



**Sermon for District Life Conference**  
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Genesis 3:1-15  
2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:1-5*

Thus far the Word of the Lord. Clarity, truth, and love belong to the Lord alone. It was love that caused God to bring creation into existence, to bring forth life in plants, animals, and all of the fish of the sea and birds of the air. It was love that brought God to create mankind in His image and form Adam out of the dust of the ground and his wife Eve from a rib taken from his side. It was love that God gave to Adam and Eve, that even after that terrible fall into sin, He would not let His creation or His people fall into eternal condemnation, but clothed them in animal skins and proclaimed to them that the Son of Eve would come to crush the serpent's head.

For God is love, the Scriptures say. What He does, what He says, what He ordains and orders are from love. His Commandments, which all men bear on their hearts, point us to what love truly is, love both to God and neighbor. Husband and wife are given to each other in marriage so that they may flourish and prosper; husbands cherishing their wives as their own flesh, wives submitting to their husbands and receiving from them all which they need. Marriage is given so that man and woman may not be alone but have companionship, and by their physical union love brings forth new life. God bestows the gift of children to husbands and wives, a gift which is beyond comparison to any other gift we may receive from our Lord, save the Word and Sacraments themselves.

Yet if clarity, truth, and love, belong to God alone, then deception, lies, and murder belong to the devil. And being the craftiest of all the creatures, Scripture says, the devil attacks and undermines the good gifts of God subtly, not outright. Abortion, one of the greatest evils of our day, is a clear example of the devil's deception, because for many in the world this genocide is seen not as evil, but as good; just ask the culture that once declared abortion was to be safe, legal, and rare yet now shout their abortions as loudly as they can, celebrities praise the "right to choose" as the key to success and prosperity, and women who say abortion is their ability to "choose when to be a mother" citing "my body, my choice" despite the fact that from the moment of conception they were already made a mother. It was not put off until a later time; they are simply the mother of a dead child.

However, it is not only the world that has been deceived by the devil, but we have as well. We shrink away from talking about abortion as the evil it is because we don't want to "impose our beliefs" on people. We know it is an evil, but we sometimes know it is the "lesser of two evils." We see the staggering number of children who have been murdered since 1973, the crosses that are placed in the ground to number the lost souls at the hand of abortion, yet even still we say, "I am personally opposed to abortion, but it's a state issue." The Word of God says that it is not,

and whatever niceties and social graces we may try to put on the matter, abortion is the direct assault of the devil on children and marriage, under the guise of love, and nothing can combat his wicked scheme except repentance and the forgiveness of sins, which comes through the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus Himself.

We have all fallen for the deception of the devil, the same lie that Adam and Eve fell for in the garden. For the devil knows that we are people driven by compassion and empathy, yet we have twisted and deluded hearts plagued by sin. We see the Law of God as harsh and unyielding, but that's because for sinners, it is. It is meant to be, since when it comes to the matter of sin God gives no wiggle room. He judges sin severely, but in His mercy He does not execute that condemnation on the perpetrators of sin, but the offspring of Eve, the promised seed who would crush the head of the serpent, and put an end to the deception and wickedness of the devil.

The Son of God who by His incarnation, His conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His glorious yet humble birth in the manger of Bethlehem, circumcision on the eighth day, His baptism at the Jordan River, His triumphant entry, scourging, crucifixion and death Christ paid the price for the sin of the world, the wickedness we had with us since our own conception, and the works of our hands, our thoughts and deeds. All our sin is paid for, covered by the blood of our Savior, and by His glorious resurrection and ascension Christ rules over all things, bestowing to us in His Church the means of grace and the forgiveness of sins.

Yet Christ is not simply ruler over the Church but over all of creation. And on the Last Day nations will have to give account for the works which they have done, for the governments were given to be a blessing to the people and not a curse. A nation that devours its children will be held accountable, and the Bride of Christ holds a duty to speak the truth IN LOVE, that we speak to their clear vocation as upholders of justice and punishers of evildoers. And for the Church, we speak not only the truth in love for the clear proclamation of sin, but speak the kind words of absolution for those who come in humble repentance seeking peace.

For the deception of the devil brings no peace, but only hurt, anguish, shame and regret. And to those bruised consciences we come bringing the wounds of Christ which cover all sin, and strengthen hearts to rejoice in the fellowship of Christ's saints. At His holy altar Christ offers life, salvation, and forgiveness, while at the altar of Molech these things are promised but never offered, and a life is not given but taken.

Though the fight is overwhelming, and we are but poor, miserable sinners, we fight not by ourselves but in the strength of God our Heavenly Father. With the full armor of God we are defended and preserved, knowing that Christ goes before us and has already overcome the might of our enemy the devil. We speak boldly and confidently without fear and speak the Truth, for only the Truth will set free those who are bound in sin and death. In Christ we are partakers not only in His suffering on account of His Word, but of the life which has no end, the joy which we are called to share, to a world that seeks to know love, love from the Word of God. **In the name of Jesus. Amen. And may the peace which passes all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**