

Main Idea: By looking at the first family's first excuse, we learn something vital about sin, specifically, how *not* to deal with it. The first sin brought about two effects according to Genesis 3:8-19.

- I. We see sin's shame (8-13).
 - A. Because of sin we hide (8-10).
 - 1. Adam hid due to fear.
 - 2. Adam hid due to guilt.
 - B. Because of sin we hurl (11-13).
 - 1. Adam blamed Eve.
 - 2. Indirectly, Adam blamed God.
 - 3. Eve blameshifted as well.
- II. We see sin's sentence (14-19).
 - A. The first consequence pertained to the serpent (14-15).
 - 1. There would be humiliation.
 - 2. There would be enmity.
 - B. The second consequence pertained to the woman (16).
 - 1. It affected her child-bearing.
 - 2. It affected her marriage.
 - C. The third consequence pertained to the man (17-19).
 - 1. It affected man's work.
 - 2. It affected man's future.

Make It Personal: The question remains: "Where are you?"

- 1. We are born cut off from God.
- 2. We are prone to make excuses.
- 3. We need to be reconciled to God.
- 4. What we need, our gracious God has provided.

We're seeking to learn how to exalt Christ in our families in our current series. To do so, we're taking a close look at the first family. Two weeks ago we considered the first marriage in Genesis 2. Last week, the first sin, in the first part of Genesis 3. Sin is our family's greatest threat, and not just sins committed against us. This includes our own sin.

Sin is a reality for every family. So how your family deals with sin is a vital key to your joy. There are wrong ways to deal with sin, and they come very naturally. And there's a right way, a God-provided, Christ-embracing, grace-enabled way. And we learn about all of this in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3 is a wonderful text to help us prepare for the Lord's table, which we'll come to following this message. For it's at the Lord's table that we're reminded of God's amazing, gracious provision for our sin.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-19

Years ago I read a list provided by the Metropolitan Insurance Company of some unusual explanations for accidents they received from their automobile policyholders. The following are just few:

- ⇒An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished.
- ⇒I had been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident.
- ⇒As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision.
- ⇒I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment.

***Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2000 in our Genesis series.

⇒The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him.

⇒The telephone pole was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end.

⇒The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.

Excuses. We all have a built in inclination to make ourselves look good, to justify our actions. Why? Where does this come from? Why do we make excuses?

There are obviously many factors, but the root cause goes way back to Genesis 3. This morning, we're going to see in living color the *first excuse* ever uttered in this world.

Not surprisingly, the first excuse came right after the first sin. In fact, excuse-making is a direct by-product of sin, as we'll see.

Since we've dropped right in the middle of a story, allow me to retrace our steps. In the beginning God created a man and a woman and put them in a perfect environment--a garden described in Genesis 2. Adam and Eve were created to live in a personal relationship with God, to honor and obey Him, and to care for His world.

God gave the first man and woman an opportunity to demonstrate their love for Him. He gave them a command (Gen 2:16-17), "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden [what an offer! what freedom!]; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

There was great freedom, with one prohibition, "Don't eat from one tree." But of course, they did. They walked down the slippery slope of sin. It started with foolish dialogue (1-5), led to a forbidden decision (6), and resulted in a fateful discovery (7).

They ate the fruit. Eve in her deception and Adam in his defiance ate the forbidden fruit. Then they cried out to God, "Oh, God! We have disobeyed You! We're so sorry! Please forgive us!" Was that their response? No, not at all.

Yes, they experienced guilt. Verse 7 indicates, "The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked." But instead of calling out for mercy, they tried to cover up their bodies (and their shame) with fig leaves. It was mankind's first self-righteous attempt to patch up their sin problem. But self-righteousness didn't work then any more than it does now.

So what happened next? I'm not sure there is a sadder scene in the Bible than the one before us in Genesis 3. I cringe every time I read it. Sin has consequences.

