

Reading: Genesis 3:17-24

Theme: The Simple Faith of Adam and Eve.

We have seen the sad, sad events in Eden – Adam and Eve had gone from rulers, overseers of creation living in a perfect, harmonious world with no disease, death, pain or suffering and because of sin there was a great disorder in place in Creation. Their relationship with God was broken, their relationship with each other was spoiled; they were uneasy in each other’s company and were ready to blame each other for sin. Their harmony and headship of Creation was broken and their physical life, though initially spared, was to be one of hardship, sorrow, pain and hard toil. To add to that, God pronounced physical death upon them - to die and return to dust.

It must have been incredible to hear these judicial sentences said by the One you knew you had disobeyed and did wrong against. God’s word must have sounded awesome as their sentences were revealed to and upon Adam and Eve. Those last words in v19 “*dust you are and to dust you will return*” must have smashed into them in their state of sin and unease. Yet in v20 it appears as if Adam ignored what God had just said - “*Death*” and called his wife “Eve” as the word means “*she gives life*” or “*living*”, indicating he saw she was the one whose work was to be engaged in giving life!

Is Adam being dismissive of God’s sentence? Is he daringly and rebelliously ignoring God and saying “*You are wrong and we will show you!*”? Some writers take it as that, but most see this as an expression of Adam’s faith. This is what I feel it is and I want us to begin this evening to see *The Simple Faith of Adam and Eve*. A longer heading is “***The Shocking, Contradictory, God Pleasing Simple Faith of Adam and Eve***”! We will see this

as we look at v20-21, with reference to 4:1. We will do so using 3 main headings, but only the first this evening:

1. Adam's Faith. (v20)

Adam had a simple, uncomplicated faith in God's promise and it is expressed in v20. There's a lot here, so I've broken it up into 4 parts, so see:

A. The first confession of faith in God and His Word: here we have faith in its simplest form; it is the first evidence of faith in God and His word in the Bible. It is a confession expressed in the words "*Adam named his wife Eve*". It is remarkable as this is such a contrast to what God had said in v19 "*Death*" and Adam said "*Life*"! The AV catches the connecting word "*And Adam...*" for we see v20 starts with the opposite of what v19 ends with! It is a staggering, a shocking contrast, even a contradiction of and to what God had said "*in dying you will die*" and Adam said "*life*".

Yet it is a God pleasing shocking contradiction and God does not rebuke Adam for it, does not tell him off for such boldness or such words. The reason for it being pleasing to God is because it involves trust and faith in what God had said earlier as He sentenced the woman and said the words of v15. There in v15 an offspring, a seed was promised and we developed this when we looked at v15, we noted that it is a singular word 'seed' - the seed of the woman would come and crush the devil's head. We briefly traced this first gospel promise through OT and into NT and saw how this was speaking of the Lord Jesus and His climactic work on Calvary.

I find it marvellous that Adam only had this vague, dim and mysterious promise of God, yet he believed it! God said it, it

must be true and therefore there is hope of this Seed and even as his death sentence had just been pronounced and still ringing his ears, he reasons by faith and says Eve - there is the hope of life, the hope of living will come through the woman as God's word will not fail and she is the one through whom **The Seed** would come and there is this hope of life, especially **The Seed** of the woman who will destroy the devil, the serpent.

As we noted last time, we are all under the sentence of death. Yet we have God's word and promises. Now we do not have vague, mysterious promises, but clear and glorious promises. We have the fuller revelation of God's word and the fullness of the gospel - that there is eternal life for anyone and everyone who trusts the promised Seed - the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Even under the sentence of death in this world we can know we have eternal life by believing what God has said and accomplished in the Lord Jesus. The gospel is simple - we are sinners and condemned to hell if we meet God in our sin, but God has provided the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, and if we go to God through this Saviour we will be forgiven and given eternal life. In a nutshell it is John 3:16, a summary of the nutshell is Acts 16:31 *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved"*. Paul declares it as Romans 10:9-10 *"if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

Adam had just one promise and he believed it! We have many, many promises - as if God asks people *"Now how about this or that or the other - surely one of them makes sense to you?"* The Bible gives us picture after picture as well as many promises e.g. the snake in the wilderness where they were called on to look

and live (cf John 3:14-15); or in the parables e.g. the father running to meet the prodigal son and so we learn that God's welcome is sincere, His offer is to "*whosoever will believe*" and He will never turn away any who will go to Him. If God received Adam on his believing of a vague, obscure promise, then when He has given such an abundance of promises to us, surely He will accept us whoever we are and whatever we have done if we believe in Him. God underlines, shows in these many promises and pictures His willingness to welcome people!

B. The 2nd Naming of the Woman: Adam now renames his wife. In 2:23 he had named her 'woman', this was his wedding song and it is poetic in Hebrew. Some argue it wasn't a name, but a nature, a classification he gave. He expressed in their wedding song their unity and oneness, but sin smashed that and spoiled their marriage relationship and even threatened to ruin it - no longer friends, no longer at ease in one another's company, Adam was quick to blame her (*and God*). Their relationship was heading downhill, was spoiled and had there been one about, they would probably have ended up in the divorce court.

Yet God's promise transformed Adam's view of the woman. Faith does affect our lives in so many areas. Here Adam's faith in God's promise now means that he views the woman in a different light and a different love song is sung and she is given a different name: Eve = *Life, Living*. He realised that in and through her God's promise would be fulfilled.

