

Sin is not something we talk about much anymore. Perhaps it's because we are too afraid of invoking the wrath of those around us, those who want to live life on their own terms, as they see fit. "It's my life and I'll live it as I want too."

Most of us would agree that that is fair enough. But as we have listened to our readings today, is it, fair enough?

Isn't this what Eve decided, when she was talking to the serpent? God told Eve not to eat of the fruit of this **particular** tree. Isn't Eve deciding that "this is my life and I'll live it as I want too." I have the right to make my own decisions. I have the right to determine my own future. And so, she did it anyway.

Isn't this what Adam decides too, when he is talking to Eve. God told Adam not to eat the fruit from that **particular** tree. "It's my life and I'll live it as I want too. I have the right to make my own decisions. I have the right to determine my own future." And so, he does it anyway.

We don't talk much, about sin anymore.

And this is a problem, because it means we don't really understand what sin is. We only see it as being the things that God says no too. But if we think about these readings, sin is not the disobedience that occurred, that was only the door through which sin came into the world. You see, sin wasn't in the world at the beginning, but was crouching at the door seeking a way in, seeking then, whom it might devour.

Eve and Adam opened the door through their disobedience, and sin walked right on in.

But, if sin isn't disobedience to what God says, what it is?

Our Romans reading might help.

Paul seems to be suggesting that sin is such a big deal, such a huge power, such a mighty force, that it is only Jesus' death that overcomes it. Paul seems to be saying that by Adam and Eve's disobedience something massive occurs. We know that from hearing Adam and Eves story, that a part of that thing that happens is that death enters the world. Physical, emotional, and spiritual death. Universal death. The death of intimate contact with God.

Genesis suggests that this massive event also brought with it a fundamental change in reality. The Text says that even the nature of the soil is changed.

Death and sin entered the world through Adam and Eves disobedience. It changed the structure of reality.

This is not about pinching your sister's bike when you were 14, or having a smoke behind the sports pavilion at 11. This is about the fundamental nature of human existence. This is not about what we do or don't do, it is about what we are.

We don't talk much about sin anymore. Which is a shame because it's a denial of our fundamental nature, that we are sinners. We might find it a bit offensive, but it's what the text tells us.

That for all of us, reality has been changed by this Genesis story, and that our only response, rather than refusing to talk about it, is to give up and surrender! There isn't anything else we can do.

When sin entered the world, everything changed. And everyone was imprisoned. And believe it or not, it's still the case, which is why Paul says ... the only way out is Christ.

Lent is a time to think on things; so, I am suggesting we think on this. How do we understand sin?

That it's not the small mistakes we make, or the wrong words we say, or the bad feelings we have, but the fundamental change that happened in our story from Genesis, that we simply cannot escape. It is woven into the very fabric of our lives; sin and death. These things imprison us and hold us fast. They are a part of us and we are a part of them.

It's not what we do or don't do, ... but what we are.

And this, Paul says, is what makes Jesus Christ so magnificent. His death and resurrection have delivered us from this curse of sin and death, and opened to us new life, free of both these things. It's a mind-boggling concept. That fundamental change in Genesis has been reversed by another fundamental shift, in Jesus' death and resurrection, and we have been set free from the prison created by them. It's no wonder Paul gets enthusiastic about it.

So, I'm suggesting this Lent, that you don't give up chocolate or coffee, buying clothes or bottles of wine. That you don't try harder ... but that you reflect, on sin, and how it is a part of who we are, something we cannot escape, and that our only deliverance from its prison, is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in whom these things are conquered, and we are set free.

This is what freedom is. This is what life is. This is what God is about. Freedom from sin and death.

It's not trying harder. It's not living our lives as we want too. It's not determining our own futures, it is as Paul says,

"If death got the upper hand through one man's wrongdoing,
can you imagine the breathtaking recovery life makes,
in those who grasp with both hands,
this wildly extravagant life-gift,
that the one-man,
Jesus Christ,
provides?"

We don't talk much about sin anymore, perhaps we should!

Amen.