

The Excuse

Genesis 3:9-13

Sunday February 28th 2010 Morning Service

Jonathan Skinner

When Adam heard the Lord walking in the Garden he hid; he hid because he knew he was guilty and he was filled with fear at what might happen to him. When drawn out of hiding Adam and Eve still tried to hide their sin, this time psychologically. In order to divert blame they made excuses, each passing the blame to someone else.

It is important to realise that both were guilty of sin, as is seen in the fact that the Lord punished both of them. But they are not only co-sinners; they are also alike in making excuses and trying to divert blame. They are alike in trying to avoid admitting their own sin.

We all try to excuse ourselves with regard to our sin, and if we can become aware of what the most common excuses are, we will be enabled to walk with God and with each other in a much more positive way.

As we look at these verses we can see four types of excuse that we need to avoid using:

1. We blame God

‘The woman **you** put here with me ...’ v12.

There are two things to say about the excuse of blaming God:

a) It is despicable

God gave Adam and Eve life; he gave them a perfect home; he guarded them from evil with the safeguard of a command, and yet Adam accuses God of causing his sin. Nothing could be more despicable. And yet people do this; they reject God because of evil and suffering in the world, even though he did not cause it. They blame him for making them prone to temptation and sin.

b) It is deadly

Blaming God for our failures is a sure root to bitterness and torment. ‘You made me like this – it’s not my fault!’

James 1:13-14 'When tempted, no-one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.' **Psalm 51** – 'my' comes four times in 3 verses – 'my transgressions' – 'my iniquity' – 'my sin' This is the only way to blessing: to be real about our own sin, to confess our own sin, to own up to our own sin. Here is the path of restoration and relationship with God.

2. We blame People

'The **woman** you put here with me ...' v12 **There are two elements to this form of excuse:**

a) It is an attempt to off-load guilt from me

Adam tried to shift the blame on to Eve. How often have we done this sort of thing? For example: 'They made me angry so that I lost my temper.'

b) It is an attempt to pile guilt on someone else.

This harms other people; this separates us from other people; it estranges us from them – it puts distance between us and them; it damaged relationships.

3. We blame the Devil

'The **serpent** deceived me ...' v13 Often believers pass the buck by saying 'The devil made me do it!' He may make temptations worse for us – but he cannot overpower us. **What are the three vital lifesaving truths that we must never forget?**

1. We can pray for deliverance We are told by Jesus that we can pray for deliverance from Satan. Lord's Prayer: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' Mt 6:13

2. We are to submit ourselves to God James 4:7a

3. We are to resist Satan (James 4:7b) If Satan can be resisted we cannot blame him for our sin. Satan spreads the lie in our hearts that we cannot resist him and so when we fall we blame Satan. We need to have confidence that we can stand against him. God has clearly said that we can resist Satan and so if we fall we are responsible. We cannot blame him when we fall.

4. We blame Confusion 'The serpent **deceived** me ...' v13 Eve was deceived by Satan and she was not supported by her husband – and yet, although these are undeniably true, God still holds her accountable. She tries to claim the excuse that she was deceived or confused. But this is not an acceptable excuse – she still gets punished and therefore must still be responsible and accountable. There are two reasons why the Christian should never be deceived: 1. We have the Word of God. 2. We have the Spirit. Because of this we cannot blame deception or confusion.

An important point: Even if someone does have even a significant part in causing us to sin, we are still accountable to God; we cannot use their sin to excuse ours.

A vital thought: In the New Testament we read in 1 Corinthians 10:13 – 13 – ‘No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.’ We cannot blame God; we cannot blame other people; we cannot blame the devil; we cannot blame our own confusion and being deceived. We are responsible and we are accountable. We are commanded to resist, to stand up under temptation.

And yet, what happens if we fail and fall? What happens if we sin when we cannot blame God, we cannot other people, we cannot the devil or confusion? What are we then to do? The amazing truth, which the rest of Scripture unfolds for us, is that if we turn to God in repentance and faith, then the blame we truly deserve *is* actually taken by another. Jesus Christ takes our blame for us on the cross.