

## **The Soul Needs a Saviour - Genesis 3:8-9, Colossians 1:21-23**

Last week we focused on this thought: “God breathed into the man and he became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7)

Though the Hebrew word for “Soul” (nepesh) is used in many different ways in the Old Testament, the bottom line is that it speaks of the living, breathing person that has been made of earth and filled with the breath of God.

Humans are unique, as they reflect the character of God and his image as animals cannot. No animal ever received the breath of God. No animal can commune and have relationship with the Creator as people can. No animal will be given a resurrection body, nor have they a living soul to enter into heaven with. So even when scripture says an animal is a soul, it simply means it is alive and breathing. It does not mean it was made in God’s image. Some ask, “Will animals go to heaven?” All I can say is, “Only if God wills it.” They do not have living souls as we do.

The second misconception that often comes from soul talk is the notion that we have a soul that can somehow be disconnected from our body. Some believe souls are eternal and are placed in bodies. This is not Biblical. That is Greek philosophy. Some see the work of the church is to save souls – the spiritual aspect of people – and bodies do not matter. They believe you can live however you like as long as your soul is right. This too is wrong theology. We are living souls – body, spirit, mind - and what we do in the flesh matters. It expresses the desires of the soul and shapes the soul. Soul care includes caring for our bodies.

Today we move to a sobering but necessary teaching of scripture. Our souls need a Saviour.

A saviour is one who rescues us, who takes us out of harm’s way and protects us. Why does the soul need a Saviour?

The roots of that story can also be found in Genesis, the book of the Bible that describes where things came from – describing their genesis.

If we read through Genesis 3 we would get the whole story, but this morning we will focus on a few verses in chapter 3 that set the stage for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus.

In Genesis 3 we read about the serpent, Satan, coming to Eve and tempting her. Eve was tempted to doubt the goodness of God, that his saying “No” to eating the fruit from the one forbidden tree was because God was not a good God, He was hiding something from her. She could know as much – or more than God if she simply ate the fruit.

Well, you know the story – the fruit looked good so Eve tasted it – and gave some to Adam who also ate it. It was at that moment sin entered the world, that rebellion against God, deciding we know better than God. That rebellion continues to this day. God says, “though shall not...” because he loves us, but we doubt his goodness and make our own rules. We redefine human sexuality, calling normal what God called an abomination, we justify the killing of infants and

seniors, we promote reduced risk instead of recovery, we choose profit over people. Yes, Adam and Eve's sin has had far-reaching effects. People today think they know better than God, so they do away with the Bible.

Immediately Adam and Eve knew something was wrong. They ate the fruit, disobeyed God, and something changed in their world.

Look what happened. Turn with me to Genesis 3:8-9.

Can you see what is happening here? Every day God would come and walk with Adam and Eve and spend time talking with them. I cannot help but think this was the pre-incarnate Jesus, but scripture does not say. All we know is that Adam and Eve had this wonderful opportunity to actually walk with God through the Garden of Eden.

Verse 8 tells us that Adam and Eve heard the sound of God as he was walking through the garden. I have this mental image of God humming, even singing a song! Wouldn't that be something worth hearing!

Every other night Adam and Eve would run to meet God, looking forward to fellowshiping together with Him. But this night something was wrong – very wrong. Instead of running to embrace God, Adam and Eve hid from God. It tells us that they hid in the trees.

Now I want you to think about this. The snake promised that Adam and Eve would have knowledge like God, knowing good from evil. Here was their first test – what had they learned? How brilliant had they become now that they ate the fruit from the forbidden tree? Well – they actually appear to be quite... silly. Hiding from the all-seeing God behind a bush! Brilliant!

The snake snickered, the couple blushed and Jesus wept.

It was obvious that man had blown it. The perfect creation was no longer perfect. Disobedience, pride, rebellion had entered the world. The worst pandemic to hit humanity took root right there – sin infected Adam and Eve and would be passed from generation to generation marring the image of God in man, and breaking the relationship of mankind with God.

Adam and Eve hid. They were ashamed. They felt guilt. They now knew what it felt like to do evil. It felt terrible. So they hid from God. The relationship was severed.

But notice what God does. He could have walked away. He could have called down lightning and put an end to the human race right then and there. He could have decided to wipe the slate clean and start all over...

But what does it say God did? In verse 9 we read that God called out, "Where are you?"

