

Reading: Genesis 3:17-4:2

Theme: Faith and God's Provision.

Last week we looked at v20 and saw the first of 3 main headings and considered **1.The Simple Faith of Adam and Eve** or more fully "*The Shocking, Contradictory God Pleasing Simple Faith of Adam and Eve*". We noted that it was the **first confession of faith in God and His word**, even though it appeared to shockingly contradict God – we noted the contrast between the end of v19 and start of v20 - God had spoken of their death and their returning back to dust and Adam named his wife Eve = Life, Living. Adam was not told off, this was a working out of God's word and promise in v15 referring to the Seed who would crush the serpent's head.

Adam believed God would fulfil His word and promise, so his faith, his confession of faith was "Life" = Eve. We noted **the 2nd naming of the woman** with this name of faith; saw **Adam had a firm belief** in God's word, this one vague promise - God had said it and Adam took Him at His word. **His faith centred on the Seed** God had promised and he is both a challenge and an example to us. We have hundreds, if not thousands of clear gospel promises, clear promises of eternal life if we believe on the Seed God promised to Adam and Eve. As we progress through OT into NT this Seed is revealed as the Lord Jesus. We don't have vague promises, but clear promises which all centre on the Lord Jesus, so we have underlined that whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus shall be saved and have eternal life. God does not and cannot lie and He will not exclude anyone of us from such a promise if we believe with all our heart on the Saviour He has provided. Adam's faith can be deduced, seen, reason from his words in v20, but what about his wife, the one he called Eve? So we move on now to see:

2. Eve's Faith. (v20)

The woman had been deceived by the devil using the serpent. She had sinned and sinned first. No sooner was she a sinner, but she was a tempter and tempted the covenant head, her head to join her in her sin. Sadly Adam did not correct or rebuke her, but he took of the forbidden fruit and ate it.

She had been sentenced by God - to subjection to Adam, to painful childbearing and rearing. She'd heard of the curse on the ground and the hard toil they would live by; had heard of their death and returning back to dust. Was there any hope, was there any future? Imagine her shock when Adam on having just heard their death sentence, turned to her and does not lash out, does not blame her as he had done only a short while before, but he turned to her and says "Life".

Here is the first preacher, giving the first sermon and it centres on "Life". Adam said to her "Life" - for her to realise there is this hope of life in the Seed God has promised – as if he said *"Woman can't you see that, can't you grasp that? Yes we are punished as we were warned and deserve, but God has given us a message of hope even in our sentences - "Life"!"* Adam was telling her that in the midst of death there was the hope of life and to show that he believed it, he called her Eve = "Life" - my wife "Life"!

We seen that Adam believed that, but did Eve? I think she did and others do as well including John Calvin and many scholars, so I'm not going out on a limb or proclaiming some new insight or novel thought! See how the woman believed the hope her name signified - see it coming out in 4:1-2.

Here in 4:1-2 we see Adam and Eve obeying God's command in prefall Eden "*Be fruitful and multiply;*" (1:28) - this is called by some "*God's funnest commandment!*" This shows that sex, lovemaking within marriage is not to be seen as some trial or something to be endured, but is right and proper and was ordained in prefall Eden and so lovemaking within marriage is clean and pure. The writer of Hebrews says in 13:4 (AV) "*Marriage is honourable in all and the marriage bed undefiled*". This means Adam and Eve were not sinning in laying together, the Hebrew says "*Adam knew Eve*" - it speaks of the most intimate and personal knowledge and expresses a closeness, love and unity. It is a lovely picture of what should be the deepest expression of relationship between a husband and wife in marriage.

Eve conceives and gives birth to a son - Cain and says, as an expression of her faith, "*With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.*" Literally at the end of that sentence she says "*the man*"! As if she says "*God had promised the Seed to crush the serpent's head and I have brought him forth*" - it seems Eve believed God's promise and expected it to be fulfilled there and then! What we would call that an active and expectant faith!

Eve had such a hope for the Seed promised, the expectancy of the Seed, that she says "*This is the man*" - I acquired him. The name Cain sounds like the Hebrew for acquired or brought forth. Surely this hints and shows to us that it wasn't just Adam who had the hope of the Seed to come, but so also does Eve. Now their marriage relationship, which had been on rocky ground as they become uneasy in each other's company and presence, as Adam was blaming Eve for the sin, is now steady and cemented together. Now they have a joint, a common and shared faith and expectation in God's promise.

Oh they would need that faith as they were put out of Eden, would know a hard slog in getting their food, would know thorns and thistles; Eve would know the pain of childbearing and giving birth, which Adam would also witness. Yet in all the shock and horror of life outside of Eden there was the hope and sustaining of faith - God's promised Seed would come.

We know Cain was not the promised one. What a letdown for Adam and Eve! Faith, new faith, even simple faith is tested and Adam and Eve's faith was - shown as a 2nd son is born Abel = vanity or breath. Adam and Eve suffered much as Cain killed Abel. There must have been questions, doubts, fears at this dark providence as one of their seed goes back to dust before them. God's providence seemed to be at cross purposes with His promise - Abel was dead, Cain had to leave and it was a confusing situation. We are not to be surprised at perplexing, confusing situations in our lives even as Christians, even as young Christians. There will be times when God's providences seem to go counter to God's promises. Yet God is still in control, He is still faithful, He still loves us and He can still be trusted.

