

Date of sermon: 4/17/22
Speaker: Pastor Mark Hanke
Bible passage or verse: Genesis 3:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-18
Title of Sermon: The Crusher

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Gen. 3: ¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Heb. 2: ¹⁴Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

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Growing up in the church, and going to church with my mom, Easter was pretty predictable. My sister got a new dress, my brother and I got moderately made up, and we took a picture out in front of this tree in front of our house. Every year. You can go back and look at our pictures, and every year right in front of that tree. My brother and I never looked really happy -- my sister did. But that's what we did. Then we went to church, then we had dinner. That was just standard. And the reality is, I kind of thought everyone in the world did. Everyone kind of like celebrated Easter. In fact, I had kids and friends at school that celebrated Easter, never went to church. In fact, I met somebody this week. "What are you doing this weekend?" "Oh, we're having our family over for dinner." "You going to church?" "No." "Really? You're having Easter dinner?" "Yes." "Easter dinner. Not going to church." "No. Why would we do that?" "Huh." It's just standard. Everyone celebrates Easter. Chocolate companies love Easter.

Have you ever just pondered the question why? Well, of course, we who of Christians know, it's like, it's all about the resurrection. He's risen! That's what we say! He's risen indeed. And we suggest by that that the resurrection of Christ is the absolute pinnacle point and the issue, or the point of celebration of Easter. I wouldn't disagree that it's an important one. But if you pondered this, there's actually other people who have been raised from the dead. Why don't we celebrate them? And why Christ? Because there's actually a number of resurrections in the Bible. There are ten different resurrections of people who were raised from the dead, and that's not even counting a couple of mass resurrections. To my knowledge, I don't know that I've seen anyone have a National Lazarus Day. He's probably the most popular one that we would say, "Who else has been resurrected?" No one has a Jairus' Daughter's Day. And I've never heard of a Little Boys Falling Out of a Window celebration of resurrection day. But there's actually a number of people.

Why Jesus? And sometimes when people ask you the question, "Why are you a Christian? Why Christianity?" And -- it's understandable. I get this. It's like, "Why are you Christians so narrow that you think that only Christians have the goods on getting in to Heaven over all other religions?" And we will quote or we will cite -- "Aha! But only Jesus rose from the dead." That's not true. There were others. So, upon what basis do we say, "On this day He is risen, and He's risen indeed," and believe that's the proof of why we can have confidence that when we die God is going to say to us, "Welcome home"?

I want to wrestle with that question. And I want to take you to a passage -- not to be original by any stretch; it's just one that, a couple of months ago, I began to look at, and I pondered it and realized that I really hadn't given it much attention over the years. It's in the book of Genesis. And it will set us on a course. It's going to be a little story that we're going to tell. You know the story. But we're going to look at it. In particular, it's a four-thousand-year period of time that we want to focus on. It's kind of small, but we'll get there. We want to ask the question: "Why is Christ's resurrection significant?" But I also want to give you something else this Easter -- at least it's been for me -- is to step back, not to diminish the resurrection -- at all -- but to understand it's connected to something as powerful, or maybe, for your personal life, far more powerful. But it starts off with a war.

In Genesis chapter 3, where it was read, there's hostility. God created the heavens and the earth, and He created Adam and Eve, and they were walking around the world, and there were animals there. There happened to be one by the name of Serpent -- it was an erect animal. We don't know really what it looks like. But this animal was erect, and it was in the garden, and everything was fine. Adam and Eve had fellowship with God; they loved each other; they lived with no shame. I don't know about you, but I think that would be one of the most amazing things in the world -- to live with absolutely no condemnation, no shame, no awareness of sin. That has to be one of the most delightful thoughts in the world. Sin enters into the world. Why? Because Satan came into the serpent, tempted Eve, and caused her to doubt God's character and God's word. She took it hook, line and sinker. Adam was right there with her. And sin entered into this world. God has now lined them up. The tragedy occurred. They became aware of their shame. The enemy was there -- the serpent. He's still erect, and he's standing there, kind of like a principal who's kinda done his investigative work, bringing the criminals into his office, lines them up and says, "I need to mete out the consequences of what you've done." And He goes to Eve, and -- ladies, you all know the consequence of that one. If you've had children, you know what He said to Eve. "When you have kids, it's gonna hurt." And it did. At least that's what I'm told.

