Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

The first time that a cure to a disease was discovered was as recently as **1885**. Before that, doctors would do stuff like bleeding people or putting leeches on them, or try and manage pain or symptoms, but they didn’t fully understand what each disease was and what caused it. But finally, only 130 odd years ago, a disease and what caused it was fully understood. And so, a cure could be made. And from time to time you hear about a person who has died only for it to be discovered that they had a perfectly treatable injury or illness that could have been cured. But it was not picked up. Can you imagine if that were you? It highlights the importance of correctly diagnosing disease.

Well, we humans are not just physical beings. We have a body *and a soul*. So, physical disease is not our only problem. In fact, our *greatest* problem is spiritual. It is sin. And this is a key message of the Bible. For it is only when we fully understand that we are guilty sinners that we will seek a cure.

And we saw sin enter creation last week with the opening verses of chapter 3. We saw that the woman was deceived by the serpent and that Adam, rather than redeem his wife, joined her in disobeying God. Well, the exposing of the wickedness of sin continues in the hide and seek episode described in our passage.

**Boys and girls, do you enjoy playing hide and seek**? It is a fun game, isn’t it. Well, the hiding and seeking that went on in the Garden of Eden was no game! But in Adam and his wife’s hiding from God and God’s seeking of them, we have a study in Sin and Salvation. And it has much to teach us about our wretched spiritual condition, and that our only hope of healing is faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, it will take us three Sundays to get through the rest of chapter 3 and this study of sin and Salvation.

* + 1. We will begin with sin today as we look at the **guilty activity of Adam and his wife** in verses 8-12.
    2. Next time we will study salvation as we look at the **gracious activity of God** in verses 8-19.
    3. And we will finish with the **gospel activity of Adam and Eve and God** in verses 20-24.

So, we begin today with sin. And in the first two points of the sermon, we will explore Adam and his wife’s sin, and see that **we *do* the same as they did**. And the third and last point of the sermon will be **what we *should* do**. And my prayer is that the Lord would teach us about the sinfulness of sin, so that we would seek our refuge in Jesus Christ.

