

# Kindled Fire

## How Desperate Our Condition Has Become

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0 Comments



### Genesis 3:8-13

Today we continue our descent into hell. Even though no sentence is passed on Adam and Eve, there is a sense where we see that all hell has broken lose.

As we look into our passage this morning, we see a radically different world than what we saw just a few weeks ago. Everything has changed.

You might have had the experience of having moved away from home for a couple of years. Then when you went back, you found that everything changed.

I remember when I came back from college. There was a whole section of my neighborhood that was missing. About 20 houses were torn down and a parking lot was put in its place. Everything changed.

The same is true here. Everything has changed. Paradise has been leveled.

Just a few weeks ago we were giddy with delight as we talked about Adam and Eve. They were holy and happy. But not anymore. Now we see them sinful & miserable. When they bit that fruit—when they chose to disobey God, everything changed.

And though they have not been officially judged, we see them experiencing something of the birth pains of hell.

As we look at this passage this morning, I want you to notice how desperate our situation has become.

Our passage opens like a good novel. We see a fugitive on the run. And by it we see something of what sin has produced.

### I. What sin has produced

Adam is experiencing something he has never felt before. It is the feeling of dread. He is absolutely terrified now of God.

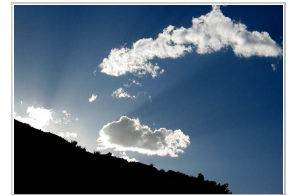
Our passage begins with the sound of God’s footsteps echoing through the Garden. And that sound strikes fear in the hearts of Adam and Eve. They immediately hide.

This is radically different than what we had seen in previous chapters. Adam was created to have perfect communion with God. But now that he has sinned against him, instead of running to the Lord, he is running from Him. Instead of walking with God and enjoying the delights of pleasant conversation with Him, Adam is cowering behind some bushes.

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How Shall We Escape If We Neglect So Great a Salvation?

Adam can no longer bear to look upon the face of God without the experience of terror.

It is interesting too that his fear is completely unprovoked by God. The Lord is shown to be completely fearless in this scene. It says that he was walking in the garden. He didn't run at Adam or come upon him in any fearful way.

And he isn't accusatory either. He asks the question, "Where are you Adam?" and it is completely innocent. It was meant to draw Adam out. It isn't like God didn't know where Adam was. Of course he did. It is kind of like a parent whose child is hiding behind the curtain. The parent acts like they don't know where he is in order to draw the child out.

Though God comes to Adam in the most gentle manner, Adam runs. His conscience is stricken with guilt and he cannot bear the thought of facing God.

I remember when I was a kid. A bunch of us were playing baseball at a lot in our neighborhood. One of the boys got a hold of a pitch and took it long. To see that ball sail through the air was something glorious to behold...until it went through the window of that house at the other side of the field.

Every one of us turned white. We were immediately filled with terror. So we bolted. We all just took off because we knew the owner would be out any moment.

That's how Adam felt. And it is the common experience of every one of us who remains in our sins.

If you have not made your amends with God, you will most certainly have this grief weighing heavily upon your conscience. To be sure, you will not always acknowledge it. You will find ways to distract yourself or push it out of your mind. But there will be times when you will feel the anxiety of a just and holy God.

People have a few of their own ideas on how this is sometimes expressed. John Calvin even went so far as to say that the most vicious God deniers are the ones who experience the terrors the most. He gave the example of one of the Roman Emperors. He was an adamant opposer of the Christ. Yet Calvin pointed out that a crack of lightening would put him wildly on edge. And Calvin expressed that the real reason his life was so frayed with fear was because deep beneath his rage against God lay a real alarm that God did exist.

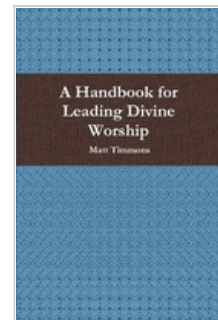
My personal opinion? I believe that this is one of the main reasons many people can't get up the gumption to come to church when they are invited. They just can't stand the thought of coming before God. Just the thought of sitting in the Sunday morning meeting makes them queasy.

Some of you might have had the experience where just your presence has set an unbelieving person on edge. It isn't like you did anything to make them feel that way. It's just that they sense God's presence and it is so unnerving.

Whatever you think of the conjectures that Calvin and I have doesn't really matter. I know that Christ captured this with the clearest colors though. Jesus once talked about the day when he would come again. He said that on that day people will be paralyzed with fear. They will be so stricken with terror that they will run to the hills. Just like Adam sought shelter in the bushes they will try to hide themselves in caves and crevices. Jesus even said that their anxieties will be so great that they will call out to the rocks, asking that they would fall in and crush them. In other words, their guilt will cause them to be so horrified that they will actually try to hid



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themselves in the shadows of death.

Jesus was just reiterating what we find right here. He affirms that the face of God is a terrible thing to the sinner. And, as we see here with Adam, our fallen state is so desperate that even the brightest smiles of God can cause us great unease.

Everything has changed. But as we look at this passage you don't just see **what the sin produced**. You also see **how the sin progressed**.

