

## **The Mother of the Living**

Genesis 3:19-20

#32 in our Genesis series

Peter Hiett

March 1, 2009

Revelation 5:8b-13

*...And the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*

### **Prayer**

Lord God, I ask that as we worship, that's hopefully the sermon not just the singing, that we'd see, just a little bit of what those twenty-four elders see, what the new creation sees. And that we would believe what we see so much that this world would no longer control us, no longer own us, no longer define us. Lord God, help us to preach. And Father, I pray for our brains. Would you pull all of these pictures together? All of these pieces, it's the most incredible picture in Genesis chapter one through three. Would you help our brains to pull it all together? Not so we can impress people at a party but so we can see more of you, more of your glory—Jesus the Christ. It's in your name that we ask these things.

### **Message**

In the mid 1980's, while I was in seminary, I worked as a youth director of Bel Air Presbyterian Church, right next to Beverly Hills and Hollywood, the home of the world's most famous and beautiful people. It was Ronald Reagan's church as well as folks like Kenny Rogers, Carol Lawrence, Steve Alan and Cheryl Ladd. That was pretty exciting for a kid like me, but pretty depressing for Eloise. Eloise was our secretary for the youth department. She was single, divorced and rather old, with the lines and age spots, she wasn't much to look at. For Bel Air, she was rather unrefined. She wouldn't use the intercom. She'd just yell, "Peter, get the phone." She wasn't a great secretary. She wore jeans, because one leg was skinny and shriveled from a bout with polio as a young girl. She wore jeans, until, to her horror and shame, the new pastor made her wear dresses in order to project the proper image.

I really enjoyed Eloise, but most treated her like a second-class citizen. And they treated her that way, nothing overt (after all, it was a church). So, people said, "Please" and "Thank you" and "God bless you." Yet, with the short attention spans; the impatience and demands, and with their eyes, people communicated: "I've judged you and named you." We've been talking about how the eye is a mirror. How that biblical phrase: "*apple of the eye*" literally means, "little man—*ishown* of the eye."

You know, the word *pupil* refers to the black spot in your eye. Pupil also refers to a person being taught. When you look in another's eye and see your reflection, you see a pupil in a pupil.

I mean you are being taught that person's judgment of you—taught whether they mean to teach you or not. For when we see something we want our pupils dilate, subconsciously, as if to take in what we see. When we see something we don't want, they constrict.

Psychologists tell us that the human mind is incredibly perceptive at reading these subconscious signals. And Eloise read them. Most people “esteemed her not.”

Isaiah 53: *“He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. . . and we esteemed him not.”*

Paul writes, *“We once viewed Christ from a human point of view.”* And we regard him thus no longer.

Well, one day, Eloise brought an old scrapbook to work. I had to beg her to let me see it. I opened it up and there was the young face of our youth secretary, Eloise, on the cover of Vogue Magazine. I turned the page and there she was again on the cover of some other magazine and another, and another. It turns out that Eloise had been a big time cover girl in the 40's and 50's.

Here's Eloise in an ad for Sweetheart Soap in 1958

And here's Eloise in an ad for Ivory soap in 1949.

Here's Eloise on the cover of *True Confessions* in 1948

One day, Eloise told me that her roommate had been Grace Kelly. Once she told me that she used to date John F. Kennedy. I said, “Eloise, you dated John F. Kennedy? What happened?” She went, “Oh, I dumped him.” “Dumped him?” I said, “Why'd you dump him?” She said, “Oh, he was boring – just politics and all stuffy.”

One of my favorite things to do at Bel Air was to tell snobby people, who looked down on Eloise, about her history. They'd be telling her to do something and I'd say, “Hey, did you know Eloise was on the cover of *Vogue*? Did you know she roomed with Grace Kelly? Did you know she dated John F. Kennedy? She not only dated him, she dumped him.” And all at once, their entire demeanor would change, for their judgment had changed. Eloise's name had changed – she was the cover girl. Their eyes would dilate.

Well, how we see people changes how we treat people (even subconsciously), and how we treat people, changes people, makes and creates people. We've been reading the story of how God makes us in His image and He's still making us in His image with His Word, that is His judgment.

In Genesis 3, the serpent tempts the woman to make herself in God's image, by taking fruit from the tree. She knows that God said, *“The day you eat of it you will surely die.”* But she eats anyway and gives some to her husband who was *“with her.”* She ate, and death entered the human race. The black plague swept across Europe. Six million Jews were tortured and exterminated. Hundreds of thousands were slaughtered in the killing fields of Cambodia. She ate and everyone you love died. She ate and then Adam and Eve hide from each other's eyes

and hide from the face of God—His judgment. God finds them, curses the snake, and curses the earth.