1. So, in our study of sin, the first thing that Adam and his wife did was that they **hid from God**. And I want us to see that this is what sin leads us all to do – we try to hide from God.
   1. We saw last week that the woman was deceived by the serpent and she ate the forbidden fruit. And then Adam joined her in disobeying God and ate the fruit. And they now knew that they had done something terribly wrong and deserved to die. Physically, though, they were not dead, yet. But they were dead in another sense. And we began to see that last week in their pathetic efforts to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. But we see more of this deadness in what happened next. For we read that “*they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*.” And we will return to the significance of this sentence next time, but **what happened next is that Adam took his wife by the hand, and they approached the Lord God and bowed down together and confessed their sin**. Is that what we read, boys and girls? It is not, is it. What do we read? They “*hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden*.”
      1. Now, think about this for a moment! Everything that God had done for them, thus far, **was good and kind**. He had given them a world to rule over and to ‘play in’ and to enjoy. He had given them each other. He had given them this *amazing* garden. And what they had done was not the worst thing ever. So, why did they not seek God and apologize? Ask for a second chance? Ask for a reset and another go? That would seem logical and reasonable, surely? But they did not. And this is hugely significant. For the reason they did not seek God is that they *could not*. They now lacked the ability and desire to be right with God. For this is what sin does to us. But just hold that thought for a moment.
      2. What they *could* do and *did* do was **try to hide from God**. And let’s think about this for a moment, too! Have you ever 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! Well, what Adam and his wife did was just as silly. You cannot hide from God! God sees everything. But again, this is what sin does. It deludes. It corrupts. It makes us think we can hide from God.
         1. But we cannot. In **Psalm 139**, David said, “*Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you*.” So, there is nowhere that we can hide from God. To try and do so is utterly foolish.
         2. But also, to try and hide from God just **increases your misery**. God is good. His law is good and is for our good. And the more you try and run away from Him and His law, the deeper into ruin and unhappiness you will become. If you want to read an ***explanation*** of this principle, read Romans 1. But if you want an ***illustration*** of this, read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Do you remember that parable, boys and girls? The young man wickedly demanded his share of the inheritance even before his father had died, and then fled off to a far land where he lived what he thought was the good life – booze, women, gambling and every pleasure you can imagine. But where did it end? With him being penniless and starving and alone. And misery is where hiding from God always leads.
         3. But you know what the dumbest thing about trying to hide from God is? It is that **God is merciful and forgiving to all who seek Him**. So, to try and hide from God is to miss out on His amazing grace. We think He will surely punish us. That is what Adam and his wife thought. But that is not what happened, is it. Were there consequences to their actions? Yes. But there was forgiveness and restoration and hope, just as there is to all who seek God through faith in Christ. But that will be our focus next time.
         4. But brothers and sisters, friends, whatever your sins, do not try and hide from God. You cannot, you will just increase your misery, and you are missing out on His mercy and grace.
   2. But there is more for us to learn about sin from Adam and his wife’s attempt to hide in what happened next. For when God called out to the man, “*Where are you?*” He replied by saying, “*I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself*.”
      1. And to help us see that something is terribly wrong with fallen sinners, there is **a Hebrew word play** here that doesn’t really come out so well in English. At the end of chapter 2, we saw that the man and his wife were naked and not ashamed. And the Hebrew word for naked is *arom*. And the Hebrew word for crafty or shrewd in 3:1 is *arum*. It is very similar to *arom*. And we saw in verse 6 that Eve believed that the fruit would make her wise, so she ate. And then Adam ate also. But what happened instead is that they ended up naked and afraid, as we see in verse 10. So, they began *arom* :-), they tied to be *arum*, and they ended up *arom* :-(. An English equivalent would be: They were nude, they tried to be shrewd, and ended up nude. And of course, we giggle at anything to do with nude, but what this conveys is something utterly awful – because of their sin, they have gone from innocence to guilt, from decency to decadence, from clean to corrupt, from wise to wicked, from decorous to depraved.
      2. And in case you are thinking that this is a bit over-the-top, the Bible is crystal clear that Adam and his wife’s spiritual condition was now that of being **spiritually dead**. And this is the spiritual condition that every human being begins life in. It has two parts:
         1. First, it is to have a **sinful nature**.
            1. **Ephesians 2:1-3** calls it being “*dead in the trespasses and sins*.”
            2. **Romans 5:10** describes this condition as being an “*enemy*” of God. Romans 8: 7 uses the word “*hostile*.”
            3. **Romans 3:10-12** says, “*None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one*.”
            4. **Isaiah 64:6** says, “*and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment*.”
            5. And the most vivid illustration of this starting spiritual condition is found in **Ezekiel 37**, where the Lord portrays sinful human beings as like a valley of dry bones.

I am sure you boys and girls have seen an animal or human skeleton at the museum. Well, if you wait long enough, could that skeleton come to life? It will not. Why? Because dry bones mean *dead*! And spiritually speaking, apart from God’s saving activity, we are like dry bones – we are spiritually dead.

