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LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Vocabulary

Original Sin: the first sin of Adam and Eve. We inherit Original Sin from Adam and Eve, which means we are conceived and born without grace.

sin: knowing something is wrong (against God's Commandments) and choosing to do it anyway

inherit: to receive from a parent or ancestor by genetic transmission

temptation: something that makes a wrong choice seem like a right choice

grace: the gift of God's life that He shares with persons

Concepts of Faith

How did Adam and Eve hurt themselves when they chose to sin?

1. They lost God's gift of grace and were not able to share God's life on earth or live with Him someday in Heaven.
2. They wounded their abilities to think and to choose.
3. They wounded their bodies, and would experience suffering and death.

How are we affected by Original Sin?

1. We are born without grace.
2. Our abilities to think and to choose are wounded.
3. Our bodies will experience suffering and death.

Should not Adam and Eve have been faithful to God? Certainly. And instead they disobeyed, and lost His friendship.

But the Lord loved them, as your parents love each of you. Then He thought of saving them by sending them a Redeemer, that is, Jesus Christ, His son. He would come, He would teach the way of truth, and then He would die to make up for men's sins. You see, then, God's goodness: ... He at once promised salvation by means of the Redeemer.

Blessed John Paul II, *You Are My Favorites*

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Scripture Story

Adam and Eve and Original Sin

Based on Genesis 3

When God created Adam and Eve, He shared His life, grace, with them. He gave them a beautiful place to live, called the Garden of Eden. The garden was filled with beautiful flowers, animals of every kind, fish in the lakes and streams, and birds nesting in the trees. There were many fruit trees, which provided food for Adam and Eve. God gave Adam and Eve that beautiful garden in which to live. God asked only one thing of them. In the center of the garden stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam and Eve that they could eat the fruit of all the trees, except for this tree. If Adam and Eve were to eat the fruit from this tree, they would not be able to live with God forever.

Not eating the fruit of the tree of good and evil seemed like such a little thing, and at first it was easy for Adam and Eve to obey God. They were made in God's image and likeness. They shared God's life, grace. Their minds and wills had complete control over their bodies. Adam and Eve listened to God, and they obeyed God. They loved God and were very happy, until one day a serpent came and spoke to Eve. The serpent was really the devil. The devil wanted to spoil everything. He wanted Adam and Eve to disobey God.

The serpent was more cunning than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. The devil asked Eve, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?"

Satan knew that he could not tempt Adam and Eve into eating the fruit by appealing to their sense of taste, or smell, or sight. Their minds had control over their bodies, so Adam and Eve could not be tempted so easily.

Eve told the devil, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" If they ate this fruit, they would no longer be able to live in the beautiful garden God had created for them.

The devil was very clever. He appealed directly to Eve's mind and lied to her, saying, "You certainly will not 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."

The devil told Eve that God was jealous and did not want Adam and Eve to have the same powers that He had.

Eve must have known that the devil was lying, but she chose to disobey God. When Eve saw that the fruit was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

Like the unfaithful angels, Adam and Eve sinned. It was a sin of disobedience and pride. They disobeyed God's command for them not to eat of the tree of good and evil. They committed the sin of pride because they wanted to be as wise and powerful as God. They thought that would make them happy. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. They chose not to trust Him. Instead of being happy, Adam and Eve felt very ashamed. They knew that they had not loved God as they should, that they had sinned.

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. But God called to Adam and asked, "Where are you?" Adam answered, "I heard the sound of you in the garden; but I was afraid . . . so I hid myself."

Then God said, "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Adam then blamed Eve, saying, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

God then asked Eve, "What is this that you have done?"

Eve blamed the devil, saying, "The serpent beguiled me into it, and I ate it."

Original Sin and Its Results

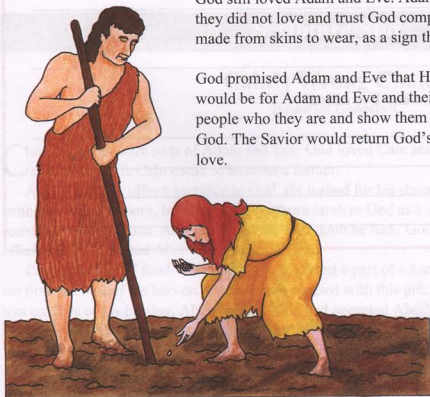
Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and not to love Him. They hurt the relationship they shared with God. They were no longer in harmony with him. This sin of Adam and Eve was the first sin. We call it the "Original Sin".

After sinning, Adam and Eve could no longer live in the Garden of Eden. They now had to work very hard for their shelter and food. They would suffer from the cold, and they would get sick. They would experience death. They were no longer in harmony with nature.

After sin, it was hard for them to know what was right and to make the right choices. Most importantly, Adam and Eve lost grace. Adam and Eve were very unhappy. They experienced disharmony within themselves and between each other.

