

Adam and Eve and the Fall - Part 1

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon delves into the fall of Adam and Eve, emphasizing the seeking presence of God and the consequences of sin.

Duration: 30:47

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-5, Genesis 3:8-9, Genesis 3:15, Genesis 3:17-19, Genesis 3:21

Topics: "The Fall"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the recurring truths found throughout the Bible, Christian theology, hymnology, and sermons. These truths are compared to primary colors in painting, as they form the foundation for all other teachings. The sermon also addresses the accusing voice of our conscience, which reminds us of our sins, and the pervasive fear that exists in the world. The preacher highlights the need for a divine presence and voice, emphasizing that it is not the preacher's or any human's presence or voice, but rather God's presence and voice that we should seek.

Transcript

In the book of Genesis, the third chapter, I'm going to read a few verses. It said the serpent was more subtler than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden.

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day in which ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened. And ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and the tree did desire to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And they asked, and both were open. And they knew that they were naked.

And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? Now, the setting of the little message tonight. Here was the perfect pair, Mr. and Mrs. Universe. The perfect pair, dwelling in the perfect environment.

And then came the disobedience, when, as Milton said, in an evil hour she stretched forth her hand, and took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave unto her husband, and he did eat. And the fall of him, that great moral disaster, that theologians call fall, that scientists deny ever happened, that everybody that has the sense he was born with knows happened, because the debris is still in his own heart. Now, here they were, this guilty pair, bowed down with care.

And God appeared. The Lord God was walking as if he didn't know what had happened. He didn't know, that is, he walked around there as if he didn't know, but he knew all right.

And this guilty pair hid from the presence of God. Now, tonight, I hope I may be forgiven. I hope the engineer may be forgiven.

If he doesn't take that squeak out of my voice. It ain't there, brother, it just ain't there. With your chariot.

I hope I may be forgiven tonight, if I use some of the same basic elements that went into last night's sermon. And I do it without hesitation or apology, only with an explanation. So when you hear it, you won't say, the old man is slipping.

He's repeating himself. But at the cost of being repetitious, let me say that there are certain truths that keep recurring throughout the entire Bible, throughout all Christian theology, throughout all hymnology, throughout all the great sermons of these centuries, certain simple truths, not very many, half a dozen maybe, or we'll stretch it to say ten or a dozen. No more than that.

They keep recurring always. Like the primary colors in a painting. You see, all colors are made up out of a few colors.

All the various shades that you see everywhere are compounded out of very few colors. Some say three, some say five, some say seven. They're called the primary colors.

And if you gazed upon the most beautiful garden in the world with a hundred kinds of flowers in all of their beauty, you would see only five or at most seven colors there compounded. You wouldn't recognize those colors. You would stand breathless in the presence of this wonderland of shades of color.

And yet all those shades are made out of those half dozen or less colors. Now it is so with everything that can be said ever from this platform, every truth that ever can be taught by any Bible teacher in the world, there are certain primary colors that make up the painting, certain basic truths which are woven in as ingredients in the truth. And one of those basic truths of those primary colors is what we call the divine eminence.

I have quoted before in your presence, for I very frequently quote it to warm my own heart and my congregation as well. I have quoted what the old archbishop said about God. He said, God is above all things and beneath all things and outside of all things and inside of all things.

He is above, but he's not pushed up. He's below, but he's not pressed down. He's outside, but he's not excluded.

He's inside, but he's not confined. He is above all things presiding and he's beneath all things sustaining and he's outside of all things embracing and he's inside of all things filling. Now that's the eminence of God as stated by a French theologian.

And I rather like it, brother. That puts God where you are and that's what I love. Now that is one of the primary colors, the eminence of God, that God is here.

I can't think of any truth that I could assert or declare that would have in it more potential glory and good for you tonight than just to remind you of the eminence of God, that God is here. Old David celebrated the eminence or the omnipresence of God. He said, God's every place.

He said, if I hide in the darkness, God's there. If I go into the light, God's there. And if I go up into heaven, God's there.

And if I even go down into hell, even I'll find God. God's every place. I can't escape from God.

And then Solomon, you'll remember, celebrated it. He said, God said to Solomon, am I God far off? Or said to one of the Old Testament, am I God far off and not a God nigh at hand? And David said that in him we live and move and have our being. God is here.

And that is the most wonderful and revolutionary fact that I could announce to you tonight. It's worthy of the angel of the annunciation that there is an invisible but real presence here tonight pressing down upon us. And this great reality is the absolute that gives meaning to all other meanings.

If you take that fact out of human consciousness or human thought, you have pulled the kingpin down out of the arch, and all of human thought will tumble to the ground. Now, this presence is a seeking presence. It's said that Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And this was not before the fall. This was after the fall. This was not among archangels but with two sinners.

And he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And this was after the shameful collapse of their moral lives. God knew they had sinned, and he wanted them to know that he knew.

So he appeared. And there was a voice there. A schoolmarm could, I suppose, find grammatic fault with the verse here.

The Bible has a wonderful way of breaking all the rules, and I rather enjoy it myself because I've been a rule-breaker since I can remember. It says here that they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Now, there isn't a teacher of English anyplace in Pennsylvania that would give a kid an F on that because it said they heard the voice of the Lord walking.

And of course they didn't hear the voice of the Lord walking, but they heard the voice of the Lord who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And they'd shoot that back to poor little Junior and say, put a who was in there or I'll flunk you. But thank God for the good old King James Version and the good old Bible that just says it and then you either like it or else something happens to you.

It says here that there was a presence, that God was there, and there was a voice. A presence and a voice. If I only had some way of rubbing that into you, like an alcohol rub, if I could get that rubbed into your brain, there is a presence, there is a voice.

Not my presence, not my voice, not Cop's presence, not his voice, not Brother Thomas' presence, not his voice, but a voice. In the cool of the day here in Hillside, there is a voice and I'm happy to tell you that it's a friendly voice. I preach a friendly heaven, ladies and gentlemen.

I never have been able to get righteously wrought up and frightfully and gloomily indignant with the human race. Of course we're a bunch of sinners. Of course we are.

And unless we repent, we'll all likewise perish. But I have never been able to get any white knuckles from squeezing my fist shut, reminding people they were going to hell. I believe in a friendly heaven.

I believe that the blood of the everlasting covenant has swept the last vestige of antagonism out of the sky and that God is on the side of the man that'll come on to God's side and that the voice that sounds from heaven is a friendly voice and the presence unseen that is here tonight is a seeking presence, a seeking presence and a friendly voice. Now, there are lots of voices in the world. There's the hard voice of duty.

I remember hearing of one Englishman that said he thought he'd commit suicide. He said, I am so sick of just living. He said, you get up in the morning and you put on your socks.

And then he said, you run around a while and at night you come take your socks off. Then he said in the morning, you put on your socks. He said, I'm so sick of taking off my socks and putting on my socks.

He said, I just want to die. Well, all that had happened to him was that he had sort of made putting on his socks and taking them off a symbol of duty. The things that were pressing in upon him and forcing him to do, the alarm clock that gets you out whether you want to get out or not, and the school bell that rings little junior to school whether he wants to go.

And so he goes, not as Shakespeare said, with shining morning face. I like Shakespeare, but I've never been able to understand why he made that mistake. Who ever heard of a kid going to school with a shining morning face? They come home that way, but they don't go that way.

Now, these are duties. There's a harsh voice. Duties are harsh things.

It tells the woman, get those dishes washed. It tells the woman, have that baby. It tells the woman, get over there and get that ironing done.

Get that washing done. It tells the man, get that day's work put in. It tells the engineer, bring that train in on time.

It tells the soldier, stand at attention there or take that hill. The strong, ugly, harsh voice of duty. It's every place in the world, but that isn't the voice I'm talking about.

And then there's an accusing voice, the voice of our own conscience telling us that we've sinned. That accusing voice that makes us sick and white when we hear it occasionally. And there's the harsh voice of nameless fears, the hard voice of fear.

The world is full of fear, ladies and gentlemen. We're a scared world. Our noses quiver like a bunny rabbit with fear.

We're shamed and we're afraid in the universe. Here we are orphans in the wide world with the vast forces roaring up and down that can tear us apart and hurl us back to the earth again, back to our native dust.

And men are afraid.

