

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Psalm 32

I'm going to attempt to do some heavy lifting. My plan is to talk to you about Artificial Intelligence, Temptation, Adam & Eve, and hope. Let's start with AI. There was an interesting letter that Matt Shumer wrote his dad about AI. It was turned into a post and now has been read more than 100M times. Matt is a CEO of a small AI company; his dad is an attorney who is looking at retirement sometime soon. The point of the letter was to convince his dad to let AI do some of the work at the law office. He wrote: you can ride the wave of AI into the future or you can have the wave break on you.

It's kind of dramatic but he does have a point. Don't be afraid of it, try AI, use it, like for five minutes every day. See what it can do. It will replace some things and won't replace others. One thing it will, according to this post, is that it will replace a lot of what law clerks and new lawyers do. Ever since reading that article I have been trying AI. It's making me wonder what it can do for All Angels and how it will shape ministry (if at all).

Are you wondering what this has to do with Adam and Eve? What were they seeking when they took a bite of the apple off the forbidden tree? Knowledge. We, as humans, are seeking knowledge. We might make fun of cats for being curious, but we are the curious ones. When I was a camp counsellor and would take groups out on over night hikes, there was a camper who brought a book with him – *The Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest*. While on a water break, he recognized a mushroom and said, "Hey, we can eat that one." I grabbed the book out of his hands and said, "No one is eating any mushrooms; I don't care what this book says!" Later that night, around the campfire, someone conjectured on how we know what mushrooms won't kill you. They started giggling because they realized someone had to try different mushrooms and see what happens. Humans – we like knowledge even if it will kill you.

Incidentally, for those who have an iPhone, or other Apple products, what's the symbol on the device? It's an apple; with a bite taken out. Yep, we took a bite of knowledge.

Here's something else to consider: humanity may have changed the way we view ourselves during and after the industrial revolution. We see ourselves as machines – things that can produce products. It was found that children are even better at it but eventually we made laws against it. If we see ourselves as machines that produce things, AI is going to be very scary for us. AI can think faster and can out produce humans. What I'm wondering is if we should look at ourselves in a way that we did before the industrial revolution. From what I can gather, we saw humanity as spiritual beings in a physical world. We're not physical beings in a spiritual world, and we are not just physical beings in a physical world; nope, we are spiritual beings in a physical world. That brings me hope about AI. If this is a lesson for all of humanity, for us to see ourselves as we really are, we are spiritual beings and can use AI to help us in the physical

world, and, perhaps, help us in our desire for knowledge; yet, developing our spiritual sense in the world.

Here's one way to look at hope. This morning, I turned off all the lights in the bathroom before opening the door so as to not wake my bride. I was up before the sun rose so any light from the bathroom may have disturbed her. Anyway, I turn off all the lights and suddenly there is an eerie glow behind me. Honestly, my first thought was it was an angel. I slowly turned around to hear what she has to say when I realized it was a blue nightlight Christi had put in the closet. I didn't know it was there – why would I stand in the bathroom with all the light off – until it was completely pitch black. That's how hope works. It is the brightest when everything is the darkest. It shines when everything else has gone dark.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13, he wrote: Love is patient, love is kind. Love rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things. Love believes all things. Love hopes all things. Love endures all things. Love never ends. Faith hope and love remain, the greatest of these is love.

What I read in this is that love and hope are intertwined. I also believe that God is love. Because God is love, and because love also hopes, that tells me that God is present in hope. When we have hope, we have love and vice versa. Love hopes all things. Hold onto this idea for a moment because we need to talk about temptation.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after a forty day fast. I could maybe make it a day or two. After that, if I could turn a stone into bread, I think I'd do it. But this isn't me we are talking about, it's Jesus. He could do it. Yet, he was tired and famished. And that is when the temptation came. Hope, in our Judeo-Christian theology is anchored in God's promises to us and that tomorrow will be better than today. God promised that God will be with us – even in temptation. God will deliver, protect, guide and love. Our Jewish and Christian hope is that God holds up God's promises; even when we break them, God is loyal and true. When Jesus was done, I think he held onto hope through the promises of God. It anchored him. He was anchored in the hope that God is with him, God will sustain and help him. And, that is what happened – the angels tended to him.

When we are tempted to be worried about the future, about AI, or any sort of thing, Jesus reminds us that our hope is anchored in God's promises and love. "He will never leave you nor forsake you." Love endures. Hope endures. Love never ends. These are all a part of what we hold onto, especially in the dark times – which is when hope shines the brightest – and that God will help us through temptation, through an uncertain and accelerating future, and that God will be with us, always.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen