

I. Advent

“Jesus, The Seed”

Genesis 3:3-15

Our reading this morning comes from Genesis 3: 8-15. We're beginning in the middle of the story. The fall has just taken place, and now the Lord is emerging into the garden to meet with those who he has created.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool^[a] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”^[b] ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,

***“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.***

***¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^[c] and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”***

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Well, I'd like to start with just a brief introduction to this series, which means we need a brief introduction to the story of redemption. The story of redemption can be told in many ways. As we'll see over the course of this advent season, we can take the story of redemption and tell it in many ways, using different vignettes, different themes, and different threads. But ultimately, the story of redemption is the story that reveals how God is not merely creator, but is also

Redeemer of the world. And so that's what we want to do. We want to focus on this advent season, on the way in which God redeems us through Christ, who is born in his birth. We celebrate Christmas. So we have to start at the beginning. And here we have an opening scene right now singing about the events that are taking place before this text that we just read. God has just created the universe and he's created it just so. It's perfectly designed for abundant life. It's perfectly formed for thriving and for living and for abundance and for fullness. Or what in the Bible we call wholeness, right? Shalom. A completion. They have everything that they need light, air, soil, water, everything that you need for life. And it's all fresh and it's all new. And can you imagine what it was like on those first mornings? You know, morning even now feel still new and fresh. Imagine was like on the first morning. This creation is just getting used to itself.

Adam and Eve had it all. They even had a goal. They had a purpose. Okay, what was it? Work, have children, celebrate the Sabbath, fill the earth and subdue it. Don't eat from that one tree. Just the one tree. Everything else you can eat from. They had it all. Honestly, they had what we desire every moment of every day. What is the glory? They had beauty. They had harmony. They had belonging. A sense of belonging, of being a part of a greater thing than yourself. They had love the divine love, immediate communing with them. And ultimately that means these are all the ingredients of they had life. But you know how the story goes. There is another animal in the garden, the serpent.

Now, I would point out we don't know exactly why Moses, who's writing this for Israelites, draws out this fact that it's a serpent. Remember, he could have just said and Satan came around. The devil came and tempted her to think about it, that that's what happens when Jesus is tempted by the desert of the devil in the desert. It doesn't say like, what form Satan looked like. Was he a man or a shadow or something like that? Or or when the Satan comes before the Lord in the heavenlies in the book of Job, you don't see the form. Why does he select out this fact that it's a serpent? Okay, I'm just saying. What? Tell us that piece of information and there's got to be a reason for it.

And I think it helps to read this text as a text that Moses is writing for Israelites who are either about to leave Egypt in exile, or they just left Egypt in exile. And he's drawing out salient facts that will be important or interesting to them in their day. What is he telling them? The first enemy, right. The deceiver, the trickster, the one who tempts them and yet has nothing to offer.

He's a serpent. Israel, who's just been enslaved for all of these generations in Egypt, whose national animal is the serpent. And unless you miss it every time you meet with Pharaoh after a plague, he's probably wearing his headdress with his viper on top of it. And there's symbol being the Nile River, which is a serpent that reaches down into Africa and all of these things.

What is he saying? The serpents have been giving us a hard time for a while, right? They've been opposing us for a long time. And what happens? The serpent comes out and he says, what did the Lord really say? It's really a theological question. At the end of the day, he asks her, do you remember what God's Word is?

How do you apply it now into this current situation? What did God really say about the fruit? Can you eat the fruit, all of the fruit, or just one of the fruit of candy? What can you eat again? Eve. And so it draws her attention to the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And she looks at it.

And here we have something happen even before she takes a bite, it says in verse six of chapter three, it says that she looks at the fruit and she sees it. It's a delight. It's good to her eyes, and it looks like it could give you wisdom. It notices a shift that's even happening right there. She's going from the way she used to be, where she is trusting she is in abundant communion with her Savior, her Lord, who has made her, who has given her everything she can possibly want on earth, the God of life, who has given her abundant life.

And she thinks for the first time ever she thinks, but I may have a better way. I know God is Lord and that all of this is made by him. But here's a little place next to this tree where I want to create my own little fiefdom, where I'm making up the rules and I can see that it's a good thing.