The first sin brought about two effects. It did something *to* mankind, and brought something *upon* mankind. Which means, this is our story. We're about to see what sin does to us, and what needs to happen. Yes, we must give careful attention to the effect of Adam and Eve's sin in Genesis 3:8-19.

I. We see sin's shame (8-13).

Verse 8 begins with the connective word, "And" (in the NIV, "Then") Picture the scene. The fruit is gone, the leaves are on, and the shame is unbearable. And then, according to verse 8, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Stop there.

Does God have legs and walk? Does He make sound? No. God is a Spirit (John 4:24). Yet He created man to experience fellowship with Him, and takes the necessary steps to make that fellowship possible.

This could have been a *theophany*, a physical appearance of God. Apparently, as one commentator put it, "Maybe a daily chat between the Almighty and his creatures was customary."² He came in the "cool of the day," a perfect time for friends to enjoy company.

²Wenham, 76.

But there would be no "daily chat" today. Why not? Because of the *shame of sin*. Sin changes things. It did for Adam and Eve, and it does for us. Here we see two changes.

A. Because of sin we hide (8-10). Verse 8 says, "...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." That's sad, isn't it? The trees that God created for man to look at and enjoy (2:9) are now his hiding place to prevent God from seeing him.

They hid. But wait. How can you hide from God? He's omnipresent, isn't He? Yes. You can't hide from Him. It's foolish to try.

But we do, don't we? It's kind of like when you're driving your car, and you see the truck in front of you flip a rock into the air. It's coming right towards your windshield. What do you do? It's coming too fast to swerve. My instinct is to blink. When I see that object heading towards me, I close my eyes. Maybe if I can't see it, it will miss me!"

That's about as likely as hiding from God, and thinking He won't see me. No, this was a tragic moment! Adam and Eve were created to live in intimate fellowship with God, and now, as the text states, they're hiding *from* Him. Why? This is what sin does. Sin *separates*. Maybe it's not so much that they thought God couldn't see them as they didn't want to see God.

A father gave his ten-year-old son a brand new bike as a gift. The boy's eyes lit up when he saw the treasure. He heard his father say, "Son, I want you to have this because I love you so much. There's just one thing I ask of you. Make sure you put the bike away in the garage when you're not riding it."

A couple of weeks later--you guessed it--the boy got wrapped up in something and left his bike laying in the drive way, right next to the road, right in the path of...the garbage truck.

Where do you think the son was when the dad came home from work that evening? At the front door? No. He was in his bedroom. Why? Did he think he could hide from his dad? No, he hid for the same reason Adam hid. He was ashamed.

In verse 9 the conversation begins: "But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Notice that God addresses *the man*, not the woman. Why? Eve sinned first, didn't she? Yes, but the man is the one God holds most responsible for what happens in this home, as in ours.

Men, this is a sobering reality. With headship comes ultimate responsibility. We will give an account for what happens in our families. We are responsible for whether or not our children are in church. We are responsible for the teaching of God's Word in our homes. We are responsible for who our sons and daughters choose as friends and date while living under our roof. Yes, our children are free moral agents who will give an account to God for their choices, but we will give an account for the biblical direction--or lack of it--that we gave to them.

God began with a question. "Adam, where are you?" It's not because God didn't know. It's not a request for information. In fact, the question isn't for God's sake, but whose? Adam's.

In God's first words to fallen man we see grace. God asks a question. Why? To help this man. God is drawing him out of hiding rather than driving him out. "Where are you, Adam?" There's a certain gentleness in the question, for God the Creator is now God the Redeemer who is seeking the lost sinner.

Listen to Adam's response (10), "And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.'" Why did Adam hide? According to his own admission he hid for two reasons.

1. *Adam hid due to fear.* He said, "I heard you...and I was *afraid*." Notice how Adam's first reaction is to talk about how his sin made him *feel*. He's not yet ready to acknowledge, let alone *confess* the sin itself. He told God, "I hid because I was afraid."

This is the first mention of fear in the Bible. Watch how sin turns trust into fear. It's a consequence of the Fall that instead of loving God and wanting to be near God, people are now *afraid* of God and want to pull away and hide from Him.