In such times God's purposes are not destroyed. I wonder if Adam and Eve realised they were the ones responsible for such sin expressing itself and it was not their failure as parents, but Cain's sin was a result of their Fall! Adam and Eve had another son - Seth = granted, restitution (4:25). They also had other sons and daughters (5:4). In those early days it would seem there was no prohibition on marrying one's brother or sister as they would have been no genetic problems caused by genetic decay - which probably occurred after the Flood.

Have you wondered if Adam and Eve ever saw any of their descendants walking with God? Reading on we learn they did! Just do a timeline chart and you see people calling on the name of the Lord (4:26) and doing so while Adam was still alive and he even saw one walking with God (5:25). Eve, along with Adam had a hope in the promised Seed. She had a misplaced focus and yet trusted God to provide the Seed who would come and destroy the serpent's head. It is so important that we have trusted the promised Seed, the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour by faith in Him.

3. God's Provision. (v21)

Adam and Eve had found that their own efforts to clothe themselves were useless - flimsy fig leaves. We related these to our own attempts to cover our sin and make ourselves acceptable to God. All our good works, our religion or our morality are no substitute for absolute holiness and perfection. Nothing other than God's own holiness and perfection is acceptable to God. Adam had blown that as his sinless and perfect state had been lost and his sin deserved punishment and death.

Yet Adam and Eve believed God's promise - this was a work of goodness and grace on God's part and it resulted in God covering their nakedness. This was and is a picture for a greater work of grace that would cover Adam's sin and our sin. This is a type, a picture of what God would and does do in the gospel for all who trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

It would appear God took and killed an animal or animals. I wonder what Adam and Eve's reaction to this was! It may have been horror at seeing death firsthand, seeing a dead animal and yet the Lord took its skin and gave it to them as a covering! Commentators sometimes go a bit fanciful here, but it would

seem that God deliberately gave Adam and Eve a visual example of what their sin deserved - an innocent substitute animal suffered in their place and then they are covered by its skin. Don't think of God as a cruel bloodthirsty God, but God was showing and driving home the seriousness of sin. This is what they deserved - to die, but God was covering their nakedness with a covering He provided. Their fig leaf covering was stripped away and God provided a covering for them.

Only God can properly clothe us - not with physical clothes, but He clothes our souls to make us stand perfectly acceptable in His presence. Yes we may, as many still do today, try and dress our souls in our best fig leaf attempts - our morality, achievements, religion and religious feelings; our good works, suffering or our own righteousnesses. We fail to realise even our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight. They will do us no good. We are to let go of the fig leaf righteousnesses we cling to and use and ask God to clothe us with the covering He has provided.

There are only really 2 world religions – DIY fig leaf covering where we do what we can do, or feel or achieve; the other is Divine covering which is provided by bloodshed. By nature we are all fig leafers and want to stand before God in what we have done and provided; but if we do, all we will know is terror and we'll be lost. We can only safely appear before God in the garment He has provided - it means letting go of our coverings, owning we are sinners and asking God to clothe us with what He has provided.

It means we have to put on Christ - to be in Him by faith, by a simple trust and saving faith. As the animal was killed to provide a covering for Adam and Eve, so throughout the OT we have the development of and a focus on sacrifices. These sacrifices are so

many pictures (types) offered at different times and yet they all point to the fact that our sin and wrong deserve death and we are told a number of times that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, remission or clearing of the debt of our sins. In OT animals we used and the worshipper put their hands on them to own their guilt and to symbolise transfer of their guilt and sin onto the innocent victim and it was killed in their place as their substitute.

When Jesus was on earth, John the Baptist pointed to Him and said *“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”*. All the OT sacrifices were repeated often and all were saying in effect *“Look there is One coming who will be the once and for all sacrifice for sin!”* Then there He was - Jesus who died to take away the sin of the world, for all who would trust in Him. He was our substitute in our place there on the cross.

When we by faith realise what He has done for us, it is as if we place our hands on Him, own our guilt and our sin is removed from us and transferred to Him. Yet we are not left naked in God’s sight, but we are clothed with something glorious - the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Not only is this His intrinsic righteousness, but also that righteousness which He wove and accomplished in His perfectly holy life here on earth - both His active and passive righteousness in that which He accomplished and that which He would do for us, especially on the cross.

This is what we would term the robe of Jesus’ righteousness - that which covers us completely and perfectly, that which is ours forever when we believe and we are justified by faith as a legal work goes on and in our lives and a legal declaration is made by God the Judge concerning us.

Adam and Eve experienced this in a graphic way and it was theirs by faith in the Seed to come. Have we been clothed with this righteousness of the Lord Jesus? It is offered freely to us, at no cost to us, freely provided from the wardrobe of God's sovereign grace. It could never have been bought by us, but it is ours freely by God's grace and it fits us perfectly no matter how good or rotten a sinner we have been. This is His gospel provision for people like you and me who have sin. If we are believers this is what has been given to us not only for time, but eternity; it remains ours not only when we feel buoyant and happy being, but is ours for ever. If we haven't believed, then why not? If we have then we can rejoice and sing our closing hymn with understanding and thankfulness –

Jesus, Your blood and righteousness
my beauty are, my glorious dress;
midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed;
with joy shall I lift up my head.