

## Fractured

Genesis 3, Matthew 4  
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Stephan K. Turnbull  
First Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, MN

Welcome to those of you who are with us in worship right now and also to those of you who are joining us via broadcast. Study guides...Bibles...Big God Story...

Did any of you do anything as a kid that got you in trouble? Something that you weren't supposed to do, and then tried to hide, but then you got found out? When I was a kid my parents had this crazy rule. We weren't supposed to play ball in the living room. Can you believe that? It was like living in prison. You can play ball anywhere outside you want, but no playing ball in the living room. So my friend and I were playing ball in the living room one day. It was some kind of beach ball or something and we were batting it around and trying to keep it from hitting the floor. And I think the floor might be the only thing it didn't hit. Oh – did I mention there was this really nice vase in the living room. A beautiful, expensive vase, over near the television. Who puts a nice vase in a living room where children play ball anyway? We were batting that ball around, and wouldn't you know it, but my friend hit the ball right into the vase, and shattered it, fractured it into a hundred pieces. And I know this might not shock you, but I didn't exactly tell my parents the truth. I tried to hide it. I put the pieces away like they wouldn't notice it was missing. (When does brain development in children pick up speed anyway?) So, I had I had done exactly what I had been told not to do, and it turned out exactly like I had been warned it would. ...That never happens, right? You ever take a shortcut at work and get caught? Ever tell a lie and get found out? Ever hide something from a spouse or a friend and get discovered?

We seem to come by it honestly. Our very first human parents had one rule. God told Adam and Eve – this whole garden is yours. Go wherever you want. Eat whatever you want, but there's this tree over there. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Whatever you do, don't eat that tree. It will not go well for you if you eat that tree. But there's a serpent in the garden, the serpent says to Eve, "Boy, doesn't the fruit on that tree look good? Wouldn't you love to eat some of that fruit?" And Eve tells the serpent that God warned them not to eat it, and the serpent says, "Oh, don't worry. Nothing bad will happen. God is such a party pooper. He says bad things will happen if you disobey him, but don't worry, you'll be jussst fine." So Eve takes the fruit that God warned them not to eat, then gives some to Adam who gladly sinks his teeth as well. Then there eyes were opened, and they realized, "Ohmigosh, we're naked. They were afraid of each other – or maybe they were afraid of themselves. So they sewed some leaves together and hid themselves from each other. And then they heard God coming, and they were afraid again so they hid from him too. The first human beings, created in the image of God, now quivering in the bushes, afraid of the God who made them.

The story had started out so well. Last week we learned the story of creation. And it was good. God saw all that he had made and it was very good. Like a potter who formed a

beautiful creation, a work of art, the perfect vase. But the vase was hardly finished before it was fractured by human sin.

And then as now, you can see the fractures most clearly in community. You can see it in relationship with others. Adam and Eve hid themselves from one another and started blaming each other as soon as God asked them what happened. They hid from God himself when they heard him coming in the garden. Just moments earlier they were enjoying life in the Garden, perfectly harmonious, no shame, no conflict. It was perfect. And then it wasn't. And we're living in that legacy. In our life stories, creation is the first chapter, but this is our 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. In the message today, we're going to look closely at the fractures in our relationships that need to be healed, but it's worth it to look at the breaks, the only reason this is more than an exercise in depression, and probably the only reason we can have the courage to do it honestly, is because we know that God has the power to heal them.

In fact, right in this very story, by the time this chapter is over, God is already promising to heal the wounds. He speaks to the serpent about the generations of humans to come, the offspring of Eve. In Genesis 3:15, God says to the serpent, **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. (Genesis 3:15)** That's the first time in the Bible that God promises to send a Savior. Looking back now, we know that's the first promise Jesus fulfilled. And it's because of that promise fulfilled, because of the healing and salvation we receive in Jesus that we can dare to look into the problem so squarely. The story shows us three fractures that need healing:

### **Fracture #1: Fear**

- We hide because we're afraid. And we've been doing it forever. When God called out to find Adam in the Garden, here's what Adam said: **He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Genesis 3:10**
- Pretty much all of us are hiding something. We hide stuff from other people because we're afraid of what they'd think of us if they knew the truth. Stuff we think or do or have done. Stuff we worry about it. We don't talk about it. We hide it.
- We hide in all kinds of ways. One of the most common ways to hide is to act like we're fine when we are so not fine. Ask somebody how they're doing and almost all the time, we'll say fine. (Or busy...) Either way it's a way not to tell people what's really going on with us. And we all know the rules of this game. When somebody hides behind the word "fine" we know that means we're supposed to look any deeper. But we also all know that we *have* to break the rules of the game if we going to have any real friendships. We're going to have to say, "No, seriously, how are you really?" And underneath it all, we know we need people to ask us this. ...By the way, have you ever seen the movie *The Italian Job*? I've never seen the original, just the remake from a few years ago. One of the guys asks another guy how he's doing. He says, "I'm fine." The first guy says you know what Fine stands for, right? Freaked Out, Insecure, Neurotic, Emotional.

Next time somebody tells you they're fine, listen more carefully and see if that's what they mean.

- The problem is when we hide ourselves from each other, the fracture between us gets deeper and we get farther apart from each other, and we won't let God heal it.
- This summer, a group of high school students from First Lutheran learned how much God can heal when we stop hiding. They went down to Big Stuf camp in Florida. They were there in a huge crowd of students from all around the country, and they had all been given finger lights in a dark auditorium. And the speaker asked them to hold up their light if they had ever had these certain experiences, the kind of stuff you don't usually admit in front of your friends. But they had the courage to tell the truth, to admit the fractures, and the experience of knowing they were not alone was the beginning of healing. A couple of them shared their stories on this video for you today. **Big Stuf video.**
- You're not fine. Nobody's fine. Can we just tell the truth here? We live in a story in which the beginning of human sin is chapter 2. That's our story. And if we'll tell the truth about it instead of being afraid of it, then we can stop hiding. And when we all come out of hiding, we'll know we're not alone and we'll get our breaks out in the open where God can heal them.