To the guy -- gentlemen, you know what it's like. This year, April -- man, we've had more rain. Yesterday at our house we had rain, we had hail, we had snow, we had it all. Why not, right? And what happens when it has all that moisture and it starts to heat up, overnight I am reminded of Adam and Eve every day. Because I go out

there, and what I weeded yesterday, I come back and it's like -- here come the weeds again! I'm like, "Good night! Where do these things come from!" It's the curse. But what I hadn't spent as much time on is verse 15. God is now speaking to the serpent, and He says to him: "I will put enmity" -- that's hostility. "You're gonna fight. You've gonna have conflict. And I'm gonna put it between you and the woman." The woman, I think in this text right now, she's representing all of mankind. But it's also between her. And God has lined up this enemy over here, this serpent, and He has said to the serpent and Eve -- and He's looking at the serpent, and He said, "You're gonna be at odds with my creation the rest of your life. You're gonna hate them, and you're gonna try and destroy them, and you're gonna lie to them. And you're gonna do everything you can. Why? Because when you look at them, they're gonna remind you of God. And you're gonna hate them. And it's gonna be between you and the woman. And, by the way, between your offspring and hers."

Now, if you have the NIV it says "offspring." I think that's not a good translation there, because the term actually is "seed." "It's gonna be between her seed and your seed." Now, the NIV is correct in understanding that it is the offspring that will come from her, and the, if you will, offspring that comes from Satan -- his demons and people, candidly, that act and think like him. Those with the values of Satan -- yes. And then, he makes this observation -- God -- and he turns, and he moves out of Eve, he has set her aside. But the serpent is still there. Notice what God says. He says "He will crush your head." Somebody else He's entered into the story. Who is it? Because what God has unveiled is, there is a battle. Sin entered into the world. But ultimately, sin is gonna come down between these two great forces -- the serpent on this side, and this "He" -- this warrior on this side. In all of human history it seems God is telling him that, "He's gonna come down and there's gonna be hostility between you and all of creation, but ultimately, you and this warrior are gonna go at it. He will crush or bruise your head. You will bite or strike his heel."

Now, it doesn't take a doctor to understand there's a huge difference between striking somebody's heel and crushing somebody's head. I've been -- probably like a lot of you -- bitten by a dog. It's a nuisance. But I was never threatened. Never thought, "Man, I'm gonna lose my life. This dog's biting me." I wanted to kick the thing, but you can't, because you'll probably we sued for that. But if a dog bites you, it's like, you know, no one's like, "Oh, I'm gonna lose my life!" But let me tell you what -- if somebody crushes your head, you can lose your life. It's a huge difference. We've all been bitten by mosquitos. I have no idea why God created them. That's gonna be one of my questions when I get to Heaven. I can understand the porcupine. Something funky to look at. But the mosquito? You wanna come after the service and give me one redemptive benefit of the mosquito, give it a good whirl. I know somebody's gonna do it. It's gonna be glorious, but in my idea, they're a pain in the neck. I think they're a mutation of sin. So -- I've been bitten by a mosquito. We all have. And when that mosquito bites me, if given the opportunity, you and I do the same thing. It's a gift to humanity.

[SLAP] There's a huge difference between that mosquito biting me and me crushing that mosquito. Doesn't take a doctor to notice that.