They try to laugh it off and they hire Bob Hope and some others to try to make us laugh, but we're a bunch of scared cats. And it's more than something to laugh about. It is a terrible thing and it's causing us to get old before our time and it's putting men in insane asylums.

It's driving them to suicide. Sheer fear, the voice of fear, the haunting, ghostly voice that is sounding that makes men afraid. But there's a wonderful voice because there is a wonderful presence.

The only reason the Bible has any meaning is because there is a voice and a presence. If God Almighty had stayed a million, million miles beyond the high imperium and had thrown our Bible down to us and then lapsed into silence, the Bible wouldn't have any more meaning than any other book. You might as well read Mother Goose's, the Bible, except for the fact there is a presence here making the Bible warm.

There is a voice here breathing through the Bible and speaking to us in the Bible. And when we read the text, the voice then speaks to our heart and the presence is here. And it's a warm and a friendly voice, an inviting voice.

The voice of God is not the voice of justice hunting us down. If there had been no calvary, no blood, no atonement, he might have had to come as a voice of vengeance. But because there was a lamb on a tree, his voice is the voice of invitation.

He says, come and draw near and believe and rest and so on. These happy, warm, inviting words. Down in the south, you know, you go up to the door and somebody will come out and invite you to come in and set a spell.

And the voice of God is a warm, hospitable voice like that and says, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. You go through your Bible if you will or if you have a concordance and see how many times the word come is found. I like the old church bell in the steeple.

I always think the church bell says come. Come, come, come, come. And the man who wrote The Church in the Wildwood must have had that idea because you musicians will remember that the bell rings come, come, come, come, come.

I always forget how many comes when I'm singing it and come in in the wrong place. But there are a lot of comes there and the bells in God's steeple are ringing and they're all saying the same thing. They're saying come.

Now I'd like to say this and I suppose I'll get accused here of being mystical if not downright nutty. But I believe the voice of God is a very musical voice. It must be a musical voice because you see God is the great musician.

He put the one, two, three, four beat in the universe and he put the rhythm in the universe. It's all there. And it's only sin that makes the world such a harsh and unmusical place.

If we could hear the voice of God we'd hear something very wonderfully musical. I don't think that we'd ever want to hear a symphony orchestra again and I'm sure we'd never want to hear banjo if we heard the voice of God. For there's all of the beauty of the sunshine and all of the sound of the sea.

It says in Revelation that Jesus' voice was like the voice of many waters. Have you stood on the shore at night and listened to the booming of the surf as the restless waves come splashing in and beat over the rocks? There's something wonderfully musical about it. I always have pictures I have of Jesus I never cared for but I remember one painting of Jesus that I rather liked.

It showed him sitting on the shore of the sea on a rock looking out brooding moodily over the lake. I think he must have done that sometimes and listened to the voice of nature. Some people don't like birds and artists up in Chicago went down with some other artists into what they call Brown County in Indiana a very wonderful place and one of the artists after the second day almost had a nervous breakdown.

He said, I can't stand these birds. He said, I just can't stand them now that's all. He said, in the morning last thing at night all day long cheep, cheep, chatter, cheep, cheep he said, they're driving me crazy.

He said goodbye and he packed his suitcase and went back to Chicago where he could hear diesel engines and elevated trains. He had trained his he trained his poor abused ears to the music of the clack, clack of an elevated train and the horrible, hoarse, devilish sound of a diesel engine. I don't know why they ever put that horn on a diesel engine.

The diesel engine's all right but why did they have to borrow a pop gun from the devil and put it on for a whistle? That's what I'd like to know. You'd think it was the devil with a bad cold trying to blow his nose. And yet that fella liked it better than he liked to hear a robin sing with a dew on the grass.

It's because he's a diseased man ladies and gentlemen. There's something beautiful in nature and any man who'd rather hear a record than hear a rooster crow ought to have his head examined. And anybody that would rather hear Toscanini's fifth play the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven rather than hear a cricket at night ought to have his head examined if he has a head.

Because everything that God made he made beautiful and good in its time. And when God speaks it's a musical voice. People's voices.

