

Adam & Eve - Simple Faith

by Joel Beeke

Faith is a relationship with God, the heart of the Christian life, and the necessary condition for salvation and sanctification.

Duration: 1:11:32

Scripture: Genesis 3:14

Topics: "Redemption", "Faith"

Description

Joel Beeke emphasizes the simple yet profound faith of Adam and Eve in the face of their sin and God's judgment. He highlights Adam's declaration of Eve as the 'mother of all living' as an act of faith in God's promise of redemption through the coming Messiah, despite the curse of death pronounced upon them. Beeke illustrates how both Adam and Eve, through their faith, found hope and life in God's promises, even amidst their struggles and disappointments. He encourages believers to embrace the simplicity of faith, trusting in God's grace and the redemptive work of Christ, which offers life and restoration to all who believe. The sermon serves as a reminder of the importance of faith in the believer's relationship with God and the assurance of His promises.

Transcript

Genesis chapter 3 and verse 14. Let us hear together the Word of God. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field.

Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Unto the woman, he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam, he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake.

In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.

For out of it was thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And to Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to no good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and there came and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. Dear friends, it's a great privilege for me and a great honor to have the invitation to return to Everest with to speak to you again and to bring you once more the word of our unchangeable God. I bring with me the warmest greetings from America.

I cannot recall all the people that told me to pass on Christian greetings to you. I think I lost track when Irfan Hughes said to me, just say hello to everyone that knows me in Wales. So I'll take care of that right away.

There are many friends that you have in America, many that are bound together with you in the Lord Jesus Christ. And one of the most beautiful things we have the privilege of experiencing as speakers as we move from country to country is to witness the communion of saints, to hear even the very same expressions in prayer, the same scriptures quoted, the same language of the soul. What a beautiful thing it is.

I believe in the communion of saints and how wonderful it will be on that great day when without interruption and division or misunderstanding or character flaws, the entire redeemed church, which no man can number, shall throw their crowns at the foot of the throne and cry out, worthy is the Lamb of God. Sometimes in all our religious speaking, we are prone to forget the most common concepts and use the most common words without contemplating their meaning. I'm thinking of words like grace.

We all speak of grace. We declare we are saved by grace. Our hope is in grace.

But do you ever think about what grace means? That came to me afresh when I was visiting an aged parishioner. I noticed that her little room in a nursing home had been greatly curtailed from her former home and she had only one thing hanging on the wall on the other side of her bed, a 3x5 index card. My curiosity was aroused and I said, what do you have on that card? Well, she said, Pastor, you can go around my bed and see.

She said, what I have on that card is my life. She had the word grace written as an acrostic, vertically, just the word spelled out behind it, God's riches at Christ's expense. I let those words sink in.

I'm sure that's not the full meaning of grace, but it's a good part of the meaning of grace. And I had a new refreshing sight of the depths of that glorious word, grace. Well, I think another word like that is the word faith.

We speak of faith. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God. We know that faith is the core and the foundation of daily Christian living.

But what is faith? Twenty-nine years ago this week, I was packing my belongings in Kalamazoo, Michigan, to move to Ontario to begin studies in our little private denominational seminary as the only student under a local pastor. And when I arrived, the pastor wanted to know my theological level of knowledge and my writing ability. So he said to me, let me give you an assignment right at the start.

You can do it in two pages, perhaps five, no more than ten. What is faith? I thought that's not so difficult. I've been thinking about faith all my life, hopefully living it for many years.

I went home and I rolled up my sleeves and I began to work. You come with me now and you write the assignment with me a moment. What is faith? Well, I thought first perhaps I should go to the original language and work off of the Old Testament words, three major Old Testament words, as your pastors will know, for faith, most of which mean to lean on and to rest in.

I could turn to the New Testament word, *pistis*, a great word, the word of the Christian faith, used more than 500 times in the New Testament and describe what it means to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Or I thought I could perhaps work off of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Many of you know that answer well.

Faith is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the Gospel. What a wonderful framework that would be for describing faith. Or I thought maybe I could use the classic reform definition of faith in its exercises in three distinct acts.

Saving knowledge is involved in faith. Saving assent and saving trust. Saving knowledge is a wonderful thing to develop where I could explain in my paper that you don't just believe with your mind, but you believe with all your heart and you taste it and you digest it.

Like the old illustration given by Herman Hoeksema that two men sat down in front of a piece of pizza and one man couldn't eat of it because he had stomach cancer, but he was a nutritionist. He knew all the nutrients in it. And the other man knew very little.

