

# The Journey from Shame to Honour

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Preacher: Mr Ian Murdo Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Turn back with me then to Genesis chapter 3, and we can read the verses marked 8 to 10. Genesis 3 and verses 8 to 10.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. I guess every service that we hear, we're told that we are sinners.

And the reason for that is explained to us in this third chapter of Genesis. And this main reading, it focused initially on Adam and Eve. And as we read in verse 25 of chapter 2, they knew no shame at that point. And they moved from that to what we've just read there in verses 8 to 10.

They moved from that, from knowing no shame, to now being totally ashamed because of their nakedness before God.

[ 1 : 55 ] And they're actually acutely aware of it in every aspect of their lives. And the fall, which is known as when Adam and Eve sinned against God, this is the first major turning point in the history of this world.

And it's important for us to understand the fullness of the consequences of that rebellion against God. It was a blatant defiance of the instruction that God had given to Adam.

And so we can perhaps look at it under three headings. First of all, let's look at what happened in the garden, how the garden was initially before the fall.

And just to have a few thoughts on that. Secondly, to look at the fall itself. And then thirdly, because of the consequences of the fall and the words that Jesus spoke to the woman during the curse she put on her, we'll go to Calvary, to the cross at Calvary and to Jesus' sacrifice there.

So let's look first of all at the garden. They were without shame. And, you know, it's very significant that of all the things that God could have told us, as the work of creation is completed and God has said it's all very good, of all the things that he could have told us in this very last part of chapter 2, is that the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

[ 3 : 43 ] And what this tells us is that tells us that everything there was very good in the creation, but God wanted us to know that we were designed to never know what shame felt like.

That was the purpose in the creation of man and woman. And it's very clear that up to this point in the history of the world, that the whole creation was exactly as God planned it.

Everything God wanted in his creation was present, and his relationship with Adam and Eve was perfect at that point. We're told that Adam and Eve in the garden were naked, they knew no shame.

Between them, there was an openness. There was an openness. There was a unity. And that was not masked by guilt.

That was not disordered by lust in any way. And it was not hampered by shame. There's a glory, and there's a beauty in the garden.

[ 4 : 57 ] There's a freedom there that is totally alien to this world as we know it. And this was God's true pattern of creation, that there would be perfect ease between them, between him and with the human beings that he created.

This was the fruit of perfect love, with no inclination for greed, or for distrust, or for dishonor, or for pride, or for selfishness, or for anger, or for envy, or for riches.

All the things of this world. But there was no inclination whatsoever towards any of these at this point in creation.

And this verse is a pointed reminder of our vanished concord, our vanished harmony, where there was agreement on everything.

Adam and Eve at this point were shameless in every aspect of their lives. And they were shameless not just physically, but spiritually as well.

[ 6 : 17 ] And how lovely this is with God at the centre of their lives. The final description in chapter 2, it just offers to us a picture of innocent delight.

Adam and Eve were truly in paradise and fellowship with God was as natural as breathing. There was no need for any kind of discipline with regard to devotion to God because all of life was devotion to God.

It was natural and there was no effort. But what now, as we read into chapter 3, what now becomes abundantly clear to us is that Genesis 2 can now only ever be read from this side where we are, from this side of Genesis 3.

And that leads us to look at some aspects of the fall here. And let's be clear as we begin that the New Testament clarifies for us that the serpent that's spoken about here is indeed the devil.

And it's at the fall that this act of disobedience that it turns the whole narrative of human life into a totally different direction.

[ 7 : 59 ] From going in one direction it flips at 180 to go in a totally different direction. The picture of the garden given to us in Genesis 2 is given to us as being reflected in a clear and unspoiled mirror.

And I'd like you just to keep this in your mind as we go through the sermon. I'm going to come back to it towards the end. So what we have in the garden in Genesis 2 before the fall is a picture of a reflection in a clear unspoiled mirror which portrays the perfect image of God in man as it was then.

But in Genesis 3 because of the fall that mirror is shattered into a thousand pieces. And each little piece still reflects something of the earlier beauty that there was but now that picture is fragmented.

And that is how we are born into this world in that fragmented picture of a thousand pieces of that mirror still elements there of the image of God but certainly not perfect because that mirror is now broken.