2. *Adam hid due to guilt.* Why did Adam say he was afraid? "Because I was *naked*." But he'd been naked since the day God created him (2:25). Why is he now ashamed of being naked? It's because he's no longer innocent. For the first time in his life he is now feeling *guilt*.

Is it good to feel guilty? It's certainly not pleasant, but yes. Guilt is actually a good thing, beloved. Think of the person with leprosy who no longer feels the fire as it's consuming the flesh on his hand. Guilt is the warning device. The feeling of guilt is a God-given indicator that something's wrong and needs to be changed.

Adam is gripped by the shame of sin. And he hid because he was afraid and full of guilt. He had the sense to know that he could no longer stand in the presence of a holy God. Sadly, this is something we've lost in our *shameless* society.

When it comes the shame of sin, here's the first change. Because of sin, we hide. Adam knew something was wrong, but did he run *to* God? No. He ran *away from* God and hid. And so has every sinner since Adam. No sinner seeks God on his own. Sinners run and hide. Romans 3:11-12 states, "There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away..."

But it's not just that we hide.

B. Because of sin we hurl (11-13). Hide and hurl, they go hand in hand. Listen as the conversation continues with God speaking, in verse 11, "He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'"

God asks Adam two more questions. Again, God knows the answers to both questions. They are for Adam's benefit. They're intended to help Adam do what a sinner must do, confess his sin and guilt. There's no hope until he does.

Now watch Adam. Here comes the hurling. In verse 12, "The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'"

Remember, God asked Adam two questions in verse 11. Adam completely ignored the first, the question about how he knew he was naked. And the second question he avoided. How? By *blameshifting*.

"Adam, have you eaten from the tree?" Here's Adam's response. Notice the first two words out of his mouth, "The woman." What's Adam doing? He's *hurling*. He's blaming his sin problem on others, namely, on two parties.

1. *Adam blamed Eve.* I didn't mention it at the time, but did you notice when we read verse 10 how many times Adam used the word "I?" Four times. Once sin enters the picture, it's not *we* any more, but every person for himself.

Adam, did you eat the fruit? And Adam responds, "The woman gave it to me, and I ate." What's Adam doing? He's trying to deflect the spotlight by maximizing what his wife did, and minimizing what he did.

Youngblood remarks, "A healthy dose of remorse would have done Adam a world of good when God confronted him with his sinful deed, but Adam chose to blame it all on his wife."³ A good reminder for the next time sin enters our family.

³ Youngblood, p. 65.

Is Adam lying? No. He's telling the truth. The problem is he's not answering the right question! God didn't ask him where he got the fruit. He asked him if he ate it. That's the issue.

Perhaps the three hardest words for a human being to utter are these. *I was wrong*. We're so inclined to throw in a fourth word, *I was wrong BUT*.

A mother asks her son, "Billy, did you talk back to your teacher?" And Billy responds, "Yea, but she doesn't like boys anyway."

A youth leader approaches a teen and says, "Sally, I'm concerned about your bitter attitude." To which Sally retorts, "Oh yea? Well you'd be bitter, too, if you had a dad like mine."

What are Billy and Sally doing? What we're all prone to do. Blameshifting. Because of sin, we *hurl*, just like Adam did.

But there's more. Adam blamed his sin on *two* parties. First, he blamed Eve.

2. *Indirectly, Adam blamed God*. "The woman you put here with me." You gave me this woman. I didn't ask for her. I'm not responsible God. You are.

Think of the audacity. To even insinuate that God is responsible for this transgression. But this is what our sin does to us. Theologians refer to it as the noetic effect of sin. Sin affects our minds, our thinking, our perceptions. We come to wrong conclusions, and don't even see the fallacy in them.

All of us are prone to do what Adam did, to make excuses. We dig in our heels and try to make ourselves look good, even if we have to make others, even God, look bad in the process.

