

It's A Fair Question Genesis 3:8-13

Someone has rightly said that no problem is so large or so difficult that it can't be blamed on someone or something else. Take these insurance claims for example.

"No one was to blame for the accident but it would never have happened if the other driver had been alert."

"I bumped into a lamp-post which was obscured by human beings."

"An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished."

"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment."

"I started to slow down but the traffic was more stationary than I thought."

"The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intentions."

"I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way."

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

With all their sincerity we can find the humor in these examples of people casting blame on others for their own mistakes. We aren't any different.

The art of blame casting comes naturally.

A sailor will cast away.

A fisherman will cast a line.

A sinner will cast blame.

That's where we find ourselves in today's episode of Garden living found in **Genesis 3:8-13**.

Verse 7 indicates that after their sin of disobedience Adam and Eve attempted to cover their nakedness.

In today's passage they will attempt to cover their sin with blame. It didn't take very long for the poison of sin to course through the veins of their heart, mind and soul. Watch an infant grow up and you realize it doesn't take long for the growing tot to rear its sin nature or blame others.

Minutes old in sin and they desperately try to hide. They try some fig leaves. Maybe God won't notice. That's like a child trying to hide eating all the blueberries with stains on his hands, mouth and teeth.

Questions are raised in our passage today, questions that deserve answers, questions that cut to the heart. Like a skillful surgeon, the Lord God gets to the point of the infection.

We begin with a question about hearing. It was perceptive.

I. THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT HEARING – IT WAS PERCEPTIVE – v. 8a

"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..."

I believe this to be a theophany. In the Greek theophany comes from a compound word – theos meaning God and phaino meaning to appear. So this is an appearance of God. Now we read in **John 1:18** that no one has seen God at any time. So how is it that He is present in the garden? In the Old Testament there are occasions, and I believe this is one of them, where Christ took on the form of a man, which is different than Him becoming man. In the Old Testament He did not come through the natural process of birth as He did in the New Testament incarnation, but merely appeared in human form.

For example:

In **Genesis 12:7-9** we have the Lord appearing to Abraham when he arrived in the land promised to him and his descendants.

In **Genesis 18:1-33** Abraham entertained three visitors who were on their way to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah when they stopped to visit Abraham, one was the Lord.

In **Genesis 32:22-30** Jacob wrestled with what he thought was a man, but turned out to be what commentators believe to be God in human form.

In **Exodus 24:9-11** God appeared to Moses, Aaron, his sons and 70 elders of Israel.

In **Deuteronomy 31:14-15** God met with Moses and Joshua in the transfer of leadership.

One author writes that while there are no indisputable Christophanies in the Old Testament, every theophany where God takes on human form foreshadows the incarnation where God the Son took the form of a man to live among us as Emmanuel, “God with us”.

So here is God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. It isn't just anthropomorphic imagery that the author is conveying here giving us the impression that God was present in Spirit. I believe God was in human form actually walking.

Our text says that it was in the cool of the day and we assume that it was toward evening as the sun was going lower on the horizon but it's not clear. What is clear is that He came and walked in the garden. We understand this to be a routine occurrence. God would come and visit with them in the garden maybe talk about their day. They were created to interact with Him, to commune with Him, and He with them. It was on one of these visits that they heard God.

Everyone has that certain style to their gait, how they walk. It's like a fingerprint. Some are heavy footed, some light footed, some have one foot that is a little heavier than the other, some shuffle. We all have it. I can tell the difference between Robyn and David when they come down the stairs. Robyn has an angelic lightness, while David is a little

slower pace to each step. Both are distinct sounds.

God, I'm sure, had a certain sound to His walk. His style was different than any of the other animals who walked through the Garden.

So what do you do when you know you have done something wrong when you hear the sound of the person coming who has told you not to do something you went ahead and did anyway? You go and hide.

Now I want you to notice one more thing before we move on to the next point. In the dialogue between Satan and Eve in **verses 1-7** God is only referred to as the Creator God. Beginning in **verse 8** He is referred to as the Covenant God. We see it in the balance of the chapter. God had not only created them, He had entered into a covenant with them. Obey Him and life would be, well, a paradise. Every need would be met. All they had to do was obey one command not to eat of that tree in the middle of the garden. Disobey the covenant and there would be steep consequences. They would die. When they disobeyed in **verse 6** their actions reveal they knew they had sinned. Now it is time to account for their sin. God was coming.

There was a question of hearing as they perceived Him walking in the garden. They knew the day of reckoning had come.

There was then, the question of hiding – it was purposeful.

II. THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT HIDING – IT WAS PURPOSEFUL – v. 8b

“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.”

Hiding simply means trying not to be found.

I had a great time a couple weeks ago playing hide and seek with Josiah after the fellowship dinner.

Children are so fun. They think you can't see them if they cover their eyes.

Adam and Eve made the first pair of camouflage clothes recorded. Draped in their fig leaves they hid among the trees in the garden. Maybe God won't see us. It's like kids covering their eyes thinking that because they can't see you, then you can't see them. It never works and it never works with God.

