(Read before reading Gen. 3) It was only a couple of sermons ago that we read Genesis 3 as one of three passages we looked at in connection with Articles 14&15 and the doctrine of total depravity. But our specific focus then was how Adam and Eve changed from being a *good* reflection of the image of God to being a *corrupted* or bad reflection of the image of God, and how we share in their guilt. Today our focus is God’s response to the sin and guilt of Adam and Eve.

Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Does anyone here like playing hide and seek? It is a fun game, isn’t it boys and girls. I thought my days of hide and seek were long gone but then along came the grandchildren and it has started again ☺

Well, our passage opens with Adam and Eve hiding from God. And they were hiding because God had warned Adam that on the day he ate from that tree he would surely die. But though they would die one day, and though they now had a spiritually dead nature, they were about to learn that there was still the hope of life! And we shall see that this is good news for us too!

So let’s see how this is so as **God reveals His amazing grace to guilty sinners in the garden**. And we will see this as we consider the **gracious approach**, the **guilty reaction**, the **great condemnation**, and then the **gospel promise**. And as we see these things together, may it be that each one of us is captivated by God and His grace to undeserving sinners!

1. So we begin with vv8-9 and the Gracious Approach.We read that Adam and Eve “*heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day,*” and they hid and He called out to them. “*Where are you*?”
   1. So let’s think about this scene for a moment.
      1. Does anyone here remember what happened to **Nadab and Abihu**? We read about them in Leviticus 10. They were priests and sons of Aaron and they “*offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded the*m.” And fire came out from the tent of the Lord and consumed them on the spot.
      2. And in **Exodus 19**, God came down to meet the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai. We are told that “*Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder*.”
      3. But here in the garden, there is no fire or thunder or instant death here; Adam and Eve “*heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day,*” and they hid and He called out to them. “*Where are you*?” And your ESV Bibles will have a little number next to the word “**cool**” and a note somewhere that explains that the Hebrew word translated as ‘cool’ literally means ‘wind’ or ‘breeze.’ One Bible paraphrase has it as “when the cool breezes were blowing.” So that picture suggests that when God said, “Where are you?” they were words spoken in a gentle tone of inquiry, much as you might call out when you arrive at someone’s house and cannot see them. This really does seem to be an unexpectedly gentle scene, given what Adam and Eve have just done!
      4. Boys and girls, did you see the pictures of **hurricane Dorian** and what it did in the Bahamas and the East Coast of the USA? 350km/h winds and absolute devastation. Well, I have to tell you that if v8 said that a great hurricane rose up and fire swirled about, and the glory of God descended into the garden, and His voice thundered forth, saying, “Come here, you wicked rebels!” that would not have surprised me at all, given what Adam and Eve had just done. But instead we have this incredibly gentle scene.
   2. But of course, there is a word beginning with ‘g’ that is more fitting than ‘gentle’ and that word is ‘**gracious**.’ You see, what we have here is the amazing grace of God on display. Even though Adam and Eve deserve judgment and condemnation and destruction and death, and even though they do not deserve to experience fellowship with God anymore, He *comes* to them; He *seeks* them out; He *pursues* them, and He does it *so* gently!
      1. Justthis past week I heard someone say that they don’t really like the God of the Old Testament because He is an angry God of wrath and destruction while Jesus in the New Testament is so kind and gentle. Have you heard something like that before? Nnnnh! Wrong! We don’t have time today to fully explore why that idea is completely false but anyone who thinks that isn’t reading their Bible carefully enough. God’s gentleness and grace is apparent in the OT, as we see right here in Genesis 3! and His wrath and judgment is apparent in the NT!He is the *same* God!
      2. So just *the way that God comes to Adam and Eve* already teaches them a very powerful lesson – God does not treat us as our sins deserve. The Bible is very clear – the wages of sin is? Death. So whenever we read in the Bible about the fire and judgment of God, like those references I mentioned a moment ago, that is not God losing the plot and going OTT, that is God dealing with sin as sin deserves to be dealt with. If Adam and Eve had been struck dead on the spot, it would have been xactly what they deserved. If this world was consumed by a big fireball and all life was destroyed in an instant, that would be what we deserve. But God came to Adam and Eve, gently and graciously.
      3. Now, make no mistake, God *cannot* and God *will* not ignore Adam’s sin, and Adam and Eve are about to learn about the reality of sin and its consequences. But this will happen in the context of grace and forgiveness and a promise of a Saviour.
      4. What a gracious, patient, kind, loving, gentle, and merciful God is the God of the Bible!
2. And we see this in how He *approached* Adam and Eve. But now we want to briefly look at what happened next as we consider the **Guilty Reaction** of Adam and Eve.
   1. And their first reaction, as we see in v8, was to hide. They tried to hide from God!
      1. Just think about that for a moment! Have you seen a little child learning to play hide and seek? We have probably all done it ourselves. The parent says, “OK, now you hide.” And the child just stands there and puts its hands over its eyes. It’s silly, right! And this was just as silly. You cannot hide from God! God sees everything and everywhere!
      2. But we must remember that Adam and Eve did not yet know what grace or mercy or forgiveness or repentance or confession or a Saviour was! And I want you to ponder that for a moment. You can’t confess your sins or ask for forgiveness if you do not know what those things are!
         1. Who here has played or knows of the game **capture the flag**? Two teams – each team hunts for the other team’s flag. But if someone from the other team sees you and tags you, you are out of the game *unless you go back to your own flag*. If you go back to your own flag you become free to join the hunt again. But of course, if you don’t know that you can become free by going back to your own flag, you will not do it. And that’s what it was like with Adam and Eve; they did not know that their sin and guilt could be fixed. All that they knew was that God said on the day you eat that fruit you will die.
         2. So the way of repentance and confession of sin was not yet open to Adam and Eve. Even though God’s approach was an act of grace, they had no way of knowing this because God first had to teach them about grace.
         3. And it is vital that we see this; it is why we read **Ezekiel 37 and Ephesians 2**.
            1. Right now, Adam and Eve were like the dry bones in the valley that Ezekiel spoke about. What did it take for those dry bones to come to life? The prophet preaching the word of God!
            2. And Ephesians 2 says that we are dead in transgressions and sins, “*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved*.” So Adam and Eve needed God to make them alive.
            3. It is God who must act first in salvation. It is God who must come to guilty sinners with the call of grace.
         4. And that is exactly what He did here – He came to Adam and Eve to teach them about confession and repentance and grace and mercy and forgiveness through a Saviour.
      3. And I must say here to those of you who know that you are sinner like Adam and Eve; who are sitting here right now with a sense of guilt and unworthiness and shame because of something or some things that you have done or are doing, if you are refusing to confess your sins and repent, you are trying to hide from God; you are as silly and foolish as Adam and Eve were! But God is calling you out of your hiding place today – come and listen to the call of grace!
