

Genesis in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of Christ from Genesis
Where are you? A question of Grace or Judgment – Genesis 3:1-13

This is the word of God. Genesis 3:1-13.

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, **3** but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” **4** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. **8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool 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** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” **10** And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” **11** He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” **12** The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
May God bless this His Word to the heart of His people.

Here is the descent into sin. When Adam sinned we sinned. In Adam we sin, in Adam we die. Adam’s sin record comes to us. Adam’s sin nature comes to us. This is an eternal moment. “Eternal” and “moment” do not seem to go together do they? However, God’s object of love that He has made in His image, man, male and female, has fallen into sin. They have committed disobedience to the living God. What will God do and what will man do? What will happen in this moment?

When I was a kid we used to play some games. Most of the games were designed to teach kids something. Do you remember “Mother May I?” I never quite got the hang of Mother May I. Do you remember Hide and Seek? Genesis 3 is the first time it is played but it is not a game it is eternity. It is also not Hide and Seek but it is Seek and Hide. God comes seeking and man starts hiding. Here is a moment where man has fallen into sin and God comes seeking him in the cool of the day with questions.

What will God do now that man has fallen into sin and what will man do in response to what God does? God comes seeking. God’s love continues unabated, searching and seeking even when man has rejected Him with

disobedience. Man's response to God's seeking is to further reject and recoil from Him. Other than the phrase used "the Lord God" it is my opinion that the second person of the Trinity is walking in the garden which is Jesus. This is a pre-incarnate ministry of Christ where He comes to the garden to be and pursue Adam and Eve to do what He will do gloriously and ultimately on a cross, coming to seek and to save the lost.

It is here that the Lord God is moving among the garden and He asks four questions. These are not questions designed to give God information. God is omniscient, He knows everything and omnipresent, He is everywhere. The first question He asks is "Adam where are you?" The second question He asks is "Who told you that you were naked?" The third question He asks is "Have you eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?" The fourth question He asks is "What have you done?" The questions are designed not for information but they are designed to do two things. One is to induce Adam and Eve to confess their sin. The questions are designed to induce them to own their sin and confess it. If they do not confess then the questions indict them in their sin. So the questions are an inducement that they would own their sin and if they do not respond with confession then the questions become an indictment that they have sinned against the Lord.

So what do they do? The fact is that we are all sinners. In Adam we died and through Adam we have a sin nature. We not only have original sin from Adam but we have actual sin that we do. The question is not "are we sinners?" but the question is "what will we do with a seeking God calling us to confession?" The Bible is very clear that there are only two possible responses. One is to confess our sins and two is to conceal our sins. The Bible says that if we conceal our sins then there is nothing but brokenness and death. The Bible says that if we confess our sins there is life and hope through Christ who forgives because of what He has done on the cross. In other words, I know that everyone of us are sinners and that there is eternal life in Jesus Christ but the question is simply this; will we conceal our sin or will we confess our sin? There is no in-betweens.

Now concealment does not just come in one form. Concealing one's sin comes in multiple forms. The sin nature and the multiple ways to conceal sin are all born out right here in the first parents. How do Adam and Eve conceal their sin? They make three attempts to conceal their sin. One way is through self-reliance and a cover up. Remember Watergate during the Nixon presidency? Recently there was "Rathergate" dealing with Dan Rather. There is always someone out there uncovering something. What is the first thing we always do as sinners whenever we get caught or whenever something begins to be made known? We try to conceal it by covering it up. In Genesis 3:7 they sewed together fig leaves to cover themselves up. Why? It was because they were naked, ashamed, guilty and they were recoiling from the presence of God by covering themselves up. There is always that initial reflex movement of sinners, like my grand daddy used to put it, "you either fess up or cover up, which one you gonna do?" It is not to fess up but the initial movement is to cover up.

The second way they concealed it is that they hid among the trees. They were trying to hide from the gaze of a Holy God. They were trying to find a way to get something between them and God. Hiding is the second way they tried to conceal.

The third way they concealed is perhaps the number one way in society today. They played the victim. "It's not my fault it's my neighborhood's fault." It's not my fault it's my parent's fault." It's not my fault it's my school's fault. I am victim here." It is also seen right here in Genesis 3. When God asks Adam if he had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he responded this way in Genesis 3:12, "***The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.***" So his answer to the question "Have you eaten the fruit?" was "It wasn't me." He was probably thinking, "I really didn't eat it. I know I chewed it and swallowed it but I didn't eat it. It wasn't me. God it's that woman. It was my wife. She gave me the fruit and I ate. By the way God, come to think of it, You gave me the woman." Here is Psychology 101. "God, this was not my fault. I have a dysfunctional marriage. I have a dysfunctional wife. She just didn't do what she was supposed to do. I also have a dysfunctional religion because You're the God that gave me the wife, that gave me the fruit. You see I am really innocent here. This wasn't me. It was her and You gave me her."

