

Sermon Notes

What's Missing in Paradise?

November 21, 2021

THAT DARN TREE

Genesis 3:3 ... *you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.*

In every garden of life there are things we crave but that are beyond our reach ... and just like the tree in the Garden of Eden we may have to brush up against them every day.

Rather than a temptation, what if the forbidden tree was intended as a totem to remind us that in order to sustain Paradise we must live as God's creatures.

THE "BIG LIE"

The "Big Lie: "We creatures don't have to live with limits ... we can have it all, know it all, and control it all." This temptation is the exact lie we want to hear and so it becomes very powerful.

Once we buy into that lie, we conclude that we can't have the "good life" until we have it all.

All unhappiness is caused by comparison, so if we could just have the things that are missing, we are sure life would then be good.

"All sin begins with ingratitude." – Karl Barth

A LIFE OF GRATITUDE ACCEPTS ITS LIMITATIONS

If we wait for perfection, we create a hell for ourselves.

Gratitude is a spiritual discipline that allows us to look around and realize that even though something is missing, it's still a pretty incredible place to live.

GRATITUDE IS A CHOICE THAT REWIRES OUR BRAIN

Practices shown to increase our attitude of gratitude:

- Starting each day with a prayer of gratitude for the new day;
- Finishing each day by mentally reviewing things that were good that day;
- Keeping a gratitude journal;
- Writing a gratitude letter to someone who's helped you.

Gratitude acts like a gate that stops fear from flowing from our primitive brain into the higher levels of our brain.

You cannot simultaneously experience gratitude and fear.

Since gratitude is not just a private emotion, it needs to be exercised and expressed.

"Silent gratitude isn't of much use to anyone". – Gertrude Stein