He saw there was cheese and pepperoni. Well, but he ate it and he tasted it. He digested it.

Which man really enjoyed the pizza? Hoeksema said, well, of course, the man who tasted it. I could work off of that. Saving knowledge and saving assent.

Agreement. Agreement with who God is and all his splendorous majesty and his Christocentricity through the Word of God. I could glorify the Father and the Son and the Spirit.

I could say with Samuel Rutherford, I know not which divine person I love the most, but this I know. I need to know them all and love them all and cherish them all. And I would agree, too.

That's part of faith, isn't it? Agreeing with who I am, a bankrupt sinner, a poor, needy sinner who lives out of Jesus Christ, out of a triune God, a heavenly Father, a redeeming Son, a sanctifying Spirit. All that beautiful saving assent to agree with who God is and to agree with who I am. And, of course, saving trust, the very heart of faith.

Putting all my confidence in God. Putting all my marbles in one basket. Trusting in Christ alone and in Christ supremely for salvation.

That would make a wonderful way to describe faith. I thought there's got to be more. Maybe I should look at the four kinds of faith from the Reformed perspective and discern true faith from false faith.

Look at historical faith in the mind, an outward belief in the Word of God, or miraculous faith, belief that something special is going to be done to me or upon me or by me. Or look at temporary faith, which seems to rejoice in God for a season, but lacking root and lacking true humility, lacking genuine Christocentricity, returns back to the world in a day of persecution. And then I could set forth saving faith, that it endures and is strengthened under trial.

You're coming along with me, aren't you? And you're thinking perhaps in your own mind of different ways to describe faith. But when I tried all these ways, I began to realize that faith is something far more rich and far more comprehensive than all my theological language. It's something as abrasive as life itself.

Faith is the heart of our relationship to God. Faith is the constant, central characteristic of the regenerate person. We live by faith, the Apostle says.

And that faith flows from the heart. That faith is the focal point of my very spiritual existence. And it's the root springing cause of all the activity of the believer's entire being.

And none of my theological language can get my arms around the breadth and the depth and the height of this glorious thing we call faith. Faith is the activity of the entire heart, the entire life. It's as broad as it is deep.

It embraces the weighty matters of personal salvation and the nitty-gritty details of daily living. Without faith, you see, I cannot eat or drink or do all that I do to the glory of God. Without faith, I am always sinning.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. And then I found John Calvin. Calvin says something like this.

Faith is inseparable from Christian liberty. It's inseparable from prayer, from peace, from hope, from love, from repentance, from self-denial. Faith must address the hard questions of life, questions of affliction, loneliness, despair, and cross providences, and numbing trials.

And faith is the heartbeat, isn't it, of evangelism and missiology. It's the presuppositional basis to my world-life view. Faith encompasses all that I am.

And faith leads me to that grand and glorious vision of the Christian life. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.

You can't believe that without faith. You can't live that without faith. You see, faith is the heart of my relationship to God.

It's the heart of life itself. It's the heart of all my theology, and especially my soteriology. You can't have repentance without faith.

They're two sides of one coin. You can't believe without repenting. Every act of faith, we believingly repent and we penitently believe.

I can't break with sin without faith. Not from the heart. I can't understand the law without faith, and its demands, and its spirituality, and the joy of walking in the ways of God.

I can't understand the gospel without faith. I can't understand justification without faith. I receive it only by faith.

I can't be sanctified without faith. Nothing will work for good in my heart without believing in God. I can't go on rejoicing in the indwelling spirit without faith.

I can't feel the seal of that spirit in my inward being. For Paul says, in whom having believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise. And faith is the principle behind all my truly good works.

Faith works through love. Galatians 5.6. And faith is the necessary condition of all the efficacy of grace. Grace is never efficacious apart from faith.

Faith is never in competition with grace. Soul of fide and soul of gratia walk hand in hand through the pastures of the word of God. Worshipping, adoring, glorifying God.

Faith is strengthened by the word, by the sacraments. You see, all of theology, the whole field of systematic theology is a field of faith. Well, now you understand that I spent 40 or 50 hours on this assignment before I wrote one sentence.

Faith is so big and so broad. And yet everything I had done left me unsatisfied. Somehow it was still all too abstract.

And I began to search the scriptures. How does the Bible describe faith? And of course I came across Hebrews 11, the great heroes of faith chapter. And I saw there how the author to the Hebrews handles faith, how he uses it for the Hebrew Christians who strengthen them when they were discouraged under persecution.

