

Title: Hiding Sin

Gen 3:8-3:15

Today's Old Testament reading is about Adam and Eve, the first humans. They were the ultimate creation by God. They were created to do his will and be God's stewards over all the Earth. Yet, as the story goes, they chose to be disobedient to God. Through their act, sin enters the creation. Genesis, chapter 3, records their first encounter with God after their disobedience, after the fall. Even then, Sin had already perverted Adam and Eve, had corrupted their relationship with God. Having done evil, having disobeyed God, like children, they sought to avoid punishment by hiding. This has been the legacy they left for all of mankind.

When we sin against another, a sinful man thinks he can deal with it and the consequences of sin: broken relationships, pain, and guilt, by hiding. Perhaps they do not physically hide. But they do hide. They hide emotionally, psychologically, intellectually. We emotionally hide by pretending we don't care about our sin. We psychologically hide when we refuse to acknowledge the sin, when we pretend it never happened. We hide intellectually, when we try to come up with intricate justifications for what we did. Nonetheless, these are nothing more than different ways of hiding. The unfortunate thing is that once you start hiding, it's hard to come out of hiding... The more you hide, the harder it becomes to admit that you have done something wrong and the harder it becomes to reconcile. If we continue to hide instead of facing up to the problem, our relationships with each other become broken.

Now it is bad enough that this breaks relationships with other people. But this is especially bad if we try to hide from God. We may have sinned against God. We know we need to get right with God, but we are afraid to admit our sin... or at best we just don't know how to make it right again, and we fear punishment. So, we hide ourselves from God. We hide ourselves rather than getting down on our knees and admitting our sin.

But the sad truth is that God already knows your sin. Now this can be a very scary thought. If my sin has the last word, then if God knows everything, I am sunk. But praise be to God, sin does not have the last word. In the Genesis story of Adam and Eve, there is a word of hope. It is an encouragement to stop hiding. Because God loves us, he has provided a road to reconciliation. In Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve have just tasted the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They have directly disobeyed God. You can just imagine how they feel.

Guilt rushes into your mind as you desperately try to cover yourself. But being naked before God means all your weaknesses, all your imperfections, your very sinfulness, is visible before an all-seeing God. You are on display before the only person who had the right to judge you. You're naked. You're ashamed. Ashamed because you just did something that He told you "not to do." He told you "it would cause you to die!" You betrayed God Himself! Probably more to the point, you are ashamed because you just got caught.

So, what did they do? Adam and Eve hide from God. They try to hide from God because they were afraid of God's anger. Now we know Adam has absolutely lost it here. I mean, he, above all people, should know that you can't hide anything from God. And yet, this is the way of sin. This was the first sign that sin was having its way with Adam and Eve. To believe that you could hide something from God is the first sign of sin having its way. It is a blindness to what God truly is. It is a blindness in ourselves which says God is blind to my sin. That's just what Adam did. That's what we do when we act like God does not see our sin. But the bottom line is: God knows when we sin. God sees us when we sin. Sin causes us to go into denial and attempt to ignore our sin. We become blind to God, and this blindness leads to broken relationships, broken relationships with other people, broken relationships with God.

But this is not where God wants to leave us. God had a plan of redemption. We continue the Genesis story. So here God comes calling out "Adam, where are you?" Adam...you're not in the place you normally are. You're not running to me like you used to. Where did you go? Why are you hiding from me? You know, God already knew where he was. God already knew Adam had chosen to do what God said not to do. God already knew this. In fact, Adam knew too. Adam knew there is no hiding from God. But now in his sinfulness he chose to ignore that, to purposely blind himself to the truth. to purposely blind himself to God.

Unfortunately, in his self-imposed blindness to the truth of God, he also blinded himself to the mercy of God. And this was the nature of God's mercy. When God asked: "where are you?" it was because He wanted to show mercy to Adam. God was asking Adam, "why are you not coming to me with this sin." "Why are you turning away from me?" "We can figure this out together." He knew Adam was afraid. God had every right to send lightning down and destroy Adam. But He didn't. Rather, he came to the garden as was his habit, looking to spend time with His friend Adam. Knowing what Adam had done, God came with compassion asking Adam to come to Him and not hide in fear, asking Adam to come and face the facts, asking Adam to work with him. In verse 10 Adam comes out from the

trees and says “Here I am.” “I hid myself from you because I was naked.” It is commendable that Adam comes out to God. But he is still hiding. He is still trying to hide the real truth, the real truth about their disobedience. God then asks Him “Who told you that you were naked?” “Have you eaten from the tree I told you not to?” It is important to note here that God already knew where Adam was and why He was afraid. But instead of swift judgment, He said “Adam, tell me what happened.” God is merciful. He did not hunt Adam down to destroy him. He wanted Adam to come to Him... to confess his sin... so that God could show mercy.

This is the hope which the Genesis story shares with us. We have all sinned at some time or another. We have all tried to hide from God at one time or another. The good news is that God is not waiting for us to come to Him for condemnation, but rather God comes to us.... to rescue us.... not because we have done anything to be worthy of rescue, but because He loves us... He loves us, even in our darkest moments.

However, while God desired mercy, the consequences of sin was still there. As a show of his mercy God clothed Adam and Eve. Even though Adam and Eve betrayed God, God in his infinite love still provided for their needs. But now there is an ominous note to that provision. Genesis says that Adam is now clothed with the skins of animals. Before, Adam was clothed with fig leaves and that was enough. But now that Adam has become sinful, his nakedness must be covered with the sacrifice of The Innocent. An animal had to die to cover Adam’s nakedness. So even in the garden of Eden, the wages of sin was made plain.... the wages of sin was death. The sin of man would have to be covered by death. Thousands of years later in the worship in the temple, sacrifices of animals would be required to pay for the sins of man. The sin of man would have to be covered by the continued sacrifice of animals. The sin of man would be covered by the continued sacrifice of animals until the ultimate sacrifice was made. That ultimate sacrifice was Jesus. Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross, to pay for our sins. once for all... to be the final sacrifice. God had mercy on Adam.

Sin spread to all of creation.

God’s mercy extended to all creation.

Sin has spread to all mankind.

God has mercy has extended to all mankind today and yesterday.

Like Adam, we have all sinned, as a result, are worthy of death. In our confession of sins, we stand before God saying we are sinful and unclean. We have sinned

against you in thought word and deed. We have sinned in the things we have done and the things we have left undone. We deserve your eternal punishment. In our confession we stand naked before God. But it doesn't stop there. For after our confession, we plead for mercy. We plead for mercy only as those who know they are loved by God can plead. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so we may delight in your will and walk in your ways. And the great news is that, as we stand naked before God "sinful and unclean," we receive the forgiveness of God and His love, as he promised to us. We are received as his beloved children.

There are billions of people out there who have sinned, billions of people who think that the fig leaves they have used to cover themselves are enough to hide their sin from God. There are billions of people who will remain naked who will have no friendship with God who will die cold, naked and alone, eternally separated from God.... unless we tell them about Jesus. This is a scary thought, but it is still true. It is a joyous thought however, to know that God does not desire to condemn them, but that through Jesus, they can have the forgiveness of sins, they can come to a relationship with Him, that they can receive eternal life.

Brother and sisters in Christ, this is the message of Gen 3. This is God's call to us to share with the people out there who do not know Jesus Christ. Share the good news that they need not fear sin anymore. they need not fear death anymore, for Christ was the final, once for all, sacrifice which has paid for all sins. Share the good news that God loves them. Amen