

Genesis 3:8-13

Mass Confusion

04/23/17

"And 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 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 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." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of 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 fruit of the tree, and I ate." 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."

(Pastor prays)

Almost every car I've ever gotten since I was 16 years old, if it had a V8, I've done something to the exhaust to make it sound better. And by better, I mean louder... (from) my first car, a 1966 Dodge Coronet – it had a 318 V8 with a single exhaust - to the one I have now.

When I couldn't afford to get a different exhaust for the Dodge, I took a screwdriver and punched holes in the muffler. It didn't have the same effect. I inherited that trait from my father. When I was a kid, he had a 1972 Porsche 911T Targa. He modified that car with something called an extractor exhaust that is really no muffler at all. Late in the afternoon every day, I could hear him coming home and I knew that meant we would be sitting down for supper and our family would be together.

It was a good sound, a good sound, that is, until the days I would bring home a report card with a C or even a D on it. I tried to convince my parents that "C" was for Clint and even tried the "D" for Dad. It didn't work. On those days when I had not done well, his car sounded like demons that had escaped Hell and were coming to supper. I was afraid. Something had changed. The sound that used to bring security was now creating fear. My Dad and his car hadn't changed. The change was with *me*.

In Verse 8 of our text we have the description of God walking in the Garden. “Walking with God” was a favorite expression of Moses in Genesis. Enoch walked with God. Noah walked with God. Abraham walked with God. But now as God walks in the Garden at the time of the day when fresh breezes bring welcome relief, something was different. *And 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.*

Something had changed and maybe you feel it too. The free and happy relationship with God had been altered. How they viewed God and how they viewed themselves and how they viewed each other was not the same. Their own sin brought terrible confusion into their perfect world. What was once glorious was now terrifying. What was joyful was now fearful. What was once longed-for was now avoided. And there are very many sitting in here today who have walked in this morning and your life is in the searing cauldron of confusion. Your view of God is confusing. Your marriage or relationship is complicated, and your understanding of your own self is twisted. And, at the very bottom of your issues is sin. In large ways and in small ways:

Sin Always Confuses Us

There are a couple of ways to get at this text. Let’s look back at the story.

Sin Confuses Our View of God

In Verse 8, what should have been a refreshing, encouraging, fulfilling stroll in the cool of the day turns out to be a terror. It’s interesting in Verse 8 that they heard the “sound” of the Lord and it was an awareness of His presence that made them try to hide from the one who loved them the most. They tried to get away from the one who has provided for them.

Connie and I have a beagle named Spurgeon. That dog loves Connie and goes wherever she goes...On the chair or swing with her or in the kitchen, wherever she is, *he* is because she takes care of him. She feeds him and takes him to the vet if he seems sick. She cares for and provides for him.

When he goes outside, he can roam the yard because of the invisible fence. Every once in a while, he will “test” to see if the batteries in his collar are working. If they are, he will get an audible warning that he is too close to the border and is on the verge of getting shocked; but if he doesn’t hear the warning, he knows he is free! And if he finds he is *free*, he is *gone*. His nature tells him to run. We are not far off of Spurgeon, are we? God gives to us, blesses us, provides – but what do we do?

Remember, God had created food for Adam and Eve to eat and trees just to look at and now Verse 8 has them hiding from the presence of the Lord in the trees He created for them. Hiding from God is such a ridiculous thing. Hebrews 4:13 tells us, *And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

"Naked" seems to be the issue. Back in Genesis 2 they were naked and *not* ashamed but in Genesis 3, sin comes in and in Verse 7 they cobble together some fig leaves, which sounds terribly uncomfortable to me. They try a makeshift effort to cover. It’s what we do. We try to cover. But even though you are covered from others, you are naked before God and your hiding is futile. It’s sin. It confuses and twists and distorts and makes us irrational.

There is only one thing to match and overcome your sin – it’s grace. That’s what you find in Verse 9. God’s first words to fallen man have all the marks of grace. Notice the question in Verse 9; but before I read *that* question, be aware that there are *four* questions - three to Adam and one to Eve that is down in Verse 13. And all of these questions, especially the first one, are rhetorical questions. They are designed for something. They are there to pull them out.

Back in Verse 9, *But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”* You – it is a singular word. They are hiding together but God says to Adam, “Where are YOU?” Of course, God knew where he was. Don’t forget what God said through Jeremiah in Jeremiah 23:24, *Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.*

God knew where he was. God is asking the question to prompt Adam to consider his wrongdoing. The Lord will do the same with Cain in Chapter 4. There is no possibility

of reconciliation with God if you are unwilling to confess your sin to God. It's what grace does. It calls.

In Verse 9, God calls to the man. Listen to the dialogue. The man and woman have sinned as a pair but are dealt with as individuals. You – singular – (meaning you and you alone) are responsible for your sin. The woman, designed to be his companion, became his partner in crime. They did this together. We sin in groups but we pay for it alone.

The “you” is singular in Verse 9. As God lovingly draws the man out, listen to the man’s response in Verse 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.”* Basically, Adam said “I heard what sounded like God and I knew I was a sinner, so I ran and hid. It was shame. Sin makes us feel shame and shame confuses how we see God. Shame confuses how we see others. Shame confuses how we see ourselves. Shame confuses who we hold responsible.

God calls out to Adam. Adam blames Eve and even blames God. Eve blames the serpent. I think the most riveting word in Adam’s confession is the word “fear”: I heard you and I was afraid. Sin makes us feel morally weak and socially shallow. We lose our bearings and forget who our God is, that he is a God of grace.

Look, God would be perfectly just in killing Adam and Eve right there and just starting over. The wages of sin is death. He’s done it. Remember Nadab and Abihu in the Old Testament and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts Chapter 5. The fact that He let Adam and Eve live is grace...That He came after them is grace.

Ours is a God of grace. He’s pursuing you in your sin. He is convicting and speaking to you, searching for you. For you, church members and professing Christians who are hung up in something really nasty – the Lord calls out – “Where are you?” And that’s the picture of the Gospel. Isn’t that what Jesus did when He brought salvation to the short man Zacchaeus in Luke 19? In fact, He said so in Luke 19:10, *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.* And all of Adam and Eve’s sons and daughters are born lost. Dead in sin. Your sin has confused your understanding of God.

Sin Confuses Our View of Others and of Ourselves

It has complicated your relationships with people who love you the most and it has distorted how you see yourself. The book of Genesis reminds us that the God who created the Heavens and the Earth is a holy God and that, although He created us in His image, that image of God is distorted and disfigured in us because of our own sin.

Our sin has separated us from God and nothing we can do or say can make us right before God. So He comes after us by giving His only son Jesus, born of a virgin, and who lived a sinless life by keeping all of God's law and earning righteousness.

Then according to God's plan, He died on the cross as a substitute in the place of sinners. He took the punishment for sinners and by His blood He purchased and redeemed sinners. God raised Him from the dead and now, this morning, God the Father through Jesus the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit has come calling asking "Where are you?"

Will you run and hide like Adam and Eve? Or will you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead...and be saved.

(Pastor prays)