

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. **15** And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring[a] and hers; he will crush[b] your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Where Are You?

Hide and seek is becoming one of my least my favorite games. I’m terrible at it and or maybe I’m just a little lazy when it comes to finding the children. And yet in spite of this I seem to be playing the game more frequently. In fact half of my time in the garage is

spent trying to find something that I've hidden in the past. This happens in the kitchen as well, specifically the refrigerator. Some say it's male pattern blindness but I like to blame the children or the impersonal somebody which always happens to be my wife. The evidence I have is when they appear the item appears as well.

Thankfully God isn't like me. He doesn't suffer from male pattern blindness, but then it looks like he's asking his wife where to find the kids? God doesn't have to waste his time looking for a tool that he's misplaced. He already knows where everything is, so hide and seek really is a wasted effort. But God's not playing for his sake but the sake of his creation. "Where are you?" God is pointing out the obvious, "You're lost. Do you know where you are? Because you're not with me." God plays along in order for them to see their lost condition and restore them.

But like Adam and Eve we'll often hide or cover up our sin. We'll refuse to ask for directions or help because, "I'm not lost." Some will cover up their lost condition with their own works and try to convince others. "I'm not lost." But God's not fooled. He still comes to us and asks, "Where are you?" And yet this lesson isn't about you but our God who seeks, confronts, and comforts those who have wandered away with the promise of his son. The one who cares to question, "Where are you?"

As we begin our Lenten journey we take a look at why Jesus had to go on such a trip in the first place. We begin where sin started; the perfect world over which God has proclaimed, "Very good." We find Adam and Eve in Eden in perfect harmony with one another and God. They are free to eat fruit from any of the trees in the garden, 99.999% of the trees are for them to enjoy the other is for worship. They are there to care for it as well as populate it. We don't know how long they were there but soon the serpent found Eve and started questioning.

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" What Satan is asking is, "How do you find God?" Is he as a God who hoards all the trees for himself. He certainly can't be that good if he is withholding all the trees in the garden. Eve responds, *"We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"* Eve knew what Adam had taught her but nowhere do we find God telling them that they will die if they touch the fruit or the tree in the center of the garden. The serpent keeps prodding. *"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* God's hiding something from you because he knows you

will be like him knowing where everything you've lost is." But there is a blatant lie and nearest cemetery stands as a witness to all.

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, (Like the rest of the trees in the garden) and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. Where was Adam in all of this? Waiting with a bowl of popcorn to see what would happen to his wife. Maybe he was waiting to see if she would die first. Adam was with her, and he ate it. Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together, and they hid. "Why?" God asks. Because we were naked. But you were naked previously. What's changed? The problem wasn't their nakedness but their sin. They didn't believe God's Word. They were ungrateful with perfect world he had given them. They even accused God of being an evil miser who hates competition. The real problem was their fear of being found as sinners before God. Instead of coming to God, they run away from him.

If you just leveled that accusation against someone and they found out, you might hide from them as well. Where are you? God has blessed us tremendously. Like Adam and Eve God has given us many freedoms but we also tend to focus on what we can't do. The devil uses the same tactic, "God is withholding something good from you. You really will enjoy doing that outside of marriage. No one will notice if you take some for your own."

When we fall into sin, we'll do our best to hide the shame. Sometimes we'll hide behind others. That someone happens to move things and make them impossible for me to find. At the wood shop we always had someone who was the whipping boy. If the boss was angry he'd go out into the shop and find something to yell about at someone. That someone thankfully wasn't me. That someone is the one who gets blamed for our faults. Adam had Eve and ultimately the one who placed her there with him. Eve had the serpent, and ultimately the one who created snakes. Who do you have? The problems of this world aren't always the result of others. Be it entire generations or political parties. It's all the fault of the millennials or the boomers. It's the democrats or republicans. The truth is that all of them are much too proud to admit their failure and they'd rather hide behind others.

Cover up our sin as quickly as possible but the problem with our custom made clothes of righteousness is that they don't work. No matter how hard we try to hide, our lies won't work. They're no good before God and he can see right through them.

God could have chewed them out, cursed everyone and everything in sight, started over with a new creation that would listen to him, or even leave them alone and let them suffer the consequences of their own actions.

But he doesn't do any of that. He goes to them asking, "Where are you? What have you done?" God knows their lost but do Adam and Eve? Do they know where they are at? Sometimes when trying to give directions to someone you ask them, "Where are you at?" just so you can help bring them home. God is out on search and rescue mission trying to find sinners and provide a way back home for them. God wants them back.

This lesson sets the tone for the rest of the Bible. God wants to bring his people home. God will find ways to get through to them be it patriarchs, prophets, judges, elders, and when the time is just right he sent his Son into the world to "*seek and to save the lost.*" Most if not all religions show man seeking God the Bible starts with God seeking. God not only sought them out he provided them with clothing and cast them out of the garden. What kind of gracious God would do such a thing to repentant people? The kind of God who doesn't want them to live forever in a sinful situation full of suffering. The kind of God who wants them to see there are consequences to their actions. The kind of God who finds people and fixes things.

He starts fixing things by cursing the serpent. God speaks to the serpent, "You're friends now. You've joined hands and caused my creation to turn away from me, but I'm going to change this and I will create *enmity* between you and the woman her offspring and yours."

Where are you? God questioned Adam to demonstrate that Adam was lost and the Lord had come to find him. Every one of us needs to know the same thing. We are lost without Jesus. And yet I don't want you to focus on where you are. I want you to focus on your God who comes in search of you. He doesn't just search for you. He does battle for you. Our Gospel shows us Jesus defeating the devil where the first Adam failed, where we've all failed.

Don't hide from him. He's not hiding from you. He wants you to hide with him. Paul writes it this way, "*Your life is now hidden with Christ in God*" (Colossians 3:3). So now "*be found in him, not having a righteousness of your own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ* (Philippians 3:9). Realize God isn't hiding things from you. He isn't with holding knowledge - he wants you to be just like him. He clothes in robes of righteousness. Forgives our every sin.

It doesn't matter if you can't find anything in the fridge. I doesn't matter if you suffer from male pattern blindness. We all suffer from something much more serious in being blind to sin. Often we are unable to see how sinful we are but then God comes in search of us. He sends his word, he sends his people, to point the way back to him. Where are you? Lost? Go to the cross and you'll find your way there. Amen.