

# *The Fall Genesis 3:7-11*

*Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2010 Morning Service*

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## INTRODUCTION

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As we look out on society and as we look within the human heart there seems to be a particularly profound problem, from which many, if not all other problems stem. This profound problem can and has been described with various terms and labels, but no one term quite gets to the heart of it. Words that can and have been used include a sense of isolation, estrangement, separation or loneliness. It is as if we are alone in the world, deeply disconnected from ultimate reality and to varying extents distant from each other.

This emotional, but real, dis-ease can be broken down into two components: A sense of separation from people and a sense of separation from other God.

### **A sense of separation from people**

Not only is it true that many people suffer from loneliness, but it is also true that many feel no real deep connection with anybody. Although surrounded by people there is a sense that they are alone; no one quite understands them and they never quite connect with anyone else. Intimacy is a mirage. We all suffer from this to varying degrees and with varying levels of comprehension. There is an ache which we try to fill with activity, shallow relationships and interaction with people.

### **Simon and Garfunkel**

*A winter's day  
In a deep and dark December;  
I am alone,  
Gazing from my window to the streets below  
On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.  
I am a rock,  
I am an island.*

*I've built walls,  
A fortress deep and mighty,  
That none may penetrate.  
I have no need of friendship; friendship causes pain.  
It's laughter and it's loving I disdain.  
I am a rock,*

*I am an island.*

*Don't talk of love,  
But I've heard the words before;  
It's sleeping in my memory.  
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died.  
If I never loved I never would have cried.  
I am a rock,  
I am an island.*

*I have my books  
And my poetry to protect me;  
I am shielded in my armor,  
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb.  
I touch no one and no one touches me.  
I am a rock,  
I am an island.*

*And a rock feels no pain;  
And an island never cries.*

The desire for illicit sexual involvement has by some psychologists been put down not merely to sexual desire, but to a thirst for intimacy.

### **A sense of separation from God**

The idea of a "God-shaped hole" in the human heart, a terrifying bottomless abyss opening up inside us which we would do anything to fill, is a famous modern metaphor for the yearning in the human soul which drives us on our spiritual quest. This is a modern paraphrase of something the famous philosopher and mathematician Pascal (1623-1662) wrote in his *Pensees* (10.148):

*What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.*

When Pascal wrote this, he was probably thinking, in part, of a famous passage at the beginning of Augustine's *Confessions* (1.1.1), where the great African saint said to God, "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are rest-less till they find their rest in you."

This perception is reinforced by the plethora of religions that we find around the world, where people try to connect with God and with each other.

This cause of this sense of separation from people and God that many feel is clearly death with in the passage we are looking at in Genesis 3:7-11.

Read again Genesis 3:7-11

There are two aspects here I wish to explore:

## 1. THE BAD NEWS

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### A Sense of Shame *for sin*

V7

Symbolic of shame

An inner feeling of **dis-ease** and **discomfort**

A **lack of peace** within our own being

A feeling of **dirty** within

A feeling of wanting to **hide our real self**

A feeling of **guilt** and of **shame**

A **breakdown in comfortable relations with our self**

### A Sense of Separation *from each other*

V7

Symbolic of separation

A loss of intimate **relaxed relations**

A feeling of **being judged by others**

A feeling of **being exposed** by others

A feeling of **being criticised** by others

A feeling of **being condemned** by others

A feeling of **being rejected** by others

A breakdown **of relations** with others

### A Sense of Sanction *that was coming because of their disobedience*

V8-11

God's Law had been broken

*This brought **FEAR***

*This brought the prospect of **JUDGEMENT***

*This brought the prospect of **PUNISHMENT***

### A Sense of Severance *from God*

God now seemed distant. We can be sure that the Lord had come before on many occasions to walk and talk with them in the garden in the cool of the day. Later we find that Adam and Eve are thrust out of the Garden – they are cut off from direct access to God from this time on. Humanity is now **estranged** from God.

## 2. THE GOOD NEWS

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**The Lord Came**- he walked 'in the Garden in the cool of the day' – v8

**He was desiring intimacy with them** – and so with us even when he knows we are

sinners – walking in the garden in the cool of the day. This is the Second person of the Trinity – no one has seen God. A theophany. Jesus comes into our world for just this reason – to find us and to relate to us.

**He need not have done this** – he knew they had sinned. ‘While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.’

**He was showing his grace** – he came for those who did not deserve him coming.

**The Lord Called** – ‘Where are you?’ – v9

**The key question the Bible asks of us from beginning to end** – God looking for his people, to save them and bring them back into a relationship with himself. The story of the lost sheep.

**A general question** – to the whole of humanity

**A personal question** – to each one of us personally

**A gracious question** – he has come looking for us and still looks while we hide

**A challenging question** – are we willing to come out of our hiding places?

**The Lord Clothed** – ‘The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.’ – v21

Ga 3:27 for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Ro 4:7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**Sacrifice** – a life given – *picturing the death of Christ* for our atonement

**Covering** – sin covered – picturing *the righteousness of Christ* imputed

## Pulling the threads together

### 1. The Bad News

**A Sense of Shame** *for sin*

**A Sense of Separation** *from each other*

**A Sense of Sanction** *that was coming because of their disobedience*

**A Sense of Severance** *from God*

### 2. The Good News

**The Lord Came** – he walked ‘in the Garden in the cool of the day’

**The Lord Called** – ‘Where are you?’

**The Lord Clothed** – ‘The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.’ – v21

**Sacrifice** – a life given – *picturing the death of Christ* for our atonement  
**Covering** – sin covered – picturing *the righteousness of Christ* imputed

## Two final thoughts

### Are you engaged in DIY- self-delusion?

Some try to hide from God with busyness, always distracting themselves with some new project, or responsibility, or activity. Still others try to hide behind what they feel are academic reasons for thinking God is not there. They study creation, but do not let themselves see or feel the creator. They hide behind creation. They stare at the details of the trees bark, trying to ignore the God who made it. Nothing's changed from Genesis!

### Are you engaged in DIY-religion?

Others actually take this hiding behind creation further, they take the tree, creation, carve into an idol and worship it. Human beings always have a tendency to worship creation rather than the creator. For us it may not be an idol as such, but immersing ourselves in the wonder of creation in a way that distracts us from the creator. Or it may be the worship of money, or our houses, or whatever.

Adam and Eve tried to take things into their own hands: they tried to cover their new sense of shame with fig leaves and they tried to hide from God by their own inadequate devises, by hiding in the woods. This failed and this always fails.

Man made human religion is simply a DIY attempt to try to cover sin and find God. Somehow we feel if we are only good enough God will accept us, or if we do enough religious duties or rituals it will cover our sin, or if we do enough good works it will bury our innate badness. This is just what Adam and Eve were trying to do, to use creation and their own activity to cover their rebellion. It did not work then and it will not work now. We can't hide from God's all-seeing eye. We can't cover our own sin.

Rather than hiding behind a tree, we must look to Jesus who hung upon a tree.

Are we hiding from God? Is this what we are trying to do? We must give up, come out into the open, expose our shame to God, confess our wrongdoing to him, and take hold of the only way he has provided to cover our sin: the death of Jesus on the Cross to pay the **penalty** and the righteousness of Jesus to **clothe us**.

Jesus is the one who **comes**, who **calls** and who **clothes**.

Have you come out of hiding?

May you do so, for his name's sake.

Amen.