I don't know what he says. I don't know if. I don't know if he knows what he's talking about. The fruit looks good in her eyes, and so she takes it and she eats it, and she gives it to Adam. And suddenly, for the first time in human history, humanity finds itself alienated, alienated from each other, alienated from creation, and most horrifically alienated from the God of whose light of life, in whose image they are made.

In the singular act of rebellion against all that is worthy, because they want that immediate desire to be met, which is to eat of the fruit, and that singular act of rebellion. Sin enters the world, and the world is never the same. You see, when the fall happens, it is ingrained in human psyche, in the human psyche.

It is a memory that ages but never fades. It's encoded for us here in the Word of God. But even if we didn't have it right here in the scriptures, we'd see it every single time we turned inwardly into our own hearts. Or whenever we look outwardly into the world of pain and strife and oppression that we see around us.

You see these opening chapters of the Scripture really are the first chapter of the story of human history, or perhaps, as one theologian calls it, it's a Prolog to the kingdom of God's coming to earth, his grand design to restore humanity, to bring the world to adjust in the good end where all things are set to right, where injustice is conquered, where oppression is undone,

where corruption is washed away, and finally to establish his kingdom throughout the whole of the cosmos.

Can you see how everything, everything in the Bible and everything in human history springs out of this one moment in time with a woman, takes of the fruit, bites it, and hands it to her husband, who does likewise. Everything comes out of this moment. Everything changes. So for this advent series, we're going to be looking at a series of themes, really threads that we could just pull if we could just pull the threads and they're going to show us different aspects, different storylines, and the broader story of redemptive history that shows us how Christ's incarnation that we celebrate at Christmas, how that really does bring about God's plan of salvation for the world.

Each one of these little vignettes are chosen because they touch on major movements of redemption, the need for an offspring that we just read about here. The need for a seed is the word that's in the Hebrew, a seed of the woman to crush the head of the seed of the serpent, or the knee that we'll talk about next week of a son, a covenant partner, one who can stand under God, who can hear the teaching of the father and can respond faithfully well, the need of a serpent who will serve a servant, rather, who will humbly give of himself, so that we might be forgiven and saved, or the need for a savior, a

rescuer who comes to win us back so that we might truly live the seed, the son, the servant, and the Savior that is Jesus Christ. So for our first theme this Sunday, we're talking about the seed, the need for the offspring of the woman, right? The need for the seed of the woman. But as we read in the story, it's really a story about two seeds, isn't it?

So notice where the text picks up and picks up right in the middle of this action. The fall has just happened and the Lord is coming to meet with his people. And it's almost like he's going through this habit that they had already begun a kind of lifestyle habits they had begun to observe in the garden where he would walk in the cool of the day, and they would come out and meet him.

In the text, it doesn't say the cool of the day. It says the wind of the day, which is interesting. You know what? What does he mean about the wind of the day? Well, it turns out that Israel has a certain kind of weather pattern that it seems that Moses is using to explain what it was like in the garden and the weather pattern that we have here.

It seems to be reflecting this weather pattern in Israel that's very similar. If you've ever been there to California, particularly Southern California, if you've ever been to Southern California, you know what it's like, though it matters where the wind is blowing from, and depending on where the wind is blowing from, it kind of matters what kind of weather you're going to have that day.

I can remember hiking one time outside of San Diego, and the wind turned around and it was coming from the east. Okay, if you ever felt that eastern wind in Southern California, the Santa Ana's blowing off of Death Valley flow, blowing off the desert, and it's like in the middle of the day, it's a perfectly normal day. It's like somebody turned on a big cosmic heater, and it's just blowing hot air on you.

As a matter of fact, the same thing would happen in Israel if you look just to the east of Israel. You see again that it's a desert. And so when the wind would blow out of the east, it would come in. And this hot blasting wind would come. Sometimes it would be so powerful it could, like, shrivel up your plants in your garden or on your farm.

You need to be careful about the hot eastern wind. As a matter of fact, that's probably why the Psalmist and Jonah and elsewhere use the hot eastern wind as a metaphor for God's judgment when it blows on you, right? It can burn you up. And yet another thing can happen in the afternoon. As often happens in California, the winds will kick around until they're coming from the west.