In Genesis 3:19 He says, *“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust (ash), and to dust you shall return.”*

In 1 Timothy 2:14 Saint Paul writes, *“Adam was not deceived, the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”*

*“The woman took and ate...”* and death flooded all history. Can you imagine a greater failure than that? It’s like she literally gives birth to death . . . mother of death.

Next verse: (Genesis 3:20) The Adam—the man—*“called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all living.”*

That is the very last thing we expect. Literally in the Hebrew, he names her *Mother of all Life*. Not because she could’ve been, not because she could be, not because she should be, and not because she will be, but because she *is Mother of all Life*. It’s the very last thing we’d expect. It’s Grace! We expect law, religion and curses: <sup>1</sup> We expect him to say, “You stupid wench! That’s the last time I listen to you. That’s the last time I let you do the talking! Yap, yap, yap!” And the next thing you know, the whole world has gone to hell in a hand basket!”

We’d expect some cursing, or at least some religion, you know: “Well Eve, I certainly hope you learned your lesson. We better make a point of regular inductive Bible study, a regime of prayer and some sort of women’s accountability group.” That’s what we’d expect. But, this is the very last thing we’d expect: “I call you Eve, for you *are* (present tense, like an eternal reality), you are the *Mother of all Life*.”

Once before Adam had named her: He named her *woman*, for she was *“taken out of man.”* She was made from his side, like we, the Church, are made from Jesus’ side, from body broken, blood shed. *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.”* The apostle Paul writes that this refers to Christ and the church. So ladies, before you get offended, remember that in Scripture, we are all the woman, and Christ is the ultimate Adam.

A few weeks ago, we preached on how Eve gave the fruit to Adam who was *“with her,”* and how we all give our sin to Jesus for He is *“with us”* and will not *“leave us or forsake us,”* for He has chosen to bear our sin on His cross, the tree.

So, there is an old Adam, but Jesus is the *Eschatos Adam*— the Last Adam. And now in the midst of the fall and the curse, Adam speaks his blessing. And did you notice? Adam didn’t judge Eve and name Eve according to what she had done. He named her according to what God had said: *“And the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent,”* and God had said, *“Let us make them in our image,”* and God is Life.

Well, Adam didn’t name her according to her judgments.  
He named her according to God’s judgment.

---

<sup>1</sup> In fact, many commentators say there must be some sort of textual error and Adam is mocking his wife or accusing his wife or cursing his wife.

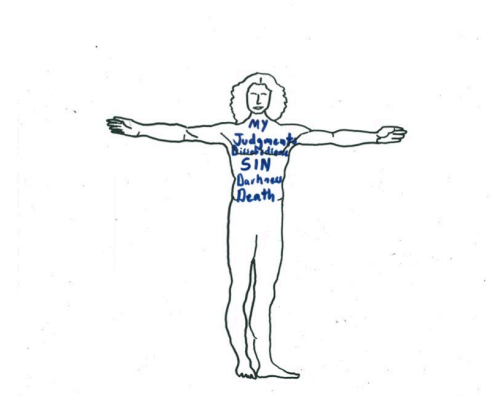
Adam didn't judge her according to what she'd done in the past.  
 He named her for who she is in eternity.  
 Adam spoke God's Word, this Adam is God's word.  
 You see this is not just old Adam.  
 This is the *Eschatos Adam*, Christ.  
 Through Him, God is creating us, His bride, creating us in His image.

In Genesis chapter 1 "*In the beginning God creates a void*" – an empty space, in Himself. And into the void He speaks His word, creating all things. Now, in chapter 3, Eve creates a void, an empty space of disobedience in herself. And into the void, God will speak His Word, His Seed, Jesus.

Let's review:

- Eve creates the void (that bubble of darkness) through her judgment, which is disobedience. She takes from the tree to judge herself and justify herself.
- The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is like a mirror. With that mirror, she gains the knowledge of the good, but makes herself bad.
- The mirror is the law. By taking law, we produce this: The false self, what Paul calls the flesh, the old Adam, old humanity, the self-made man.

We've been preaching about this picture for months.



This is the kingdom of *my* judgments, *my* kingdom of disobedience. This is death, darkness, and the beginning of hell.