Now ladies, does this sound like somebody you know? Do not quit reading though. To the woman, "Did you eat the fruit of the tree?" The woman responded in Genesis 3:13, "*The serpent deceived me, and I ate.*" She is further thinking, "God it wasn't me." This reminds me of a shtick that Flip Wilson used to do. A line he was most famous for was, "The Devil made me to do it." The woman says here, "It was the Devil that made me do it. It wasn't me. It was him." We are always attempting to play the victim or pass the buck to someone else. Concealing sin through cover up, hiding or playing the victim never work so what is it that God would have us do?

The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" The word "confess" means to agree with. There was a great man and king in the Old Testament named David. He had a heart like unto God. He was an interesting man, this king. This king, one day, got trapped into sin because he did not flee temptation. He went out on a roof and the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life got him. He made the choice to sin with a woman whose name was Bathsheba. Then he started covering up the sin by entering into a conspiracy to murder her husband Uriah. But one day a preacher came to him whose name was Nathan. Nathan began to preach a sermon to him and the sermon had a story in it. Nathan, this non-descriptive prophet that very little is known about went to this great king and told him this story. He said, "There was a very rich man who had a lot of sheep and who came in contact with this very poor man who had only one sheep. The rich man with all his sheep killed the poor man to get his sheep. David what do you think we ought to do with that rich man?" David in all of his righteous anger looked at Nathan and said, "Kill him." Then Nathan with his finger pointed at David said, "Thou art the man." (This account of Nathan and David is found in 2 Samuel 7.) Nathan's preaching of the

Word came to the conviction of David's soul. David went into such deep conviction that in Psalm 32:3, 4 it says it was like he was languishing in the fever heat of a summer cold with his bones roaring within him until finally he no longer covered up and concealed but now he confessed.

Thank the Lord that his confession is revealed to us in His Word. Psalm 51 is the confession of David after Nathan preached to him. Psalm 51:1-17; **1** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! **3** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **4** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. **5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. **6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. **9** Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. **11** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. **12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. **13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. **14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. **16** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

What does one learn about that text about confession? Confession is marked by three things. The first thing confession is marked by is personal responsibility. David says, "I have sinned." He did not blame it on Bathsheba and her immodesty. He did not blame it on the intoxication of power where he did it because he could it. He just said, "I have sinned."

Secondly confession is agreeing with God in three areas. One is that a person agrees with God that what they did was a sin, not a mistake, not faltering, not a frailty, not a human weakness, but saying, "God this is sin. I have transgressed Your Word. I have rebelled and sinned against You." Secondly, one agrees with God that it is sinful, the sinfulness of sin. It is not a worldly sorrow that one got caught but it is a sense of the sinfulness of sin. It is an agreement with God that one cannot save themselves. One says, "I have no burnt offering to bring. I have no sacrifice to bring. Nothing that I can do will save me. Playing the blame game will not save me. I need You to save me. Don't just patch up my heart but give me a clean heart O God. Go to the heart of my life. Thirdly it is an agreement that God's grace and mercy are greater than my sin. "In Him I surely can be saved." Again, 1 John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Not only faithfully will He always forgive those who confess but in justice He goes to the Father yet He does not say, "Father here's Harry

trying to do better, let's give him a second chance." He says to the Father, "Father forgive your son, I Your Son, paid for those sins. Forgive him." O how the wounds of Christ cry out. Concealment brings only death but confession lays hold of the life and grace of the Lord Jesus.

Here are a couple of takeaways. The first ministry of evangelism is found here in Genesis. It is a sinner and the Living God comes seeking the lost. Note the use of questions here in Genesis 3. Note the use of seeking out the lost. Even though man has rebelled against God, God does not leave man under His justice and judgment but He comes seeking and inducing him to confess his sins and cast himself upon God's mercy and grace. Here is that moment where God comes to seek those who seek Him not. The Bible says that those who seek Him will find Him (2 Chronicles 15:2) but the Bible also says in Romans 3:10, 11 that "*No one seeks for God.*" and "*None is righteous, no, not one.*" This is not God hiding and man seeking. It is God who seeks and man who hides. Praise God we have a God who not only came seeking but who calls the one who would hide to Himself and makes seekers out of us who would hide from His grace. Here is the Lord who comes not only seeking but with His calling inducing us to confess and to trust in Him alone. That is what God would have us to be as a people, not waiting for the seekers to come here but in the name of Christ going out into the world "to seek and to save the lost" with those inviting questions that would draw people to Christ. We are not a people waiting for others to come to Christ but in the name of Christ we go to them because He came for you and for me.

