

Text: Genesis 3:8-15

Theme: Playing the Blame Game

May 27, 2018

Unless you grew up as an only child, I'm sure you can remember events such as this: Mom says, "Stop your fighting." You say, "He started it." "I did not. Johnie's the one who started it. It's not my fault. Don't blame me!" Sound even a little familiar? When we're in the wrong, we like the blame game because if we can blame someone else, then we get ourselves off the hook. In our text, Adam and Eve played the blame game and ever since that time, God's people have been playing a game God never wanted us to start in the first place.

I. In the beginning, God created us to answer graciously to our God. A. However, like Adam and Eve, we prefer the blame game. 1. We like the game because it makes us think we are better than someone else. The moment God called Adam on the carpet, Adam didn't want to look inferior or somehow less than Eve. His solution? Play the blame game and make Eve look like the bad one. Even today, we're still playing the same game for the same reason. We don't want someone to look down on us, to think less of us, to diminish our value, to knock us down a few rungs, so we play the game thinking all the while that it's working, even when it isn't.

2. We like the game because our mistakes, our sins are then someone else's fault. Look at Adam's response. "The woman You gave to be with me..." In his desperation, Adam not only blamed Eve, but he had the audacity to blame God. "If You hadn't create this woman, I wouldn't be in this predicament!" Can't you just see the logic Adam is working with? It's easy for us to think, "How dare he!," but, we are the Adam's of today. Our methods may be different, but the result is the same. We're not responsible. "It's not my fault. It's her fault!" Years may have gone by, but, like kids, we're still eager to blame someone else, anyone but ourselves.

3. We play the game because we don't realize the value of forgiveness. Did Adam and Eve know the meaning of forgiveness? They had no reason to know because they were living in a perfect place. But as soon as perfection vanished, Adam and Eve knew the meaning of guilt and needed to learn the value of forgiveness. Centuries later, we still have a problem with forgiveness. We still don't understand its value, its importance. If we remembered the value of forgiveness every time guilt attacked, guilt would be short-lived because forgiveness would wipe away our guilt. The blame game is our solution because we forget that forgiveness is a better choice.

B. So, what happens when we stop playing the blame game? 1. When we stop, we take ownership of our sin. As God walked through the garden, did He really need to say, "Where are you?" He asked the question because He wanted Adam to take ownership, to step out into the presence of God and own his sin, and He wanted Eve to do the same thing. Why? Because when we own our sin, we are in the proper place to claim ownership of forgiveness, to stand before God and say with boldness, "I have sinned and I stand here asking for Your forgiveness." When we own our sin, God smiles and says, "Now you are ready for My divine intervention!"

2. When we stop the game, we stop hiding from the grace of God. As long as Adam and Eve played the blame game, they missed out on the benefits of God's grace. As we stop the game and stand in the presence of God fully aware of our unworthiness, God steps onto the scene and says, "You don't deserve this. Yet,

because of My grace, I have washed the slate of your past. You now stand forgiven in My sight." Forgiven in God's sight - could it get anymore wonderful, any more spectacular? In this moment, the God of all grace is ready to say to you, "I forgive you." Are you ready to come out of hiding and live in the wonders of His grace?

3. When we stop playing, we encounter the joy of forgiveness. What was the most wonderful moment in the life of Adam and Eve? It was the moment of forgiveness. That same moment is the greatest moment in our lives. We may classify other moments as great, but the greatest, the most wonderful, the most spectacular moment of your life and my life is still the same. It's the moment when God steps into our lives, unworthy as we are, and says, "I forgive you." There is no better moment, no more joy-filled moment than each of those moments when we humbly stand before God owning our past, yet hearing Him say, "Forgiven. Move on!"

4. When we stop, we allow God to repair our broken relationship. What happened the first time Adam and Eve sinned? What happens every time we break the heart of God? We, like Adam and Eve, cut off our relationship with our perfect God. It's like we're hanging by a rope fifty feet off the ground and we reach up with our perfectly sharpened knife and we cut the rope. Forgiveness is God reaching His hand down from heaven at precisely the right moment to rescue us before we hit the ground. As He does so, He brushes off the dust and dirt encountered by the fall and He touches the two ends of the rope and they reattach as if they had never been broken.

5. When we stop the game, we are eager to stand in the presence of God. How eager were Adam and Eve to stand before God? So eager that they tried to hide from God. It may be our nature to hide, to think and to hope God doesn't notice, but when we stop the game, we come out of hiding. Instead of God saying, "Where are you," as He waits for us to own our sins, we stand in His presence with great eagerness as we say, "Here I am, Lord. I have failed, but You promise to forgive, and, once forgiven, You remind me that You want to use me in a special way." As we remember God's eagerness to use us, we are eager to stand boldly in His presence.

6. When we stop the blame game, we allow God to prepare us for His next incredible task. Adam and Eve, they faced the consequences of their actions, but they also became the parents of the entire universe, quite an amazing task from the first man and woman who disobeyed God. As we stand forgiven in the presence of God, we open our hearts and say, "I don't know Your plans, Lord, but I know You have a great plan for my life. Take me and use me. Take me and prepare me for Your next task. It may look impossible to me and I may think You need to find someone else, but teach my heart to go whenever and wherever You prepare me and lead me."

7. "I didn't start it. He did. It's her fault, not my fault! Don't blame me!" Those words will echo in our minds as long as we live. But, as long as you live, choose to stop playing the blame game because God has a better game planned just for you. Amen.