3. So Adam and Eve’s attempt to hide is a picture of our total inability to fix the problem of sin ourselves – it is God who must draw us out with the call of grace. And the corrupt condition of Adam and Eve, and all human beings, is seen also in that having come into the presence of God they proceeded to blame someone else for what they had done. And we won’t spend any time on this today because we looked at this just a few weeks ago, but they are **a picture of how every human being naturally responds to sin** – it’s not my fault! Someone else/circumstances/genetics – born this way/the way I was raised/science/ sickness. There is no end to the variety of excuses that we come up with for our sin. But let’s turn our attention now to v14, which is where we see the **Great Condemnation** that is delivered to the serpent.
   1. Many commentators explain this whole passage as a kind of **courtroom trial**. God is the judge and He summoned Adam and Eve to appear before Him when He said, “*Where are you*?” They appeared before Him and He examined them in vv10-13, and now He will deliver the verdict. And the verdict is? Guilty. For even though Adam blamed Eve, notice what he said at end of v12: “…*I ate*.” And even though Eve blamed the serpent, notice what she said at the end of v13: “…*I ate*.” So they both revealed their guilt.
      1. And let me quickly point out here that this is how it will be on Judgment Day with all those whose sins have not been dealt with by the cross of Jesus Christ. **Romans 14:10** says, “*We**will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”* **Romans 3:12*ff*** tells us that “*no one does good, not even one … There is no fear of God before their eyes … the law … speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God*.”
      2. So while unrepentant unbelievers might throw out every excuse under the sun when they stand before God, they will reveal their guilt.
   2. But next we come **the passing of sentence**, which is what God says to the serpent in vv14-15. And I know that God continued to speak to Adam and Eve about the consequences that their sin would bring on themselves and all humanity, but again, we looked at that just a couple of weeks ago, so today we focus just on the sentence given to the serpent.
      1. And first of all, did you notice that **God did not examine the serpent**? He asked Adam what he had done and Adam blamed Eve, and then He asked Eve what she had done and she blamed the serpent, but He does not ask the serpent for an explanation; He just passes judgment on the serpent. Why?
         1. Well, several sermons ago we looked at what the Bible teaches about angels and demons. We saw that after they were created good, some of the angels, led by Satan, rebelled against God. **2 Peter 2:4** says, “*For … God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment*.” So the devil is already under the sentence of condemnation.
         2. And it is very clear that behind the activity of the serpent here is the devil. Later in Revelation, we read of “*the great dragon*” and “*that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world*.”
         3. So there is no need for God to examine the serpent/Satan and there is no possibility of repentance for the serpent/Satan.
      2. So let’s next look at the sentence delivered to the serpent: God said, “*Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.*”
         1. And we could spend hours thinking about this but today I want to be as brief as possible. This was a **real curse** delivered to the serpent. And what this curse means is that prior to this moment, the serpent had been some sort of magnificent creature that walked upright, but now it was a defeated and slimy creature that would crawl on the ground.
            1. Some people mock the Bible here and say that snakes do not eat the dust! But make no mistake, they do! Their tongues touch the ground and their food is covered in the dust of the ground.
            2. But you will know also that whenever we talk about an athlete who unexpectedly loses a game or a politician who is fired for lying or cheating, the expression we use is that they ‘**bit the dust**,” right? And what we mean is that they have fallen down, low; they are defeated.
            3. So literally *and* figuratively, the serpent ‘bit the dust’ and would now eat the dust forever. From this day forward the snake would be a symbol of deceit and sliminess.
            4. I know there are some people who love snakes, but I’m sorry, that is just abnormal. Snakes are hideous! ☺
         2. But think also of Adam and Eve who heard this curse pronounced and who saw this once beautiful creature become a hissing, slithering, dangerous snake. You can imagine the cold shiver that went down their spines as they realized that that God had every right to pronounce a much worse judgment on them! And surely that is exactly what they expected God to do now to them.
         3. But as you sit there with the knowledge of your own sin and guilt, I hope you realize that you also deserve the condemnation of God. “*The wages of sin is death*.” You are a commandment breaker and you deserve death and eternity in the fires of hell.
4. But this is why we must press on and end with the **Gospel Promise** in this passage, our fourth and final point. And we see this in the rest of the sentence passed down on the serpent/Satan, where God says, “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel*.” And boys and girls, enmity means hostility, bad feelings, hatred.
   1. And this was a curse addressed to the **serpent**, as we have seen, because while the serpent had previously been an admired creature, maybe something like they way we view dogs or horses today, now the snake would become one of the most loathed creatures of all. When most people see a puppy or a pony, they instinctively want to reach out and pat it. But when most people see a snake, they scream and climb up a tree! And this is because there is an inbuilt enmity between humans and snakes!
   2. But it is also and especially a curse addressed to **Satan**. You see, in eating the fruit from the forbidden tree because of what the serpent said, Adam and Eve had gone from being friends of God to being **friends of Satan**; they had left the kingdom of truth and light and life for the kingdom of lies and darkness and death.
      1. **In John 8:44** , Jesus was talking to the Pharisees. And he said to them, “*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies*.” Well, Adam and Eve had become friends with the father of lies.
      2. So there is grace here, already! Even as God says “*I will put enmity between you and woman, and between your offspring and her offspring*,” He is telling Adam and Eve that they are not permanently stuck in the relationship of friendship with Satan!
      3. And that is good news because our chief problem as humans is friendship with the devil or slavery to sin. This is our natural condition. But God’s message here is that that can change; we can become enemies of Satan. Hallelujah! We can be rescued from slavery to sin. Hallelujah! We can be “*delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son*,” as **Colossians 1:13** puts it. Hallelujah!
   3. And this can happen because of what God pointed to with the last part of v15, “*He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heal*.” And congregation, we could spend hours exploring the implications of these words. They are, in effect, the rest of the Bible and the rest of human history. They are the promise of Jesus!
      1. In the very next chapter of Genesis, Cain kills Abel. That was Satan trying to kill who he thought might be the promised child of Eve. But he was wrong!
      2. And then pretty much of all of humanity gets progressively wicked until God destroys the world with a flood. That was Satan trying to wipe out mankind. But God saved believing Noah!
      3. And then God made a covenant with Abraham but we are told that there as a famine in the land. That was Satan trying to kill Abraham. But God brought him to Egypt.
      4. And later, Pharaoh tried to wipe out the Hebrews. That was Satan trying to destroy the line of Messiah. But God delivered His people out of Egypt!
      5. And later Haaman tried to destroy all the Jews. That was Satan trying to destroy the line of Messiah again. But God raised up Esther and delivered His people!
      6. And then, eventually, the Son of God, Jesus, came to earth and He was nailed to a cross and He died. And Satan thought he had won! But God raised Jesus on the third day and Satan was defeated!
      7. And with all of these events, Satan was ‘bruising the heel’ of Messiah, but all along, and especially with the empty tomb, Jesus ‘bruised Satan’s head’! And that is what these words in Genesis 3 are pointing too! Jesus has conquered Satan and death!