### **Fracture #2 Blame.**

And blaming is just another way of hiding, isn't it. In the Genesis story, God found his hiding humans and asked them what was going on. And in Genesis 3...

- **The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."** **Genesis 3:12-13** They blame each other. But as I read this passage, it looks to me like the problem isn't figuring out where the blame lies. It's assigning blame to the wrong place. Let me try to explain.
- Sometimes we blame others for everything thing that goes wrong with us. Do you do this? Have you ever heard a kid say "He hit me first" as if that excuses what they did next? Adults do this too. We blame other people for what we've done, for how we feel, for everything that goes wrong. We blame other people. And if they would just get their act together, then everything would be fine.
- But some people are more prone to make the opposite mistake. Some people will place all the blame for everything on themselves. Maybe you do this sometimes too. If only you had gotten there sooner. If only you had said the right thing. If only you were smarter. If only you had chosen differently...If only you would get your act together, then everything would be fine. But that's not really entirely true either, is it. You can't always make everything better.
- The Bible teaches us to see more deeply than this. The problem isn't totally other people; the problem isn't totally you either. At the very least, it's usually both of those things, but it's even more than that. The Bible shows us that there is a force in the world called sin. And in this story it's represented mostly by the serpent. And it works in other people – Eve got Adam to eat the fruit. And it works in us – both of them reached out their hands and took it. It's at work in all of us, but it is also outside us, working against God's good will in the world. There's a

serpent in the Garden. In world conflicts, broken relationships, failing marriages, in all kinds of trouble, there's a force at work that's bigger than us.

- And you need to know about it, and fight against it, and most of all, you need to know that your God is stronger. If we're going to see any healing of the sins in our lives that break our relationships and fracture our community then we've got to stop pretending that the problem is so small. As if everything would be better if other people would just clean up their act or if we ourselves would just try a little harder. Now both of those things probably do need to happen; we've got to take responsibility for what we all have done, but we also need to turn to God for healing and forgiveness and for the power to heal the fractures that we simply cannot heal without Him.

### **Fracture #3 Death**

- Death is the ultimate fracture, the ultimate relationship breaker. Death is the enemy that leaves us saying "I wish I could have told him. I wish I could have spent more time with her. I wish they were still here."
- In Genesis 2, God had warned his creatures, "**you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.**" **Genesis 2:17** The serpent told Eve that wasn't true, and she believed him. But the wages of sin is death, and in the chapters that follow there are these genealogies that most of us skip over –so and so begat so and so begat so and so...But then those genealogies say, so and so begat so and so, and then he died. And then he died. And then he died.
- Last week I was standing in the middle of Fort Logan national cemetery in Denver, Colorado. I took **this picture** while I was there. And I walked up and down the rows and read epitaph after epitaph on those stones. And after a while it sounded like "And then he died, and then he died, and then he died."

And if this second chapter of the story were the end the story, then friends, that would be the end of your story. "And then he died." "And then he died." "And then she died."

But remember the promise. You will strike his heel, but he will crush your head. According to the Gospels, Jesus faced the serpent. He was tempted too. Like a 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, Jesus is a new beginning for humanity, and was in the wilderness with the wild animals. And the Satan says to Jesus, "Don't worry, you could jump off this pillar and you'll be fine. You can trust me, you can do anything you want, and you'll be jussst fine" But this time the story turns out differently. Jesus is faithful one, even unto death, and even when satan strikes his heels and his two hands on the cross too, Jesus crushed the head of sin and death when the stone is rolled away and the old logic of the fractured world doesn't work anymore. Remember, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that's our story too. We have a chapter 2 in our story, but stories don't have to end like they begin, and if you are in Christ, then that is where our story is going. It is headed for resurrection and for a healing of all that has been shattered.

Just this past week, a member of our congregation sent me a video that illustrates this more beautifully than I could have imagined. It's a story of shattering and healing.

## **Porcelain unicorn video**

We've all been fractured. Some of us have felt crushed. You don't have to hide it. You don't have to blame anybody for it. You don't even have to fear death because of it. You can just tell Jesus about it, and let him put the pieces back together.

And the healing takes place in community. Sin fractured our community; Jesus puts it back together. The unicorn in the box was a cool thing, but it wasn't healing until they sat down together. Being a disciple of Jesus isn't just a "me and Jesus" thing. It's not just about healing what's inside my box. It's a "we and Jesus" thing. It's about putting God's world back together, beginning among the people who know Jesus.

What are the next steps of restored community that Jesus is leading you toward? Do you have some close Christian friendships where it's time to stop hiding and tell the truth together? Do you have some relationships that are hurting because somebody has been playing the blame game and it's time to stop?

Or maybe where you're at, you're ready to put yourself in a place where we can start to form those connections and start walking down the road to healing and community. Next steps for you in this church community might be an FLC 101 class if you're looking for a starting point or maybe one of our 201 classes or groups as a next step. Maybe today would be a good day to take step forward into a regular community group.

The Big God Story moves through a chapter of fracture and sinful alienation and broken relationships, but it moves toward a destination of grace and community and healing in Jesus Christ. That's our story.

**PRAY**