God still loved Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve, however, showed that they did not love and trust God completely. But God gave them clothes made from skins to wear, as a sign that He still loved and cared for them.

God promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior. The Savior would be for Adam and Eve and their descendants. He would teach people who they are and show them how they should act as images of God. The Savior would return God's love and help them return God's love.



LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Review Questions

1. What was the one thing God asked of Adam and Eve?

2. Who tempted Adam and Eve?

3. What was the most important thing Adam and Eve lost when they sinned?

4. What was the first sin of Adam and Eve called?

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

On the one hand we know we must do good, and in our inner selves this is what we desire, yet at the same time we feel an impulse to do the opposite, to follow the path of egoism, of violence, to do only what he enjoys even though we know that this means working against good, against God and against our fellow man This inner contradiction of our being is not a theory. We all experience it every day as around us we see the second of these two wills prevail. Suffice to think of daily news of injustices, violence, and dissipation.

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, December 3, 2008

Our parents and guardians make decisions that affect the whole family, for example, where we go to school and where we live. Adam and Eve made a decision that affected them and all of their descendants, except Jesus and Mary. Adam and Eve chose to sin. When Adam and Eve committed the Original Sin, they lost grace, and they were not able to live with God in Heaven. They were not able to love each other as they should. It was hard for them to know what was right and to make the right choices. They could no longer live in the Garden of Eden, and they had to work very hard for their food and shelter. They would suffer and die. Original Sin and its effects were passed on to their descendants.

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve. As descendants of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel suffered from Original Sin and its effects. Cain and Abel lacked grace. It was hard for them to know what was right and to make the right choices. They also had to work hard for their food, clothing, and shelter. In the following story we will see Original Sin and its effects reflected in the choices Cain made.

Scripture Story

Cain's Wrong Choice

Based on Genesis 4

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve. God loved Cain and Abel. Abel grew up and became a shepherd, while Cain chose to become a farmer.

Abel wanted to offer a sacrifice to God. He waited for his sheep to have their lambs. When the lambs were finally born, he offered the firstborn lamb to God as a sacrifice. The firstborn lamb was considered the best one. Abel gave God the best lamb he had. God was very pleased with Abel and his offering. God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

Cain grew lots of food. Eventually, Cain offered a part of a harvest to God. Cain did not give God the first and best of his harvest. God was not pleased with this gift. God did not accept Cain's gift. Cain was envious of his brother, Abel, because God had accepted Abel's sacrifice and not his. Cain became angry at Abel. Cain thought of a plan to hurt his brother. Cain asked Abel to go into a field with him. When they were in the field, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.

God knew what Cain had done. He asked Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother?"

Cain answered, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

The Lord then said, "What have you done!"

The Lord told Cain he had done a terrible thing to his brother. The Lord also told Cain how he had hurt himself when he killed his brother. As a result, he would no longer be able to farm. He would have to wander far from home. Cain had lost his home and would never be able to find a place to settle down. Cain feared that, as a wanderer, he would soon be murdered. "Not so!" the Lord said to him. The Lord placed a special mark on Cain. Anyone who saw the mark would know that Cain was protected by God. God still loved Cain and protected and cared for him.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Abel do that showed he loved God very much?

2. After Cain's sacrifice was refused, what feeling did Cain have toward Abel?

3. Did Cain make right choices or wrong choices? What were Cain's wrong choices?

4. What did God tell Cain?

5. Why was it hard for Cain to make a right choice?

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US



Temptation

Cain should not have been angry at his brother. Because of Original Sin and its effects, it was hard for Cain to love his brother, to know what was right, and to choose what was right.

God wants us to be happy here on earth and some day with Him in Heaven. God wants us to be free to choose to love Him and to be happy with Him. So, God created us in His image, with minds to think and wills to make choices. It is up to us to choose to love God and to accept the love and happiness He offers us.

When Adam and Eve committed the Original Sin, they were no longer able to love God as they should. It was difficult for them to know what was right and to make loving choices. Original Sin and its effects were passed on to all the people who came after Adam and Eve, except Jesus and Mary. We are all conceived and born with Original Sin and its effects. It is still hard for us to know what is right and to make right choices. Sometimes we are tempted to make wrong choices.

Many “voices” inside and outside us tempt us not to believe in God, not to listen to His fatherly invitations, to prefer our whims to His friendship.

Blessed John Paul II, *You Are My Favorites*

Temptations make wrong choices seem to be good. No matter whether temptations come from ourselves (for example, selfishness, misguided emotions, weaknesses), from the world (people, places, and things), or from the devil, we can still choose to make right choices with the help of grace. But making right choices is difficult sometimes, and we struggle between what is right and what is wrong.