While the gospel is not guaranteed to solve personal problems, marriage crises etc, it may often do so as a side-effect, as a subsequent consequence to having one's sins forgiven, having peace with God and eternal life. A. W. Tozer wrote "*This generation has forgotten that the gospel message does not clean*

up and shine the outside of a person, rather it bores into the very heart and soul of a person and radically changes that person from the inside forever.” Because we are changed people with living hope, as we realise God has changed us, made us new and hopefully better people, now having God centred priorities, so we are able to handle difficult people and situations in a way not possible before. If that change is known and shown as God’s word is lived out, it **often** (*not must, will or certainly*), but often has an effect on other people around us especially those we live with and may often have most conflict with. Yet it can also give rise to different conflicts, especially if a believer is resented or asked to do or enter into sin, but refuses to do so. The woman was given this name that spoke of the hope that Adam realised was held out to them both - there would be life springing from the hope of the Seed God had promised.

C. A Firm Belief: we are focusing again on Adams faith. It was so simple and he had no questions, no “ifs, buts, how...” Adam uncomplicatedly, simply believed God - the Lord had said it and he believed it! The how and when were left to God. It was a first promise, it may have been vague, but it spoke of the Seed crushing the devil’s head and Adam believed it would happen. He didn’t want a sign; didn’t need to have it all laid out and explained to him. God had said it; Adam heard it and he believed God.

Faith comes by hearing the word of God. It is good and right for us to hear and to speak of what God has said and promised in His word. Saving faith, uncomplicated, simple faith believes God’s word is true - that God will do as He has said. Hebrews 11:1 says *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”* That’s not a bad description of Adam’s faith! This is the rationale of faith. God does not expect us to leap

blindly into the dark - often with us it is a reasoning, a growing understanding, our trying to grasp and understand, but there comes a point we have to say “*God has said it; do I believe Him or doubt Him?*” See it is:

D. A Faith Centred on the Seed Promised: the hope that Adam centred and focused on the Seed who had been promised in v15. In our terms it is the Lord Jesus. Saving faith is never faith in faith, or the hope of something better, it is never vague, or mystical, or a wish, but centres on a real historical person - the Lord Jesus Christ; on who He is and what He has done. Martin Luther said “*Faith is the ring that clasps Jesus Christ who is the diamond.*” Adam focused on the diamond of God’s promise and so must we, for faith never draws attention to itself, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. In that lovely hymn Rock of Ages v3 says “*Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; naked, come to Thee for dress, helpless, look to Thee for grace; foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Saviour, or I die.*” [MP 582:3]

Adam knew he deserved all he had been sentenced to by God, but in it all he saw God had given the promise of hope and he believed it. Doesn’t his faith put us to shame? He had one vague promise and yet he can say confidently “*Life!*” People can make all sorts of excuses - *I’m too bad; God would not accept me* and yet we can tell them with certainty that He will accept them. We can tell them that God accepted Adam and God says in His word “*Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*” (1Timothy 1:15) – this was written by the apostle Paul who had gone out of his way to imprison, kill and persecute Christians. It could be argued that in many ways Adam was the worst sinner ever - as he was perfect, living in a perfect world, he saw and spoke to God, had God’s direct command and warning

of the consequences and yet he still sinned. In doing so he plunged us all into sin and all its accompanying miseries and now we have sin biased and captive wills. Yet Adam believed God and says “*Life*”.

What about us? Remember when we realised that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and we recognised that included us; then we saw He came to save us and He offered to us “*Life*”. It is so easy for people to feel that they are too bad for God, but it is not the case; they need to think again as none are too bad to be saved and none too good not to need saving!

I read of a godly Scottish preacher Hugh McPhail who lay dying in his bed, as he did so he lost all hope and comfort of eternal life. He felt that he would be shut out of heaven. (*None of us know how we will face or go through our own dying experience.*) Sadly no one could comfort him - his wife, children, the elders of the church, great friends who were great men of God. Then one night he had a dream in which he dreamt he stood before the golden gates of heaven. As he stood and watched he heard music and along came OT saints - Abraham, Moses, David etc. The gates opened and they went in and he was asked if he could go in. He said “*No*” and he was told of Abraham’s folly, Moses striking the rock, David’s adultery, lying and murder and Hugh McPhail still said “*No*”. The gates were closed.

Then he heard music again and saw NT saints - Peter, Thomas, Paul etc and the gates opened and they went in. He was presented with snippets of their lives - denying Peter, doubting Thomas, persecutor Paul and he still felt he could not go in. He heard music again and he saw the church fathers, people from history, even his old elders who he knew so well with all their

faults and sins and they all went in, but Hugh McPhail still felt he couldn't go in.

Then he saw one man in rags walking up the road and Hugh McPhail asked who he was - Manasseh, wicked Manasseh, who had filled Jerusalem with idols, with the blood of God's people, who dragged the worship of God down to the dust. The question was asked "*Can he go in?*" At that point Hugh McPhail woke up. Neither he, nor we put emphasis on dreams, but God can use them exceptionally and Hugh McPhail thought about this dream and Manasseh. He knew God's word and Manasseh was punished by God, put in prison in a foreign country and there he trusted God and was a man of God in his old age and of course he could go in - **he was saved by faith alone**. Hugh McPhail called his family and friends and said "*If there is room for Manasseh, there is room for me.*" He died in the joy and confidence of faith.

If Manasseh, if Adam could believe this God and His promises, can't we! Why do we not believe? Why do we have doubts and lack of assurance? We need to believe in the Seed promised to Adam and Eve so long ago - the Lord Jesus - none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. If we have trusted the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour, then we are to realise that He has saved us for all time and all eternity. Our security, our going into heaven does not depend on our feelings, our experiences, our successes or even our failures, but it rests on what He has done for us and in us. It is all of grace through faith and even those are gifts from God who has been pleased to offer this salvation to whosoever will believe and when we do, we are safe and secure in the Rock of Ages and He will never, ever let us go, but bring us safely into heaven.

Next time we will see: 2. Eve's Faith & 3. God's Provision.