

THE FALL AND THE UNCHANGING LOVE OF GOD

Genesis 3:1-24

Key Verse 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.“

In chapter 2 of Genesis, we learned that our God is the God of love who prepared the best environment for man's happiness in the Garden of Eden. We were allowed to realize that the commandment of God is the best blessing of God for man. But when man disobeyed the commandment of God, he lost paradise. In chapter 3 of Genesis, we are allowed to know the reason for the Fall and its consequences. Above all, we may recognize the searching love and the unchanging love of God for the sinned people. In this unchanging love of God we can find the way back to God and to paradise.

I. The Temptation (1-5)

Consider verse 1a: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman..." Among all the animals God had made, the serpent was the most cunning. It no longer felt like talking to the other animals. The other animals were probably too spiritually clear like M. Sarah Chang or like our parents. That is why the serpent looked for someone to "really talk to". This was, of all things, the woman whom God had made as a helper for the first man, Adam.

In verse 1b, the serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The serpent made the commandment of God the topic of conversation. But she spoke about the commandment of God in a very unedifying way. God had given the whole paradise to mankind and only commanded them not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden (2:16, 17). But the serpent turned the commandment of God into a prohibition first of all and made the commandment of God the subject of a human discussion and judgment.

How did the woman respond? Let's look at verses 2 and 3: "The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" This seems to be a neutral, factual statement. Here was a good opportunity for the woman to pass on a statement of thanksgiving for the wonderful grace of God: "Praise and thanks be to God, who created this world and everything very well. He has given us everything freely to eat from all the trees in the garden. He has made us in the image of God, above creation and a little lower than God. In His love, He has also warned us that we should not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He has taught us how to manage this beautiful paradise well through the word of God, and how to cultivate and preserve this world well as rulers. Wait a minute, serpent, what kind of sick question are you asking? Are you still all right?" But the woman's expression of gratitude was extremely short. Instead, she spoke at great length about the prohibition and embellished it, "You must not touch it!" Romans 1:21 says, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." Apostle Paul saw it as the root of sin not to praise and thank God. Gratitude is not a feeling that one sometimes has and sometimes does not have. Gratitude is a life of actively giving thanks and praising God at every opportunity because of the fact of God's abundant grace and love. When a person stops thanking God, it is clear that he is not spiritually well. When the woman did not consciously thank God all the time for God's love, her thoughts became strange and her heart became dark. She became a good ground for the serpent's disposition.

Consider verse 4: "'You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman." The serpent now claimed to the woman that she would by no means die of death. She was calling God a liar. The serpent was like a drug dealer, for example, of crystal meth, who said, "Nothing will happen to you..."

Consider verse 5: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Finally, the serpent awakened pride in the woman. The serpent said that her eyes were still "closed", but that her eyes would be "opened". The serpent promised that by transgressing the commandment of God, people would become like God. They would be free like God and understand good and evil, implying that they would even be above it. Pride is deadly.. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction."

Here the serpent fully showed its malicious nature. She planted pride and lust. It did this with lies and false promises. These are exactly the characteristics that the Bible attributes to the devil. In John 8:44b Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language," The devil also tries today to plant doubts about the Word of God and the absolute love of God with lies of all kinds. How can we counter the lying seduction of the devil?

First, we may at all times consciously remember the fact of God's love and grace and live a thankful life, basing our lives and life choices on the grace of God. That is why Apostle Paul said, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1Thessalonians 5:18)

Secondly, we may study God's word, especially in our youth, pondering it day and night. God's word is like a sharp double-edged sword. Through God's word, like Jesus when he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, we can expose the devil's sick thoughts and refrain from them. Apostle Paul exposed and destroyed the devil's false teachings with the sword of God's word. That is why he is always depicted with the sword in the pictures.

When Joseph was serving in Potifar's house and Potifar went on a journey, he was tempted by Potifar's wife. It was a very strong temptation

of lust and pride for a young man. But Joseph resisted the temptation, remembering the grace of God and fearing God, "But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Gen 39:8,9) God later exalted him to be the second most powerful man in the Egyptian empire.