This battle got set four thousand years before Jesus ever came on the scene. Before anything about the cross, anything about the resurrection, God said, "Serpent/Warrior -- you're going to clash. He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." In answer to the question when people ask you, "Why does God allow all of this suffering?" it's right here. If God was going to allow choice, then He had to allow the consequences of those choices. And He did. If God was not gonna turn you and me into automatons, mechanic little beings that had no choice, if God was gonna take all of your volition away from you, He could've done that, but I don't think there's a person in this room that wants to tell God, "I want all of my volition taken away from me, I want to have no choice, I want to get up every morning and have you mechanically dictate every decision that I make." There's no one in this room that wants that. And if you don't want that, then you have to live with this tragic implication that when sin entered the world, God said, "Serpent, you're gonna bring hostility into the world." That's why you're gonna wake up tomorrow morning and you're gonna hear news about Ukraine. That's why you're gonna wake up and you're gonna hear news about problems in the inner city. That's why you're gonna hear problems about people being shot. That's why you're gonna hear this year tragically, friends of yours, some of them, aren't gonna make it in their relationships, and there are gonna be businesses that split, and there are gonna be all kinds of problems, and it all traces back to this day where God said to the serpent, "Because you deceived Adam and Eve, one of the consequences that this whole world is going to experience is that there's gonna be hostility."

Our story continues with the strike of a heel. In the text, it actually reverses it. It says first, "He will crush your head," and then it says, "You will strike his heel." But the fact is, when it plays out, the striking of the heel is actually first. Who's he talking about in this? Well, the text says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed." Now, a Jewish person who understands Hebrew is gonna look at this and say, "Whoa -- biologically, this doesn't make sense. Time out." God who created all people understands women don't have seed. Men do. Women have eggs. They would have looked at this text -- that's where the translation of the NIV maybe doesn't help us, because it kind of has already done some work for you. But if you were to look at this in the original, the Hebrew, the Jewish person would have looked at this and said, "Whoa! Time out! Something's wrong with this picture! A woman doesn't have seed. Time out, God -- what happened here? Women have eggs. Men have seed. We need a woman, and we need a man, and out of them come offspring." But it doesn't say "offspring," it says "seed."

Who's the text talking about? Because later in the same verse, he says "He." Isaiah 7:14 helps us. The prophet is speaking. It says, "The Lord will give you a sign." What's the sign? "The virgin will be with child." "The virgin will be with child and will

give birth to a Son, and will call him Emmanuel." Long before Isaiah ever prophesied about the virgin birth, long before the Psalmist every prophesied about the virgin birth, the writer of Genesis prophesied about the virgin birth. Because the only way that a woman has a seed is if that woman has a seed from a heavenly Father that comes on her and impregnates her through the power of the Holy Spirit. And that virgin gives birth to a son. God is laying out something really amazing. There's gonna be a battle, and it's gonna be between the serpent. And God needed somebody that would take this serpent on who held sin and death in His hands. And Christ was the vision that the Father had. And He said, "The seed of the woman is gonna come into the story and He is going to come into this four-thousand-year war, and He's gonna take the serpent on."

Our story continues with the strike. How does it unfold? Four thousand years after this prophecy, Heaven sends Jesus to earth. Hell hears about it. Hell's been thinking about this day for years. Hell's been scheming about it. He's been stewing about it. And to be honest with you, I think Satan was probably a little miffed when he heard from the Father, "He's gonna crush your head and you're only going to strike His heel." And I would imagine over a four-thousand-year period, that Satan, it kinda got under his skin that somehow this warrior of Heaven is going to get the better end of this battle. And so, when Christ is born and He comes into this world, I believe that it is Satan who comes into a king's heart -- King Herod -- and he comes into his heart, and he whispers this little lie: "There is a Jewish child who is being born who's gonna come up to be a king, and he's gonna displace you, and he's gonna take your place, and you're gonna lose all of the comforts of your position. You better take him out!" And Herod, because of the jealousy of his own heart, tragically murders all of these boys trying to destroy the warrior. God graciously spares His son and Jesus grows up.

