

I want to tell you the story of Genesis, but in more or less my own words. God said to Adam and Eve, “I will give you perfect happiness but I ask one thing of you – that for your own good you obey when I ask you not to eat from the tree in the middle. You can have everything else, the whole garden. But don’t eat from that one tree because you will die.”

Then Satan, the tempter, comes along and says, “Oh you won’t die. I have a secret for you. God doesn’t want you to eat of it because he knows that if you eat of it you will become like Him, and he doesn’t want that to happen. God’s word isn’t trustworthy. You can’t believe God’s word. You can be like God, make your own decisions. If you want to be happy you have to do it yourself. You have to make yourself happy.

And so they listen to Satan and eat from the tree, and what happens? – Disaster! God’s word was true! They ate of the tree and died. They lost their relationship with God. They lost their perfect relationship with each other. They lost paradise.

It is the same with us really. God says to us: I give you everything. I give you relationship with Me. I give you a loving relationship with each other. I give you all created things to enjoy, and when you die, I want to give you perfect happiness with Me and all who love Me forever. Only thing: for your own good, you have to follow My law.

Our reply: Ok, pretty good deal. Then temptation comes. “You know what? I’m not so sure God can make me happy after all. Maybe I need to try to do that myself. I’m not so sure that God can really make me perfectly happy.” And so we choose sin and what happens? - Disaster! If our sin is serious enough we lose our relationship with God. Sin leads to destroying our relationships with others. It leads to destroying ourselves. We become selfish, self-seeking, addicted, dependent, miserable. Sin is ugly, ugly business.

So why don’t we always see that? Why doesn’t the world see that? The world loves sin. The answer is because sin blinds. The more we try to make ourselves happy, the more we begin to think that if I just had more of this, if I could just sin more, then I would be happy. Then when someone sins more, what happens? “Well, I’m not happy yet. If I could just sin more...” You see, it’s a lie. It’s a trick of Satan, a trick of our own selfishness. Sin is not the key to happiness. Sin ends up just leading us farther and farther from God, destroys our relationships with others, destroys ourselves. Ultimately leads us to hell if we continue in following this path.

Because God’s word is true, in the end, He will give us everything we want if we follow in His way, if we let Him give us the life He wants for us. Perfect happiness.

**Given by Father Mark Gurtner at Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, 2013.**