**New Kilpatrick**

**You 25th June 2023**

**Genesis 3**

**YouTube**

**Gathering**

It never falls far from the tree

The fruit

Easily reached

Easily picked up

Easily tasted

The sharpness of insight

The bittersweet of knowing

The sour taste of discovering ill from good

We have tasted such fruit

And in the tasting

Did we fall

Or did we rise?

Hello… I’m RH the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish and thanks again for making room for us in your day, where we can worship together… We’ve explored the creation stories over the last week, and we continue to do so… And in the great garden that has been designed around us… we stray into the out of bounds area… and we taste and see… that the Lord is good?… and that we have become like God?… or that we have just caused the fall of humankind in committing the first of sins… It is an open question… with a variety of answers… Let’s find ourselves in our first growing-up story…

**Prayer**

When our tastebuds are ready

And our hunger great

May we pause

Here

Now

And wonder

What shall we become

What shall we learn

What shall we discover about ourselves

In biting the apple

What will this moment

Change

What consequences are we prepared for

Gardener of Eden

In every moment we have bitten more than we can chew

May we find a place in you

That will bring comfort

Compassion

A place of grace

Where we can take time

To shift everything

With this new knowledge we have

Of ourselves

That perspective that changes

Of the world

Now we are a little more broken

A little more worldly wise

A little more seasoned

In you

May we find our renewal

Putting us back together again

Learning from the experience

Growing with it

More compassionate

Understanding

It is not forgiveness we need perhaps, O God,

But an adult hand to guide us

Help us navigate

Every time we take a bite

And find the world is less kind

Less forgiving

Than we thought

It is in that place we come from today

And seek the one who knows

More than we can ever know

About the cost of consequences

We need your wisdom

Your grace

Your guiding love

Our father

**Scripture Background**

The story we tell today continues where we left off last week. We are still in the garden in Eden and God has created a garden with everything we need or could ever desire. In there, however, is the tree of knowledge as well as the tree of life. It is a great metaphor for the human condition: two trees you never really need to eat from as there is plenty of everything else. It would take a lifetime to get round the whole garden but being human, we find our way to the very place we aren’t meant to be.

Are we inquisitive or easily led? Or both?

You won’t hear of any apple here as there isn’t any. There were no apples around. It would have been a fig. Not that that makes any difference though they do cover themselves in fig leaves afterwards. To me the two are related: the very thing that leads them into this new awareness of themselves, they use to cover themselves. There is something going on there.

Nor will you hear of the devil or the Satan. Not there. It’s a serpent. No one else is putting ideas into the man and woman’s head.

And only after the fruit is eaten, when they become aware, Eve is named. Interesting. Again, a new awareness of relationships, division perhaps, blame, already beginning to isolate each other in the roles we play…

**Genesis 3**

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden”?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.”’ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You 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.’So when the woman saw that the tree 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 of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ He said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.’ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent tricked me, and I ate.’

**Reflection**

We have passed the solstice

The longest day

It was also presbytery

The longest night

Every presbytery that meets at this time of year

The days stretched to their longest

We still manage to leave in the dark

This week it was the same night Scotland were playing

And given everything is now sent electronically by presbytery

You need your computer with you

So it was very easy to slip over to the live streams of what was happening at Hampden

Now, I am no football fan at all

But it was a lot more exciting than presbytery

Even the hour where no football was played!

There was a lot of wrestling at Presbytery

With plans and mission and buildings

People seeking to justify choices

Or change decisions

How many of those would we like to do

Now we know the consequences of the

Decision we made

Foolishly

Short-sighted

Without full knowledge

Would Adam have made a different choice

Would Eve?

Or

Might it have been the most grow-up thing they did

To eat that fruit from the forbidden tree

It didn’t seem that way at first

“The woman *whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree,* and I ate.”

I didn’t give myself this woman. You gave her to me. What were you thinking? If she hadn’t been around trying to trick me…

We couldn’t even own up to our mistake. We couldn’t just stand there naked and reveal the naked truth that we got it wrong.

No longer innocent we have to grow up

Become an adult

And there are too many figures in our society recently

That haven’t reached that state yet

Still blaming everyone else for their decisions

But the pain comes with the gain of becoming an adult

This is no original sin moment here

There isn’t one in the Bible

This isn’t a fall in the Bible

You could read this story rather as a rise, a fall upwards

Where we learn to own up

To grow up

And live by our decisions

Eating the forbidden fruit was our moment

Of maturity

One way to hold this story with integrity is to hear it as a fable

It is a story about the human condition

That God’s gets this

And recognises it is a daily challenge

There is no devil to blame

The devil is mentioned nowhere in the story

This is a story about owning up

Admitting our own faults

And the invitation from the Creator

Have you grown up yet?  
Are you responsible yet?  
Have you got what it takes to be my co-creators?

We don’t need to fall

Rather

We can rise

**News**

**Prayer**

For life

For fullness

For peace

For renewal

For neighbourhoods

For compassion

For tables filled

For banquets

For homes

For communities

For welcome

For diversity

For families

For friends

For the ill

For the grieving

For today

For tomorrow

We pray

Hear us

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**