

Reading: Genesis 3

Theme: Hiding from God.

Things had changed in Eden. Adam and Eve knew it by a sense of unease in each other's presence, flowing out from unease in their own individual lives. They covered their nakedness and unease with fig leaves. Sadly things were going to get worse - for although sin affected them in and of themselves, it also affected their relationship with God, His relationship with them and they were going to have this driven home – as we will see more of in v8-11, for now I want us to just note 3 things from v8 & 9:

1. The Familiar Sound.

It would appear from v8 that God came down to the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day and would spend time with Adam and Eve. This was a familiar pattern and routine which they had and until their fall into sin it was no doubt something they looked forward to. It was incredible that they could walk and talk with God; they could have fellowship with their Creator God. For Moses, who wrote the first 5 books of the Bible, this must have been a huge thing to have recorded and written it down. Moses himself had been aware of God's presence on Mount Sinai on a number of occasions. He had been awed when God spoke to him from the burning bush; he had seen the awesomeness of God's approach as He met with Moses and the people at the giving of the Law; Moses had seen a glimpse of God's glory at another time on Sinai when he was hidden in the cleft of a rock and God passed by and let him view His hindermost parts.

Adam and Eve had the privilege, the honour of God coming down in the cool of the day, walking and talking with them and them with Him. It was a close and intimate relationship. For this to happen God would have to do something He did at other times in OT - He probably took on the appearance of a man. We call such events “theophanies” and they can be seen throughout the OT when God appeared in human form to various people - to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, also when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were in the fiery furnace. The One who appeared here was probably the member of the godhead who would one day take to Himself human nature for ever - the 2nd person of the godhead, God the Son - who since taking flesh to Himself for all eternity is known to us as Jesus.

Why do I say God took on the appearance of a man here in the garden? It is because of who God is. He is spirit, He is infinite, He is totally other to mankind and any part of His creation. Man could not speak face-to-face with invisible spirit and so God would graciously appear in human form and this allowed this close relationship to exist in pre-fall Eden. Adam and Eve hears the familiar sound of their God walking in the cool of the day in the garden. The word for “cool” (ruwach) is usually translated “spirit” or “wind”. Was the presence of God accompanied by the “Spirit” moving in the garden by a cooling wind? I’m raising it, but will not speculate on or try to answer it!

What it indicates is that the time they usually spent with God, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus, would have been a time of comfort and refreshing. How long this had gone on for

before the Fall we are not told, but I guess their reaction before the Fall would have been one of joy and delight as their God and Creator approached. Here is this first recorded approach of God to fallen Adam and Eve and sadly there is a complete contrast. See:

2. The Fearful Response.

Previously when God had come to speak to them as friend with friend, they took great delight in these visits and His company. Now as soon as God's approach is known, there is a fear, a terror even and they hide away. They had done their best to sort out the unease they felt in each other's company, but their fig leave clothes are now shown to be pathetic and useless at the approach of God. They may be covered by fig leaves, but it did not prepare them for the horror and fear they felt within as they heard their God nearby.

Sin is not just about doing wrong, for sin involves guilt - we have broken God's law which makes us liable for condemnation and punishment from God. Often people are ignorant of their guilt. They dismiss their consciences and even forget about the wrong, the sin they have done and may even excuse or dismiss such. Yet their forgetting or dismissing their sin does not remove their offence or guilt before God. Adam and Eve experienced this - for as the Lord came and walked in the garden, Adam and Eve with newly activated and totally responsive consciences, are aware of their guilt before God. They were no longer, pure and sinless, but they are disobedient, rebels without a cause, knowing good and evil from the position of sinners and God's familiar approach, which previously caused them so

much joy, now caused them a terror, an awe, a sense of fear which their pathetic cover up clothes could not help and they ran away and hid.

Here is the action of fallen mankind - to run away from God and hide. They did it then and all have done it to a greater or lesser extent since, as Jesus said (John 3:19-20) *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that His deeds will be exposed.”* People naturally do not like being in God’s presence as it makes them feel uneasy, uncomfortable, it will expose their lives and failings. It is not easy to be exposed by God and shown even a little of what we are. People do not like it as it smashes pride, self-sufficiency and self achievement. All our DIY things to get right with God are exposed as useless. Our lives are shown as wrong and also we realise our guilt. Impressed upon us is that we deserve God’s condemnation and punishment. People do not like or want to know such things, we didn’t before we were Christians, nor as Christians, and we and others will try to get away and hide in and behind all sorts of things.

People imagine that when they meet God they will put Him straight, argue their case and stand their ground. Winston Churchill when asked if he was ready to meet his Maker retorted *“Is my Maker ready to meet me?”* Sadly such ones, like Adam and Eve, will not be bold, but will be terrified and all too late their arguments will be seen as false and useless and that all their ideas and notions were but nicely painted

lies and delusions of the devil. As did Adam and Eve, they will realise the truth too late and they too will be afraid and want to hide!