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Story of Faith

The Difficult Choice

It was a beautiful, sunny, spring day. Andy, Mark, and John had to stay inside during recess and finish their science projects. Their teacher, Mrs. Brown, had warned the class about what would happen if they didn't have their work done on time, but the three boys hadn't listened. They chose to wait until the last minute to do their science projects, and they ran out of time. While the boys worked, Mrs. Brown wrote that night's homework assignment on the board, as she always did.

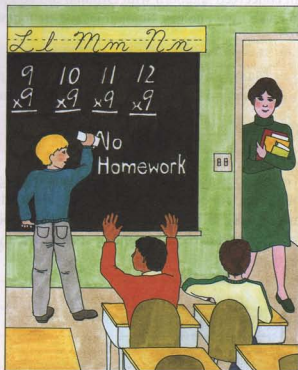
Andy worked especially hard. He knew he had put off doing his work, and he knew he had better finish this project, or he would be in trouble! Andy had already been to the principal's office several times, because he had not behaved in class. He had drawn pictures and written notes on the board several times. If he got in trouble again, his parents would ground him for sure.

Mark and John usually got their work done on time, but with the beautiful spring weather, they had been busy playing baseball. Mark and John were best friends, and they played baseball together all the time. That's what they had planned to do at recess. John knew it was his own fault he had to stay in for recess, but Mark was really angry. Of all days for Mrs. Brown to keep them in!

Andy received permission to go to the lavatory. After he left, Mrs. Brown told Mark and John that she was going to go to the library to get a book and that she would be right back. She asked Mr. Carson, the other fourth-grade teacher, to look in on the boys.

When Mrs. Brown left, Mark quickly went up to the board, erased the homework assignment, and wrote, "NO HOMEWORK!!" in its place. He was back at his desk working when Mr. Carson checked on the boys. As Mr. Carson was leaving, Andy returned and went back to his desk. He looked at the board to see how much homework Mrs. Brown had given them. When he saw "NO HOMEWORK!!" on the board, Andy knew Mrs. Brown would suspect him, because of the times he had written on the board before. Andy went up to the board to erase "NO HOMEWORK!!" Just as he got up to the board, Mrs. Brown walked in. She noticed the words written on the board in place of the homework assignment. Andy told Mrs. Brown that he hadn't written on the board, and that he didn't know who had. Mrs. Brown told Andy she was sorry, but his parents would have to be called, and his pranks would have to stop. Andy figured it was no use arguing, because he had written on the board other times. So he just sat at his desk.

Meanwhile, the rest of the class came in from recess as Mrs. Brown was rewriting the homework assignment. Mark worked at his desk with a little smirk on his face, because he had gotten by with his prank, and Andy had been blamed for it!



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John, however, sat thinking. John knew that Mark had erased the homework assignment and had written "NO HOMEWORK!!" instead. John had watched Mark do it! John also knew that Andy was really in a lot of trouble this time. Andy was going to be punished for something Mark had done. John didn't know what to do. He didn't want Andy to get in trouble for something he didn't do. He also didn't want to tell on Mark, who was his best friend. Besides, if he told on Mark, Mark probably wouldn't be his friend anymore. Or, maybe John should encourage Mark to tell Mrs. Brown the truth about what he did.

Discussion Questions

- 1. If John helped Andy, he would betray his best friend, Mark. John had to make a choice. What would be the right thing for John to do?**

- 2. Put yourself in John's place and think about the choice he has to make. What would you do if you were John? Finish the story, telling the choice John makes and why he makes the choice he does.**

Sin and Forgiveness

Sometimes we fail to love as we should. Sometimes we are selfish, we give in to our weaknesses, and we choose to sin. Sin is knowing something is wrong and choosing to do it anyway.

We know that by sin the Lord is offended, friendship with Him is broken, His grace is lost, one strays from the right path, heading for ruin.

Committing sin, we are far from God, against God, without God.

Blessed John Paul II, *You Are My Favorites*

When we do sin, God still loves us. When we sin, we should tell God we are sorry and ask Him to forgive us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The following prayer is based on Psalm 25, a psalm asking God for guidance and forgiveness.

LESSON 5: ORIGINAL SIN AND US

Prayer for Guidance and Help

To you I lift up my soul,
O LORD, my God.
In you I trust.

Help me to know and follow
your ways, O LORD.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior.

You are compassionate and kind.
In your goodness, do not remember
my sins and my weaknesses.

You are honest and good, O LORD,
you show sinners the way.
You guide those who seek you,
and you teach them your way.

You offer your friendship
to those who show you great love and respect.
You free from sin
those who look toward you, O LORD,
and you instruct and guide them.

Look toward me
and have pity on me, O LORD.
My heart is deeply troubled,
and I am in great distress.

Remove my troubles and suffering
and take away all my sins.
Protect me, LORD,
I trust in your love and care.