

Text: Genesis 3:1-7

Theme: The Garden of Eden Revisited

March 5, 2017

Suppose we could return to the Garden of Eden, that we could walk among God's perfect creation, that we could see the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Suppose we had been Adam and Eve. Would we have got it right? In our minds, we say, "Yes, I would have got it right! How difficult could it be to avoid one tree in a place like that?" Today, as we revisit the Garden, we have the opportunity to use it as a springboard for making changes in our lives.

I. As we revisit the Garden, we realize that we are like Adam and Eve. A. But why are we still like them? 1. We are like them because we are surrounded by temptations. What if God eliminated temptation from your life for a week. What would you do or not do that you had done previously? We will never live in a temptation-free world and because of that reality, we remain like Adam and Eve. Call it being human, normal, or whatever other term you may like to use, but the truth is that we still haven't learned or chosen to avoid temptations. As long as we live, temptation will knock at our door even though it may be viewed as an unwelcomed guest.

2. We are still like Adam and Eve because we are overcome with doubt. "Did God really say?" The devil used the perfect phrase, the same phrase that still works today. Create questions; give them a reason to challenge the obvious, and then, wait for their response. We know how it works and we know that it works. Kids doubt that their parents understand. We doubt that our employer understands our workload, and on the list of doubts goes. Add to that our greatest doubt as we doubt our God, His Word, His promises. From the outside looking in, we wonder how it could happen, but in the midst of living, doubt strikes and, like Adam and Eve, we crumble.

3. We're still like Adam and Eve because we fail to trust. God had placed them in a perfect place and given them everything they needed. How could they have messed that up? In this moment, do you lack anything that you actually need? Hasn't God promised to supply all our needs? So how could we distrust our God? How could we believe that He won't come through for us? Like Adam and Eve, we are human and in our humanness, we fail to do what appears so obvious. We fail to give it all to God and go. We fail to believe what we sing, "I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, trusting only Thee." We're not proud of it, but like Adam and Eve, it happens.

B. Because we're like Adam and Eve, what do we do as we revisit the Garden? 1. As we revisit, we become people of confession. We know how it unfolded in the Garden. "It was Eve's fault." "The devil made me to it." Nobody took responsibility and therefore, nobody realized the value of confession. In I John, we find the words, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins." What will God do? Isn't that better than creating excuses that require more excuses? Adam and Eve teach us the value of confession, of laying our messed up, broken lives before our God saying, "I don't deserve to be called Your child" convinced that it's the right thing to do.

2. We learn the implications of forgiveness. Once we dump our pathetic lives at the feet of Christ, we prepare for His response. But, before we even confess, we

know God's response which makes confession so wonderful! Whatever lies in our heap at His feet, Jesus looks across it, looks us in the eye without rummaging through our pile and says, "Forgiven! Because you are My child, I choose to forgive you. Now, go and live without this heap on your shoulders!" The imagery is so inviting, so wonderful. We may have failed just like Adam and Eve, but we have Jesus burying our mistakes and saying to you and to me, "Go. I have great plans for you!"

3. As we revisit, we trust God in the little things. We don't know what type of fruit it was, but we know it was so little; it was tiny compared to everything God had given them. If only they had trusted God in the little things, the rest of life would have been so much different. Like Adam and Eve, we need to trust God with the little things, the insignificant things, the unimportant things, the "I can do that myself" things because as we trust Him with the little things, we learn to trust Him with everything. When we bring God the little things of today, of tomorrow, of each day next week, we will learn very quickly that bringing everything is the best thing.

4. We also build our resilience. Adam could have and should have said, "No," to Eve, but he didn't. Our lesson is to do what Adam didn't do. Suppose it were spring time and you spent the entire day spading your 40' x 40' garden. What would you find on your hands by the end of the day? Now, suppose you spaded gardens five days a week. What would develop on your hands after the first week? Blisters are evidence that we lack resilience and calloused hands indicate that we are tough enough to face the challenges. When it comes to resistance, we need a calloused heart, a heart that's prepared to resist when resisting is the right thing to do.

5. We make it our daily goal to walk with God. What did Adam and Eve do after they ate the fruit? They invented hide-and-seek, one of the first games created in history! As we revisit the Garden, we learn that hide-and-seek isn't a faith-based game. We know the words. We hear them at Christmas time but they remain true all year long, "Immanuel, God with us." By revisiting, we realize the value of God with us and we make a point each day of inviting God to walk with us. When we remember that God is at our side, we function differently. We may not be in the Garden, but God still says, "I want to walk with you day after day."

6. As we revisit, we pray like we mean it. Adam and Eve may have lived in a perfect garden for a time, but, in the midst of our imperfect world, God continues to supply all we need. Among those things we need that He supplies is prayer. Prayer doesn't merely make a difference. Prayer makes the difference and the more dedicated and faithful we are in prayer, the more we will see God working, God stepping in, God transforming, God doing what only God can do because He loves us. I don't know if Adam and Eve knew of the power of prayer, but what we know in this moment is that prayer works when we pray like we mean it.

7. God could recreate the Garden and give us the opportunity to get it right, but rather than wasting His time, He says to us, "Learn from their mistakes. Revisit the Garden and then, go and do what they failed to do!" Amen.