

8 They heard the voice of the Lord God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 The Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

10 The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”

11 God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

12 The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 The Lord God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 The Lord God said to the serpent:

**Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than all the livestock,
and more than every wild animal.**

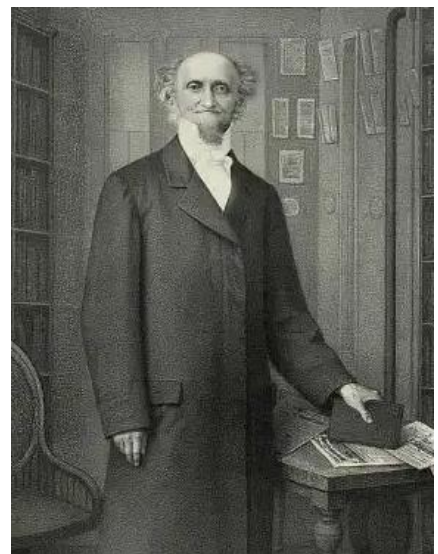
**You shall crawl on your belly,
and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.**

**15 I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed.**

**He will crush your head,
and you will crush his heel.**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of you are familiar with the hymn, “*He’s Risen, He’s Risen.*” It is CWH:445 in the blue hymnal. It is the only hymn in our hymnal by Written by C.F.W. Walther, a giant in Lutheranism and founding father of the Missouri Synod. There is a story behind this hymn. The **Perry County Lutheran Historical Society** reports:



[Walther] experienced the Great Fire and the Cholera Epidemic, both of which took place in 1849 in St. Louis and impacted many families in his congregation. He lost two sons who died before they were four years old. By the time 1860 rolled around, Dr. Walther was exhausted.....physically, mentally, and spiritually. He was on the verge of a breakdown. His condition led him to make the decision to make a trip back to his homeland of Germany in hopes of getting some much needed rest and to get re-energized. It was on his voyage across the ocean in 1860 that C.F.W. Walther composed the hymn, “He’s Risen, He’s Risen”. He wrote this hymn on April 8, which was Easter Sunday that year. <https://lutheranmuseum.com/2017/04/25/a-hymn-to-bring-back-hope/>

I am going to read stanzas 2–3.

*2 The foe was triumphant when on Calvary
the Lord of creation was nailed to the tree.
In Satan’s domain did the hosts shout and jeer,
for Jesus was slain, whom the evil ones fear.*

*3 But short was their triumph; the Savior arose,
and death, hell, and Satan he vanquished, his foes.
The conquering Lord lifts his banner on high;
he lives, yes, he lives, and will nevermore die.*

Text: tr. Anna M. Meyer, 1867–1941, alt.; C. F. W. Walther, 1811–1887, abr.

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Despite the fact that we are children of God we may feel worn down because the devil is always attacking us: physically, mentally, spiritually. Very often it would seem to us he is winning the battle. From Genesis 3 we have this thought...**The Devil Does His Worst Yet Jesus Always Wins**

1. The Devil does his worst. Vs. 8-13, 15d

In Revelation 20:4 St. John testifies, “**And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God.**” *Those who have been beheaded*...John the Baptist comes to mind. St. Paul may have died in this manner. There are stories of Christians being martyred today. This verse gives credence to the thought, “*The devil does his worst.*” He made trouble in the beginning and the old evil foe still makes trouble today.

A. God's children Adam and Eve changed in Genesis 3.

1. They had changed inside. They no longer have the image of God. They don't see things from God's point of view. They didn't have complete faith in God who had done everything to bless them. They now had a sinful, self-centered nature. They were afraid of God. Vs. 10

2. This changed their behavior and their life. They were in close fellowship with God. Now they run away and hide from him.

Before they were righteous with him. Now they try to make themselves right by excusing their behavior. Their natural inclination is to make excuses rather than confess and trust.

3. We are descendants of Adam and Eve. We are their children. We are told in the Bible that Adam's children were born in his fallen image. (Gen 5:3)

"One common sin infects us all" as the hymn verse states. (CWH:556) Do we run from our problems? Are we slow to confess, even as Christians? Do excuses come naturally? The answer is, "YES" for every one of us. God's word is clear we are naturally under his wrath. (Romans 1)

B. God has not changed. (9, 11, 13a)

1. God is Holy. **"Where are you?"** he calls out. Something is not right. **"Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"** **"What have you done?"** This is a serious matter that has to be addressed. God is not going to avoid his responsibility. This also is a part of his love for the humans.

2. God is gracious. **"Where are you?"** **"Who told you...?"** **"Have you eaten...?"** **"What have you done?"** Four gracious questions designed to draw out a confession. Then the Lord can announce his gracious forgiveness.

3. The Lord has not changed in all these centuries. When you sin, he gently seeks you out in his word. The pastor's voice, the voice of another Christian invites us to confess. God wants us to confess so he can administer his grace.

"Your sins are forgiven." He doesn't want us to run from him, but to him. We can do this if we by faith see him for the gracious Lord he is.

2. Jesus always wins.

In speaking of the devil, Jesus says in Mark 3:27 **“On the other hand, no one can enter a strong man’s house to steal his possessions unless he ties up the strong man first. Then he can plunder his house.”** God cannot talk about victory unless he has the devil defeated and under his control. In Revelation 20:2 the Devil is bound with a chain. BUT we note that from the very beginning we see that God has corralled Satan and had him under his control as we see in Genesis 3. Jesus always wins.

A. We know because Satan is condemned. He loses. (14)

1. There is no salvation. So it is with all who refuse to listen to God. If people stubbornly refuse God’s grace, then they share the devil’s defeat.
2. In the snake’s humiliation is a symbol of the devil’s defeat. The Lord God makes it clear Satan is going down to utter defeat.

Here is a loving warning for people and particularly the children of God. The life of unbelievers appeals from the advantages they have in this life, often it is money and comfort. However, the devil is no friend and in the end no one is “comfortable” living in the devil’s house. It only leads to ruin in the end.

B. We have something better and lasting. What a Friend we have in Jesus. Jesus was willing to pay the steep price for defeating the devil. **“He was wounded for our transgressions”** as Isaiah wrote. His hurt was not permanent even though Jesus died on the cross. He rose victorious over Satan. Satan is defeated through the forgiveness of sins. He can no longer accuse. We have peace in Jesus. Jesus’ victory is our victory. (15)

2. Please understand that there is still enmity. There is conflict, but not between us and God. God has put enmity right where it belongs between believers like Eve and the devil. As Eve’s believing children we understand that that there is nothing good about the devil and his kingdom. All his promises are lies. He is the enemy. We know our real Friend. What a Friend we have in Jesus and God, the Father and Holy Spirit. Our Friend will always take care of us even if we can’t see it.

Conclusion: *Look at our lives—the problems, the pains—and it’s easy to conclude that we are losing. Look at the world—the brokenness, the chaos—and it’s easy to believe that the devil is winning. It all can lead us to despair. Yet this turmoil is exactly what God said would happen already in the Garden. There God declared that until the end of time enmity would prevail. But God promised more than that. He promised that from humanity would rise one who would completely defeat the devil.

We need a top-down faith to understand that things are definitely not what they seem. Yes, the devil and his allies are constantly doing their worst. Their work always brings pain. Yet, ultimately, Jesus always wins. And his victory is our victory. Jesus’ victory is so complete that even when Satan continues to cause chaos, Christ uses it to reveal his glory and grace to those gifted with top-down faith. Amen.

**Conclusion is a quote from WELS CWH YearB-SAP01-AtopDownFaith.*