

Consequences of Sin

GENESIS 3:7-13

Baxter T. Exum (#1552)
Four Lakes Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin
June 28, 2020



****COVID-19 SPLIT SERVICE****

It is good to be with you this morning! As we get started, Juanita wants us to know that Al is still in the hospital today, and he does appreciate phone calls! If you would like to write it down, the number at St. Mary's is 608-251-6100, and Al is in room #5636. He might be going home today, and his number is in the directory.

As we have done over the past few months, we are starting again this morning with the good news: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We respond by believing the message, turning away from sin, confessing Jesus as the Christ, and by allowing ourselves to be buried with Christ in baptism, for the forgiveness of sins. As we are raised up, we are born into God's family, and the Christian life begins.

And once again, we are starting today with some examples, and we have several today, starting with Chris' baptism at the Boulevard Church of Christ in Cleveland Ohio. Their preacher, Maurice Parker, tells us that Chris has been faithfully attending their worship services there in Cleveland, since the pandemic began. He was baptized just a few days ago.

Anizah was baptized in Honolulu, Hawaii, this week. I was scrolling through Facebook a few days ago, and a "baptism alert" popped up. I love those alerts! And I joined a Zoom broadcast in progress as it was fed through Facebook. I caught it right as she was coming up out of the water, so when it was over I went back and took a few screenshots, and that is what we have here.

These are some pictures of Deboryana's baptism at the Beltway Church of Christ in Camp Springs, Maryland, this week. This one popped up on Friday in a group I'm a part of.

These are pictures from India and Kenya this week. In the upper left, Mani (a gospel preacher) reports that they baptized a dozen Hindus this week. In the bottom right, Richard (also a gospel preacher) was able to baptize twelve people in Kenya this week. Due to blown transformer, they haven't had electricity for over a month, so they weren't able to pump water into their baptistery, so they went to a local river.

And we close with some pics from Kenneth Moody, a friend who preaches in Tennessee. He was able to baptize his girlfriend, Bethany, this week! We have seen some happy people this morning. And we are using them as examples: What they have done this week, you can do this morning! We have a baptistery downstairs, and if you are ready to obey the good news in your life today, or if you have any questions or concerns, please talk to either me or John/Aaron after today's service, and we would be more than happy to open the word of God with you and to find some answers.

This morning I'd like for us to return to our brief series of lessons from Genesis 3. Last week, we learned that Genesis is a book of beginnings. We have the creation in Chapter 1, we have more information about the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2. And in Chapter 3 we come to the first sin. Last week, then, we looked primarily at the role of Satan in that process as he encourages Eve to doubt the word of God, as he lies about the consequences of sin, and then we looked at the temptation and the sin itself.

This morning, I'd like for us to continue by looking at the immediate aftermath of the first sin, the results of sin. We'll look at the impact the first sin has on Adam and Eve. And then next Sunday, Lord willing, we will continue with the prophecy that comes after this. Today, though, let us look at what happens. Eve sins, Adam sins as well, and we pick up with Genesis 3:7-13. Let's look together at Genesis 3:7-13,

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. ⁸ 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 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." ¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from 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 from the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

- I. **As we look at the inspired word of God this morning, and as we look at what happens immediately after the first sin, I want us to move through a series of consequences, starting with the fact that both Adam and Eve are overwhelmed with a sense of SHAME.**

In verse 7, as soon as they eat the fruit, their eyes are opened, they know they are naked, and they try to cover it up. They take fig leaves and they make themselves loin coverings. They are ashamed. Before the fall, before the first sin, Adam and Eve were almost like children, in a sense. They are naked, but they don't know it. They don't care. They have no concept. But as soon as they sin, they try to hide themselves. They suddenly become aware, and they cover up – not their faces, but their loins, their mid-section. They don't do a very good job at it either (we'll get to that in a week or two when we come to God's solution for this problem), but they at least try. And the point is: As a result of eating the fruit, their eyes are opened, they feel shame for the very first time, and they try to cover themselves.