* + - * 1. So, Adam and his wife now had a sinful nature. They were dead in trespasses and sins; unable and unwilling to seek God. And because Adam is both our biological forefather and covenant head, we inherit this spiritual deadness from him.
        2. Boys and girls, do you know what we call this spiritual deadness? Hint – It is the T in T.U.L.I.P. **Total depravity**. Every part of who we are is infected with sin, such that apart from the saving activity of God, we are spiritually dead.
      1. And to our sinful nature, we must add our **sinful actions**. And I want to illustrate just how massive this problem is with Adam and his wife. You might be forgiven for thinking that all they have done so far was to **disobey** God’s command and eat the fruit. But James 2:10 says, “*For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it*.” And I want to use Adam and his wife to illustrate this principle.
         1. The woman **misrepresented** **God**. She didn’t describe His bountiful provision fully and she added something that He did not say. So, that was a 9th Commandment violation – she bore false witness.
         2. And her and Adam also committed the sin of being **unthankful**. **Romans 1:21** says, “*For although they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks to him*.” He had given them the fruit of every tree in the garden, but rather than be thankful, they chose to disobey.
         3. But in **failing to honour Him** as God, they were sinning also against the 1st commandment, the 2nd commandment, the 3rd Commandment, and the 5th Commandment. The 1st commandment, as we learned last week in brother Brett’s sermon, requires exclusive love for and devotion to God. But Adam and his wife wanted to be gods like God. The 2nd Commandment requires that we worship Him *according to His commandments*. The 3rd Commandment requires that we not misuse God’s name, which the woman did when she misrepresented what God had said. And the 5th Commandment requires us to honour mother and Father, which surely includes honouring our Father in heaven.
         4. But they were also guilty of **suppressing the truth in unrighteousness**, which is what we always do when we disobey God’s law.
         5. And Proverbs 3:5 warns us against **leaning on our own understanding**, which is another sin of Adam and his wife.
         6. And the **6th Commandment** forbids murder. And in disobeying God, Adam knowingly brought down the curse of death upon all mankind.
         7. The **8th Commandments** forbids stealing. And in eating the fruit, Adam and his wife stole what did not belong to them.
         8. Proverbs 16:18 says, “***Pride*** *goes before a fall*.” And Adam and his wife were also guilty of pride.
         9. And there was also **sin against the roles** that the Lord had assigned them in creation – she should have got Adam to speak to the serpent. And he should have loved her and led her to repent.
         10. The **10th Commandment** forbids coveting what does not belong to you. And they sinned also by wanting to be like God.
         11. They also **failed to exercise dominion** over the serpent.
         12. And they were **selfish** in that the followed their own desires.
         13. They were **faithless** in that they did not trust in God and His word.
         14. They were **impatient** in that they did not wait until they could eat from Tree of life.
         15. They were also guilty of **gluttony**, in that they wanted to eat this good-looking fruit that had been forbidden them.
         16. They were **envious** of God and His attributes.
         17. They lacked **self-control** in giving in to their desires.
         18. And after these initial sins, here in the garden they demonstrated a lack of **humility**. For they should have humbled themselves before the Lord and confessed and repented of their sin.
      2. Are you starting to get the picture, congregation? Are you starting to see just how utterly sinful we are? And remember, every one of these sins had to be atoned for by the Lord Jesus Christ. He had to endure the eternal punishment that every one of these sins of Adam and his wife deserved. And this was just the first ‘batch’ of sins, from the first moments of sin, with this one couple. And every moment, thereafter, they added to the pile. And every moment, in your life and mine, we add to the pile.
      3. It is no wonder that when David reflected on himself and his sin in **Psalm 51** that he used every possible Hebrew word for sin that exists, and put them in the plural. We have an utterly corrupt sinful nature, and we add to that, every day, with our sinful actions.