Well, when Christ came,  
 We judged Him.

We nailed Him to the tree of law—"The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" - the cross.

We took His life, on the cross, yet He gave His life, fore-gave His life.

We took the Good. Yet He gave the Good – Himself.

He turned the tree of law into the Tree of Life.

He fulfilled the law by bearing our curse and giving us His life.

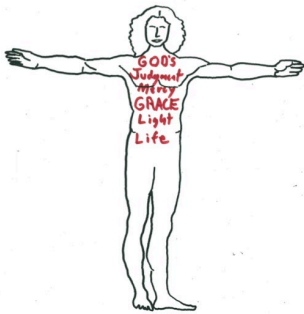
Now His cross is our mirror – our judgment. And the judgment is Grace.

At the cross, He makes us in His image—the New Adam—the New Man—the true self.

This is the kingdom of God's judgment, the kingdom of mercy.

This is eternal life, light, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

And, you see, the New Man has the form of the old.



Yet it contains an entirely new substance, no longer a “*vessel of wrath*,” but a “*vessel of mercy*.”

Now, I have an old man and a new man.

This old self isn't the real me, but a lie I tell about me, but I think is me.



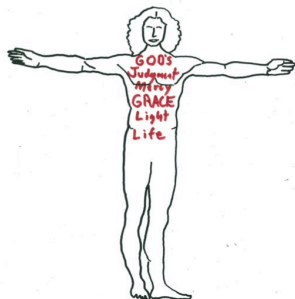
It has to be defended because it's extremely fragile. It's extremely fragile because it's a lie. It's already dead, but doesn't know it.

It's everything bad in me and responsible for everything bad that comes from me.

It's the kingdom of my judgments.

It's “*sin in the flesh*” and it was judged on the cross.

This new self is the real me – the truth about me that God tells and I barely believe.



And it doesn't need to be defended or justified, for it is not fragile. It's indestructible, for it is made of Truth—Jesus is the Truth. It's eternal and yet being created and revealed in space and time. It is the "*mystery hidden*" for ages, "*Christ in me...*"

He's everything good in me and responsible for everything good that comes from me. It's the Kingdom of God's judgment, revealed on the cross, where His Spirit was poured out on all flesh (Acts 2:17).

Scripture tells me to consider myself dead to this, the old man, and alive to this, the new man — God in Christ Jesus. And scripture tells me to view no one from a human point of view. For, you see, the old man, no longer counts.

You know, the way we see people changes the way we treat people; and the way we treat people changes people. Each of us is a mirror and just with our eyes we can reflect the judgment of God, which is Grace and Truth. Or, we can reflect the judgment of this world, which is death and lies.

The judgments at church eventually got to Eloise. She lost her job. The last time I saw Eloise, she was alone in a one-bedroom apartment. She was completely paranoid, wouldn't go out and was terrified of the phone. She kept muttering, "What will people think? What will people think?" I heard she died alone.

And, you see, I didn't help when I'd go on about John F. Kennedy, Ivory soap, and Eloise the cover girl. It was still a human point of view. No wonder she got embarrassed. She used to say: "Oh, Peter, stop!" Now I see why. I was only encouraging hell, something dead she could not maintain. "Cover girl" was just a pretty name for the false self, like white wash on a tomb or fig leaves on death.

Richard Rohr says, "Most religion is just survival mechanisms for the false self," ways to white wash the tomb—cover it in fig leaves. It's just finding prettier names for the old Adam, names like "Pharisee" instead of "prostitute." A nicer name, yet in the words of Jesus, "*twice the child of hell.*"

Well, Instead of encouraging the flesh (the old man) I could've encouraged the Spirit (the new man). Instead of speaking human judgment (condemnation), I could've spoke in God's judgment (the cross—forgiveness).

I could've said, "Hey did you know: Eloise hasn't just been washed with Ivory soap, she's been cleansed with the blood of the Lamb, her Sweetheart. Did you know, Eloise not only dated John F. Kennedy, she is actually betrothed to Jesus the Christ? And Hey, did you know, Eloise not only roomed with Grace Kelly but the Spirit of God rooms in her soul — right now. Hey did you know her face isn't only on the cover of *Vogue* magazine, but God is her Daddy and she's the "*apple of his eye*?" She's the face reflected in the eyes of God?"

Now what I'm telling you is a true confession — no lie. . . I could've said that. I could have entered her sorrow and spoken the truth. I could've helped Jesus shape her in His image in space and time.