And congregation, by faith, Adam understood God’s message of grace and forgiveness and the promise of a Saviour. We know this because of verse 20.

* You see, even though I have been calling **Eve**, Eve, she didn’t become Eve until v20. Up till now her name was woman. When God brought her to Adam, He said, “*She shall be called ‘woman.’*” And just in case you think it unfair that Adam got a proper name while she was just ‘woman,’ Adam simply means ‘man.’ So he was man and she was woman!
* But in v20 she gets a name change. We read, “*The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living*.” Do you see Adam’s faith here? God had said on the day you eat fruit from that tree you shall surely? Die. But now God had come with the call of *grace*. And Adam now knew that he and Eve would have a child who would bruise the head of Satan. So there was the hope of life – spiritual life and resurrection! Eve would not be the mother of the dead but the mother of all living! So this truly was the first public profession of faith!

But you too have heard the call of grace today. So stop holding on to your sin and guilt and stop hiding from God. Come out and go to Him today. Turn to Him and confess your sins. Tell Him that you no longer want to sin and you believe that Jesus paid for your sins on the cross. And then you can do **the right sort of hiding**. It is the sort of hiding that we shall sing about in a moment: *Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, Save from guilt and make me pure*. So stop hiding from God and hide, instead, in the cleansing blood of Jesus! He is the best ‘hiding place’ in the world! Amen.