That may sound like a strange question for God to ask, for who can hide from God? But the question was not for God's sake – as if he needed help finding them – it was for Adam and Eve's

sake. This was their chance to realize **where they were** – estranged from God. They were given opportunity to see what sin had done – driving a wedge between man and his Creator.

And God sought them out. Humankind was now guilty of sin, and deserved nothing but the wrath of God. But God sought out Adam and Eve, finding them in the garden, calling them back into relationship with him. Even though things would never be the same again on this earth, God would never change. He is still the God of love who would not give up on his creation.

There would be terrible consequences due to the sin of Adam and Eve. The honeymoon was over for this couple and they were escorted out of the beautiful Garden of Eden. From now on it would be a struggle to provide food for the family, and family would come through pain. Childbirth would not be an easy thing for women.

Even as God was outlining the consequences of sin, he gave a promise. Yes, Adam and Eve were being driven from the Garden, the place where they could walk with God as friends. Yes, life would become exponentially more difficult. Yes, Adam and Eve would never feel as close to God as they once did in the Garden, **but there was hope.**

The snake who set everything in motion, that deceiver named Satan, who had already lost his position in heaven, would one day be served a mortal blow by God. God was going to send someone through the woman who would be bit by the snake on the heel, but in return he would crush the head of the snake.

Genesis 3:15: “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.”

When I go to the store, I sometimes ask the cashier to give me a sub-total so I know where I am at in my purchasing. Let me give you a sub-total in our story – or a summary to this point.

1. We were created for fellowship with God. This is why God made us in His image – as close to him as possible. He created a perfect world where he could come and visit regularly his creation. He delighted in walking through the garden with his special creation into which he had breathed the breath of life, making him a living soul. **Yes, the soul was created for fellowship with God...**

2. But man ruined everything when Adam and Eve sinned. Sin put a huge gulf between humanity and God. God is holy, man is now sinful. Before mankind can enter the presence of the Holy God something had to be done with the sin problem. **The soul needs a Saviour....**

I want to take you to the New Testament where we find God’s response to this problem. Turn with me to **Colossians 1:21-23.**

Verse 21 describes our circumstances well, doesn’t it? We are alienated from God. We are hiding in the bushes, getting as far from God as we can because we know we are sinners, we are guilty before a holy God, we deserve punishment, not conversation. The relationship has

been broken and we miss so much the communion we once had with God. Our souls were created for fellowship with God, but sin destroyed that relationship.

Then verse 22 points us to the Saviour – the one sent to rescue us from our sin and restore the relationship with God we once had. In verse 22 we are introduced to Christ who..

“reconciled us (to God)... through Christ’s physical body through death...

What is the Apostle Paul saying? Jesus did something that reconciled us to God – something that restored the relationship we lost with God. But it cost him – for we note the mention of death of Christ’s physical body. Jesus truly did die on that cross and his dead body was buried in a borrowed tomb. We read in the Gospels that it was not a swift, merciful death but an agonizingly slow and painful death on a cross, preceded by beatings and whipping. But this was God’s plan all along – this was the snake bruising the heel of the Saviour...

Wait, you may say. Jesus was tortured, nailed to a cross by his hands and feet and left there to die. How can that be a bruised heel? How can that be anything but a crushing?

If the story ended on the cross, or even in a tomb, then we might say Jesus was crushed and the snake wins. But Jesus did not stay in that tomb long. On the third day he rose victorious over sin and death. Satan was crushed that day. Oh, he still limps along but he knows his doom is sure. Jesus won!

And those who put their faith in Jesus, and his victory over sin and Satan, will be saved. Note what Paul says is the outcome of Jesus’ death:

“...he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. “

I don’t know about you but that sounds an awful lot like what Adam and Eve were before the fall. Christ died not to cover up our sin but rescue us out of its control and stain. We can be made holy – clean – and free from accusation – forgiven!

Verse 23 says this is the hope of the Gospel and we must hold onto it firmly. Do not let your faith waver. Keep your eyes on Jesus, our Saviour... the only one who can bring you back into a relationship with the Heavenly Father. You were created for relationship with God, but sin destroyed that. But Jesus destroyed the power of sin on the cross, so that we once again can walk with God even as we journey through this life. True, we are no longer in an idyllic garden, our world is marred by the effects of sin. But God still walks with us through this broken world, and promises to do so until Jesus calls us to our heavenly home.

The soul needed a Saviour, and praise God, “...for unto you in born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

This morning as we partake of Communion, remember the story of your rescue. Jesus came from heaven to be our Saviour. Why? So we could have a relationship with God once again. PTL