They may be nasal or adenoidal or guttural or scrappy or high or too low but all the voice of God how beautiful it is. Dr. Simpson said one time said that one time he had been reading an old book he didn't say what book but I think I know I could tell you people some things if I didn't, if I wanted to. I think I knew what he'd been reading because I've run on to his sources in my own reading.

He said he was reading a book one time the gist of which was that God is waiting to speak in the depths of your soul if you'll get quiet enough to listen to him. So he said I decided to try it. He said I knelt down all by myself.

He said I began to listen in my own heart to see if I could hear God speak. And he said I never knew before how nervous I was. And he said I never knew how noisy the world was and how noisy I was.

But he said little by little I put it all away and put it all for me and I began to listen. And pretty soon I began to hear. And then he launched into one of those poetic descriptions of his that I can't imitate of the great, lovely, fragrant beautiful musical voice of God.

It was things like that that made A.B. Simpson Simpson. He was hearing God speak in his heart. My friends, that voice is in this tabernacle tonight.

Not in mine. Not in my rather nasal voice. They say it sounds like Truman's.

My voice more or less distorted by this gadget here. That's not musical but there is a voice. And you won't hear it.

It didn't come out of my mouth. If you'll bow the good ear which is your good ear bow your good ear down a little towards your chest and listen. I think you'll hear God speaking.

Because there's a presence and that presence is speaking. And it's a seeking presence and an inviting voice. And God is here tonight with that presence and with that voice.

Now there are some people who hide from the presence. You will see that the Adam and Eve hid from the presence of God. Sin made them ashamed.

They had gotten into their sin together and now neither one could help the other one. She with her feminine arts couldn't help Adam and he with his masculine strength couldn't help Eve. They had gotten in together and now they had to each one get out alone.

And I might stop and develop that thought a little. Listen, young fellow, you're going to get into sin with that girl but when you get out you're going to get in and out all by yourself. If you ever get out she can't help you.

And listen, you man, you're part of a business firm and there's a bit of chicanery going on and a crooked deal and you're going to sign a paper that will make you a party to a crooked deal. You get in with the company but when you get out, if you ever do, you'll get out all by yourself. That's the terrible irony of sin.

You sin with the crowd but you crawl out of the mire if you ever crawl out all by yourself. Nobody can help you out. Adam took courage from Eve and Eve took courage from Adam and they held hands and sinned together.

And now they couldn't help each other and so they got scared and fled from the presence and the voice into the garden or into among the trees of the garden. Such painful confusion as it all was. And so they hid from the presence and they hid from the voice.

I was thinking down in my room that would be the biography of some of you dear people. You're hiding from the presence and shrinking from the voice and you've been doing it a long time. If anybody could write your life, I could write your life and I think for a lot of you I could convince it.

You might not say you have a life that's worth writing as good as some of these young evangelists. Sixteen year old evangelists write their lives and all they can say is I was born. But you have a little more.

You've been hiding from a presence and shrinking from a voice and those are the two major truths in your life and they have been because there's another major truth and that is that you've sinned and you're ashamed. There is something about sin that makes us ashamed and particularly ashamed when God is near and we sense that God is near. When God is in this place it was then that Jacob was ashamed and it was then that Isaiah was ashamed.

It was then that Daniel sat down astonished. It was then that John threw himself like dead on the ground when the presence of God moves down. Oh, if we could only recapture a sense of God's presence.

You never need to pray for God to come although if you do pray for God to come God won't get mad. Theologians sometimes get mad about things that God smiles about. God will know what you mean.

When you say, Oh God come into our midst you don't mean God come into our midst. You mean, Oh God make me conscious of thy presence in the midst. When a blind man says, Oh God let the sun shine he means, Oh God heal my eyes so I can see the sunshine.

The deaf man can't hear the birds sing and so a sinner can't sense the presence of God. That's the terrible woe of it. And so we walk the world orphans without any sense of the divine presence.

I tell you that to live in a world like this even to live in a city like Chicago or New York or Pittsburgh or Philadelphia and have the presence of God puts velvet on all the hard pavements and puts peace and quiet in all the rocky sounds. To have God with you to know that God is there. To take God with you to bed at night and to be able to smile in your sleep and to know that God is there and to have God all around you.