Most of us have been there. We sin, and we immediately regret it. We try to cover it up. We do something wrong, and we have the "Oh no!" moment. "What have I done?" And we try to slap a patch on it. When I was very young (maybe 9 or 10 years old), my parents bought me my very first cassette tape. I don't remember what it was, but I loved it. I had an old stereo from a garage sale. I think it still had an 8-track deck on one side of it.

But something went wrong, and one day my brand new tape got tangled in the machine and broke, and I panicked. I know it wasn't a sin, but in my mind I must have done something wrong, so I tried to cover it up. I remember winding most of the tape back in the cassette until only the two ends were showing, and at that point...I tied a knot! As you can imagine, that did not work! But I put it back in the cassette deck, and sure enough, it got a lot worse at that point! Now the tape is completely tangled, and now it is also stuck deep inside the machine. I finally get up the courage to tell my dad what has happened, we take it all apart, and he teaches me how to splice tape! We tape it instead of knotting it, and that seemed to go through the cassette deck a lot better. I say this to make the point that when we do something wrong, we often feel a sense of shame, and we try to cover it up. And that is what we see with Adam and Eve. They sin, and then they try to cover up in shame.

In a sense, there is a value to shame. Shame reminds us that we have done wrong. Unfortunately, many today are not ashamed, they are proud of their sin. Adam and Eve, though, are overwhelmed with shame.

II. And this leads us to what comes next in this process – now that they cover themselves in shame, they hide from God in FEAR – their sin has cause them to be AFRAID.

They hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, and now they have a new problem. Not only are they ashamed, but now they are scared. I came close to titling today's lesson, "Naked and Afraid," but I ended up going with a more boring title. But the point is: Now Adam and Eve are fearing the consequences. And so, they hide. And at this point, God asks a series of questions, starting with, "***Where are you?***" Maybe we should ask: Is God doing this for his own benefit, or is God doing this for Adam's benefit? Obviously, God knows where Adam is! It's not as if Adam has gone missing. God, though, is asking this for Adam's sake. God is giving Adam a chance to come clean. As I see it, the question is an invitation; the question is God's way of opening the conversation, "***Where are you?***"

And in the answer, Adam describes being "***afraid***" for the very first time in Scripture. Remember: Genesis is a book of firsts, a book of beginnings. And this is the beginning of FEAR. This is the beginning of human beings being afraid of God. It also describes the first attempt of lying to God. Did Adam really hide because he was naked? Remember: Adam had been naked all along! What changes is: Now Adam KNOWS he is naked. And now, Adam is terrified of facing God. This wall has been built. There has been a separation between God and the human race. It's a bit like what might happen if I were to steal your car. Assuming we both know it, things very quickly get awkward between us. I have sinned against you, and things are no longer okay between us. In the same way, then, Adam and Eve feel SHAME, and now they are overwhelmed with FEAR.

If we could go back to the broken cassette tape, I know now that I should have just gone to my dad first, "This is what I have done, can you help me with it?" And obviously, that is probably the preferred solution, but as it is, we tend to 1.) hide, and 2.) be afraid. And so, instead of going where we need to go for help, many times we do the opposite: In shame and fear, we run and hide from the one person who can fix it. This is what happens here in Genesis 3.

Now, think for just a moment how God could have reacted. Obviously, God could have brought it all to an end right here. Adam and Eve are deserving of death. They have been warned, and yet they did it anyway. God could have started over at this point. But instead, God starts asking a series of questions. And in asking these questions, he is inviting a dialog, he is encouraging a conversation. We'll get to the rest in a minute, but notice the progression here, "***Where are you?***," followed by, "***Who told you that you were naked?***," followed by, "***Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?***" Isn't this how we would like to be treated?