1. But there is more for us to learn about the sinfulness of sin from another sin that Adam and his wife committed, which is that they tried to **shift the blame**. And again, I want us to see here that this is what sin leads us all to do – we blame everything and everyone else, except for ourselves.
   1. God said to Adam, “‘*Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate*.’” It’s terrible, isn’t it. Every time I read this, it just gets more feeble and pitiful!
      1. And notice who they are blaming, ultimately; it is the Lord. Adam is explicit about this: “*The woman you gave to be with me*.” But Eve was implying this too by blaming the serpent, *which God had made* and *had allowed to do what he* *did*.
      2. Just a few verses ago we saw a picture of a kind of super-man that God had created – made by God, made in the image of God, appointed to be a prophet, priest, and king in creation, and who immediately named all the animals. And then we met this super-woman, who Adam rejoiced at in every way – also made by God, and in the image of God, and the ideal helper for the work God had in store for them. But now they are pathetic, driveling, blame-shifting sinners. They look so ordinary and feeble, don’t they.
      3. But you know what else they look like? **They look like … you and me**. For who of us has not done the exact same thing? Many times? Why did you hit your sister? Because she pushed me. Why did you speak so harshly to your wife? Because she was pressing my buttons. Why do people overeat or get drunk or gamble or watch porn or continually gossip or drive aggressively? Well, it is genetic, which means: it is how God made me. And in these and a thousand other attempts to lie and squirm and shift the blame, we are most miserable and pathetic sinners.
   2. When the reformer Martin Luther commented on this passage, he noted three things about sin in particular:
      1. First, sin is **progressive**. And we saw this in our last point as we listed the sins that Adam and his wife had committed. And this is how it is with sin. It tends to make matters worse by adding sin to sin to sin. And a key way that this happens is through blame-shifting – it is my circumstances, it is my genes, it is my upbringing, it is other people, it is you, God. And if this is not confessed and repented of, which is God’s remedy, as we shall see in our last point, its end is eternal condemnation in the fiery pit of hell.
      2. But Luther also noted that sin is **the same everywhere**. Adam, rather than own his sin, blamed her. And she, rather than own her sin, imitated Adam and blamed the serpent. And this is the way sin works in all of us. We do not want to own our sin. We do not think we are to blame or that we are bad. But can anyone tell us what **Romans 3:23** says who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*.” And what does **Romans 6:23** say about the wages of sin? “*The wages of sin is death*.” We may not believe ourselves better than anyone else because *any* and *all* sin is utterly offensive to God.
      3. And thirdly, Luther observed that sin **blinds us even to God’s goodness**.
         1. Boys and girls, do you remember what happened to **Nadab and Abihu** when they offered false fire to God? They were immediately consumed by the fire of God.
         2. And do you remember what happened to **Ananias and Sapphira** when they lied about how much money they were offering to God? They were struck dead on the spot.
         3. Well, that is what Adam and his wife deserved. God had said to them, “*in the day you eat [the fruit], you shall surely die*.” But they were not dead! So, they should have fled to God in repentance. But such is the blindness and hardness and deadness of sin, they just kept adding to their guilt.
         4. And it is the same with you and me. We view God’s laws as harsh and restrictive. We view God as a kind of cosmic policeman. We forget or choose to ignore that He is good and kind and gracious, and that His law is good and for our good. And we shall see next time that this condition can only change by the gracious activity of God.
2. Well, thus far in our study of sin, we have seen that just like Adam and his wife, the natural inclination of fallen sinners is to hide from God, and to blame Him and any *thing* and any *one* else, except themselves. So, let’s finish by seeing **what we should do** when we understand that we are sinners and that we have committed sins.
   1. And we are helped here by two passages from the New Testament:
      1. The first one we read earlier; it is **1 John 1:8-9**:
         1. Verse 8 says, “*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in* us.” I am sure you have heard that the pathway out of alcohol addiction begins with … what? Admitting that you have an alcohol addiction. For only then will you truly want to be set free. Well, this illustrates John’s point about sin: “*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in* us.” What we should do, instead, is this: “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.”And to confess your sins is to acknowledge them and be truly sorry for them. It is to say, “LORD God, I have sinned against you, and I know that my only hope is your forgiving grace in Christ Jesus.”
      2. And true or sincere confession will include **repentance**, as our other New Testament passage makes clear. For in **Luke 13:3**,Jesus said, “*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will … perish*.” And perhaps you have heard before that to repent is to turn away from our sin towards what is good and right. It is to say, “I resolve to follow Christ as my King and to obey His commandments.”
      3. So, what should two things must we do when we understand that we have a sinful nature and that we commit sin? Confess and Repent.
   2. Now, our focus next time will be God’s amazing grace in Jesus Christ. But as we have seen, He promises to *forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” if we confess and repent and believe in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord.And I want to finish today with an example of God’s amazing grace in Jesus Christ in connection with confessing sin. I don’t know if you have considered this before but despite being probably two of the weakest most pathetic confessions ever, notice that both Adam and his wife did say, “*I ate*.” They *had* hidden and committed the 25 other sins I listed earlier, and they tried to shift the blame, but they did **confess their sin**. And I don’t say this to hold them before you as any sort of example of how to confess sin, but to further illustrate the amazing grace of God.
      1. Some of you may know of the collection of puritan prayers called ‘*Valley of Vision*.’ It is old fashioned language, but if you want to strengthen your prayer-life, this book will be of great help. And one prayer about confession says,

*But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;*

*my best prayers are stained with sin;*

*my penitential tears are so much impurity;*

*my confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin;*

*my receiving the Spirit is tinctured with selfishness.*

*I need to repent of my repentance.*

* + 1. So, we ***can’t even get our confession and repentance right***! But the good news is that God is not waiting there to punish you when you feebly confess your sins! He has already punished His Son on the cross for all the sins of His people. So, again, don’t think of Him as a cosmic policeman. Think of Him, instead, as like the father in the parable of the prodigal son that I referred to earlier. For even though his son deserved to be punished, the father was waiting for him, and he ran to him, and he wrapped him in his arms, and he kissed him. And that is how God receives sinners who confess their sins and repent. One author put it this way: “Around Jesus, sinners—those who know themselves to be sinners—feel safe. They find themselves both known to be guilty and embraced in love, rather than one or the other.”

And we will have much more to see about God’s amazing grace in Christ, next time, but may the Lord open our eyes to how much we need Christ. May He expose our sinfulness, so that Christ is everything! And may we be those who confess our sins, and repent, trusting always in Christ, every day. Amen.