

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
September 15, 2013

Knowledge of Good and Evil

Read Genesis 3:8b-17, 22-23

Key verses: “The Lord God said, ‘The human being has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, so he doesn’t stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever,’ the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken” (Genesis 3:22-23).

Here is how John Wesley, founder of Methodism, writes about the Fall (Wesley’s words are underscored, with accompanying commentary from *The Wesley Study Bible*):

1. “Unbelief begot pride”: *Eve thinks that she is wiser than God and capable of finding a better way to happiness than that taught by God.*

2. “Pride begot self-will”: *Eve is determined to do her will and not the will of God who made her for holiness and happiness.*

3. “Self-will begot foolish desires”: *Eve sins outwardly by taking the fruit and eating. She gives the fruit to Adam and he eats. In that moment he dies (“The life of God was extinguished in his soul.”) God’s glory departs and the human moral image is lost, rendering humankind no longer “capable of God,” that is, able to know, love, and obey God as we were made to do. We thus became dead to God. Our refusal to return God’s love is at the heart of Wesley’s description of the fall of humanity into sin.*

The effects of the Fall, according to Scripture, are felt to this day. Sin and its effects have been passed down through Adam and Eve to the entire human race. Genesis 3:8b-17, 22-23 describes not only the results of the Fall for Adam and Eve, but the continuing struggle with temptation and sin that we all face. The story of Adam and Eve, of temptation and sin, is *our* story:

1. Sin breaks our fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8b-9). As Adam and Eve hide among the trees, God comes looking for the ones He loves: “The Lord God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’”

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they enjoyed unbroken fellowship with God. Now the relationship is marked by shame, separation, and alienation.

2. We excuse our sins by blaming other people and circumstances (Gen. 3:11-13). Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the snake. Who or what do we blame for our sins?

Rather than excusing, blaming, and hiding, we can come home to the truth: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

3. Sin has terrible consequences (Gen. 3:22-23). Separation from God, spiritual and physical death, banishment from the Garden—these were the consequences for Adam and Eve.

Sin has its consequences still today, for us. In his book *Finishing Strong*, Steve Farrar sums up well the terrible price of sin: “Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you’re willing to pay.”

Thank God, there was hope for Adam and Eve and there is hope for us!

God said to the serpent [Satan]: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15, NIV).

“The offspring of the woman would eventually crush the serpent’s head, a promise fulfilled in Christ’s victory over Satan—a victory in which all believers will share (see Romans 16:20)” [textnote from *The NIV Study Bible*].

Thanks be to God.

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