In the movie, *What Dreams May Come*, Robin Williams plays a man named Christy. He's married to a painter named Annie. Their two children die in an accident and then Christy dies in

an accident as well. Annie paints herself into a hell of shame; she judges herself and commits suicide. She tries to fill herself with her self, which is only more self, more hell.

In heaven, Christy, or “**Christy**” finds a guide and descends into hell to search for his bride. He finds her in an upside down church, in a dark little room constructed with her judgments and lies. Christy tries to convince her of the truth, but she will not leave. The guide tells Christy that if he stays, he’ll be trapped in her lies too. Christy decides he would rather be with her in hell than apart from her in paradise. He comes out to inform the guide of his decision.

Clip from *What Dreams May Come*

Christy: *You didn’t you think I’d make it out?*

Guide—Al: *You were in there a while*

Christy: *It took me a while to realize you were right*

Al: *Nothing you can do could help her.*

Christy: *Well...I...ah...I’m giving up; just not the way you think. Go home, Al. Will you tell my children I love them and I won’t leave their mother? Thanks. (Choked up taking in the weight of his decision.)*

[Christy returns to the house where Annie, his wife, is trapped and he shuts the door behind him.]

Annie: *Where are we?*

[Christy reaches out to touch Annie and she pulls back in fear.]

Christy: *Where are we headed?*

*In one minute I won’t know you any better than you’ll know me.*

[He reaches out again to take her hand and this time she doesn’t pull away.]

*But we’ll be together.*

*Where we belong.*

[Christy actively loves and pursues her; she holds back in fear and guilt, then warms up during the course of conversation.]

*Good people go to hell because they can’t forgive themselves.*

*I know I can’t.*

Christy: *But I can forgive you.*

Annie: *For killing my children? And my sweet husband?*

Christy: *No, for being so wonderful, a guy would choose hell over heaven just to hang around you. [Calming music begins to play.]*

Annie: *Christy! [The couple finds themselves in paradise.] Sometimes, when you lose...you win.*

So, “Christy gives up *everything* to be with her. He bears her sin and, in doing so, he tells her who she is. Through his sacrifice she believes the truth. She sees him as he is, then sees herself in his eyes, and they rise from the dead – together.

Now it’s just a movie, but it ought to remind you of the Truth.

The Bride of Christ has trapped herself in a body of sin and death, but our Bridegroom, the ultimate Adam, has descended into our darkness. He has descended into our hell. As we nail Him to the tree, where He gives us His body and blood, we see Him as He is, then see ourselves in His eyes. He is God’s Judgment of Grace, God’s Word, God’s Seed, descends

into the dark womb of this world and of our hearts, creating us in His image. He washes us, covers us, and completes us with Himself.<sup>2</sup>

Listen to Ephesians 5:25-28

*Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without spot (blameless). In the same way husbands should love their wives.*

You see, I'm to make my wife splendid, not by grumbling, nagging and complaining, not by judging her with human eyes, but by seeing her with the eyes of God, and naming her. . . by being "with her," and naming her as she truly is.

- The way Jesus came to be with a coward named Simon, but looked at him and named him Peter, the rock, then on that rock built his church.
- The way the God-man came and wrestled with a cheat named Jacob, but looked at him and named him Israel, then through him fathered his people.
- The way Adam who was "with her" looked at the woman and instead of naming her Mother of Death, named her Mother of Life, and through her still crushes the head of the serpent.

So, you see, in Genesis 3:20, this is much more than just old Adam. This is Old Adam surrendered and filled with the New Adam – Jesus the Christ.

You know that we all are Eve, and we all are old Adam. And to the degree we surrender to the New Adam, we operate as His Body in this world; we enter into the sorrows of our neighbors here in the world and yet see them as they are in eternity in order that we might reflect that image now. And they might be that person now, in space and time.

Do you understand? I'm saying we help Adam name Eve. We help Christ name His Church. We help Jesus name people and thus create people—eternal people, the new creation.

Now you may say, "Cool. That's nice. But how do we do that? What does that look like?"

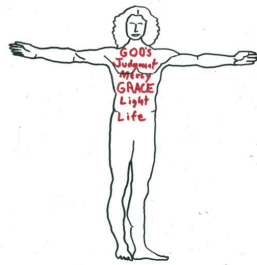
- Well, first, it looks like being "with her" "with each other". That's why we make a big deal out of house churches and why I hope you're part of some small group or have a prayer partner, or just go bowling with someone that believes the gospel. For when we believe the gospel for ourselves, we also believe it for others, then we tell them who they are subconsciously with just the dilation of our eyes.