It's called the doctrine of original sin, which we'll develop more later but must affirm now. We have inherited Adam's post-Genesis 3 nature. All of us. We do what he did. We enter this world as sinners, and as sinners we are self-focused people who want to look good with a passion.

If you doubt me, answer this. Suppose you approached a parent whose child was out of control and said, "I'm concerned about your child." What kind of response do you think the average parent would give? Would it be this? "Oh, thank you for your concern. I welcome your insight. I know I'm a sinner and need all the help I can get."

Hardly. More likely, this. "You don't think I'm a good parent? Let me tell you something. My child's okay. He's a good boy. People just don't understand him. Your kids weren't perfect either!"

Because of sin, we choose to hurl, and do so even against those care the most for us, including our spouses and even God.

Lest we think this is just a man thing, keep reading. It wasn't just Adam.

3. *Eve blameshifted as well*. Notice verse 13, "Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'"

What's Eve doing? The very same thing her husband did! *I'm not responsible, God. The serpent is*. And the insinuation? *You made the serpent God*. If this creature hadn't been here, I wouldn't have done it!

Blameshifting, just like Adam. And again, this disposition is what our forefather has given to all his descendants.

Do you remember Aaron's response after the golden calf incident? Moses has been up on the mount receiving the ten commandments, which begin, "No other gods. No idols." What did Aaron do? He gave in to peer pressure and fashioned an idol. But when Moses confronted him for making the golden idol, Aaron in essence said (Exodus 32:22-24), "Hey, it's not my fault. The people made me do it. They brought me their golden jewelry, I threw it in the fire, and out popped this golden calf!"

Classic blameshifting. And it's standard equipment in the human package.

In *Discipleship Journal*, Don McCullough wrote: "John Killinger tells about the manager of a minor league baseball team who was so disgusted with his center fielder's performance that he ordered him to the dugout and assumed the position himself. The first ball that came into center field took a bad hop and hit the manager in the mouth. The next one was a high fly ball, which he lost in the glare of the sun--until it bounced off his forehead. The third was a hard line drive that he charged with outstretched arms; unfortunately, it flew between his hands and smacked his eye. Furious, he ran back to the dugout, grabbed the center fielder by the uniform, and shouted. 'You idiot! You've got center field so messed up that even I can't do a thing with it!'

Dear friend, we may laugh when we see others doing it, but here's the reality. Those who practice blameshifting remain in the straightjacket of their own sin. There is no hope for blameshifters. There is hope for those who will practice Proverbs 28:13, which says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."⁴

More about that in a moment. The first sin brought *two* effects. We've seen the first, sin's shame. Now the second.

II. We see sin's sentence (14-19).

The questioning is over. Now comes the judgment, sometimes referred to as "the fall". The "fall" is a needed category for our thinking. It speaks of the drastic change that occurred when the first man sinned.

We need to teach our children this category, and think of it regularly as we parent them. This is why the catechisms were written. Listen to Westminster Shorter Catechism:⁵

1. What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

10. How did God create man?

God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

14. What is sin?

Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

⁴For an example of true contrition see David's confession of his sin of adultery in Psalm 32:5.

⁵ <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/westminster-shorter-catechism>

The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.

In Genesis 3, God declares that the first sin resulted in three consequences, and He addresses the three guilty parties in reverse order. We're not going to do an exhaustive study of the threefold curse today. I merely want to mention it today, and then examine it in greater detail next time, as well as probe God's remedy for it in verses 20-24.

A. The first consequence pertained to the serpent (14-15). Listen to verses 14-15, "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God pronounced a curse upon the serpent. We might ask, "Why? The serpent wasn't responsible, was it? It was merely a pawn in Satan's hands." Centuries ago, Pastor Chrysostom offered the analogy that the Lord cursed the serpent, "just as a loving father when punishing the murderer of his son, might snap in two the sword or dagger with which the murder had been committed."⁶

As a result of the curse, what did God say would happen to the serpent? Two outcomes.