## II. How Sin Progressed

When Adam saw that he could not hide, he should have come to terms with what he did. When he was found out—when it was apparent that he could not hide from God—he should have come forward and confessed his wrong.

That's what you want from your children, isn't it? If your kid runs and hides because he took the cookies from the cookie jar, you expect them to come out and own up to what they have done. But that's not what Adam did. Instead of turning to God he takes one step further. And boy is it a bold step!

Look at how blazingly defiant he becomes in his sin. He says in verse 12 "This woman who you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit and I ate!" It is bad enough that he throws his wife under the bus. Last time we saw that he told Eve to take the poison first. Now he exposes her again. God it was this woman.

But more than that. Adam is really pointing the finger at God. It is the woman you gave me. Essentially he is saying that all would have been well and fine if you hadn't put this woman here. "What kind of helper is that? What kind of God are you that you would do this to me?"

In my house we would say, "Really? Really, Adam? Are you that demented that you will actually blame God for what you did?"

What he ends up doing is compounding his initial sin. It was bad enough that he ate the fruit, but now he is lashing out at God.

This is what we call the snowball effect of sin. Sin always has this pattern. It is never satisfied with where it is and it is never static. It always has the tendency to progress.

As you see here: It begins with defying God behind his back. Now it is emboldened. It defies God directly to his face. But that is how sin works. One sin gives birth to another. The first sin gives the strength and boldness to the second.

I like what Luther has to say here. Luther says, "This is the nature of sin: unless God immediately provides a cure and calls the sinner back, he flees endlessly from God and, by excusing his sins with lies, heaps sin upon sin until he arrives at blasphemy and despair. Thus sin, by its own gravitation, always draws with it another sin."

That's why I mention the sin of lust regularly from this pulpit. You know, adultery doesn't start in the bedroom. It starts with the remote control. This is why Jesus says, "If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out!" He is essentially saying that this little wondering eye is no innocent thing. If it is not remedied—if you don't deal with it, it will snowball.

I was thinking about divorce the other day. Divorce is rampant today. And every one of us is susceptible to it. But you know where divorce starts. It starts with the rolling of the eyes. It

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starts with a cutting comment; a little sarcastic remark that was just a little more true than a joke.

My friends, I want you to realize that sin is a black hole. Adam shows us that every transgression has a downward trajectory to it. And it leads us deeper in the pit of wickedness.

**Conclusion:**

Now, I think that we need to back up a bit here. I think that we need to stand back and look again at our passage. We've been looking at some of the details, but I don't think we've really hit on the central point of this passage. It could be easy for us to lose the forest for the trees here. It is interesting to examine each of the things that Adam does, but we need to think about what is really going on here.

As we look at Adam here, what is he really doing? We see him running from God and accusing God. But why? What's his motive? What is he intending to do?

Well, let's just think in terms of our own experience. Have you ever had this happen with one of your own children? Have you ever had them squirm like this?

First they run from you and then when you call them out they won't face up to the reality of what they did. You confront them but they won't own up to it. They make some lame excuse. They try and blame it on the cat or something.

What are they really doing? They are trying their hardest to avoid the punishment aren't they? In running from you they are trying to avoid having to face the consequences of their actions, aren't they? As they make excuses they are trying to justify themselves. They are trying to say that they are innocent. They know they are guilty; they know they are liable to be punished; and they can't bear it.

That's what Adam is doing. He's trying his hardest to escape the punishment that is due to him for sin.

And we know he can't.

If you are here today, you need to know that you are in the exact same spot as Adam. You can't run from God. Even right now some of you might be trying to avoid him. But all our efforts to run from him are vain.

My daughter Geneva, is to the point where she tries to play hide and seek. But she just doesn't get it yet. She hides by covering her eyes. She thinks that if she can't see you, you can't see her. And I think that's how a lot of people are. They put God out of their minds, they say if I don't think of him, then he can't see me.

That's foolishness though.

And there will come a day where we will stand before him. We will be called before the bar of Judgment, and on that day there will be nothing we can do to justify ourselves. No amount of excuses will have any avail with him.

The only way we can escape is through the means God has provided.

There is that story in the gospel of John that is something of a parallel to our story here. It is the story of when Jesus when was in the Garden. He was confronted there. A band of men

came seeking him. They came out to arrest him and take him to his death.

You know what is interesting about that story? Jesus never tried to run. He never tried to dodge them. As a matter of fact, he stepped right up to them and introduced himself. "Who is it you seek?...I am He."

What we see there is something of a replay of the Garden of Eden. That story is presenting to us the Second Adam. The Greater Adam. Adam tried to lay the blame on God. But in that story we see that God takes the blame upon himself. Jesus is presented as the innocent one who willingly gives himself over to death.

That passage in John is the counter to the passage before us this morning. It is there to say that we have a way of avoiding God's wrath and curse. There is one who is able to remove our guilt. It is the one who stood in our place, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when it comes to dealing with your guilt, you should know the way to deal with it is not by running from God or pointing your finger at Him. But instead the way to deal with it is by resting in the one He sent to be your redeemer.

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