They're coming in off the Pacific. And instead of having a heater blowing on you, now you have a, an air conditioner blowing on you, and then it's just cool of the day, and you can walk out after a hot day, after a hot noon, and you can sit on your porch. You can talk to friends. It's quite pleasant.

It seems like the Lord is still going through the old habit that they had had before the fall. And yet everything has now changed. And he can tell because as he comes out to meet them, they're hidden. They're covering themselves in foliage, using these fig leaves to try to weave them together and make some kind of sorry underwear to cover up their embarrassment and their shame.

Another emotion that they had never felt before. But now, realizing that they had done what they had done, realizing that they had no place before the Lord, but shamed. And this is where we think the story should end. I here's the God of life. You've rejected him. You've taken your own way. So if you're taking away that is not the way of life, then what does that mean?

You were going to death. That is the proper place that you should go to. It's what you've chosen. He's giving you your heart's desire. Adam and Eve, okay? He is a God of abundance and life. Now you're going to die. That'll be the end of it. Maybe he'll start over again. Maybe he'll do something else. Who knows? But the story clearly seems to be done.

And yet it isn't. They continue to live. But as they learn this living will be a sign. It will be marked by conflict and alienation, rejection and alienation between each other. And we see it already as the woman blames the serpent and the man blames the woman. A loving relationship between man and woman are now torn apart. They find now alienation from the world around them,

from creation and most terrifically obviously, alienation from God himself as they enter into a state of spiritual death.

But notice where God starts. It starts with the serpent. He says there's going to be conflict now. The serpent will now no longer move about as he had been moving about. And we have to admit, we just don't know. Okay, but now he will be down in the dust. He will be slithering in the dirt. This will now put him into a position of being underneath, or being below, or being cursed above.

Right? If you're cursed above, that means you're brought low, cursed above all of the other livestock and animal life that we find now. The serpent is the lowest. As a result of this, put down low in the dust and the dirt, and that creates the occasion for the nature of this conflict, because now that they have entered into this world of sin, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent will forever now be in conflict with one another, they'll be in conflict with one another.

As a matter of fact, you could actually you wouldn't be going too far to see this. The rest of the Bible is about the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, who will win. And that's where we get this little glimmer of hope. It's faint hope. It's very faint hope. It's a matter of fact.

On first blush, if blush. If you read it, it looks like this is a stalemate battle, right? Moses even uses the same verb. Okay, he's going to bruise your head. He's going to bruise your heel. Seed of the woman will bruise the head of the seed of the serpent. Seed of the serpent will bruise the heel of the seed of the woman.

This is a conflict. You're just going to be bruising each other back and forth. But there's no sense of an end unless. Unless you consider the location of the wound. Or what can a serpent do? He can strike at your heel. He can attack your heel. He can wound your heel, but a wound to the heel. It may be an annoyance, may be painful, and it may harass you.

It may even leave you crippled. Walking with a limp. Okay, but it's not going to kill you. But when you think about a bruise to the head. Now we're striking at the vitals. This is the reason why you're early translations and actually the way many of us remember this verse when we remember does that he will bruise your heel and you will crush his head. But it's actually the same verb. It's bruise and bruise. But when you bruise the head, that's a fatal wound. So this is an early glimmer. We think the story is going to be over, but the story is not over. There's this conflict, but we had this early suggestion that the conflict will have a conclusion that one day there will be a fatal blow to the head of the seed of the serpent. As a matter of fact the subtle hint is noticed very early on in Christian history. So the Christians begin to refer to this passage as the protevangelium. This is the first giving of the gospel. One day, the seed of the serpent's

head will be bruised by the seed of the woman. Now it's interesting. As we keep reading the story, it's clear that there seems to be this idea that, this battle is going to maybe happen in the very next generation. Okay, sometimes you have to read the Bible and try to clear your head about what you know, that you know that this is just chapter three of a 66 book, compendium of redemptive history.