The world is now seen through the broken glass of chapter 3 and this is no longer a normal world nothing about it could be called very good anymore.

[ 9 : 34 ] And the reason of course is because sin has now entered in and it's a reality for the very first time. And it's impossible I think to get any more of a radical contrast of words than we have in chapter 2 25 and chapter 3 and verse 1.

Look at what it says. So this craftiness is there now from the very beginning.

The serpent, the devil begins a dialogue with the woman which opens up with this question and this is the first question I'd like us to consider in our passage today.

this first question did God actually say you shall not eat of the tree of the garden? And what does that do?

Well that immediately puts a doubt into Eve's mind, into the mind of the woman. That seed of doubt is planted immediately.

[ 10 : 47 ] And you know it just gives us a thought as well. Because we need to be in our guard for these words as well. Did God really say? Did God really say this?

Because this is the first question in the Bible and it speaks volumes to us about knowing and understanding God's word. If we don't know what God says in his word then doubts will be put into our minds as well.

We're going to be led away by every wonder of doctrine and possibly even false teaching. We need to know God's word so that we can stand firm in the face of questions and accusations and all the wiles of the devil.

So we need to keep that in our minds. So this is a question then that is put to Eve. Did God really say this? This dialogue continues between the serpent and Eve to the point where she eventually caves in and eats of the forbidden fruit and ultimately rebels against God.

She gave some to her husband who also ate. Adam and Eve's eyes are now opened meaning they now begin to understand the whole context of good and evil.

[ 12 : 14 ] They are now sinners. And what they did was unspeakable rebellion against God. As one commentator puts it they are now ashamed.

They are aware of their nakedness now but it's not just their physical nakedness it's a moral nudity a nudity of the soul of which they are now conscious.

And what they cannot do is to cover that nakedness of their guilt and shame before God it was their sin that led to this shame.

And even while the taste of the fruit was still on their lips they died right there at the foot of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

They died spiritually and sin immediately penetrated every sphere of their being. And physical death also came into the world.

[ 13 : 20 ] In an instant they passed from life to death from trust to distrust and from ease to dis-ease.

It didn't take a day to happen it all happened in a millisecond. And what we're told in Ephesians chapter 2 summarizes so much of this.

Ephesians 2 tells us about a person's state before they come to faith in God and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

And so on. And actually Ephesians 2 actually goes on to repeat that in other ways as well. Their position before God went from a perfect harmonious relationship to now being God's enemy.

Very stark isn't it? Complete contrast. And this leads us to our second question. As God comes into the garden God calls out to Adam where are you?

[ 14 : 50 ] Where are you Adam? Where are they indeed? They're hiding from God in the trees in the forest.

they realize they're naked, they cover themselves with sown fig leaves and they are totally overcome with guilt and with shame.

They're ashamed, they're now rebellious, guilty human beings who shift blame, who are afraid and hiding in the trees from God.

what a transformation from what we had in the words of verse 25. And we can just imagine them, can't we, just crawling out from these trees coming before God, coming out of their hiding place in abject fear fear.

And God then confronts them with the third question that we can consider. Who told you you were naked? Who told you that you were naked?

[ 16 : 03 ] And we need to know the answer here because sin comes into its own immediately. Immediately. Immediately. she gave me the fruit from the tree and I ate it.

It was her. It was her fault God. Don't blame me. She gave me the fruit. That's nothing but treachery.

And Adam was already immediately so cold and so calculated. And instead of fellowship together, they had deceit and guilt and judgment.

It's now the order of the day. No different for the woman. When God asked the woman, it was the serpent's fault. The serpent deceived me. The serpent told me to take it.

So I took it. It was the serpent's fault. Once again deceit and shifting the blame. So God, as we read, God judges the serpent and then Eve and finally Adam and each with specific and personal judgments laid upon them.

[ 17 : 10 ] And following God's judgment, they are cast out and this is the thing that they are cast down into this dark and evil world.

sin and evil. It didn't just fabricate itself into the lives of Adam and Eve and human beings.

But Romans 8 tells us this. for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of whom you subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

So the whole world subjected to sin. But thankfully our God is a God of mercy because his judgment upon the serpent also turns into a word of grace for human beings.