Taking biblical portraits of faith and laying them before the Hebrew Christians and showing from each portrait one or two dimensions of faith that are operative in the life of the believer. And so bit by bit unfolding the richness of the character of faith by faith Abel, by faith Enoch, by faith Abraham. And then I began to think this is the way.

You can only understand faith through living biblical portraits, through faith operative by the Spirit in the lives of fallen sinners like we. And when I understood that, I began to have some breakthrough. And dear friends, I want to bring you something of that breakthrough in these four lectures, these four sermons this week.

What I'd like to do is I'd like to look with you at four aspects of faith as they operate in the life of one particular biblical character. And I would like to look at those biblical characters with you from outside of the Hall of Fame or the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. Characters that are often forgotten in the Bible and yet characters who have so much to teach us.

And as we look at these four characters and these four particular aspects of faith and I've chosen them carefully, I hope for aspects that I believe the Church of Jesus Christ sorely needs today. As we look at these, would you please ask yourself three questions and I will do it to myself as well. First of all, do I have this kind of faith at all? We need to be honest with ourselves.

Do we have saving faith at all? Secondly, am I exercising the particular aspect of that faith that is being expounded on that particular morning? And thirdly, and most importantly, how can the example of the

particular aspect of this particular person's faith that is highlighted in Scripture as we will see them be used in my life to mature me in the most holy faith? Those are the great questions. And I pray, God, that the Holy Spirit will richly bless these talks, that you, dear child of God, may grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that at the end of this week, through these addresses and the other addresses you shall hear, you may walk out as stalwart sons and daughters of the Church of Jesus Christ through faith in our Savior. Aware, more aware of your own weakness, but also more aware of the strength of God's grace through faith in Christ.

And if you are not saved at this present moment, it is my earnest prayer that this week you will understand the emptiness of life without saving faith. And that you will find that your life without faith in Christ is like a midnight darkness. That's what it is, friends.

Without Christ, we are in darkness. And we are living in a small world. You see, young people, Satan comes to you, doesn't he? And he says, don't be a Christian.

If you're a Christian, your life will be restricted. You'll be in a small world. The opposite is true.

When I left the United States Army, a black sergeant came up to me, a very large black sergeant. He said this to me, I hope, son, when you go back out into the world, you make it out there in that big world. I said, well, why do you say that to me? Well, he said, because it's a big world and I'm in the Army and I serve Uncle Sam.

If you don't know, that's a symbol of the United States government. I serve Uncle Sam and my world is so large because I serve the government and I've got security. But you out there in that world all by yourself, you won't have security.

Oh, I said, my friend, I serve a bigger being than yours. My God is the God of the universe and he will care for me. He will take care of me.

You see, as a Christian, you don't just serve yourself. If you're not a Christian, you've got nothing bigger in your world than yourself. And you're tiny, aren't you? You're a speck of dust.

Have you ever been in a plane and looked down on people and thought, every little human being scurrying about in that little car is a speck of dust? This God is the God of the universe. This God has made billions upon billions upon billions of stars and galaxies. This God is my God.

You see, my world is so much bigger because my God has promised that all things shall work together for good for me, that I may live to His glory through faith. And so, faith is the linkage. Faith is the pipeline.

Faith is the instrument by which I am hinged together with the great God of the universe. And it gives my life breadth and depth and height and meaning. My friend, if you're unsaved, your life is small and restricted.

And if you're a believer, your life is large because you belong to the heart of a big God. There was once a little boy, eight years old, who was laying on his deathbed. And his father said to him, Son, aren't you afraid to die? He said, No, Dad.

Well, wouldn't you want to stay here with us for a while, Son? No, Dad. Why not? Well, you see, Dad, when George Whitefield came to town and I heard him preach and I heard about his big God, ever since

then I've wanted to go to be with Whitefield's big God. You see, it's not only a big God in this life, but in the life to come.

Faith has a big God. And that is what gives the Christian long-term security. The Heidelberg Catechism says it so beautifully.

What is your only comfort in life and in death? Life and death. One breath. You see, all the comforts you put, you believe in in this world, my dear unconverted friend, every comfort you trust in, every comfort you put your faith in is only a this life comfort.

But the Christian has a life-death-eternity comfort. And it's one comfort that is good for this life, that is good for death, that is good for eternity, that is good for every situation, forever and ever is, as the Catechism says, that I don't belong to myself, but I belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has died for me and who sits at the right hand of the Father to live for me and to Lord Himself over my life so that He may prepare me, to bring me, to be with Him where He is. Well, in these sessions, then, we want to look at this big God through the lens of faith and we want to ask ourselves how this faith is operating in our lives.