I tell you it's a wonderful thing and it's real and it's just as real as the air that breathes. For just as the atmosphere presses on you all parts of your body 14 pounds to the square inch at sea level so the presence of God presses in on your spirit. And you can live in the world and not be conscious of that atmospheric pressure until you're reminded of it and so you can live in the world and not be conscious of the presence of God there to help you.

Now, I want to call attention to you that self-condemnation that drove Adam and Eve from the presence of God is a very good friend. To be condemned, to condemn yourself, it's a very good friend. It's a wonderful moment in the life of a man when he says, Oh God, I accused myself.

Oh God, I did it. It's a wonderful moment in a man's life when self-condemnation hits him. And I think that one of the difficulties with us is that we can't get conviction on people anymore.

People come to God without having any conviction of their own iniquity. And the result is they never get very deeply saved. They're poorly born.

Now, I'd like to think that you can be saved even though you're not very well saved. I'd like to think that, you know. I wish I could think it and I'm not sure but what I'd do in a kind of an oblique way hope that there are some people that'll get to heaven by the skin of their dentures.

But I'm not sure, brethren. I'm not sure. But I believe that we'd get converted more wonderfully if we got convicted more deeply.

But we're afraid to get people convicted. I preached at council one year. Let's see, what did I preach about? I preached about Salome and Herod and Herodias and that dancing girl, you know, the dance, the old man and John the Baptist preaching his head off.

I preached that. And I preached sin. I told people they were sinners.

And an Alliance preacher, now as big as life and twice as noisy, came up to me afterward and said, you never should have done it. You make people feel they're sinners. He said, why nobody will come tonight.

They feel they're criminals. And in spite of that, somebody gave an altar call and they came flocking down to the front. I tell you, we need to know we're sinners.

We need to find that out. We need to know it. And we need to have it born in upon us.

Up around Chicago, everybody's a theological sinner, but nobody's actually a sinner. All those good Calvinists up there are theological sinners. You just beat a bush anywhere and there'll be a Calvinist with a Bible, Schofield Bible under his arm, hop out and say, all our righteousnesses are filthy rags.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But if you turn on him and say, I don't believe you're quite right, brother, your text's wrong, he'll get white mad. He's a sinner, all right, but he's only a theological sinner till you prick him.

And then he becomes a sinner indeed. We need to know that we're sinners indeed, ladies and gentlemen. No theological man ever went to heaven who was a theological sinner, who just went to God and said, now God, I read in the Bible that I'm a sinner, and if I'm a sinner, I suppose I ought to get saved.

Will you please save me? Nobody ever got that way. You can't do it that way, brethren. God Almighty knows that your emotions are tied up with our good and our bad.

And he knows that if you're not emotionally smitten, you'll never be emotionally lifted. And he knows that if you make a man sick to his stomach of a sin, he'll quit it. But if you only convince him theologically that he's a sinner, he'll sneak around back to the building and commit it again.

And that's our trouble in these terrible days. We want to make religion easy for people, and so we never bring any self-condemnation down on them. Now, when self-condemnation hits you, and you know you're a sinner, you can do one of two things.

You can let that self-condemnation drive you to the wounds in Jesus' side for cleansing, or you can let that self-condemnation drive you into the wilderness to hide from God. And people react those two different ways to self-condemnation. When Peter felt condemnation, he wept bitterly.

When Judas felt it, he committed suicide. You can go one way or the other. Self-condemnation is a good friend because it tells you how bad off you are.

But it's also a dangerous master if you let it drive you from God. If a man says now, I am so bad, I don't think God would ever have anything to do with me, self-condemnation has become his enemy then, not his friend. I remember once a woman, a young woman, a nurse, came to see me and she said, Mr. Tozer, I'm the backslider.

She said, I have backslidden completely because she said, I have been among doctors and I find they're cads, was her expression. And she said, they're no good and I've lost my spiritual life. And she said, I am so bad that I'm not even going to bother God about it.

She said, I just don't think that God would do right if he'd forgive anybody that's as bad as I am. Well, that was a tough one now. If you preachers don't think that was a tough one, it was.

You didn't have to convince her that she was a sinner. She knew it, but she was so self-condemned that she felt that God wouldn't do right if he forgave her. So I was thinking hard and praying hard and finally I said,

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