There's no judgment at the beginning, but there's an invitation to restore the relationship. And it's God who takes the first step. God goes looking for Adam, not the other way around. It's what we do as parents. When a kid writes on the wall, we might ask, "What have you done?" We know what they have done, but we are opening the conversation. We are inviting a confession. We are giving them a chance to make things right, and that's what God seems to do here.

Before we move on from this part of it, let's realize that the same thing often happens today. We sin, and the tendency is for us to hide. We have a way of distancing ourselves from God. Maybe we avoid coming together with our Christian family. Maybe we stop answering calls or returning messages. Maybe we pray or study less. In a sense, we hide from God, when that is the last thing we need to be doing! What I'm saying is: We understand what Adam is doing here, and we learn from it. When we sin, let's not do what he did. Let's not hide from God, but let's look for help from the one we have sinned against in the first place. Go to God in prayer. Reach out to your Christian family. Come together to worship. Study the word. Instead of running away from God, we need to be running toward God.

III. As we come to the end of this passage, we come to a third result of sin as Adam and Eve both start shifting the **BLAME**, they do everything in their power to **AVOID PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**.

First of all, it's interesting how God goes to Adam. Why Adam and not Eve? Well, let's remember: God had originally given the command to Adam, not Eve. So, God goes to Adam, and God wants to know, ***"Who told you that you were naked?"*** and Adam blames it on the woman. Or does he? When we look at what Adam actually says in verse 12, who is Adam blaming? ***"The woman WHOM YOU GAVE TO BE WITH ME, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."*** So, Adam turns this back on God: You put this temptress in my life! It's not my fault, God! You did this to me! Don't we see this today? "God made me this way. I was born with a temper. I am naturally jealous," and so on. What we're saying is, "God, this is all on you."

Nevertheless, God now turns to the woman, ***"What is this you have done?"*** and the woman says, ***"The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*** So, the man blames God for giving him the woman, and the woman blames the serpent. Everybody is shifting the blame. Nobody takes responsibility. It's what Aaron did to Moses in the golden calf incident, it's what Saul does to Samuel concerning the Amalekites, it's what the one-talent man does to his master in the Parable of the Talents. We need to remember, though, that sin is a choice. Sin is on us.

Next week we hope to look at what happens next here in Genesis 3, but how refreshing it would have been for Adam to have said, "God, it was me. I did what you told me not to do!" But, he does not; instead, he blames his wife. Imagine what this does to their marriage! There are two people on the entire planet, Adam is facing the wrath of God, and he says, "Not me! It's her!" That right there would put some tension in a marriage. And we can do the same thing today. When we sin, it is so easy to blame somebody else. It's not my fault. He made me do it! She made me do it! I didn't have a choice! And on and on. And yet, by shifting the blame, we really don't fix the problem. Instead, we need to be confessing sin: I did it. I was wrong. Please forgive me. Unfortunately, this is something Adam and Eve fail to do here. Instead of accepting responsibility, both of them try to shift the blame.

Conclusion:

This morning, if you have sinned, God is still asking, ***“Where are you?”*** But it’s not for his benefit; it’s for yours. He’s inviting you to speak up. He’s inviting you to accept responsibility. He made the first move in sending Jesus, but the rest is up to us. We turn to him in faith, we turn away from sin, we confess Jesus as being the Son of God, and then we allow ourselves to be buried with him in baptism for the forgiveness of sins. If we can help in some way, we hope you will get in touch. If you are listening on the phone, give me a call at 608-224-0274. Before John/Aaron leads us in the prayers for the Lord’s Supper, let’s close this lesson with a prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

We praise you today for creating us with the ability to choose. We are thankful for your word. We are thankful that you are always looking for us. When we sin, we are often overwhelmed with shame and fear, sometimes we try to push the blame onto somebody else. This morning, though, we come to you asking for your forgiveness. We pray for strength and courage in always doing what is right.

Thank you for Jesus. We come to you today in his name, by his authority. Lord, come quickly.
AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: fourlakeschurch@gmail.com