

Sermon for June 7, 2015

“Everybody’s Doing It”

based on Gen. 3:8-15 and Mark 3:20-35

Political cartoon by Pat Oliphant: Pres. Nixon pointed our Pres. Johnson’s shortfalls, Pres. Johnson criticizing Kennedy, Kennedy pointed to Eisenhower, until finally they end up with Adam and Eve, who originally did it.

- Passing of guilt common – criminals, alcoholics, abusers, all of us blame others for our behavior
- Old Testament brings up basic question: What happens after we fall into temptation?
- Recall Genesis story
- For momentary pleasure, humanity saddled with guilt forever. Nakedness suggests shame, hiding reflects fear. What we experience when we disobey God.
- Who is ultimately responsible for our sin? Is it God who created us, or we who disobey?
- No one wants to admit to sin. Karl Menninger wrote “Whatever Happened to Sin?”, which concluded that sin is ever present in guilt and anxiety of people. People looking for ways to bail out, search for greener pastures, be like God.

Necessary task of Church is to remind people of their sin.

- We are all guilty, sin is universal, common to all people. That’s why we come to church, to confess our sin
- The happier task of Church is to spread the news that God forgives us. Provides answer to our basic problem in the life and death of Jesus Christ.
- In the Gospel, people questioned Jesus’ ability to forgive sin and exorcise evil spirits, but Jesus didn’t back down and continued.
- What began as rebellion against God ends with God covering our mistakes. Shame and fear is overcome with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. St. Paul tells us “So we do not lose heart, though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.”
- May not find that perfect paradise in this life, but God promises peace of mind and heavenly glory, much better than anything else offered today.

Our Choice is to continue in tradition of Adam and Eve, leading lives of guilt and always shifting blame to someone else, or break that cycle through faith in Jesus Christ, admitting our sin and receiving forgiveness.

One corollary: God seeks humanity, God takes the first step, God has reached out to restore us, reestablish the relationship. May we have the good sense to entrust our lives to this God who has shown this great love to you and me. Amen.