

Reading: Genesis 3

Theme: Excuses, Excuses, Excuses!

A fortnight ago when we last looked at this passage we began to see how the sin of mankind caused their state of blessing and perfection to unravel. In this passage we see how things went wrong for mankind, for the world and indeed for all Creation. The sovereign God created this world perfect and harmonious. There was no such thing as natural disasters e.g. tsunamis, earthquakes, freak weather which cause drought and disaster. There was no such thing as illnesses, disease or even pain. Death and the grief it brings were not part of God's original design and plan for Creation. It was into this perfectly harmonious and delightful place that God put a man - by a special act of creation, then God also created woman from man by another special act of creation. They had free reign and rule of all creation as stewards of God. The only prohibition Adam was given was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam had told Eve of this command as she was not created when God gave it to Adam.

As we have seen, Eve was tempted, deceived, seduced by the devil using the snake; she ate and gave to Adam and he ate it also. This had many consequences - even straightaway. Adam and Eve felt uneasy within themselves and in each other's presence. Their God-given right nakedness caused them unease and shame. To cover this unease they sewed fig leaves together. Sadly at the approach of God, previously a pleasure, they hid from God and then He began to question them.

Last time we saw 2 of the 3 points I wanted to look at in v10-12 and we saw **1. Expression of Fear** (v10) – sadly the approach of God, which only the day before had been a delight, but now His approach caused Adam and Eve to fear and hide. Their fig leaves

were no defence or covering before God's presence, they are afraid. The unease they felt with each other, was now dramatically heightened as they were aware of the broken relationship between God and man and showed itself in Adam and Eve by this fear of God, trying to get away from Him and hide. We are to encourage ourselves and others not try and hide from God if He comes to meet with us; Adam and Eve and all since have found it pointless to try and hide from God.

We also saw **2. The Examination of Grace** (v11) - God graciously questioned Adam to draw out a confession from him. God knew all that had happened, but he wanted Adam to confess it and he would realise and recognise what he had done and be humbled by it before God. God reminded them of the only command he had been given. This commandment was the magnifying glass to bring Adam's sin into focus clearly. We need God's word, especially His laws and commands, to bring our lives and sin into focus and to show to us, reveal to us its true offence in His sight. God may examine our lives, but if so, it is with grace and it is for us to see our need of His grace and to confess our sin and first of all to seek to be right with Him through the Lord Jesus. Once we are a believer then it is to restore us back to a right relationship and walk with Him. Whenever God deals with us we are not to try and hide behind anything - our churchgoing, morals, our dos and don'ts dos, education, social standing or family connections. If God examines us in His grace, then we are to wise up and not to try a cover job. It is better to have an examination by grace in this life that will lead to salvation, rather than have an examination by justice in eternity which will lead to eternal damnation. If we are believers, the Lord loves us so much that He wants us to see how we are with Him and to be in a right relationship, to walk with

and delight in Him in every area of our lives. This brings us to see Adam's response:

3. The Excuses of Adam (v12)

All Adam had to do was to make an open honest confession. It was obvious God knew what was what and what he had done. Adam surely knew God better than to carry on trying to give reasons, excuses why he felt ashamed, afraid and was aware of his nakedness. Adam laid down *a 2 part pattern of defence* that many have used through the years and are still using!

The First Excuse: Adam could not defend himself or his actions, but he tries to lessen the seriousness and his guilt *by shifting the blame onto someone else*. Adam lays all the blame onto Eve - "the woman" - she is the one who gave it to me, it was her fault, I'd not have done so if she had not given it to me, or said it was OK to do so. She is the reason for the problem!

Have you ever met people like that? I have. One man in the firm I was in, was forever adding comments to pieces of production notes to use if something went wrong on a job - so-and-so said to this; customer unclear about the details. I know of young people who will blame others for making them angry and they kick in the bodywork of a car, or do some senseless action and then turn around and blame other people - as if it's their fault. I know other people who did something as they couldn't govern their own temper, actions or mouth and they did, reacted or said and yet they always justify it by saying it was someone else's fault!

We live in a blame culture and people are always happy to blame others, to say it was the fault of others and yet so many fail to realise they are accountable. They are accountable in law for the damage they have done, accountable to the ones they have hurt

in what they did or said, but also accountable before God as an individual. They may feel they can blame others and feel that it is always the fault of other people, but they are ultimately responsible for their own words, thoughts and actions - this is definitely true in regards to God.

Are we those as Christians, even non-Christians who will always blame others - we still have trouble with words or actions, but others are always to blame and we are the innocent party and deserve no blame for the way we reacted and anyway they deserved what happened as we were provoked! I'd just say "*Wise up!*" Ultimately we are responsible before God for our words, actions and reactions. Can I urge us not to do so through pride, or stubbornness (*pride causing inaction*), or blame shifting, to make excuses for ourselves and our actions. Adam did and he blamed Eve.

Thank about the one he now spoke so disparagingly of, she happened to be the one he spoke so highly of in 2:23-24 "*The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*" Eve was his darling wife, his one and only, the woman who especially made for him, the one to complete him, to be his companion, to be his helpmeet and the one he was with. This precious one is rounded on so easily - it is the woman's fault! **Realise** that sin not only spoiled, ruined man's relationship with God, but also spoiled, affected and ruined relationships with all other members of the human race, even with nature itself. This spoiling, affecting of relationships can show itself in many ways such as hurting, blaming, having bad thoughts about those who are nearest and

dearest and being willing to speak harshly, bitterly and falsely of those close to us and not just those we don't like.