1. *There would be humiliation.* "You will crawl on your belly and eat dust," God said. Calvin insisted that the curse did not change the anatomy of the serpent. He may be right, but I don't think so. It seems to me that prior to Adam's sin this creature was perhaps the most sophisticated one in the animal kingdom (see 3:1 "more crafty than any

⁶In Keil-Delitzsch, p. 99.

beast"). Apparently, before the Fall the serpent moved about in a vertical fashion (perhaps it walked). But in pronouncing this curse God announces, "Now you will crawl." The curse affected its physiological structure.

Aalders comments, "The present method of locomotion of the serpent is the direct consequence of the curse God pronounced on it. This does not mean that the whole appearance of the serpent changed. It is possible that the serpent kept its general appearance while changing its means of getting about."⁷

For the serpent, the curse resulted in humiliation. Secondly...

2. *There would be enmity.* Verse 15 again, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring ." What kind of enmity? Two types. The first is an enmity between the serpent and the woman. The serpent was once an attractive creature, but from now on it will be repulsive.

But God announced a second level of enmity, this one between the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring. God made an important promise here. Don't miss it. He said that the woman's seed is going to crush the head of the serpent's seed. He also said that the serpent's seed is going to strike the heel of the woman's seed.

What is God talking about? I'm convinced He's not just talking about a victory of people over snakes. Right here in the garden, right after the first family's first sin, God gives the first sinners a promise.

Theologians refer to this verse as the *proevangelium* (meaning "the first gospel"). As early as the second century AD, biblical scholars like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus taught that the woman's offspring referred to the coming Christ who would some day defeat Satan himself. Paul used this language in Romans 16:20 when he declared, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

Satan is a great foe, but God Himself made it clear that He would deal with this foe. How? Just turn the page and keep reading. The Bible is the story of God's redemption, from paradise lost in Genesis 3 to paradise restored in Revelation 21. All accomplished by the One God sent to crush the serpent's head. We'll go deeper into this amazing story next time, the Lord willing. But for now, we need to understand more about the problem that necessitated the Redeemer's coming.

B. The second consequence pertained to the woman (16). "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.'"⁸

God is just. He must deal with transgression in His universe, and He does. Here He announces that the woman's fateful choice will affect her in two ways.

1. *It affected her child-bearing.* The rendering of the AV follows the Hebrew text more closely at this point, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception."⁹ Two things will increase for the woman. Her sorrow (or pain) in delivering children, *and* her conceptions. In other words, she will now deliver children in pain. And she will see an increase in conceptions.

I'm reminded of Carl Sandburg's definition of a baby: "God's opinion that the world should go on."¹⁰

Apparently, Eve's physiology changed. Dr. James Grier suggested that prior to sin Eve did not experience the 28-day fertility cycle that women experience today. But after

⁷ Aalders, p.105.

⁸ Here's the NIN, "To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'"

⁹ The Legacy Standard Bible says, "I will greatly multiply your pain and conception."

¹⁰ Taken from Ronald Youngblood, *How It All Began*, p. 67.

the curse her pelvic structure changed, and so did her ability to conceive and bear children.

God's judgment affected the woman in a second way.

2. *It affected her marriage.* "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you," is how verse 16 concludes. What does that mean? Some have asserted that "your desire" refers to Eve's psychological need and dependence on man. I don't think that's it.

The Hebrew word (*tesuqa*) conveys the idea of a desire to possess or control. The same term appears in Genesis 4:7 where God says this to Cain, "Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Sin wanted to master Cain.

So, too, as the result of sin in the world, the woman will "desire" to dominate the man. She will be inclined to reject God's design for her marital role, now possessing the desire to control him rather than complement him.

And what about the man? What will he be inclined to do? He will "rule over you," God told Eve. In his commentary, Kidner observes how "to love and to cherish" becomes "to desire and to dominate," and remarks, "While even pagan marriage can rise far above this, the pull of sin is always towards it."¹¹

Have you ever wondered why husbands and wives find it so easy to lock horns in their relationship? Why is it so hard to selflessly serve one another? Don't miss this. We're seeing the answer right here in Genesis 3. It's because of sin's entrance into the world, and the consequent Fall. Before Genesis 3, there was harmony. After Genesis 3, there is conflict. When sin entered the world it affected the way men and women look at their roles in marriage. Again, prior to sin, they found joy in complementing one another with their distinct roles. But after sin, they find it easier to compete than complement. God said the woman would desire to usurp his role, and he would desire to squelch her.

