

Pastor Roy's sermon from June 10, 2018

Adam and Eve. Their names mean, "Groundling," or "Ground Man" and "She Who Lives"/"Of Life." Otherwise referred to as "The Man" and "The Woman." God is present in the garden. God has given instructions. But The Man and The Woman walk away from God's presence and ignore the instructions. They decide they can make their own decisions. They forget God's presence. They mistrust the power of mercy and peace. They are not mindful of the gift of God's presence and the power of relationships to guide them in decision-making. They value the fruit of creation above the Source of creation. They prioritize stuff over relationship. They forget that they are part of creation. Creation will now be at their disposal to do with as they please. Yes, they still know God's name. They can still pray and talk to the Creator. But to the extent that they continue to walk away from the presence of God, they will not know the **joy** of walking with God in God's creation.

Don't get distracted by the story. The truth of the story is not found in whether it happened. The truth of the story of The Woman and the Man is that it teaches us about ourselves. It reminds us that we tend to forget the life giving presence of God. It reminds us that we tend to substitute lots of things for God's presence and guidance. We are a distracted people. What we often refer to as "The Fall" is our constant temptation to ignore the life giving gift of God's love. We forget that we are called by God into relationship.

What difference does this presence of God make? The presence of God can save us from ourselves. Remembering God's presence helps us release our fearful greed, our obsession with making sure our future is secure. Obsessive thoughts get in the way of relationships. Family, friends, neighbors, animals, trees, all of creation. Living in the presence of God sets us free from having to make things work all by ourselves. So much of our lives is out of our control. Yet we spend so much energy thinking and acting as if it all depends on us. When we live in the presence of God we live in relationship to God and in relationship to all of God's beloved. We remember that we are **part** of creation. We remember to find our meaning in relationship to one another in the mystery of divine mercy at work. Our place in the world is *in relationship*, not in control. When we open ourselves to the merciful presence of God in our relationships, we will be filled with joy. We will know abundance.

The narrative of the Man and the Woman, of Eve and Adam, teaches us to beware substituting things for relationships. The presence of God sets us free to make decisions based not on scarcity but on the abundance of mercy.

Remember a few weeks ago, during the Easter season, we were thinking a good bit about resurrection. The resurrection of Christ and the promise of resurrection for all of us is the reason we don't need to have everything figured out. It's the reason we don't have to be in control. Why? In the end, the only thing that finally matters about our lives and us is that we are living into the **joy** of the resurrection by the mercy of God—not by our own strength.

Adam and Eve seek the forbidden fruit to give them the edge they need to overcome, but our only hope for eternal connections with God and all whom and which we love is found in the resurrection. It's not up to us. We fall into the grace of God. That is what the woman and the man learn at the end of this story--they receive clothes, the promise of lots of hard work, and finally, of an ongoing relationship with God as they entrust themselves to the Creator. As much as we are tempted to trust in our own ability to make a bright future for ourselves, our hope is to keep reminding ourselves to trust. I don't know about you, but I find that to be a great challenge! I know what I want to do, but I find myself sliding back into worry, anxiety, and trying to make things happen by myself.

The hope I have found is to open myself moment by moment to the presence of God who invites me to live by faith rather than by instinct and habit which leads to anxiety and frustration. Each day is a new opportunity to live in the **joy** of the resurrection—to live in freedom. God make us mindful to live by faith. Day by day. Thanks be to God. Amen.