart to inebriate it, that I may forget my woes, and embrace Thee my only good? What art Thou to me? Have compassion on me, that I may speak. What am I to Thee that Thou demandest my love, and unless I give it Thee art angry, and threatenest me with great sorrows? Is it, then, a light sorrow not to love Thee? Alas! alas! tell me of Thy compassion, O Lord my God, what Thou art to me. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." So speak that I may hear. **Behold, Lord, the ears of my heart are before Thee; open Thou them,** and "say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." **When I hear, may I run and lay hold on Thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me die, lest I die, if only I may see Thy face.**" (St. Augustine of Hippo, Confessions, 1,1.5)

It was (and is) God's custom to visit Adam and Eve during the day. The communion He enjoyed as Trinity was to be enjoyed by His creation. Each day His arrival was looked to with expectancy and joy. Adam and Eve loved His arrival and waited with anticipation and elation. This is something from which they need not hide or fear. Yet something happened that broke the trust and crushed the innocence. Adam and Eve stopped listening, and rather than enjoy what God gave chose their own means of "scratching the itch."

Their rejection of God's direction and the pursuit of their own severed the once harmonious relationship. It is sin that now marks the relationship between God and His people. Sin becomes the obstacle that is insurmountable by human means. It is only after the fact that Adam and Eve realize that paradise is now lost. Yet it isn't the paradise of the garden but rather that of the soul that is lost. No longer will they enjoy a relationship with God that is unmarked by fear and anxiety. What God enjoys within Himself, mankind will never know again . . . until God sets things right.

God speaks to this in a **promise** and a **picture**. The promise is found in Genesis 3:15.

I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; **he will bruise your head**, and you will bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15; *The Complete Jewish Bible*).

The picture is found in Genesis 3:21.

ADONAI, God, made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21; *The Complete Jewish Bible*).

Both the promise and the picture speak to something better. From the promise, God gives a picture. What humanity does through their rebellion against and rejection of God, God begins to set aright. Both the promise and the picture are put in play so that His people will long for His arrival. He is still meeting with His people, yet there is something more. There is coming a day when His promised seed will fully and finally crush the head of the serpent, whereby removing sin and its offspring. But that day had not yet come, thus the promise and the picture.

Like Adam and Eve we have been fashioned in the image and likeness of our God, thus enabling us to enjoy communion with Him and with one another. Tragically so, this fellowship is marred by sin, and it is sin that prohibits us from entering into any and all relationships without fear or anxiety. It is sin that causes us to live protected lives. It is sin that empowers us to be condemnatory and judgmental of others. It is sin that produces within us all elements of darkness that exclude and spoil our relationships. Thus we wait for His arrival, when He will purge from us this wickedness so that we might once more enjoy His presence anew.

May our lives be marked by joy at His daily arrival, and may we have an enduring longing for His full and final presence. In Jesus name we wait and long, Amen.