And there's one more. What about the man? What did God tell him?

C. The third consequence pertained to the man (17-19). "And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"

How did the Fall affect man? In two ways. I'll mention them now and we'll develop them next time.

1. *It affected man's work.* How so? Adam, from this day on you'll have to exert painful toil to get food. The ground is going to produce thorns and thistles. You're going to eat by the sweat of your brow. And why? Because of Adam's sin, God cursed the ground. God made Adam from what? The ground. And what did God do to the ground in Genesis 3? He pronounced a *curse* upon it.

Don't miss this. Adam's sin affected not just himself, but the rest of creation. According to Romans 8:22, what is creation doing right now? It is *groaning*.

But it wasn't just Adam's work.

2. *It affected man's future.* God concludes His message of judgment with these sobering words in verse 19, "For dust you are and to dust you will return." Here's your future Adam. You're heading back to the dust. You're going to *die*. The shame of sin, and the sentence of sin.

¹¹D. Kidner, p. 71.

Now let's make it personal. And to do so, I'd like to take us back to the question, "Adam, *where are you?*" In a very real sense, the question remains for every sinner, and the Creator is now asking us the same question.

Make It Personal: The question remains: "Where are you?"

Where are *you*? To help us evaluate where we are in relationship to God, I'd like to pose four very personal realities that are true this morning.

1. *We are born cut off from God.* Unlike Adam, we were *born* in sin. Adam became a sinner when he sinned, but we inherited a sin nature from Adam. All of us did.

The *New England Primer*, a teaching book used with children in colonial America, put it this way, "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." Adam acted as what theologians call the "federal head" of the human race. His fateful choice brought the curse of sin crashing upon mankind and the entire creation.¹²

Let that sink in. You were born cut off from God, and so was I, because of Adam.

2. *We are prone to make excuses.* It's all Adam's fault, right? Hold on. Yes, because of Adam we are born in sin, but that's not our only problem. As we grow up, we *willfully choose* to do the same thing Adam did. We too sin and hide and hurl.

We're like Lucy in the cartoon strip "Peanuts." She loved to shift the blame. When she missed the fly ball, she didn't say, "My bad." Rather she blamed it on the sun, the moon, the stars, and even the toxic substance in her baseball glove.

Isn't that our inclination, too? Rather than face up to our shortcomings, we are so prone to make excuses.

We go our *own way* instead of God's. We put on a "respectable" front--our own set of "fig leaves"--and then we hide.

When we hear the question, "Where are you?", our first instinct is to *defend ourselves*. We cling to our self-righteous rags. We try to make ourselves look good. How do we do it? By blame-shifting. By making excuses.

The fact remains. There is no hope for a person who makes excuses. *No* hope. Why not? Because our excuses can't change the third reality.

3. *We need to be reconciled to God.* Is that possible? Yes! How? God sent the "second Adam" to reverse the curse, as 1 Corinthians 15:22 explains. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Why did God become a man? He did so to undo what the first man did. When Jesus hung on the cross, He took the penalty for the sin of Adam and of every other person who would believe in Him. He experienced alienation *from* God so we could be reconciled *to* God.

And whereas Adam chose to disobey God and died, Jesus Christ chose to obey the will of God perfectly and then *conquered death*. This is the good news, the *gospel*.

To put it simply, here's reality #4.

4. *What we need, our gracious God has provided.* Christ is all we need. So the question remains. *Where are you?*

Closing Song: #203 "*And Can It Be?*" (all four verses)

Communion

Closing charge: Let the redeemed of the Lord...SAY SO.

¹²Gordon Talbot, p. 29.