

Navigating a Broken World

**Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17, 3:1-8 John 17:1-4 | Second Sunday After Pentecost |
June 22, 2025 | Pastor John Klawiter, preaching**

Grace and peace to you my friends in Christ,

For the rest of summer, we will spend time looking at the book of Genesis and then pivot to the book of Revelation. The Alpha AND the Omega... the beginning and the end of the Bible.

So much of our time is devoted to the Word found in the gospels. Yet, the Spirit of God can be witnessed throughout scripture.

Looking at the book of Genesis, as we started to explore with the kids, helps us better understand how the people of God tried to make sense of the world and where they saw God.

The kids had a Bible Quiz, I'm pretty sure you'd like to take part in one, too!

Now, I'm going to ask these questions... and admittedly, they're a bit trickier, so answer boldly. And don't be embarrassed like Homer here if you don't get it right.

How many creation stories are in the beginning of Genesis?

Two; (note that "another account of creation" is written by a different author than the 7 days account in Genesis 1

How many authors wrote the book of Genesis?

Likely 3. Yahwist, Elohist, and Priestly accounts all are composed in different styles and were edited later on, commonly believed to be done by Ezra

While many of the stories in Genesis come from an oral tradition, what era did Ezra compile the Torah/Pentateuch?

Around the 5th century BCE, during the Babylonian Exile (present day Iraq)

What does the name "Adam" mean?

The human/the ground. The name "Adam" doesn't appear until Genesis 4, after Eden

What does "Eve" mean in Hebrew?

The living one/Source of life

Sermon Transcript

What fruit is eaten from the tree in the garden of Eden?

Doesn't say—apples are popular in art, in reality, figs were common to the area

Who enters the garden to eat the fruit?

Both of them! The snake tells Eve, but he was with her when she takes it and gives it to him

What does God say will happen if they eat of the fruit?

They will die

What happened after they ate the fruit? Did they die?

Not immediately! But this was humanity's way to explain mortality

There's so much truth in the story of Adam and Eve. Two people experience disobedience to God and then there are consequences for not doing the right thing.

Whether it's God, other people, or even ourselves, there are consequences to our actions when we don't do what we're supposed to do.

We all have our origin stories when it comes sin, or pain, or brokenness.

I remember the earliest memories I have of pain—being about 4 years old and riding a tricycle into a wall and needing to get stitches above my eye. I don't remember what happened, but the faint mark on my eyebrow reminds me of what I did.

Or when I was a few years older and learned the naughty words I wasn't supposed to use and deciding to shout them as loud as I possible at the neighbor kids—I quickly learned that with that kind of crime, the punishment was severe—no tv and no friends until I learned my lesson.

The punishment wasn't because I was forever tainted and this one incident ruined my ability to receive forgiveness. The punishment reminded me that bad decisions or doing the wrong thing would lead to outcomes with consequences.

Thank God this judgment doesn't mark us for the rest of our lives. It guides, informs, and leads us. We have God's law, but that's not the final word. We also have the good news.

Sermon Transcript

God's justice is not merely punitive but aims to guide and shape the ongoing creation process toward greater harmony and fulfillment. The promise of a Redeemer reflects God's relentless pursuit of transformation and restoration—a continuous urging toward beauty, goodness, and wholeness within the evolving moments of existence.

Julián Andrés González Holguín, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Pacific Lutheran Theological School

Earlier this week, two of my sons, Sully and Edison were fighting. It's like when you're watching a sporting event and who gets the penalty called? It's usually the one who retaliates—because you didn't see the original action.

They were outside playing a game when something happened and they erupted at each other—I'm not sure who started it, but each time they'd push each other back, they'd say "he started it." Finally, I got them separated before Sully could retaliate. I took him aside for a minute to help them both calm down.

After a quick breather, Sully went back and I watched what he'd do. He was like a hunter. Finally, he had his opening and chucked a ball at his brother when he thought nobody was looking.

Just as quickly, I intercepted him and he yelled "what did I do?????" I put him in the equivalent of the penalty box. I said, "You know what you did." His response: "but I missed."

It wasn't true vengeance until he had an eye for an eye. I told him I didn't care. It was time to stop. He insisted that his brother started it.

My Dad voice was strong on this response, "I don't care who started it, I want you to end it."

The next day, a similar fight was brewing. I could tell things were getting close. This time, Sully backed off when his older brother, Phin separated him from Edison. He didn't retaliate. He let it go.

He learned.

At least for this day. It's a lesson that we keep encouraging and reinforcing, but it can be really hard for kids to get it.

It can even be hard for grown-ups to get it.

The way life plays itself out, we want to make easy black and white conclusions.

Sermon Transcript

We continue to see conflict arise, and escalate like it did last night with the US involvement in Iran, because our world of sinfulness and brokenness is messy.

The answer isn't easy. The solution won't come without significant conflict to resolve.

We want justice in our own hands. We want to be justified and proven right. We preach forgiveness, loving our neighbor, and the grace of God, but are we good at living it out?

I wonder what prevents us from truly embracing that call.

This story comes full circle. (Quiz time)

Where is Jesus arrested?

The Garden of Gethsemane

What happens after Jesus dies on the cross (according to the final words of the Apostles Creed)?

We receive the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come

From one garden to another, Jesus confronts the consequences of sins. Jesus takes on the brokenness and evil that we can never overcome on our own. God, in the flesh, dies for our sins, and brings about a new creation.

We don't live in a world free from sin. Evil didn't disappear when Jesus rose from the dead. Serpents and devils didn't take a hike. If anything, the devil became emboldened.

But sometimes the takeaway is more simple. Do we want to feel free? Release from the grips of sin?

We must put our trust in Christ. We must believe the promise of grace. We cannot doubt that these very waters of baptism—like we witnessed with Beck and Reid—will wash away our sins and bring us to new life.

Every single day. Even when we can't look at ourselves in the mirror, God sees us and says. You are beautiful. I created YOU. I'll never abandon you. You are mine. Amen.