We are to realise that sin has spoiled relationships between people; so much so that even Adam and Eve's first 2 children could fall out over the worship of God and one kill the other! Sin's spoiling of relationships has brought about murders, crimes and wars. Global events can bring about global animosities as easily as family events can cause family arguments etc.

The first of Adam's excuses was a weak one - even if Eve had given it to him, he did not have to eat - was he saying Eve's wishes and ways overrode God's commandment? Even our nearest and dearest can lead us into sin and we are not to drop our guard, but be those who lead our loved ones, our friends by our example and life and lead them on in the ways of God. It is incredible that Adam could so quickly and readily blame God's greatest gift to him, his darling God-given and made wife - Eve!

The Second Excuse:

Incredibly Adam self-justification doesn't end by shifting the blame on to Eve as his excuse, but then ***he shifts the blame on to God*** also! He says to God "*The woman you put here with me...*" or "*The woman whom You gave to be with me...*" (NKJV). It is as if he turned around and was telling God it was His fault, as He gave her to him, and if God had not given her then he would not have eaten the fruit! We see that man away from God and in sin has no problem even in blaming God and saying how it is His fault for allowing things to happen, even for not stopping it etc!

That, which he had been so thankful to God for, is now cast back in God's face with derision, with arrogance and contempt as an answer to God's examination of grace. Many people have done

and do this with God. It may not be so arrogant, or it may be so, but it goes something like this *“it had to be right, we were not happy in our marriages and God brought us together and He wouldn’t want us to be unhappy...”* Or *“I needed money, there it was an open display and I took it... so God must have wanted me to have it!”* Or *“I prayed about it and I felt it was right as I had such peace...”* then they went on to do an action that was clearly contrary to God’s word. Others openly blame God and asked why He didn’t stop them! When these things are exposed as wrong, or things don’t work out people are ready to blame God.

Adam was not a robot. He and only he in his prefall state could choose to obey God or ignore, and therefore disobey, God. His eating was a choice he made contrary to God’s command and he could not excuse it or pass the blame on to anyone.

Thankfully Adam did confess that he ate the fruit, but sadly did so after he tried to blame others, giving mitigating circumstances. God calls on us to confess our sin, to forsake it and go to Him through the Lord Jesus for forgiveness. That is what we have done if we are a believer and we know full forgiveness of sins, no condemnation and guilt before the holy God. In our conversion experience there may have been differing degrees and intensities of conviction of sin - this will vary in our own individual conversion experiences. Yet there has to be recognition of our own personal sin, confession of it and our going to the Lord Jesus as the Saviour from sin. Jesus is not provided as a Divine Paracetamol to ease our pain, or a Divine Ecstasy tablet to make us high. He is the Saviour who saves us from our sin, its guilt, condemnation and deserved judgement. Yes there is great comfort and joy in having Him as our Saviour, but His primary, His chief work is to redeem and save us from

our sin, make us right with God and give us a home in heaven where there will be fullness of joy and peace for ever more.

Yes His saving work does affect our lives here and now. The Puritans would say that if a man's faith did not affect his dog, then it was questionable! By that they meant that our faith is to affect our lives in every area. It is to affect our behaviour, our attitudes, our work, our morals, our bank balance, our aims, our children, our marriages; it is to affect every area of our life from the boardroom to the bedroom.

We are not to overlook, minimise the need of confession of sin in our lives whether we are believers or not yet believers. The Bible speaks of repentance and confession of sin as part of our salvation, whether we are gross or moral sinners - for we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory i.e. His holiness and perfection. When God by His grace began to work in us, we saw our sin, we were humbled, had a sense of godly sorrow, a sense of self loathing and hatred of sin, more than that, a hatred of our sin and sinful acts. Think back on how we called to God to be merciful to us a sinner and we asked Him to help us forsake sin, wrong ways and thoughts, with no excuses or self-justification. Then we realised that wasn't enough and we asked the Lord Jesus to receive us, to take away our sin, to make us His child and to accept us through all that He had done. We asked Him to clean us up and out, to accept us as those who needed His forgiveness. We didn't try and reason or argue with God, didn't try and give excuses but we owned our need of such a Saviour to do such a work and give us new life.

Be thankful that such a work of God's grace has happened to us when He examined us, showed us our sin and caused us to call on Him in and through the Lord Jesus. We are not to despise

such, or to minimise such, but we are not to stay there either if we are a believer. We are now ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven and have a new life and standing with God. What God has done in us is to work out within us and to show, be evidenced more and more in our lives. We are to keep short accounts with God and not to be forever beating ourselves up with a stick of our own, or rather the devil's making and live a miserable existence.

Yes even as believers God will have to show us our sins and failings, but we are to thank Him for such and not to excuse or to cling to the sins. We are to confess and forsake them and seek His grace to live as we should live, even pray for grace to see the need of more grace!

Adam tried to make excuses, but eventually had to confess his sin. We are not to try to hide behind the excuses we make, by trying to pass the blame on to others for who we are and what we've done. God knows us through and through and He wants us to be truthful with Him and we can then know the great things He can do with flawed persons such as you or me. As believers we are to warn people to flee from the wrath to come and that they do not remain arrogant and proud before God, but humble themselves, confess their sin without any excuses and seek God and the great salvation that He's provided in the lovely and great Saviour - the Lord Jesus.

As believers we can revel, delight in our God and Saviour that our sin has been forever dealt with in Jesus and there is now no condemnation for all who are in Him.