

July 11, 2021 The Consequences Genesis 3:17b-24

Dearly Beloved;

The Province of Ontario, has announced the intention of our moving to stage 3 of the reopening strategy. As a result, I will be asking the Clerk of Session to poll the elders, concerning returning to in-person worship. If a positive decision is made, we could be back together on Sunday the 25th. If that occurs, the information will be posted on the church sign, and I will announce it by this note next weekend. Because it is summer, it may not be the case that you will get a phone call. I will be continuing to post the sermon on the web page, and the link to The Sermon From The Dining Room Table. Also be aware, we may be meeting in the sanctuary, but the temperature will be the deciding factor as to whether or not we meet in the Church Hall. We will be doing our best to socially-distance, and masks will be required because we are inside and therefore sharing the air. If we are in the Hall, we will try to have windows and the doors open. The usual procedure of documenting your presence will be necessary for some time. The good news is that we have not had a new case of Covid-19 for a number of days in our area. One person is in hospital as a result of the pandemic at this time in our Health District. This information was on local radio and is available on the internet.

Barbara had her staples removed during this past week. She is doing the majority of her walking with a walker (around the house), but she went with me to Zwick's Park this morning for coffee with a group of friends and

managed by holding my arm and using her cane. Progress is being made. I am grateful for your expressions of support, and your prayers.

So....let us turn to the Word. Let us pray;
Lord our Lord, how excellent is YOUR name in all the earth. As we read and consider the content of this Bible passage, bless us with the insight of YOUR Spirit. Feed us for life here on earth and life everlasting. In Jesus name, Amen.

Sin has consequences. The Scriptures remind us of that reality over and over again. And the passage described as Genesis 3: 17b (the second half of the verse) to verse 24 describes in basic terms some of those consequences. When I talk about sin, I do not do that to make you feel more guilty. In fact what I want to occur, is that you might be made aware there is hope for you, your kin, your friends, and in fact the whole world. It is true that sin is a much more dynamic force than our simply having done something wrong. To use modern slang, it is a game changer. It changes everything. It is like the result of never doing housework. The sink becomes full of dirty dishes, dust bunnies start showing up everywhere, and the laundry piles up, and the garbage does not get taken out. It fouls our whole home-space.

Can you tell that I have been doing the housework as Barbara is recovering from her knee surgery? Barbara and I have always done some household chores together, there are some that I do exclusively, and some that

have been her turf. During this time of recovery, I have had a fresh insight into the work that goes into doing all that stuff. And there is an urgency about getting certain things done daily.

There is hope for you and for me, because we do learn not to repeat some of our missteps in life. And the grace of God is far greater than we tend to believe. He forgives when we seek forgiveness and trust Jesus to have accomplished the very thing for which he said He came among us. But it also good to know and understand why some things, details of daily living and the world around are as they are. This morning's reading lists what has happened to alter the set of life because the fall occurred. The sin of Adam, was his choosing to do that which God forbade. The result is not simply that he ate something he shouldn't have, and found, that while it tasted good at the time, it made his belly ache. The ground which he has become accustomed to tending as a garden, a farm, is cursed by his disobedience. It suddenly becomes "painful toil" to work it. To cultivate it. To plant it. To harvest it.

The work makes his body ache. His muscles complain. His heart rate increases because the fact is, he is afraid he won't get all the work done in time to grow his food. He fears the rains will not come to germinate the seeds. He fears that come harvest time weather and other conditions of survival will make it impossible to take in a great enough harvest to see him and his family through to the next one. So what really happens is the workload goes up, his body complains, and he learns to worry about everything that could

go wrong. He harbours a suspicion in his heart that he is alone here. If he doesn't get it done, no one will.

One of the consequences of the fall, is that weeds become part of the picture of gardening, and farming. He can work the ground and plant for a crop, but when those good seeds germinate so do a bunch of others. The weeds compete for space with his vegetables and grain. The fact is he has to pull out the weeds. OOPS! The fact is he has to do it carefully or he pulls up the roots of his carrots, and loses portions of his grain crop. It is not as easy to till the ground and grow the garden as it was before the fall occurred. The sun seems hotter. He sweats a lot. In fact, he starts to smell of the work he works at. He needs to have a bath to stand being himself.

And notice this, some of the weeds are like thistles. They hurt his fingers, his hands. And that thing called allergies, enter the picture. He reacts negatively to some of the things he has to remove from his garden. They tear his skin and fog up his breathing. Life gets tedious.

Then he starts to age. There literally comes a time when he simply cannot manage on his own to grow a garden and care for the livestock. Arthritis and rheumatism. And heart failure. Yes, he ages and the body gives out. His body is buried and returns to the dust from which it was made. God provided him with clothing once. He now has to create the replacements because the clothing wears out. And as the seasons change he needs more and warmer stuff. The real fundamental change is

that he is no longer living in paradise. And while he may think he needs to get back to the garden there is no going back. The gates on that option closed when he disobeyed his Creator, his Saviour, his Comforter.

Yes, he has family. His wife is with him and remains at his side. They have children along the way. But the joy one ought to have in family is affected by something else. Each member of the clan has his or her own priorities. Not everyone plays nice. Jealousy is real. If you read on, Cain attacks his brother and kills him. And for Cain, that leads to a life in exile, where he is not only cut off from his kin, but where he totally loses contact with the Lord his God. And life is tough. And life is cold. The rules of life get scrambled...people can do what they want...and chaos becomes a real part of daily life. It is tough. And it's a mess. And here is the detail we rebel against and attempt to deny. It is false that God has been mean to Adam and Eve and their heirs. The truth is they made choices. They decided to do life, their way. And their way, their chosen way, often our way, our chosen way, means there is more chaos than there needed to be. And we cannot get back to the garden. That road is closed.

But it is not the end of the story, it is the beginning. The insight into how things came to be...complicated.

Fast forward many generations. A girl named Mary, becomes the wife of Joseph. She is pregnant, and the

baby is not the result of Joseph being her husband. The baby born in Bethlehem is God's Son. Jesus. This is not a fairy tale, it is an undeniable fact of history. HE grows up, Joseph dies, and Jesus preaches about the kingdom of God. HE invites us to be born a second time. Born of the Spirit of the living God who made us. HE makes us a single promise. If we follow HIM, our sin will be forgiven. HE was crucified for making the offer. That too is a matter of history. And 3 days later, on the Sunday morning, HE was alive again, came out of the tomb and met with his followers, who were stunned that that could occur. They took it as the ultimate sign that HE was indeed, God's Son and the means of redemption...new life, filled with God's Spirit, a new heart, a new mind. Changed lives. There is hope for you and for me. Because it is true. Jesus is alive. Jesus saves. No we are not back in the garden, but our journey leads us home. And God our Father is waiting for us with open arms.

Let us pray;

Lord Jesus, we recognize that when we try to be masters of our own destiny, we make a bad job worse. Help us to let go and let YOU make us new and clean and forgiven. Help us to live for others, to receive even as we give. In Jesus name we pray. Amen