Fanny Crosby was born blind. She could never see her mother's face nor this beautiful colorful world. But she did not look at the one thing she did not have, but she thanked God with beautiful songs for the abundant grace of God.

Giving thanks for God's grace and fearing God or believing in the absoluteness of the Word is the best shield against the devil's temptation and the key to spiritual victory in any situation. Thanks be to God who, through GLEF, has set up our Next Generation as outstanding preachers, Bible teachers and speakers. As a result, they have spiritual authority to overcome the devil's temptation in their youth with the Word of God and may live as spiritual victors and conquerors and be used by God as spiritual leaders, reformers and world changers.

II. The Searching Love of God (6-13)

Let's look at verse 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." When the woman did not thank God and no longer feared God's word, she was controlled by her desire. The fruit suddenly looked very tempting like a cell phone before becoming ordinary after three days and electronic waste after a year. The woman took of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and ate. She also gave to her husband, and the husband ate from it as well. The woman could not fulfill her role as a helper, but she became the tool through which her husband was also brought down.

What were the consequences? Verse 7a says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened,"

The Bible confirms the promise of the serpent that the eyes of man were opened. But it was not what the people had imagined. God and God's word are the truth. God is always honest. God had warned the people of the consequences of sin very clearly, saying that they would die if they ate of the fruit. Unlike God, the serpent was not honest. She spoke in half-truths. She did not tell the whole truth. This is the characteristic of all the devil's words. When you realize this, it is usually too late. The eyes of the people were opened; but it was the eyes of the godless self-consciousness that were opened. The ungodly self-consciousness is the consciousness of man in separation from God and in sin. It is a self-consciousness full of guilt, rebellion and self-righteousness. They recognized what was good and evil, namely that they had done something evil. But they were not above good and evil, but they recognized that they were caught in their evil deed.

Let's read verse 7b: "... and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." Sin seems to be very tempting. But the fruit of sin is first shame, then distrust. Man and woman were ashamed before God and could no longer trust each other. That is why they began to cover themselves with fig leaf shrouds.

Let us read verses 8 to 10: "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."" The next consequence of sin is fear. People could no longer see in God their Creator and loving Father and themselves as His beloved children. They hid under the trees in fear. God waited patiently until evening, like a mother who waits for her children to return, even if they come home very late on purpose. But the sinful people did not come. Therefore, God set out Himself and went to find Adam throughout the Garden of Eden, lovingly calling him, "Adam, Adam, where are you?" Through this call, Adam was allowed to remember God's love and turn back to God. God's seeking love built a golden bridge back for him.

God seeks sinners with the love that calls to repentance and conversion, yesterday, today, and tomorrow: "Where are you?" He wants to forgive sinners and restore them completely. Apostle

Peter betrayed Jesus three times. But the risen Jesus sought him until he finally found him by the Sea of Galilee. When he found him, he asked him, "Do you love me?" Peter accepted Jesus' searching love by faith, saying, "You know that I love you." Then Jesus restored him completely, "Feed my sheep!" John, who experienced this incident and recorded it in his Gospel, later described God's searching love this way in his letter: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8,9)

God is also looking today for the people with the broken shepherd's heart, to re-establish the relationship with them: "Where are you?" This is God's wonderful invitation to us to make us His beloved children again. Instead of hiding behind the fig leaves and trees of apologies, self-righteousness and excuses, we may respond to God's searching love with repentance and conversion, for example, by writing a profound personal statement or by coming to him for early morning prayer.

When I did not actively thank God, my thoughts became void, so I only looked at what I did not have, such as a comfortable and pleasure-seeking life. In the midst of God's abundant blessings, I felt somehow unhappy and lonely. Then I betrayed my first love for God by giving my heart to other people instead of God in my youth. But God did not give up on me, but sought me through my parents, who prayed for me with tears and called me to repentance through the word of God. But in my godless self-confidence, I would not listen to them, but blamed God, others and conditions. Nevertheless, the servants of God did not give up calling me. One day, through John 21:15 - "M. Petrus, son of M. Peter, do you love me?" - I was able to see the searching love of God. I was allowed to repent with tears of repentance and gratitude to God and to God's word by deciding with Deuteronomy 6:5 to give my heart to God in my youth. I was allowed to experience being fully restored and living a most blessed life in love relationship with God. However, I repent of my self-centered, narrow and judgmental heart toward others. I may now myself, with the seeking love of God, as a Bible teacher and preacher according to Ezra 7:10, seek the young people and call out, "Volker, where are you?"