I know I have used this verse many times, but it bears repeating.

Jeremiah 23:24 **“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?” saith the Lord. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.’**

The NLT simply says **“Am I not everywhere in all the heaven and earth?”**

So why is it that when we sin, we try to hide from God or try to run away from Him?

We are crazy to even think that we can get away from God, but still we try.

Jonah 1:1-3

Revelation 6:15-17

We will never be able to escape the all-knowing, all-seeing eyes of God. The One who is the light brings to light the hidden things of darkness.

In 25 of the 30 occurrences the word hid refers to people hiding in fear of death. Maybe they hid in fear of certain death that it would happen immediately whatever death was, because that's what God promised – **“in the day you eat of it you shall surely die.”** There is no ambiguity in the command or the punishment. They could have also hid out of guilt for being in the presence of a holy God and because of their shame. Sin and guilt and shame all go together.

I think that's what Isaiah felt when he had a vision and was taken to heaven. There he was standing before the throne of God witnessing the celebration of praise by the angels as they proclaimed His holiness: **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;**

the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3)

Recalling his own sin he was so overwhelmed with the sense of despair and doom, he responded: **“‘Wo is me.’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty’” (6:5).**

When we are among and around each other there is no reason to feel shame or guilt because we are like each other in many ways. My sin may be a little worse or less than yours, but we have all done wrong so we don't feel shame, but when we are in the presence of God, His holiness compels us to see ourselves in the mirror of our own sinfulness and we should be like Isaiah or like Peter who, in recognizing truly who Jesus was wanted Jesus to leave him because he was a sinful man. We should all want to run and hide and we do thinking we can escape Him and perhaps His judgment.

So here He is walking in the garden in the cool of the day to confront Adam and Eve. They purposefully hid from God.

Evangelist Billy Sunday once said that sinners can't find God for the same reason criminals can't find policemen: they aren't looking!”

We read in **Luke 19:10** **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**

Please notice something important in our verse. God is the one who sought out the sinner and not the other way around. The very One they should have run to because of their sin was the one they hid from, but He is the One who came looking for them.

Aren't you glad of that? Aren't you glad God sought them out, that God seeks us out? He could have just left them in that condition – always running, always hiding.

Each of us knows someone who is like that – still trying to run from God, still trying to hide from

God. What are they afraid of? What are they trying to hide from? Maybe you are the one hiding. We'll see next week that, yes, they received the consequences of their sin, but we will also see something else infinitely more valuable to us that God extends to them in the garden, something we will see throughout all of Scripture and that is His abundant and amazing grace.

Instead of hiding among the trees, Adam and Eve would have been better served by finding that God was their hiding place, the one who protects from trouble, who surrounds them with songs of deliverance (**Psalm 32:7**).

Dear folks, let's remember that when we sin, we can't hide from God, He already knows what we did and He comes looking for us. So let's come out from whatever place we are trying to hide and deal with it right away and experience His deliverance, His grace.

There was a question of hearing – it was perceptive
 There was a question of hiding – it was purposeful
 There was a question of helping – it was probing

III. THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT HELPING – IT WAS PROBING – vs. 9-11

Did you ever get caught with your hand in the cookie jar? How did you feel at that moment?
 Did the room start to close in on you?
 Did you start to feel warm or get sick to your stomach?
 Was there a little perspiration?
 Did you get a little fidgety, anxious, stumble for words, shake all over?
 Did your throat and mouth become dry as a bone?
 Did you avoid others, especially the person you had wronged?
 We don't know how they felt, but we know they felt shame and guilt because they covered themselves and went and hid when they heard God.

God asked a simple question. **“Adam where are you?”** Notice though a difference here. In **verses 1-**

7 Satan sought out Eve. Here God sought out Adam. Adam was the one to whom God had given the command, the one responsible to ensure it was followed. Now that doesn't mean Eve was off the hook, that she wasn't culpable for her actions. She too, knew the command because she recited it to Satan, all be it with some embellishment or alteration.

“Adam, where are you?”

God already knew the answer, but He asked it to find out if Adam himself knew where he was. He wasn't asking Adam the physical location of his where about. “I'm over here behind the pear tree.” He was asking if Adam knew where he was spiritually. “Adam, where are you in relationship to Me?”

God wanted Adam to confront his sin and confess.

That may be a question God is asking each one of us every day.

**Where are you in your walk with Me today?
 Are you trying to hide something from Me, that I already know about?**

What are you hiding that you won't confess?

God wants us to confront our sin and confess it.

Jesus was a master at asking questions to get people to look into their own heart.

Once when Jesus and the disciples were walking along, they were arguing about who the greatest was among them. What are you talking about?

When thousands had gathered to hear Him preach rather than send them home hungry He asked the disciples what they had to feed them with.

Stopping for a brief rest he began a discussion with a woman and asked her if she would give Him a drink of water.

After Peter's denial and Jesus' resurrection while He and the disciples were eating by the seashore He asked Peter about his love for Him.

They weren't just questions for the sake of

conversation, but questions that probed into their hearts to help them see where they really were.