Okay. Forget that. You know that and say, well, okay, I guess then that Eve is going to have a son and the son will be in conflict with the seed of the serpent, and that battle will be fought out over the course of the next generation. And what's interesting is that actually something like that happens now. Now, Eve has both of the sons, right? Cain. She names him Cain because she acquired him from the Lord, and that his name sounds like that acquiring. And then she has another son whose name is, Abel. Okay. Which is the same word that the author of Ecclesiastes uses when he says, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Do you know that this idea of it being a puff of air and it's maybe that Abel is named after the fact that his life itself is a kind of wisp of air. He just kind of comes on the scene, then he's gone. So if you have Cain and Abel and there's one who is righteous and faithful and there's one who is murderous and envious. Oh, by the way, the one who's envious and murderous is a farmer. The one who's righteous and faithful is a shepherd. Again, let's just jump back and check with Moses and the Israelites. Right. And what is he telling them? You shepherd Israelites who have been oppressed all these years, forced to work in the farms of the Nile Delta by those Egyptian farmers. They've been doing it to us for a long time. The farmers have been oppressing the shepherds for a long time. Again, why does Moses spend the time telling us what kind of sacrifice they offered?

So we have the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent at odds. And what happens right away? Right away, the seed of the serpent strikes out to crush the head of Abel, and he succeeds. He succeeds. It seems as if evil has won. And we go, well, what about the protevangelium, right? What about this first giving of the gospel? The Lord says, I know, I know, and he gives us another one. We have Seth, and Seth comes. And now that begins us, this genealogy that continues on. Go back and read early Genesis is fascinating. You have this genealogy of righteous and unrighteous. You have two different lamb. One is murderous and one who kills even more than Cain kills. Then you have another one who seems to be righteous. And then you've got Enoch, who's righteous. He finds favor in the side of the Lord. And you have this interesting passage which says, and he was not. And we still even know what that means. But he kind of translates a perhaps or something enters into the presence of the Lord.

And then you have Noah. And actually Noah is the only seat of the woman. Everybody else is a seat of the serpent. And here we learn two things. One of them is this that God will step in from time to time to level the playing field between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, because it looks like there's no way Noah can stand.

And the Lord says, flood, here's your chance. So Noah merges with his family from the flood. He's given the same command that Adam and Eve were given to fill the earth. So second Adam, maybe. Maybe now we'll do it right. The Lord's even stabilized creation. Daytime and nighttime seed time and harvest. Hot and cold. Maybe. Maybe finally, we'll get it right this time.

And then we learn another difficult truth about this conflict.

Noah, the faithful. Noah, the one who finds favor in the eyes of the Lord, know the one who emerges out to start out a new humanity, like a new Adam. After the flood falls prey to the temptation of wine and drunkenness and the things that come with that Noah, whose name means comfort, finds comfort in false places. And so we learn something else about the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

And that's this. There's no perfectly idealized seed of the woman. It's a matter of fact. There's a tendency for the seed of the woman to take on the role from time to time, of the seed of the serpent. Next person we get is Abraham, who's given these redemptive promises to bless the nations of the earth through his family.

And yet what does he do? He tries to bring about those blessings in his own way again by seeking out an Egyptian handmaiden. This check back with Moses and the Israelites again, right? I point out that Hagar from Egypt says it. They're tempting. He's telling them, you'll want to go back, but don't. Don't give in to the temptation.

And then we speed forward to Jacob. Jacob, who is named Israel and yet is a swindler, a liar, and a cheat who has to be broken by a greater swindler, Laban, in order to receive the blessings, or than his son Joseph, who receives the blessing for the family so that they don't die in the famine. And yet he doesn't actually get to have the covenant blessing of the King coming out of his line.

No, that goes to Judah, who is the serial, philanderer in the family. You see, we learn quickly that from Adam to Noah, from Abraham to Judah, from David to Daniel, it becomes evident that there is no seed of the woman who is perfect, who is idealized. There's no true hero in the Old Testament. They all fall short.

We come to realize that the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent seems to be a battle that takes place even within the hearts of the protagonists of the biblical story. I'm reminded of the quote, the famous quote by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He had been imprisoned, in the 1940s in Russia because of some letters that he had written that were critical of the Soviet regime.

And so he was thrown into gulags, where he was basically suffered and always on the edge of death for the next ten years. And he wrote about it and reflection. And one of the things he

noticed is this is that the evil that we want to be always out there actually isn't all out there. He writes this gradually over these ten years in the gulags.

Gradually, it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart and through all human hearts. This line shifts inside us. It oscillates with the years and even within hearts, overwhelmed by evil. One small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts there remains an unknown, uprooted small corner of evil.