But there'd be more. Satan would come to Jesus because he didn't get Him when He was a child. And so, Satan met Jesus one day when He was in the desert. And he said to Jesus, "Hey -- how about you and I make a team? How about you forget the Father" -- and Satan is saying this to Jesus -- "How about you and I become a team. I'll give you the world, because I hold, as the prince of the world, I hold the world with sin and death, I have it in its grip, but I will give you the world, and you don't have to go to the cross. Let's make a deal. But we just have to get the Father out of the way. Do you wanna do that?" And the Son resists him. And there would be other offspring, seeds that come along, that try to get rid of Him. And then there was a seed that came along, an offspring by the name of Judas, and he found a way to sell out his Rabbi. And he sold Him. Things got out of hand, way beyond what Judas ever imagined, and they took Christ to the cross. But make no mistake - - God tells us in Isaiah 53:10, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." In other words, God was the one who chose. "You're gonna bruise my Son's heel. But He will strike and crush your head."

On the day that Jesus Christ died, it is my belief that hell celebrated like they've never celebrated before. I believe that Satan threw the biggest party. I believe he

thought he was victorious. I believe he thought he had proved the Father wrong. I believe that he thought he'd turned the tables on that prophecy. I believe he thought -- "Ha! I got one over. I won the victory. I didn't get him when he was a little baby, but I got him when he was 33. I got him. I have him." And as he was celebrating, I believe all of Heaven, save the Father and the Spirit, hung their head in despair just like the disciples. But the Father looked over to the Spirit and said, "The final part of the story hasn't been told." Because He promised four thousand years before Jesus was ever born, "He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." The question I began to wrestle with was, when did that happen? We know when Satan struck His heel. We know -- that's pretty clear, it's the cross. We know when He bruised the Lord. We know when the iniquities of the world came upon Him. We know that. It's a point in time, it's real clear. But I began to look, and it got really blurry and muddy because no one really agreed, and we're celebrating the resurrection, we're kinda like, "Well, that's the -- that's the crux of this whole day!" But is that the place where the warrior crushed His enemy?

I stumbled upon this text in Romans chapter 16, verse 20: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet," and I realized that, though it doesn't show up there in the prophecy of Genesis, God has now engaged you and me in this partnership. It's true, the warrior is going to crush him, but the text says that the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. WE get to participate in this. "Well God, when do I do that? When do I get to show up? Because I can't wait to stomp on him! He's caused a lot of pain. To be quite honest with you, Lord, there's a lot of suffering, and I'm getting sick and tired of all the pain and the trafficking and the sex trafficking and the" -- every time you turn on the news, I just wanna stomp the ground and say, "God, when do we get to squash him? When? When does that happen, Lord?"

There are a number of options. If you've ever seen Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ" -- I love that. I do, I like that movie. He has a belief -- if you remember seeing that movie, he has a belief of when it happens. And you say, "Well, Mel Gibson's no theologian." Let me tell you what -- he's not a slouch. You know. May drink too much, but he's not a slouch. And though he had a powerful movie -- and where was it that he put this? If you remember the movie, Jesus is in the garden, and Jesus is battling it out in the Garden of Gethsemane and He's all alone. And Gibson depicts this woman coming to Him, and out of her robe this snake slithers. Now, if you don't like snakes, you're gonna hate this scene. In fact, if you like snakes you're gonna hate this scene. And the snake slithers out, and Christ is on His face, and He is grieving and He is lamenting and He's praying, and He's facing the cross, knowing that the sins of the world are going to come upon Him. And it's almost kinda like -- I remember the first time I watched it. I was kinda like a Rocky movie. "Come on, Jesus, get up!" The snake's gonna get him. I was so afraid -- I thought that snake was gonna bite Him. I was just like -- I was trying to figure out in the Bible, where are we, Lord? How do we -- do I know how this ends? I was trying to get the fear out of my gut. And all of a sudden, right there in the

movie, Jesus stands up -- BAM! And He smashes that snake. And I just wanted to go, "YES!"