To the disciples arguing their importance it was a question of pride vs. servanthood.

To the disciples feeding the thousands it was a question of trusting in Him to do the impossible.

To the Samaritan woman it was a question of drinking from the well of living water that gives eternal life.

To Peter it was a question of love and devotion.

To Adam it was a question of acknowledging his sin and confessing it, of starting on the path of reconciliation.

Warren Wiersbe says that “God called to Adam to give him opportunity to answer and come out into the open. That God called him at all was an act of grace, for God could have spoken the word of judgment justly.”

What questions has God been asking you as He enquires about the condition of your heart?

Is He asking you if you are where you should be in your relationship with Him?

He already knows, but He’s wondering if you will admit where you are really at.

God doesn’t ask questions because He is looking for answers, He asks questions to see if we will face the facts, accept responsibility for our actions and then repent for the purpose of restoration.

Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying that “you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.”

That may be true with people, but you can never fool God. He knows your heart all the time. So the only question that remains is what are you going to do about it?

We aren’t told if Adam and Eve stayed behind the trees where they were hiding, stepped out from behind the trees or if God stepped around the trees to where they were hiding.

Adam’s response was that they heard Him in the garden and then gave the reason for their hiding. They were afraid and naked.

Understand that this is not fear in the sense of awe or wonder about God and being in His presence.

This was a feeling of anxiety caused by the anticipation of the punishment promised by God.

It was the kind of fear King Belshazzar of Babylon sensed when he saw the handwriting on the wall.

Daniel tells us he was so afraid of what he saw that his knees knocked together. He trembled in fear.

It is the kind of fear Revelation speaks about when the unsaved ask the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of God.

Adam and Eve were afraid and ashamed, so they hid from God.

We will always hide from sin because of its consequence due to fear and shame.

God wanted to know how they knew they were naked. **Who told them? Did they eat the forbidden tree?** He knew but He wanted them to say it.

In dealing with their sin they exhibit two responses. Both result from an unwillingness to deal with it. They are delay and denial. We want to put it off or we want to put it out of our mind as if it didn’t even happen as if to believe the punishment might be less or not at all. **I knew someone whose Mom would tally up all the acts of disobedience on a sheet. The Dad worked second shift so didn’t see the kids till the weekend. That’s when there was a reckoning. They hoped she would forget or that the punishment would be lessened by the delay.**

We conclude with a question about honesty – it was problematic.

IV. THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT HONESTY – IT WAS PROBLEMATIC – vs. 12-13

A husband and wife were reviewing finances and decided it was time to tighten the purse strings. The

next day while shopping the wife found the dress of her dreams and just had to have it even though it cost way too much. That evening she showed it to her husband. He asked how she could buy it in light of their conversation the evening before. She responded by saying that the devil made her do it. He then said didn't you tell the devil to get behind you. She replied that she did and that the devil said it looked really good from the back too.

Flip Wilson coined the phrase "the devil made me do it" in his comedy show from the 70's.

I'm here to tell you that the devil doesn't make us do anything. We are quite capable of doing it on our own. He will dangle the carrot in front to tempt us, and when we choose to sin we will blame him for our lack of indiscretion when it comes to whatever sin we just committed.

We play the blame game well. A leader in one church believes that the reason Satan will be bound for 1000 years is so that no one will be able to blame him for their sin.

Both Adam and Eve blamed someone else, but Adam's blame was greater than Eve's. Of all the nerve, Adam first of all blamed God. Adam blamed God for the woman He had given him. Perhaps he reasoned that he was doing just fine with things as they were but YOU made this woman. God it's your fault. And then he blamed her. Eve then blamed only the serpent. Neither wanted to accept responsibility for their own disobedient actions. It was easier to blame someone else, even God.

People do that today. They blame everything and everyone except themselves, even blame God. He could stop it, He could stop me if He wanted, but He doesn't so I'm not to blame.

Warren Wiersbe writes "When people start making excuses, its evidence that they don't sense the enormity of their sins or want to confess them and repent."

Understand that when we blame others it creates a rift in the relationship. There is a breakdown in the intimacy between God and Adam and between Adam and Eve.

We blame our boss or coworkers

We blame our neighbor or children or parents or siblings

We blame our teacher

We blame the government

We blame someone else's government

We blame God

Teddy Roosevelt said that if we could kick the person in the pants who is responsible for most of our trouble we wouldn't be able to sit down for a month.

Folks, God really does want to help us by asking probing questions that will bring us out in the open and accept responsibility for the wrong decisions we have made. Yes, there are consequences, but His grace is so marvelous. It is wonderful to know that when we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Next week we will learn about the provision that God would make for Adam and Eve so that they wouldn't have to remain in their guilt and shame. It is a reminder that His grace is available to us as we confess and repent of our sin.

So, are you listening to God coming to you or are you intentionally hiding when you hear Him?
Do you fully understand that God wants to help you when you sin or are you unwilling to be honest with yourself and accept responsibility so you blame others for your sin?
What are the lengths you going through to cover up your sin?

God already knows because you can't hide it from Him, so step out in the open and let God deal with.