

Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none. – November 1, 2015
By Wayne J. Schneider – Soli Deo Gloria

“Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.”
...William Shakespeare
Genesis 9:8-17

Do you realize that we are four weeks away from the Season of Advent? When I realized this and, in my weird and convoluted way of thinking, I began ruminating about the Season of Lent. The day before Lent begins is known as ‘Shrove’ Tuesday or, more popularly, ‘Fat’ Tuesday.

Eating donuts or pancakes, sprucing up your house, getting rid of all the yeast in your home, and deciding what you are giving up for Lent are all preparations for the season. The Old English word for Lent means ‘*to lengthen*,’ and denotes the coming of Spring with its longer days, and new life coming from death's cold grip.

In his book entitled, "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team," Patrick Lencioni says the first and most important dysfunction, becoming free from the grip of death in our relationships with God and others, is the absence of trust. We discover this in the Holy Scriptures as well. Genesis starts with the creation story giving humans the choice between right and wrong.

It is like a parent who teaches her two-year-old child not to touch the hot stove. Genesis instructs the first humans in the Garden of Eden that they were not ready to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With a little sweet-talking, the serpent talks the pair into breaking God's command, because, after all, what does the Creator of all know? Then comes the ‘why’ questions: *Why is God keeping the fruit from them? Why is God trying to hide something from them?*

This is what happens to us when we begin to mistrust others. *What is she hiding from me? What is it that he is hiding from you? Why are they questioning our motives?* At this point, we enter what some call the “state of invulnerability.” We choose not to be vulnerable with that person. Simply, we no longer trust them, so we take the matter into our hands, exactly what Adam and Eve did when they ate that forbidden fruit.

With this one act of disobedience, mistrust became part of their relationship with God. Once again God attempts to warn the first couple's first born, that the

roaring lion of sin is at his heart's gate, but Cain does not trust God, makes his choice, and murders his brother Abel.

By fourth chapter of the book of Genesis, human are murdering one another. By the sixth chapter, sin grows so rapidly and pervasively, God must take action. God chooses Noah and instructs him in ark building and zoo keeping. When the flood is complete God makes covenant with Noah and all living things in earth. This covenant is a contractual agreement that contains some provisions we see in chapter nine, verses 1-8. (CEB)

God restates the very first commandment God gave humans in Genesis 1: "*God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fertile, multiply and fill the earth. All the animals of the earth will fear you and dread you—all the birds of the skies, everything crawling on the ground, and all the sea's fish. They are in your power. Everything that lives and moves will be your food. Just as I gave you the green grasses, I now give you everything. However, you must not eat meat with its life, its blood, in it. I will surely demand your blood for a human life, from every living thing I will demand it. From humans, from a man for his brother, I will demand something for a human life. Whoever sheds blood, by a human his blood will be shed; for in the divine image God made human beings. As for you, be fertile and multiply. Populate the earth and multiply it. God said to Noah and his sons with him, 'I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you. So that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.'*"

Because we are visual people, God gives us a rainbow as a sign of the promise. It is a symbol of God rebuilding trust. How do we rebuild trust with God? With one another? The re-establishment of trust always begins with one person willing to be vulnerable and taking that first step. God begins anew with Noah.

All of this begs the question, with whom do you, and I need to rebuild trust? What boundaries do we need to put in place to begin the rebuilding of trust? What of a covenant? As with Jesus are you willing to be vulnerable with God? Are we willing to invite God into our lives and be ready to follow wherever God leads? So may it be. Alleluia. Amen.