But I think Gibson was wrong. I don't think that's where Jesus smashed his head. Others would argue that when Christ walked out of the grave, that's where He was victorious over death. But there's nothing in Scripture that tells us that's where Jesus won that victory. Some would go -- and this is a good text -- Revelation chapter 20, verse 10, where you have the tribulation period and the rapture, and then you have this thousand-year millennial period, and then at the end of the millennial period Satan gets released -- I don't know why God's doing this, but He does -- and I'll let Him be God, since I'm not. And He lets Satan loose again, and he deceives people for a period of time, and then Christ captures him and throws him into the fiery pit, it says, along with what? The false prophet -- the anti-Christ. Many would argue, that's where Christ smashes his head. The problem -- it says, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." I don't get to participate in Revelation. That's Christ.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews, the second chapter. More times than I can count, somebody has asked me, "Pastor, why does Jesus have to come in the flesh? Why couldn't God just forgive people from Heaven? Why couldn't He just have declared, 'You're forgiven'?" The text right here answers that question. "Since the children have flesh" -- chapter 2, verse 14. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity." If Jesus is going to save you, He has to save you in the condition that you're in -- you're in the flesh. You're not a spirit; you're in the flesh. You have a spirit, yes. But you're not merely a spirit being. We sinned in the flesh; He must redeem us in the flesh. The only way Christ can come back, the text says, is if He comes back to redeem us where the battle was lost. The battle was lost in the flesh. He has to come back in the flesh. But read on, because here it begins to unveil something very powerful. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that" -- here it is -- "by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death -- that is, the devil." Where is it? When is it? That Christ crushed the enemy?

I think it goes like this. You see, Satan knows the Bible, and he knows it well. And it says in the Scripture, Revelation chapter 12, that he's the accuser of the brother. And he came before the Father, and he said, "Father, Mark is a sinner." And a sinner says, "Yup. I know him. He is." "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and Father, you kicked me out of Heaven because I was a sinful angel, and you said that nothing sinful, nothing unholy can come into your presence in Heaven." And the Father said, "Yes." "And Mark is a sinner! He knows it, you know it!" "Absolutely." "And the wages of sin is death." "Absolutely," the Father said. And so, Satan comes, and he accuses me before the Father. "There's no way you can let Mark into Heaven. There's not a shot. He's a sinner, the wages of sin is death, he is deserving of death, and I hold the keys to sin and death." So the text says -- "He has the power of death." What is the power of death? It's the power of

condemnation. "Father, you cannot let unholiness enter into Heaven. I accuse this man. He's mine."

My friend, death at that point is my greatest enemy. Why? Because it is there that I meet my ultimate wage. The wages of sin is death. Death from God, separation from God. But in that moment, where Satan is standing there having this conversation with God, and Satan reminds the Father, "The wages of Mark's sin is death. You can't let him into Heaven. He's mine" it's then that the Father reminds him, "Do you remember the day -- do you remember the day that you killed my Son? Do you remember the day that you inspired those people to believe a lie, and they speared my Son, and they flogged my Son, and they nailed Him to the cross? Do you remember the day that you celebrated in hell? Do you remember the day you thought you won?" "I did." No. You see, when Satan intended to wound the Son, majestically, gloriously, miraculously, he set his own trap and actually brought his own destruction. Why? Because now the Father turns to look at the serpent, and He said, "Yes, Mark does deserve hell. But here's the problem -- I made my Son, who had no sin, to become sin. I took all of Mark's sin and all of your sin and I put it into my son."

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Him who had no sin to become sin." Whose did He use? Yours. And He took all of your sin and He put it into His son. And not only that, the Scripture says, so that you could become the righteousness of God. Where was it that Christ crushed Satan? It wasn't at the resurrection. It was when He took your sin and He took out of Satan the leverage that he had against you. The ability for Satan to condemn you. The ability for Satan to accuse you. The ability for Satan to stand and leverage your sin against the Father as a means of keeping you out of Heaven. And when the Father took your sin and put it on His Son, Satan was crushed. That's what the text says. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity, so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death. That is the devil."

