

## WHY DO WE SO HATE TO FEEL VULNERABLE

“Who told you that you were naked?” This is the question that the Creator asks of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. That question leads us to other questions. “Why did you listen to that other voice after all I have done for you and provided for you?” “Why did you believe that other voice?” And we, today, ask: Whose voice was that? We are told in the Book of Genesis that it was the voice of the tempter, the serpent. We now know that one as the devil. It was that same enemy who tempted Jesus himself.

“Why did you believe that other voice? Why did you act on it?” Our parents don’t answer but we can attempt to guess. They might say: “We did not trust your voice, Lord. Actually, we did not remember what you said. We did not think of you at all. It was as if you were not even there.” But, the Lord can say, “Why did you not discuss this with me when I came each day to walk with you in the twilight?” Again, Adam and Eve might respond: “We did not think it really mattered. We forgot to be grateful for everything you placed in our garden. In that moment we did not see you or feel your presence or even think of you. It was as if you were not there. It was as if you did not exist.”

In that moment of realization they knew they were naked. But being naked is more than being without clothes. All creation is naked, without clothes. There is no shame in that. The shame is in the awareness of what being naked means. It is not that our nakedness is dirty or embarrassing so much. Being naked means more than being vulnerable, being able to be wounded, or being unprotected. The very realization of their nakedness was their wound. Suddenly fear was born where there had never been fear. Never before were Adam and Eve afraid. Never before were they afraid before God or in the presence of God. It is only after they broke faith with God, only after they did not act in trust of God that they realize they are wounded and still very much capable of being wounded again. Truly vulnerable.

And that vulnerability is why they are afraid and want to clothe themselves and want to hide from God. That vulnerability is why they feel shame and immediately begin to point the finger at each other and blame. The sin? The lack of trust. The sin? Trusting a voice other than the Lord’s voice. The sin? Acting as if God did not even exist. As if there was no one there. This sin has infected everyone in this world. That is what we mean by the effect of original sin. Much worse than the coronavirus. And if we think about it, doesn’t all of this have a very familiar feel to it in terms of our own lives?

God knows all this about human beings. So God designs a plan to remedy this situation. God will send his beloved Son. God will actually have his Son become one of us, become flesh and blood. God had entered into covenants with his Chosen People for two thousand years. In Jesus of Nazareth the greatest and most definitive covenant was made. Jesus himself was God's covenant with Mary, the Ark of the Covenant. In the moment of conception Jesus takes her blood as his own. That was the beginning of a new covenant in his blood. On the cross his blood will be shed in a moment of complete and total vulnerability. He took on our woundedness, our brokenness, our vulnerability in order to save us from it.

In Jesus we are shown how to live as adults, how to live with our vulnerability, how to live in a new openness to God. How? Through forgiveness. The shedding of his blood is the fulfillment of the shedding of blood of the first covenant sealed with circumcision. So what does Jesus show us in his life and his death? Turn to me and you will turn to God. Follow me. Imitate me. Do not make excuses for yourself. Do not hide from me. Stop blaming others and stop blaming me. Calvary is the greatest of blood covenants. Ultimately this is the truth revealed. There is no mystery beyond love.

My friends. It is Lent. It is time to focus on Jesus Christ and to choose to live his way in our daily lives. If we want to find a way out of the fears and the wound and the feeling of vulnerability—then turn to Christ. Pray to him. Ask him. Follow him. Have communion with him.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.