Let us look at verses 11 and 12. How did the first human beings respond to God's seeking love? Because Adam did not admit his sin, God asked Adam directly if he had eaten the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and gave him an opportunity to confess his sin and take a positive step. But Adam did not repent, but gave all the guilt to his wife. The woman did not repent either, but blamed the serpent and ultimately God. Unfortunately, the first humans remained without insight and unrepentant until the end. That is why they had to experience the curse of sin. The problem is not God. The problem is that sinners reject the seeking love of God. God could have given up now. But he did not give up.

III. The Unchanging Love of God (14-24)

Because of his impenitence, man had to live under the curse from now on. Consider verse 16: "To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."" Now childbearing became something very painful for the woman. Also, the order of love in the family and the joy of working together in God's work as a missionary unit was replaced by an arbitrary rule of the husband over his wife and the wife's dependence on the husband. But in Christ, this cursed position of the woman is abolished again and her proper position as a co-worker and helper is restored.

Let us look at verses 17 and 18: "To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field." From now on, the blessing of fruitful work for God's mission was replaced by the laborious and pointless work for eating three times a day. However, although Adam would work very hard, giving up his precious time for it and ruining his health, the work would hardly yield any return, and moreover, thorns and thistles and many problems would constantly make his life difficult. Finally, God said in verse 19, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it

you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Finally, death would make all the hard work, toil and achievements of man meaningless.

Let's think briefly about verse 19b: "For dust you are and to dust you will return." "You are dust" here means spiritual death, while "To dust you will return" means fleshly death. Without the relationship with God, man is nothing but dust. Without the relationship with God, death is the final destination. Death is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of sin.

Let us look at verses 22 to 24. God expelled the sinful people from paradise. People lost paradise and eternal life. We can clearly see from this that the consequences of sin are very serious and eventually lead to death, just as God had warned people before.

But God did not give up on people. Even before God had to abandon people to the curse of sin, He gave them the promise of salvation. Let us read verse 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." God promised to send a savior as the woman's offspring who would defeat the devil. God did not abandon people to the power of the devil and death, but prepared a way of salvation and a way back to paradise. This way of salvation is Jesus Christ. God gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, to save people from the cruel dominion of the devil. When Jesus died on the cross, he was stabbed in the heel by the devil. But Jesus fulfilled his mission by obedience to the point of death on the cross. On the third day, Jesus rose again from the dead. Jesus is our Savior who overcame our separation from God because of our sin and restored our relationship with God. Jesus is our Savior who crushed the head of the devil and broke the power of sin and death once and for all. Praise and glory be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Today, we see and experience everywhere the curse of the Fall, that young people are tormenting themselves under the consequences of sin. But because of the unchanging love and victory of God in Jesus, we may serve the salvation work of this generation with the hope of God. Through Jesus' victory, we come to know that we overcome the power of sin and death and the curse of the Fall. God's heart is that no human being will be lost but will be saved and

have eternal life through faith in Jesus. Let us cooperate with God through forming 10,000 1:1 Bible study teams, spiritually mobilizing the Next Generation, and through the M-Mission and Online Mission as spiritual leaders for the spiritual salvation and revival of this generation.

In today's text, we have learned that by actively giving thanks for God's grace and through the Word of God, we may overcome the temptation of the devil and live as spiritual victors. We have learned that we respond to God's seeking love with repentance and conversion and are fully restored in God. Finally, we have learned that God unchangeably loves sinners who have fallen into death and sin because of impenitence and has given Jesus Christ as the way of salvation. God bless us and this generation to accept the gift of God's unchanging love in Christ Jesus and to return to God and God's Word.