

Genesis 3: 17-24; “The Judgments Upon Adam’s Sin”, Sermon # 11 in the series- “Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 21st, 2013, in the Morning Worship Service.

We have been looking at the consequences of sin which were brought upon the first man and first woman as a result of their sin against God, their fall from their original righteousness in which God created them. We saw the consequences to Eve and all women, as result of her sin. She would have sorrow and pain in her conception, that is, her whole pregnancy and delivery would be affected, and she would experience difficulties, pain and sorrow at various points, trying to bring forth children into the world.

We saw, also, that she would have a desires to lead and to manage things within the marriage, but that these desires would be subject to her husband’s rule and evaluation. His rule at times would naturally be felt by her to be an imposition upon her; not like it was before the Fall, and it would take Christ’s death and His mighty grace to show men the better way to lead and govern in the family. I have been trying to show you that not that all men, in the Old Testament, were left out of these blessings of Christ’s grace. It was that God applied these blessings of grace to them based upon the future purchase of grace, by Christ at the cross.

We saw that it would take Christ’s coming in His incarnation, to retrieve any of us from the effects of Adam and Eve’s sin. It would take Christ’s death to crush the serpent’s head, to destroy his works, and to defeat his schemes. We saw that the woman would play a very important role in his defeat. She would conquer by submission and by faith in the promise of God. She would submit to her husband and she would submit to God’s will for her as a woman. The enmity mentioned in verse 15 was not placed by God between the man and the woman, but between Satan and the woman, between his seed and her Seed. She would be saved through childbearing. Her main purpose would be to be a helper to the man, and in being submissive to God, and to her husband, her role in the plan of God would be saved, and fulfilled by her through faith in the promise of Christ.

The man-child who would come as a descendant, or a Seed of hers, would suffer and die to bring these good things about. This, Eve did not fully understand, but she thought to herself, “What a gracious promise has been given to me, one so undeserving. What great joy she must have had, in the midst of judgment. She would have sorrow and pain, and she would be subject to her husband. But looking forward in time, her Savior would come. Her heart, even then, was established by grace, and she believed that she would live forever. Satan’s kingdom would be overthrown, and God would not send her to hell, because she had believed in the promise of her Savior.

Now this morning we want to turn our attention to Adam and the consequences of his sin. The consequences of his sin affect all men, for all generations and all time until Christ comes a second time, and all things will be restored for believers, by His mighty power. The consequences of Adam’s sin not only involve his work, but they involve his total inability to save himself. He could not please God, or be accepted by God by his own attempts at doing works of righteousness. The consequences of his sin are laid out for us in this passage as judgments of God, judgments which only Christ can save us from. They affect all of us here this morning and they are as follows:

1st – The Judgment of a cursed earth. (verses 17 and 18)

We find in verse 17 that it was because Adam heeded the voice of his wife that this curse would come to the ground. Adam tried to shift the blame from himself to the woman, when God confronted him with his sin in verse 11. He tried to make it appear that, not only was it Eve’s fault, but that God, Himself, was at fault for giving him this woman in the first place. “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate,” he says. Now I wonder

how many of you husbands here this morning continue to think and reason this way? It is a very sinful form of reasoning. It is the kind of reasoning that refuses to assume responsibility for what we do, or what we think, and that is wrong. It is the kind of reasoning that says – Since God is sovereign in his giving me this woman to be my wife; if she does anything that is sinful, then I am not responsible for my reactions to her sin, because You God, could have prevented it by not giving her to me in the first place. If this is a good gift, this woman whom You have given me, then I should never have been tempted or led into sin. I would be better without her, and You should know that, since You are God.

This is all very sinful reasoning, which says that if God is sovereign, then I am not responsible. Let me say this, first of all. It is because God is sovereign, that we are responsible moral agents. God created man both righteous and free. He had, in the beginning the freedom to choose to eat from any tree in the garden, except the one which God forbade, and he had the freedom to refuse that. God's sovereignty established that freedom. Adam, in eating of the forbidden fruit was agreeing with Eve's false reasoning that God had not been good in withholding this one tree. And he was willing to heed her voice over God's.

He was also free not to heed her voice, but he did. So, he was fully responsible for his own sin. And because he was the head in the marital relationship, he was responsible for the outcome to both of them. It is to Adam, in Romans chapter 5, that the guilt of the Fall is ascribed. It says, "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation,..." ; even so, Adam could not shift the blame. And it was because Adam heeded the voice of his wife, and ate from the tree of which God commanded him not to eat, that the ground, the whole earth, was cursed for his sake.

All of the physical creation is now in a state of spiritual and physical bondage as a result of the consequences of Adam's sin; and it cannot be released from it until the time of the resurrection and the restoration of all things. Romans 8: 19-22 states this truth with clarity. "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."

In other words, all of God's physical creation which He had made and pronounced good, now groans. God has cursed it because of Adam's sin. Because of this first man's sinful action all other innocent creatures are subject to vanity. This is why animals and pets die; this is why there are thorns and thistles where once in Eden, there never were. The whole creation is degraded and impacted by man's sin. Listen to Robert Haldane's comments on this: "When the creation was brought into existence, God bestowed on it His blessing, and pronounced everything that He had made very good." "Viewing that admirable palace which He had provided, He appointed man to reign in it, commanding all creation to be subject to him whom He had made in His own image." "But when sin entered, then, in a certain sense, it may be said that all things had become evil, and were diverted from their proper end."