Shall we all have this temptation to say that while the battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is happening out there, the serpent out there, and the seed of the woman, obviously I'm doing the right thing. It's easy to start to think, well, the seed of the serpent is this happening in parties out there, or in nations or in political movements, you know, or after last night, some of you might say, the seed of the woman has now taken on the form of an elephant, or some might say it's taken on the form of an eagle.

But what we learn in Scripture is that the battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent takes place in the mundane. It's in the daily thoughts and actions of every human. It's in the fallen banality of evil that we see around us, both in the microcosm of the human heart and in the macrocosm of human society.

So when we come to the advent season, we talk about the advent, the coming of the Lord, that the arrival of the offspring, of the seed of the woman. We have to remember this, this great conflict that's been raged over the course of redemptive history is now coming to an end. Advent and Christmas, for that matter, is a victory march. It's a victory march because the birth of Jesus signals that God is now fulfilling the promise that he made all the way back there in Genesis three eight through 15, all the way back there when he was still just delivering the immediate curse following the fall, where he said, one day, one day the head of the serpent will be bruised by the seed of the woman.

You see, there is no true hero in the Bible except one.

Remember this. We should remember this whenever we're lifting up Daniel and saying, be like a Daniel out there doing what you're doing, or be a David or be an Abraham. That's all fine. Okay. That's fine. It's fine to use the Bible uses them to as metaphors, as kind of exemplars of behavior. Hebrews 11 is a good example. When you list the heroes of the old Testament. And yet don't ever forget there is no true hero in the Bible except one. Jesus of Nazareth. And he is truly born of a woman. This is important. It's important, as we say, in the Creed, okay, born of the Virgin Mary. It's important when Mary gives birth to the seed of the woman, as it were. What is she doing? She's being a kind of kind of second Eve. She's being like a last Eve. We're finally getting the seed that we need. Eve couldn't deliver it with Abel and with Seth. We didn't

see to Noah. It wasn't an Abraham, wasn't a Jacob, wasn't a Moses. Wasn't an Aaron, wasn't in David, wasn't in Hezekiah and Josiah, the ones we thought would win. Wasn't John the Baptist. We finally get the hero that we need.

See, we rightly make a good bit about the divinity of Christ. It's important to point out Jesus is God, and a lot of our apologetics are about that, because that's a remarkable thing that Jesus Christ, the historical man, is also God. And yet we should never forget this, the absolute importance, the central city of the importance that Jesus must be a man, he must be human.

He must be flesh and blood born of a woman. Because that's the only way we're going to crush the head of the seed of the serpent is if the seed of the woman does the crushing. Our situation was so bad that nobody could get us out of it except ourselves. Okay, I know that doesn't say, like, wait a minute.

That's not the Christianity. Yeah. That's Christianity. That's why he had to be born of a woman. Because we had to have a man, a human, come and do it. Jesus Christ, very God and very man. And yet perfect in righteousness, unlike Abel and Seth and Noah, because he's conceived of the Holy Spirit, that's how he's going to do it.

I notice how he crushes the seed of the serpent's head throughout his life, who resist the devil right away in the in the Garden Temptations, he stands before him and casually disregards him with the Word of God. He cast out demons who, when they meet him, as we talked about last week, when they meet him, they don't say, okay, Jesus, let's fight.

What do they say? Why have you come to persecute us before the given time? But they know the battles over. He rebukes the Pharisees, but when he does so, he's not just rebuking religious hypocrites. He actually says, you are liars and your father is the father of lies. What is he saying? He's saying you are the seed of the serpent.

By rebuking them, by crushing them in debate, he is crushing the head of the serpent. And then when the serpent who enters into Judas, expediting his judgment as he then betrays Jesus, thinking this last gambit will be it. This will be like with Seth, or with me rather with Abel. We'll just crush his head. We'll crush him on the cross.

The last gambit of Satan is a terrible failure. It's a terrible failure because Jesus Christ turns the cross, the Roman cross, into a weapon against Satan, sin, and death. He turns the grave into a new garden, out of which sprouts resurrection life. And the seed of the serpent is crushed. But here's the most remarkable thing about the way the serpent Crusher does his work. He doesn't do it all individually. He actually chooses to do it through his people, who he will indwell with the spirit of serpent crushing. Okay, notice it happens all or already while Jesus is on earth. In Luke ten, we see Jesus send out the apostles. Remember, he had his three close friends and he had his 12 kind of broader apostles, and he had 72 apostles that he sends out.