God's presence and sin do not go together. To have sin and to be in God's presence is a terrifying awesome situation. One day all people will have to stand face-to-face with God! One sin, one wrong deed, word, thought and desire will cause us to have guilt and along with that guilt will come the fear and the terror of the God who is holy, of the God who will judge us for our sin and there will be no escape and no hiding place. Are we ready for that? Adam and Eve were not ready, so they feared and they hid. Now see:

3. The Fantastic Question. (v9)

Adam and Eve try to hide in God's creation, in the trees He made! At first glance it appears they succeeded, for God says "*Where are you?*" Yet they had not succeeded even though they may have felt hidden and out of sight, for God knew where they were and why they were there! He knows all things, sees and understands all things and it was futile to try to hide from God. The question is fantastic, not because it looks like it shows ignorance on God's part - for there is none, but because it is a question that focuses our attention on God's fabulous and fantastic grace! Let me explain...

This is not a question that God uses to determine Adam and Eve's location or whereabouts. God knew where they were and why they were hiding from Him. He knew of their fall into sin and the effect it caused in them and in the relationship between God and man, as well as man and God.

Man had rebelled, had committed treason against God. If God had, at the moment of them eating the forbidden fruit, struck them down with lightning bolts, or vaporised them, then no cry of injustice or accusation of Him being unfair could ever have been levelled. It was what man deserved! They had been warned of the consequences - *“in dying you will die”* and God being so pure and holy, sin would have been eradicated in a moment.

Yet God does not remove mankind off the face of the earth, or reduce them to an amoeba-like status. God does not abandon these rebellious, ungrateful disobedient creatures to the full horror of His justice and their just deserts. God approaches mankind in a kind and gentle way and calls out in grace and mercy to them in their lost condition. For here we see that God took the initiative to reach lost men and women. The question was not for God to determine their place, **but to cause them to consider their condition!** It is a question designed to bring them to realise the nature of their condition and to confess their sin. EJ Young, a Hebrew and OT scholar wrote that this is *“the first overture of saving grace in the Bible. In all justice God might have cast man then and there into everlasting punishment; instead He approached man in tender love to announce His determination to save Him.”*

God in this question reveals His grace and love. For His purpose in questioning Adam was to cause him to see where their disobedience had brought them. Adam and Eve wanted to be as God, but God says in essence *“Where has your disobedience brought you?”* They were not as God, not with

eyes opened as God, but their eyes were opened as fallen sinful creatures and knowing the initial bitterness of sin and sadly this would become even more bitter. When God could have justly abandoned them, yet He came to them and addressed Adam - "*called to the man*" - as the head of the relationship. Thankfully God still deals with people in grace and mercy. God calls to people as He is revealed in Creation, through the word of God taught and preached, especially the gospel. All are addressed to hear God's overtures of love and mercy, but in that general call there is a specific call, as if God is addressing us as individuals, as if we are the only one addressed, the only one in a congregation or meeting that God wants to hear what He is saying. Sometimes it seems as if the preacher had known us, was speaking to only us. This is God is calling to us and saying in essence "*Where are you? Think where you are!*"

It is good and profitable for us to consider where we are in our relationship to God. It is good to challenge people to think about this and to ask them where sin has taken them. Sadly even as Christians we can be backslidden, afar off and hiding from God because of sin, sinful actions and desires. God would call on us all to consider where we are and He does that so that we may receive His grace and mercy. If God hadn't called after Adam and Eve, then there would have been no hope and they, along with the devil and his fallen angels, would be forever lost. Yet God came to seek out Adam and Eve. The one who would be known as the Good Shepherd came and sought these first 2 wandering ones; to bring them back and in order to do that they needed

to be reminded where they were and that they shouldn't be there!

If God shows us our state, then do not to run from Him and hide. This side of eternity such a revelation is a blessing - because He shows us our position and condition not to leave us there, but that we might consider our ways, to seek Him and His way of escaping such a condition and position. God would show Adam and Eve their position and condition, but there would be enough said and done to give them the way of escape from the deserved punishment.

The word of God comes to us and asks “*Where are you?*” Where are we in relationship to God, His eternal life or His deserved anger and punishment? Most of us here at peace with God through the Saviour He provided, but perhaps we're walking at a distance and are not aware of His love and the closeness of His relationship. We are to stop running and hiding from God, and go to Him to delight in His peace and forgiveness, to luxuriate in a wonderful relationship we have in the Lord Jesus. Hide and seek is a great game, but stop hiding from God, the God who seeks us and our eternal wellbeing and seek Him who seeks us - as He wants to be found and enjoyed in and through the Saviour He provided.