The second takeaway has to do with the profile of sin. The profile of temptation has already been looked at which was the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. Now the profile of sin is seen. What does sin bring? Sin brings fear, shame, guilt, brokenness and self serving. Fear is seen when Adam says, "I ran from you because I was afraid." Shame came when innocence was gone. Brokenness came when the relationship with God was broken. Brokenness is seen when relationships with each other are broken, and in relationship to God's creation. Sin also brings a self preservation and a self reliance even to the exclusion of others. Here is Adam ready to throw Eve right under the bus so to speak, if he can get out from under this thing. No longer is there a concern for the unity that God granted them in a marriage but now there is a brokenness in the marriage and between them and God. There is guilt, fear, brokenness, self preservation and shame. Sometimes the worst lies are lies that are half truths. Remember what Satan said to Eve? He said, "When you eat of this fruit you shall know good and evil like God." That was a half truth. They did come to know good and evil but not like God. They came to know good and evil like Satan and that is shame, brokenness, destruction and death.

The last takeaway is that one's concealments will never work. This text tells us they do not work. Did the fig leaves work? No. In Genesis 3:7 it says that they sewed fig leaves and they covered themselves. Then God came looking for them and Adam said in Genesis 3:10, "I hid from You because I was naked." He was not naked because he had loincloths or aprons or it says in the Geneva Bible "breaches." Yet the fig leaf coverings never work. One may be

trying to covering up one's sins with religion, with involvement in the church even. One may be trying to cover up one's sins with philanthropy but cover ups never work. One needs to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Those who confess it says, "He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How many trees are we hiding behind? There is the tree of materialism. One thinks if they get enough things maybe they will not have to deal with this sin issue. There is the tree of power, the tree of possessions, the tree of agnosticism. There are all kinds of trees that we hide behind and we think it gets us off the interrogation of God; "Where are you? Have you sinned against Me?" But in reality the trees will not hide us either. Whatever tree one tries to hide behind it will not block out the day of God's judgment. The Bible says there is coming a day in which the great and the small will stand before the Lord and the ocean shall deliver them all up and in that day who will stand? It will not be those who cover up, not those who hide behind trees, not those who play the victim.

Aaron, Moses brother, is a great example of playing the victim. Moses is up on the mountain getting the Law and he comes down and sees the people worshipping Baal. There is Aaron right in the midst of everything with the golden calf that was made. Moses looks at Aaron and says, "How did this golden calf get here?" Aaron says, "Moses you would not believe this. They brought this gold and silver and threw it in the fire and the next thing I know this golden calf is here. It just happened." (Exodus 32) We are always trying to play the victim. You are free to confess because it is not your performance that gets you to heaven. It is Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. That gives us a hatred for our sin and a desire to confess, agree with God, casting ourselves on God's mercy and then begin to grow in His grace.

This is the day to confess. Our Savior not only came into this garden but He walked into another garden and agonized over our sin. Then He climbed a hill, went on a cross and paid for all our sins so we could confess it. He will be faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The wages of sin is death so do not try to conceal it. Confess and come to Christ. The wages of sin is death so one cannot pass the buck to one's parents, to one's friends, to one's wife or to the Devil.

I went to Charlotte and had the privilege to pastor a church there. There was a young guy who was coming with his wife and kids. His family was so excited and he would sit on the edge not to get too close. Finally one day he came to me and said, "Preacher I heard you liked to play golf." I said, "yeah." He said, "I used to play on the Nike tour in Florida. Can I play golf with you?" I said, "Sure if you'll take it easy on me." So we went out to play golf and he was good. We got to know each other a little bit. Finally one Sunday he was sitting on that back row right on the edge and after church he came up and asked to talk to me about this stuff. We went to a restaurant and talked about the Gospel for about an hour. I finally said to him, "Buzz is there any reason why you won't commit your life to Jesus Christ right now?" He looked at me and said, "Preacher, let me ask you a question. My daddy told me that when I took a preacher out to eat I had to pay for his lunch." I said, "Buzz you got a smart

daddy.” He said, “So I am going to pick up your tab and you are free to leave. Now what you are telling me is that 2000 years ago God’s Son came into this world and picked up my tab, paid for it on the cross.” I got a free lunch that day and Buzz trusted his life to Christ and Buzz even stuck the ticket in his Bible. We pulled out the ticket from his Bible when I preach his funeral two years ago. Do not pass the buck. Jesus has already picked up the tab. Confess your sins today and put your trust in Him alone today. Now grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the moments together in Your Word. O Lord meet with us, guide us, fix our eyes on Jesus in a very special way. Thank You for the privilege to commune with You and each other, in Jesus name, Amen.