"So Pastor, you telling me that the resurrection doesn't matter?" Ho ho ho ho, no, it does. Oh, it's huge! But what message does it tell us? See, the cross tells you Christ took your sins. It was the cross where Christ bore your sins. It was the cross that crushed Satan. What does the resurrection tell us? Do you remember sometime maybe in Sunday School somebody told you about the high priests? We're back in the Old Testament. Do you remember about the high priest that used to go annually, once a year -- it was a once in a lifetime choice where you were chosen as the high priest to represent the sins of the Nation of Israel, and you went into the Holy of Holies. No one else goes in there but the high priest. And you walk in, and you're taking an offering before the Lord and you sacrifice the offering and you give it to the Lord so that you might represent all of the sins of the people that God might forgive them. What an incredible privilege and honor and weight. How did the people know that God forgave your sins? How did they all know that God accepted the sacrifice of the high priest? It was really simple -- listen carefully. He walked out. That was it? And if God didn't accept his sacrifice, how did they

know? He died. That's the reason why they tied a little rope around his ankle. Because nobody could go in. If Zachariah went in there, and he did the sacrifice, and it wasn't good, and God didn't accept it, you can't just run in there and say, "Well, let's wrap up old Zach's body and take him home." You can't go in there or you're struck dead! So what do they do? They pull him out.

My friends, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 9 that Jesus Christ, when He died, He went into a temple not made by human hands, and He went into the tabernacle, and He entered that tabernacle not with the blood of goats and sheep but with His own blood. Where was He? He was in a tabernacle created by God, and He presented this sacrifice before God. What was He doing? He was presenting His life for yours! And how do we know that the Father accepted His sacrifice? He walked out. That's the message of the resurrection. The message of the resurrection is -- the Father has been pleased to accept the sacrifice of His Son. And what's the result? The text says, "And to free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

What kind of freedom? Number one, it's freedom from the wages of my sin. Satan has stood before God and he has accused me. And by the way, he doesn't stop. And every time Satan stands before the Father to accuse me, the Father looks back at him and reminds him, "My Son came into the Holy of Holies in Heaven, and I accepted His sacrifice." What freedom do I have? Not just from the wages of my sin but from the condemnation of my sin -- meaning, all of my past sins, and every one of your sins, the ones you've told friends about, the ones you haven't told anyone about. The ones your spouse knows about, the ones you've never told your spouse about. And Christ has cleansed every one of them, and the Father has washed them away. And He's giving me freedom to not fear death and to not wonder, "God, what happens when I die?" and "Lord, are you gonna accept me?" and "Lord, are you really gonna forgive me?" and "Lord, are you really gonna embrace me?" And the Father says, "Yes. I love you. You're mine."

When Jesus was dying on that cross, there were two people with Him -- one on His left, one on His right. And one of those criminals was kind of mocking Him and saying, "Well, if you're really the Son of God, you're really the King of Kings, then save yourself and save us!" The other one looked over at Him and said, "You have no business. You and I are here because we're criminals. He's here not because of anything He's done. He's here because He's here to save us." And this criminal looked over at Jesus and he said, very simply -- so simply: "When we die, would you remember me? I trust you." And in that moment, He crushed the serpent's head. Why? Because the God of peace, the God of peace, when He takes away the sins of your life, He takes out of the hand of Satan the only leverage he has against you - - your sin and your death. And in that moment, again, He crushes his head.

The glory of God is this: when Satan intended to wound the Son in a four-thousand-year-old battle, when he intended to wound Him and to defeat Him, he actually set his own trap, and the Father set you free. He did. That's the message of the

resurrection. But the resurrection without the cross is just a resurrection, and to be quite honest with you, there are a lot of resurrections. You have to make sure you understand, why is Jesus' different and unique? Because His resurrection is tied to a death on a cross where He took your sin. And last I checked, Lazarus didn't take any of your sins. Nor Jairus' daughter. Nor a little boy who fell out of a window. But God made Jesus, His Son, His warrior, this four-thousand-year battle, and He allowed Him to die because He wanted you in heaven with Him. The resurrection is God's validation I've accepted His payment -- paid in full.

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