[ 18 : 29 ] Look at verse 15 here of chapter 3. I will be enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. You shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

What God says when he says this, he's looking forward and what we have here is quite an astounding gospel prophecy.

The woman's offspring that God refers to points to Christ, who will crush Satan's head. In other words, it is Christ who will deal a death blow to the serpent, to Satan.

And in saying you shall bruise his heel, this refers to humans being afflicted by sin and limping along in the path of life because of sin.

And I mentioned Adam's responses previously as we had it, which when God asked him, why have you done this? How do you know that you're naked?

[ 19 : 39 ] And that was effectively for want of a phrase, one of a better phrase, one we used to do, it was passing the buck, wasn't it? He was passing the buck on to the woman, who then passed it on to the serpent.

Well, that was not passed to Eve, actually. It was passed to Jesus Christ to deal with this, to remedy this, because Adam and Eve were our representatives of the human race, as human beings, the first human beings, they were our representatives, and so what they did is transferred to us as well, every single human being.

And this required a remedy, and it leads us to the cross, our third point, because Christ comes in the person of Jesus to deal with sin.

We need a remedy for this sin. And as we read there in verse 12, it mentions sin, that he endured the cross, and he despised the shame.

Jesus despised the shame. And the word shame in the Greek describes something that is base, is ugly, is revolting, is grotesque.

[ 21 : 02 ] And by using this word, the writer of the Hebrews is telling us that Jesus' experience on the cross as he hung naked and broken in full view of the world, was disgraceful, deplorable, despicable, and reprehensible.

He endured the cross and despised the shame. crucifixion. But he endured that for us.

He endured it for us. Crucifixion was a form of capital punishment. And went not only to torture someone, but also to publicly shame that person.

It was served for the scum of society, like rebels, slaves, outcasts, murderers, so on. Crucifixion stripped its victims of their clothes and their dignity.

Criminals were hung naked, arms outstretched, all alone in front of the crowds and the hordes that were gathered along these Roman roads. They were mocked, they were spat on as they struggled for breath.

[ 22 : 17 ] And it's interesting that the authors of the four gospels, they don't emphasize or sensationalize the gruesome details, of Jesus' death, but rather they highlight the shame of the cross.

They show us that on the cross, Jesus bore our shame. He bore our shame in the scourging and being taken outside of the city walls to be crucified in front of a huge crowd.

People were spitting on him, mocking him, shouting at him, abusing him, stripped naked, which was a clear indicator of bearing Adam's shame from the Garden of Eden.

The cross wasn't just punishment that he took for our guilty verdict, it was public humiliation. It was public humiliation.

shame. And the emphasis on shame in the Bible is always in relation to God. But it's also significant that these same four gospel writers, these authors of the gospels, do not dwell on the manner in which Jesus was crucified.

[ 23 : 42 ] Because if you search the gospels, you'll discover that there are very few details concerning Christ's physical sufferings compared to what it would have actually been like.

There's very few details of his physical sufferings. Instead, they point to what was happening to him spiritually as he hung there. Their focus is more on the purpose of the cross than on the cross itself.

and their focus is on what he suffered spiritually in our place in that three hours of darkness on the cross. Going to hell itself in our place.

Leading him to the point where he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Our fourth question in our considerations here today.

Why have you forsaken me? Jesus borrows him for the threefold joy that was set before him, as we're told in Hebrews.

[ 24 : 49 ] And that joy was so that the Father would be glorified, that he would be victorious over the devil, that he would crush the head of the devil, and thirdly, so that we could receive his honor.

And that's why the cross is good news. Jesus just didn't die, Jesus died for us. He died for us. through faith, we can receive his grace, and his peace, and his love, and his joy, and his honor in the place of our shame, because that is the opposite of shame, we receive his honor.

he laid down his life, and he was crucified to bear our shame, and to adopt us into God's family, where we share in the king's honor.

And it's perhaps best understood as that great transaction which is summarized for us in 2 Corinthians 5, and in verse 21, and where it says, for our sake, God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Christ, we might become the righteousness of God in him.

And as Galatians 3, 13 tells us, the curse of sin and death was placed on Jesus, so that we might obtain the blessings of Abraham.

[ 26 : 26 ] So as you reflect on the cross, remember that when Jesus died, and if you are a believer, your shame also died.

