

“All About Eve”

My vacation was stress-free, minus the pending visit from the Springfield Garden Club tour. For those who know me, you can appreciate that I have little, if anything, to do with the gardens at my house. Mark is the Master Gardener; I am merely the beneficiary of his hard work in our yard. The “stress” comes from listening to Mark as he is wondering if he should add something to the yard, etc. We even had the Japanese Maple replaced as the previous one was destroyed (Mark would say, “Murdered!”) in what we now refer to as the “unfortunate accident” that also totaled my car. To answer some immediate questions: a) Miraculously, no one was injured, and b) I didn’t do it!

In this post-Creation story in Genesis, Eve and Adam lived in an ideal setting that was certainly meant to be stress-free. They were allowed to roam the area with no restrictions except to leave alone the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. And this is where the stress came in: what if that serpent was correct? What am I missing? The story tells us that Eve eventually succumbed to the stress and took the fruit, ate it, and gave some to Adam.

On the surface, it appears to be a cause-and-effect story. With the disobedient action of Eve and Adam, none of us can live in a stress-free world; we have to wear clothes, and childbirth would be miserable for women. Well, they certainly answered some of the big questions of life, didn't they? Some biblical scholars believe that the creation stories are part of our sacred lore that responded to questions for people when they didn't have the knowledge that has since been discovered. The patriarchy of the time simply blamed the woman and, hence, established that men were stronger and less susceptible to making decisions that would endanger others. Well, we have seen how well that has worked out, haven't we?

Now, before we rise with pitchforks and torches, we have to recognize that even though we do not know much about Eve and her situation. If we want to come to her defense, we must examine the passages and draw some conclusions. We could say that Eve was curious, non-compliant, gullible, lonely, subversive, and maybe even willful. I would venture to add that she felt that something was missing.

How many of us, regardless of how we identify our gender, can sometimes feel the same way?

Did you know that other than Jesus, Eve is the only other person in the Bible to have spoken to God and Satan? We can learn some other things from Eve as well. We can learn that we should stay away from people who tempt us, even if the temptation is innocent. We can always ask God for support. We should also not take a crafty snake's word for things, even if said figure does not appear in the snake's clothing.

Additionally, decisions, both healthy and unhealthy, can affect generations. And finally, for today anyway, you may be forced out of the garden, as it may not be the best place for you.

How can such an idyllic spot not be the best place for us? Perhaps the Garden of Eden hindered Adam and Eve from getting on with their lives. Can we spend too much time in the Garden? What if we won the lottery, found ourselves in a resort in the Bahamas, and never came back? What if we didn't live out our call to spread the Good News?

Each one of us has a comfort zone that could be our garden. Maybe we need to move out of our own garden or comfort zone to help us grow. Or, we can take a look at our gardens, yards, or what we possess. Is it enough? Is it too much? We have to make that decision for ourselves.

In our times of stress, let us reflect on all that has been given to us by God. It may not be perfect, but it is ours. The garden tour, much like the one at our house tomorrow night, will happen, whether or not we are ready. Let us give thanks to our Creator, the source of all good things, for what we have and what we can share with others. Don't be fooled by snakes or those dressed in snakes' clothing. Let us remember to step out of the gardens OR our comfort zones to do what is needed to help us spread the Good News.