And they go out into the world proclaiming the gospel, and they come back and they say, Jesus did you did you did you know that we can cast out demons? They seem surprised by it. I mean, this is never happened before. Jesus. We have power over even spiritual beings. You remember what Jesus says? It says, I saw Satan cast out of heaven like a lightning.

Think about it. It's not a it's not a slow. It's not coming out of heaven like him. It's okay. Some people would say, is that the origin story of Satan? No. I think it's actually exactly what Jesus is saying. It is when he sends out the apostles, he is going about the work of crushing the head of the serpent.

One of the things that had to happen is that the serpent had to be cast out of heaven. I don't know exactly what all of that means. In job one, we see Satan entering into heaven conversing with God, but he seems to have somehow lost that status. So he no longer has standing in heaven. He knows no longer has the power to deceive the nations.

And we see that immediately after Jesus sends the spirit. Because what happens were you used to have a trickle of unbelievers coming into the people of God? You know, Ruth, Naaman, Tamar, we can just name a few. Uriah the Hittite. Okay. We had a few coming into the people of God. All of a sudden they start flooding in.

Okay, see, Jesus shows it's going to be when I send out my apostles. That's how I'm going to do the crushing. Look at what Paul says in his letter to the Romans. As he's closing the letter, he gives them a benediction. And I'm going to give you today, too, and notice what he says in Romans 16:20. He says, The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. And that's his benediction. Rome Church in Rome. Church in Jerusalem. Church in Ephesus. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to crush the head of the serpent under your feet. He's going to do it soon. This should excite us. This should remind us. It should invigorate us when we're going about the work of being believers, of growing in Christ, of maturing in our faith, of of being, you know, being in discipleship groups where we're sitting next to men and women and we're encouraging them to grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

We're not just going through the motions of some kind of religious participation. We are crushing the head of the serpent. When we develop discipleship groups that are drawing out of evangelism, we're not just getting people from other churches to come to our church, but we're bringing new people in off the streets of Birmingham. We are crushing the head of the serpent because we are filled with the spirit of the serpent Crusher.

Right. This is what you're called to do Briarwood.

So as we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent, like we do today, think about this. Like celebrating Independence Day. But on a cosmic level, it's already happened. The work's been inaugurated and initiated by Christ Jesus. He then thought for nothing other than his own glory. I'm going to have my people be a part of this endeavor, so we get to participate in that. Now, until he finally brings it to completion in the Lake of Fire, when Satan and all of his entourage are cast into it, never to return. It's Christians, beware of pessimism. Beware of a narrative of decline. I know it's so easy to say, particularly those of you who've lived longer lives and you've seen a broader scope of history, and you're being cut anew by the pain and the strife and the sin that you see around you in the world. Be careful. Don't become pessimistic. Don't talk about how it's all going to hell in a handbasket. It's not. The serpent is being crushed. He's still a deceiver. He's. He's a lion now, no doubt he's a lion on a leash. Don't be deceived. The serpent is being crushed. Listen, if Noah wasn't crushed, okay? We're good. What I mean by that is this not something you'll hear often from Christian pulpits? Be triumphalist like. Be triumphalist like the gospel of Jesus Christ. The crushing of the head of the serpent is triumphalist. The language of good news gospel is triumphalist. What's the good news? That our King reigns, that he has conquered? Now hear me. Don't let that triumphalism lead you into pride, and to anger, and to self-righteousness, and to loathing of others, but rather, as it did with your Savior, your King.

The triumph is a triumph of love, of humility, of reliance in our on our Lord. Live a life of bold love so that you can increase the stories of all of the serpent crushing that you did. When we're in the new heavens and new earth, and we sit around and we retell what the Lord did through us by faith, let's increase those stories. Gather, gather up in your quiver more ways that you saw the serpent crushed during your lifetime.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, as we come before you, we are on. We are awed by what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. We are awed by what he has inaugurated and initiated within us the church. We pray, Lord, that you, Heavenly Father, would be with us as the spirit of the son testifies within us of his lordship, that we might respond boldly in faith.

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.