He took it with him to the grave, and that's where it stayed. And you're raised through his resurrection in honor, robed, and clothed in his righteousness.

righteousness. How thankful we ought to be that we are able to read Genesis 3 through the eyes of the New Testament, where we are told of someone who stands in the breach as mediator with this word of good news, the good news of the gospel.

It tells us that the clothing of his righteousness, the acceptance the forgiveness, the love and peace of his gospel, and the power of his resurrection bring life back to those who were spiritually dead.

They are no longer spiritually dead in their sins. They are now alive in Christ. Colossians 1 verses 19 to 22 tells us this, for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus in Christ, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

[ 28 : 04 ] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour, but now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish, free from accusation, and without shame.

That is what the cross has accomplished for us. Jesus has sacrificed there. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned against God, their freedom in God immediately gave way to the bondage of sin.

But now, for everyone who preserved faith in the finished work of Jesus, that bondage now has to go away to the freedom that is found in a life that trusts in Jesus.

So let me ask you today, in your life, personally, do you have this freedom in Christ? Or are you still hiding behind the trees, as Adam and Eve were when they became aware of their sin?

hiding there in shame when you hear the voice of God again? That's a question that every one of us needs to ask ourselves.

[ 29 : 26 ] Where are we today with regard to this freedom? Are we free in Christ, or still hiding in that shame behind the trees?

Remember the mirror I spoke about at the beginning? The mirror that was shattered into a thousand pieces when sin came into the world? The one which portrayed the image of God in man as being perfect before the fall, but broken when Adam and Eve sinned, resulting in our image becoming distorted.

Well, let me tell you this, that everyone who has faith in Jesus as their Savior has had that mirror replaced, not repaired, but replaced.

It's replaced. They have been gifted a new one that perfectly reflects the righteousness of God in Christ in them.

It's perfect, and it's new, because when you put your trust and faith in Jesus, that is a new start for every individual. It's a new life, and they are now also a new creation, as we're told in the Gospels, particularly in 2 Corinthians 5, once again.

[ 30 : 52 ] So it's a new start, a new life, a new creation. And you know what's so special about this new mirror? It is unbreakable, absolutely unbreakable, preserved hold for the believers time on this earth, and through the endless ages of eternity.

But that broken mirror of a thousand pieces remains that way for those who are still without Christ as their Saviour. And you know, just as it was with Adam and Eve, so it is for every one of us.

We are all responsible for the choices that we make. God gives every one of us a choice.

Believe in Jesus, believe in what he has accomplished on the cross, put your trust and faith in him and his finished work, and commit your life to him in faith, or don't believe in Jesus, don't believe in what he has accomplished on the cross, don't put your trust and faith in him and his finished work, and don't commit your life to him.

that's the choice we have. And the choice is yours personally. But thankfully we have a God who is a God of mercy, and we have a God who is reaching out to you again today, and he's saying, come to me, all of you who are laboring and are heavy laden, and I will give you that rest.

[ 32 : 23 ] Come to me, and I will give you that safety, and that security, and I will be with you, and I will lead you each and every moment for the remainder of your life.

He's just saying, come to me. This is what God has done for us. He has given us a remedy, and Christ is representative of all of his people, just as Adam and Eve were representative of a broken and sinful world.

And so there we leave it for today, with that choice, and with that great invitation from the Lord, to come to him, and to place your trust and your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

May God bless these thoughts. Let's close now, then let's sing together. We'll sing in Psalm 130, from Sing Psalms.

We'll sing the whole of the Psalms. Psalm 130, and it's on page 173 of the Blue Books. And may this be your prayer and your call to God today.

[ 33 : 48 ] Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high, and give attention to my voice holy holy my voice when I for mercy die.

Lord, in your presence to the Son, if you are sins before, but yet forgiveness is with you that we may fear you, Lord.

I wait, my soul, wait for the Lord, my hope is in his word, for am the Lord, praise for dawn, my soul, wait for the Lord.

O it shall give your hope in Lord, for mercy is with him, and who redemption promises from the sins that be the will be free here.

Now grace of Jesus Christ, the love the Father, the fellowship of the Holy rest upon and abide with each now and always.

[ 36 : 34 ] Amen. the