

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
February 21, 2010**

Lent 1

**Woman of the Passion
History: Eve**

Text: Genesis 3:15

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

Genesis 3:15 “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.”

This past Wednesday was Ash Wednesday and the beginning of another Lenten season. Often the sermons during the Lenten season focus on men like Peter and Pilate, Caiaphas and Herod or Judas and Simon of Cyrene. This year, during the Sundays of Lent, a sermon series will be followed called *“The Women of the Passion History.”*

Where do you start with *“Women of the Passion History?”* There’s Mary, the mother of Jesus. You might include Mary and Martha, at whose home Jesus often stayed. There’s Pilate’s wife who told him to have nothing to do with that just man. Then there are the women of Jerusalem to whom Jesus spoke on the way to the cross and said, *“Weep not for me but for you and your children.”*

We can’t forget the women at the foot of the cross or the women going to the tomb on Easter morning to finish embalming the body of Jesus. When you think of women of the Passion history you have to go back farther than Mary and those women present during Holy Week. You have to go all the way back to the beginning of time, to the first woman to walk on this earth, to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Now you might wonder, *“What does Eve have to do with women of the Passion History?”* She lived over 4000 years before Jesus was even born.

We must start with Eve when we think of women of the passion history because besides being the first woman, the first wife and the first mother she was also the first sinner. What she did set in motion a series of events that we know as the Passion History. By looking at the story of Eve today, we’ll be reminded of her great fall, of God’s great promise and of Christ’s great victory.

God created the world in six days out of nothing by his almighty word. At the end of the six days God looked over his work and said, *“It is very good.”* Everything was not only good, but very good. There was no evil, no war, no problems, no pain, no sorrow. There was perfect weather, perfect plants, perfect animals. Adam and Eve had a perfect marriage and a perfect relationship with God. Eve was the perfect wife, the perfect woman and Adam was the perfect man and perfect husband. They lived in a perfect place called the Garden of Eden. In that Garden God had planted two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God gave Adam and Eve one command, not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God warned them that if they ate of it they would surely die. Every time Eve passed by that tree and did not eat of it she was worshipping God and showing her perfect love for God.

Suddenly, one day everything went from very good to very bad. The devil, in the form of a snake, spoke to Eve and tempted her to eat of the fruit of the tree. He first tempted her to doubt God’s word and then to doubt God’s love. The devil seemed like her friend. She’d found a new buddy. Deceived by the devil she ate of the fruit and gave some to her husband who was with her to eat also. Sin had now entered into the world. Life would never again be the same for Adam and Eve. No more perfect weather, no more perfect crops, no more perfect marriage, no more perfect family, no more living in the Garden of Eden, no more eating of the Tree of Life, no more perfect relationship with God. The most terrible affect of all was death, not only temporal death but also eternal death and damnation in hell. Paul writes, *“In this way death came to all people because all have sinned.”*

All around us today we see the sad consequences of the Fall. We see it in ourselves

when we get angry, when we are selfish, when we don't glorify God in all we do. We see it in our children when they are disobedient and disrespectful. We see it in our marriages when there is arguing, quarrelling and divorce. We see it in our churches when there is dissention and division. We see it in our politicians when there is corruption and greed. We see it in our gardens when there are weeds and thorns and thistles. We see it in our hospitals when people are sick and hurting. We see it in our crowded jails and prisons. We see it in the funeral home as the lifeless body is prepared for burial. Any study of the women of the passion history must include Eve because her fall into sin brought about the need for a Savior.

Eve is also an important woman in the passion history for another reason. To Eve and her offspring God gave a great promise. God could have annihilated Adam and Eve after the Fall. He could have doomed them forever to hell with their new found friend. Instead, God did something quite unbelievable. Instead of condemning Adam and Eve, he condemned Satan and promised to send a Savior. Addressing the devil, God spoke the first gospel promise of a Savior and said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman." Instead of Eve and Satan remaining friends there would be hatred, "hatred," God says not only between Satan and Eve but also between your offspring and hers," between the devil's followers, the unbelievers, and hers, the believers. Then God continues, "He," that is an offspring of the woman, "will crush your head," and you will strike his heel." An offspring of the woman would crush the head and power of Satan but in crushing the head of Satan and too would be wounded. Eve brought sin into the world but God promised an offspring who would bring righteousness. She had brought death into the world but her offspring would bring life. She had become a friend of the devil. Her offspring would make people the friends of God. Immediately after Eve's great fall, God gave the great promise of a Savior. Eve never lived long enough to see the promised offspring and his victory but like all Old Testament believers she found great hope and comfort in this great promise. We today look back on his coming as an accomplished fact, but whether you lived in the Old Testament like Eve, or the New Testament

like we do, the object of saving faith is the same, Jesus Christ. Any study of the women of the passion history must include Eve because to her God gave the first gospel promise that an offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, the devil.

Some four thousand years after the first gospel promise, Paul wrote to the Galatians, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law that we might received the full rights of sons." Today we can celebrate the fulfillment of that first promise and Christ's great victory.

Less than two months ago, we celebrated the birth of Jesus, the Savior, *the* offspring of the woman who would crush the devil's head. In the Gospel reading this morning we heard of the temptation of Jesus by the devil in the wilderness. The devil tempted Eve to doubt God's goodness. The devil tempted Jesus to doubt that God cared for him. The devil tempted Eve to doubt God's word. The devil tempted Jesus to test God's word. The devil tempted Eve to think he was her friend. He tempted Jesus to be his friend and promised great wealth and riches if only he'd bow down and worship him. What a different outcome to the two temptations. The outcome of Eve against the devil was defeat. The outcome of Jesus against the devil was victory. The apostle John wrote, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." That's exactly what Jesus did. When Jesus was dying on the cross and he cried out, "It is finished," he was announcing to you and to me and to the whole world, "Satan is conquered. I have won the war." Before his resurrection on Easter Sunday, Jesus descended into hell to announce to the devil and all of his angels and all of his offspring and friends and followers, "I have won the war. Your power has been crushed. You are defeated."

On Easter Sunday Jesus rose from the dead. Six weeks from today we will be singing, "Jesus lives, the victory's won!" The good news for you and for me is that Christ's victory is our victory. His victory over sin is our victory over sin. His victory over the devil is our victory over the devil. His victory over death is our victory over death. With the apostle Paul we say, "Thanks be to God who

gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Eve’s name is written many places in the Bible but where is your name written? Your name is written twice in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” It is written in John 3:16, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Eve’s name certainly belongs in the list of women of the Passion History. She is the first woman and mother of all the living. She, together with Adam, committed the first sin and changed the history of the world. She received the first promise that from her offspring a Savior would be born who would conquer sin, death and the power of the devil. As you observe the season of Lent, remember Eve and the role she had in the Passion History. Remember her and her great fall. Remember God and his great promise. Remember Jesus and his great victory. Amen