Our eyes will dilate because we see this:

---

<sup>2</sup> The Word, The Judgment of Mercy.





And we no longer believe this:



When you believe, your eyes become Christ's eyes – God's mirror telling people who they are. And when we know who we are, we act like who we are.

- And secondly, it looks like "*confessing your sins one to another.*" When we confess our sins we are surrendering this the old man. We are delivering the old self to crucifixion in the eyes of a brother or sister. And if you're worried about confessing this new man by accident—confessing too much. Don't worry; He's indestructible and needs no defense.

And when you hear a confession:

Don't answer it with curses or shame.

Don't argue it with religion.

Don't prescribe a program so they can justify themselves.

And don't hand them some fig leaves to cover it up saying, "It's not so bad."

No. Just enter their sorrow. Now look them in the eye and issue God's Judgment. Speak the Word: "In the name of Jesus you are forgiven."

- Then thirdly, tell them who they are. Speak the name. Peter writes, "*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people.*" John writes, "*You are the little children of God.*" Children receive their Father's name. "*You are the bride of Christ.*" Brides receive their groom's name. Paul writes, "*You are the temple of the Spirit.*" "*You are the body of Christ.*" *You are the BODY of CHRIST!* So, if a name won't stick on Jesus, it won't stick on His Bride.

Are you His Body? Then don't receive any name that won't stick on Him!<sup>3</sup>

Well, name your brothers and sisters with the family name, the name of Jesus, and I think we can even begin to name them as individuals. Only God knows their full name (the one on the white stone). Yet, even now, He's revealing it in time.

When we enter another's sorrow, darkness or hell, we begin to see their old man. We begin to see this (the false self), and we see the false self in the inverse of an obverse – the true self. The form of disobedience becomes the form of God's mercy. The new man fits in the void that is the old.

So, when I pray for people, I try to ask, "God what does your Grace look like in this particular person?"

- So, if I was praying for Simon Peter, I might ask that question, then look him in the eye and say, "Peter you seem mighty scared, but I think you're like a rock."
- "Paul, you're an old Pharisee, but not really. I think you're like an Apostle of Grace." "John, you seem pretty angry, calling down fire on Samaritan villages. John, you're the Beloved Disciple." God show him!
- "Mary, you think you're a prostitute, but that's not who you really are. You're the Bride of Christ."
- "Child, you think you're a bastard, but God is your Father."
- "Woman, you feel desolate, barren and ashamed, but you are the Mother of the Living." That means so much to me, for I've heard Jesus name my friend, Elaine with that name and then watched as its truth has been revealed even in space and time. Jesus names her. And do you see He also names you, The Mother of Life.

You realize that every time we sin, we give birth to death, even the death of Christ on the cross. So, if we were to be named by our judgments and by our deeds, we would be named Mother of Death.

Yet, Adam looked at Eve and named her "the Mother of *all* Life." That would include Adam's life, and please remember Jesus is the Life, and please remember the Church is His mother.

When we believe the gospel,

We testify to the gospel.

We give birth to Jesus in others and He is *all* life.

So church, look at me: I know that you have sinned, but that is *NOT* who you are!  
You are the *Mother of All Life*:

Isaiah 54:1-5

---

<sup>3</sup> So, Simon is Jesus a coward? No he isn't.

So, Jacob, is Jesus a liar and a cheat? No he isn't.

So you may have denied him in fear, Simon and you may have lied and stolen the birthright, Jacob, but that's not who you are. You're Peter and you're Israel.

*Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent. And let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.*

## **Communion**

On the night He was betrayed, the beginning of the sixth day, He took bread and He broke it saying, *"This is my body which is broken for you."* And in the same way, He took the cup and said, *"This is my blood of the covenant poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me."*

So sweetheart! Come to the table. Look God in the eye. Believe who He says you are.

## **Benediction**

God has done what the law could not do. Sending His own Son, in the likeness of human flesh, and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.

[Peter nails a picture of the old man to the cross]

*"In order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in those of us who live according to the Spirit rather than according to the flesh."* If you came to this table, repeat these words after me: *"It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me."*

You don't have to defend that. You don't have to worry about that. You don't have to fight for that. You're free. In Jesus' name believe the Gospel so other people can be free! Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*