"The creatures by their nature were appointed for the service of the friends of their Creator; but since the entrance of sin they had become subservient to His enemies." "Instead of the sun and the heavens being honored to give light to those who obey God, and the earth to support the righteous, they now minister to rebels." "The sun shines upon the wicked, the earth nourishes those who blaspheme their Maker; while its various productions, instead of being employed for the glory of God, are used as instruments of ambition, of avarice, of intemperance, of cruelty, of idolatry, and are often employed in the destruction of His children." (End of quote)

This is what it means, when it says that the ground is cursed for Adam's sake. It affects all of us today, and indeed we contribute to it by our own sins. Jeremiah 12: 4 says, "How long will

the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither?” “The beasts and the birds are consumed, for the wickedness of those who dwell there, because they said, ‘He will not see our final end’ .”

The 2nd consequence of Adam’s sin was the judgment of a sweaty face. (Verse 19)

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.” You see this judgment in verses 17 and 18 as well,” In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.” The Fall has affected man’s work. Man will have to work hard to obtain his daily bread. It was going to be something which he would have to persevere in, and be persistently applying himself to, in order that he might obtain what he needed, in order that he might succeed in business and obtain what he was wanting and needing. Toil is exhausting labor. The evidence of it is sweat upon the brow; weariness and uneasiness to the mind in accomplishing our tasks, so that we might be paid.

The curse here, is not upon the labor itself. The curse is the burdensome heaviness that comes to the mind which is trying to grapple with the difficulties of how the work can be done, the frustrations, the problems and the difficulties of what it would mean to get it all done; and the exhaustion which comes from the repeated attempts to get the work done in a certain time, or in a certain way. Then, too, there are the worries that come when the man wonders if there will be a proportionate reward for his labor, and the difficulties of working with unreasonable or unloving people around him, or in conditions which ruin his health.

All of these are consequences of the Fall. Various of these consequences are seen in every job that men can think of. It does not matter what kind of job you have, you can be sure that some of these consequences, or all of them, will affect a man’s mind and his body, to show him the vanity of his efforts apart from God’s blessing and grace. Even the man with the most wealth, who could spend it on anything that he wanted to, understood the consequences of Adam’s fall upon his life.

Turn with me over to Ecclesiastes 2: 10. He says: “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.” “I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward for all my labor.” “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind, there was no profit under the sun.” So all of this is what any man can expect to see in the measure that the Lord ordains; and this, no matter what job they have under the sun.

From this passage that we are studying this morning we see that there is no release from these consequences until death. “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” But we can make the best of it, through diligent and persevering efforts; to do what we do to the glory of God. Ecclesiastes 9: 10 says: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” “Diligence is the precious possession of a man,” it says in Proverbs 12: 27.

Through diligence, a man can meet all the consequences of Adam’s sin and actually have joy in his labors. Christian diligence is based upon God’s grace at work in your soul. The reason that we work hard is because we know that it will ultimately bring honor and glory to our God; it will be a good witness and testimony to others, as well as a means of providing for our family. Turn with me over to Colossians 3: 23. “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

In other words, we remember that “It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it,” as it says in Proverbs 10: 22. We also remember what it says in Ecclesiastes 9: 11 – “I returned and saw under that sun that – The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men

of skill.” Let us remember that it is God’s blessing we seek; it is the glory of having a good witness to bear, to the work of His grace in us, that we seek.

3rd – The judgment of banishment from the garden, and from “taking” from the tree of life. (verses 22-24)

Verse 22 says, “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – Therefore the Lord God sent out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.” “So He drove out the man....” Man was banished from the earthly paradise; he driven out by the Lord God. Let us see and take notice of the fact that sin is always that which separates us from our God. God, because he is just, must take away the privileges of innocence once sin enters.

He must take these disciplinary steps against Adam. “Behold the man”. “He has become like one of Us,” says the Triune God. In other words, Adam had come to know good and evil like God, but he was not able do the first perfectly, and he was not able to keep himself from the second, practically speaking. Before he walked naked in this garden and he was not ashamed. Then, because he sinned, he defiled himself and that place with his sin. So, God compelled him to leave. He would not be able to enjoy the privileges of what he had, before, when there was no sin in him, when he did not stand condemned.

The sinner must be separated from the privileges of a perfect state. Now, his nakedness must be covered. Now, he must be banished from Paradise. Now, he can no longer freely take of the tree of life. Now, his eyes are opened, but he is not wise. How can this man save himself in such a condition? Who can retrieve him from the consequences of his sin? He must be driven out. He must be kept from the tree of life. If he “takes” from that tree and eats, he will live forever in this wretched condition. He must not think that he can obtain salvation or eternal life by his own works, or by his own free-will ever again. Let the angels stand guard to the entrance of paradise, with flaming swords in their hands, to show that this way to the tree of life is barred forever.

But, let us all rejoice that there was another time in Scripture when someone else said, “Behold the man”. Do you remember where it was? It is found in John 19: 5 when Pontius Pilate brought Jesus out to the people after he had scourged him. Only, in that case, Pilate was telling the crowd that he could find no fault in Him. Behold, it is Immanuel, God made manifest in the flesh, God with us. He is about to be driven outside the City and crucified. He is about to become a curse for us who are sinners in Adam’s likeness. He is about to suffer the shame of nakedness on the cross, so that we can be clothed in His righteousness!

He is about to be nailed to a tree; and His precious blood shed to atone for the sins of His people. He has become like one of us, in terms of what we deserve. Instead of knowing good and evil, He will taste death for every person who will believe in Him. Come, and take of the tree of life, and eat of it today. The fruit of this righteous man’s death is a tree of life. The Lord Jesus who wins souls is wise. All the consequences of the judgment against us, have fallen upon Him. All of God’s banished ones can rejoice. Christ has died, and He has risen. And the door to the paradise of God stands open for you today. Come in, come in, while there is yet time.