

Genesis 2:15 (NIV) - ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

This was the job that they were to do, work it and keep it. Work and keep what? The Garden.

Genesis 2:16 (NIV) - ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

Here is the first command given. You may eat from any tree

Genesis 2:17 (NIV) - ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

Except that one.

Why in world would God do that. It seems to me on first look that God was set out to see them fail. One job work and keep the garden, one command eat from any tree except that one.

The tree that they were to avoid was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

What we need to understand is that all they knew was good. They were naked but not lusting, they were talking with God in the cool of the day every day.

I want to propose to you that God didn't place a tree there to tempt them, but He placed it there to give them a choose of having intimacy with Him.

He saying you have two roads you can take this one and it leads to a closeness with Me where I will let my Spirit teach you all things, or you can try to teach yourself by making all the choices you want all by yourself without my guidance.

You can lean on your ways or my ways. If you lean on me there will be peace in the midst of the storm (remember when they were in a boat with Jesus and he calmed the storm by saying peace be still).

Or you can walk the path that seems right.

Listen to what Proverbs tells us,

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV) - ¹² There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Again Proverbs 16:25 (NIV) - ²⁵ There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

You think the author is trying to make a point.

You can walk the way that seems right or you can fully trust God for knowledge.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV) - ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Or how about this one found in James 1:5 (NIV) - ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Is this making sense to anyone? God wants us to fully trust Him with every area of our life. To lean on Him for when we just don't know the answer.

So from the very beginning there has been two roads to walk, my question for you this morning is which road do you choose?

So we know the story they ate from the tree and the bible says,

Genesis 3:6–7 (NIV) - ⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

I could talk on verse 7 about them trying to cover their sins by themselves, but that is not the message I want to deal with today. Maybe another time. I will just say this about that Jesus came and covered our sins for us on the cross.

So she ate then gave to Adam. But here is really the message for today. It's found in verse 23

Genesis 3:23 (NIV)

²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

They were kicked out of the garden still having to work the ground, but no longer in the garden.

But here is the other real important part look at Genesis 3:24 (NIV) - ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

So after they left from the East the Lord put angels to guard so that they could not return to the tree.

They were banished from the Garden and moved East.

Look at the story of when Cain kills Abel and where does Can go verse 16.

Genesis 4:16 (NIV) - ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Then in Genesis 11 the people had look at

Genesis 11:1–2 (NIV) - Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.
²As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

We know this story as the Tower of Babel when the people were attempting to make a tower to the heavens the Bible says so that they could make a name for themselves.

See the theme. Adam and Eve, we need to learn this thing on our own move east, tower of Babel we need to make a name for ourselves after what. . . they moved eastward.

I want to suggest today that the further east you walk the further from God you are.

The further east they traveled the more desert they encountered. No this would really not end good if I just stopped here and said you all are too far east. But there is some good news.

It doesn't matter how far east you have traveled, God is calling you back to intimacy with Him. And he is willing to take you from where you are right now and guide you on your journey back.

Next story we have in the Scripture that we need to see is one of a man called Abram who has a name change to Abraham. He is known as the father of faith.

Abraham was saying no I'm not going my own way, I'm trusting in God.

Look what the writer of Hebrews tells us about Abraham.

Hebrews 11:8–10 (NIV) - ⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham end up in Bethel (which means house of God) and it is to the west of Ai.

In the tabernacle of the Old Testament, God specifically tells the Israelites to build the entrance to the temple on the east side of the temple so when they're walking in they're going what direction? . . . West.

God wants to bring us back to that place of peace, of beauty, of intimacy, of healing, of garden experiences.

Back to the garden for a minute. First command, work the garden. First question after the sin in the garden. . .

Genesis 3:9 (NIV) - ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

This is the first time He's ever had to address sin in His human creation. He could have easily said great you all lasted three verses. I made you in my image and you blew it. Poof your gone, I'll just start over with another.

He doesn't do that, he asks, where are you?

He could have just condemned them right then and there telling them how big of losers they are.

He doesn't do that he asks, where are you?

That's why we can read in Romans 8:1 (NIV) - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Remember Jesus is an exact representation of the Father. God didn't condemn them and make them feel unimportant in the Old Testament nor does He do so in the New.

He asks, where are you?

God asks that because He saying to them come home. Why are you hiding? Why did you leave me? Why are you not listening to my voice anymore?

The first response to sin is not condemnation or guilt or shame. It's God going, "Where are you?" Where are you?

It's like the Father's heart crying out to His creation saying, "Where are you? Why are you hiding? You don't have to run."

He finds Adam and Eve and it says they come out of hiding, but they say to Him, "We hid because we are naked."

So, they say I'm over here so God asks a second question, you know what it is?

Genesis 3:11 (NIV) - ¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

Is as if God was saying, who told you that you weren't good enough? Who told you, you were condemned? Who told you, you had to hide? I sure didn't. My voice from the beginning was intimacy, walking with you and knowing you.

Here's the thing how can we really know if it's God's voice. A few things, does it align with the Scriptures. But here is another that is equally as important to measure it by, If it's the One calling you out of hiding.

If it's putting you into condemnation and shame into a place where there's no life, it certainly isn't His, because that is not the character of God.

Listen church He is still asking the same question of us, why are you hiding from me it's time to turn to me, repent and ask for directions from me as you travel back to Eden.

if you want the Old Testament summarized, after Abraham and on, this is basically what happens. God promises to Abraham that He's going to put back the world through him and his family. That's a crazy promise that means the very people that broke it, God says, "I'm going to use the very people to put it back together." Now that's grace.

The very people that made this whole place fracture, I'm going to use them to put it back together. He promises to Abraham and his family that He's going to do that and then that lineage turns into Israel and that goes all the way through the Old Testament. The basic summarization of the whole Old Testament is basically them thinking they're the solution, but every step of the way realizing they are actually part of the problem.

Isaiah comes along and he tells of the solution that will occur.

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Doesn't stop there

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) - ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Goes on Isaiah 11:1 (NIV) - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

He continues, Isaiah 35:5–6 (NIV) - ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

He goes on to say, Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) - ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

One more Isaiah 61:1–2 (NIV) - The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

There's more but I think you're getting the picture.

Someone is coming who is going to fully put it back together. There's going to be resurrection. There's going to be new life.

James 4:8 (NIV) - ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Jesus shows up on the scene and everything is different.

He's so powerful in the sense of who He is and what He came to do.

As a matter of fact, 1 John 3:8 tells us that the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Think about it In the Old Testament every time something unclean came in contact with something clean the clean became unclean.

Jesus comes on the scene and a leper who was unclean gets touched by Jesus and becomes clean.

Every time someone comes in contact with Jesus, they become clean. The leper, the woman with the issue of blood.

Why is it that many in the Body of Christ think they are too dirty for God? Not good enough? Maybe they still live in the Old Testament mentality.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) - ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Now church that is good news.