This morning, I want to look with you at the faith, briefly, of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve, who make the first confession of faith in all of Scripture. I want to look with you, especially at verses 20, 21, and Genesis 4, verse 1. Let me read those three verses again.

20, 21, and 4, 1. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them. And 4, 1. And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived in Berkean and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

Adam called his wife's name Eve. Well, I want to look with you, then, first at Adam's faith and then at Eve's faith. And our focal point this morning will be on the simplicity and the childlike character, the simplicity and the childlike character of their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I say to you this morning that these opening words of our text are some of the most remarkable in all of Scripture. Adam called his wife's name Eve. Why do you say that's remarkable? Well, I say it's remarkable because of the tremendous contrast between that and the previous verse.

Verse 19 reads, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, this is God speaking to Adam and Eve, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it was thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam said, Eve, Eve, you know what Eve means in Hebrew? Ahawa. Ahawa means life, life giver, living.

So God says, you will die. And right on the heels of that pronounced death sentence, Adam turns to his wife and says, Eve, life. I don't know if you've ever talked with people and got the feeling after you said something to them, they turned around and said exactly the opposite.

And you said, I guess they didn't hear me at all. Donald Gray Barnhouse wrote once someplace that his children would often turn on the radio and flick to different stations. And he said one time they were turning to a station right when some royalty was getting married and they were being pronounced husband and wife.

And the question was, do you hereby take so and so to be your wedded wife? And the child turned the station and the next thing that came on the station was now go get in your corners and come out and fight. And Barnhouse said, that's like Genesis 3, 19 and 20. The contrast is stupendous.

God says you will die. And it's as if Adam doesn't hear him. And he turns to his wife and says, living.

And what's more astonishing is God doesn't tap Adam on the shoulder and say, Adam, didn't you hear me? He doesn't bawl Adam out. He doesn't correct him. What's going on here? Adam's boldness is unrebuked.

He hears God's death sentence and he pronounces his life. Well, Adam also heard Genesis 3, 15. Thanks be to God.

Where God said in the presence of Adam to the serpent and I will put enmity between the serpent and all your ungodly seed serpent and the woman and her seed. That's your wife, Adam, and all the godly seed that will come from her between thy seed, Satan and her seed, the seed of the woman, it and suddenly God turns into a singular tense and says it the seed. There will be one coming from the woman's seed that shall bruise thy head, Satan, crushing it to death and thou, Satan, shall do no more than bruise the heel of the seed.

Now, heel bruising is still serious, but it's not fatal. So Adam hears this death sentence in verse 19, but he also hears a life sentence, a remedy, a way out in verse 15. And facing imminent death because of his sin, he professes simple childlike faith in the life sentence of God through the seed of the woman.

And seeing that God will bring life to the seed of the woman, he turns to the woman and he says to her, your name shall be Eve, life giver for through your loins, how I don't know, but through your loins, God will bring forth a Messiah. Now, I wonder if you experientially know in your own heart something of this cry, Eve, life, life in the midst of death. When God the Holy Ghost has entered my life and persuaded me that I deserve to die, that I'm dust, sinful dust, and I must return to dust again and then throws open the remedy of the gospel for me and I believe in it by grace, I receive it and repose in it and rest in it and clasp it and embrace it.

It's as if I confess with Adam, Eve, there is life in Jesus Christ. Many years ago in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, I preached a sermon on Genesis 3:20. There was an old janitor in that church who was 71 years old.

He had struggled for 20 some years to come to liberty in the gospel. That morning, his hearing aids didn't work. And he tried the hearing set of the church and he couldn't get it to work either.

And he didn't hear one word I was saying all through the preliminaries and the prayer and the singing. And I got to the sermon. I announced my text.

He didn't hear anything. He was fiddling around with his hearing aid. And suddenly it came on.

And the first words he heard me say were these, Eve, there is life in the second Adam, Jesus Christ, for sinners who are on the way to death and hell. And the Spirit used that one statement. Penetrated that man's heart.

And he broke down. And he left church. And he came to see me on Monday.

He said, there is life for me in the Lord Jesus through the promised seed. Well, in one way or another, perhaps not that dramatically, perhaps not that suddenly, perhaps more gradually, but surely every believer knows the simplicity of this faith. Learning to trust God in his life-giving Messiah simply and sincerely.

When my dad was nearing his death, he had an aneurysm surgery. And on the bed of his sickness, before he went into surgery, he gathered the family around to say farewell in case the Lord took him. And he spoke to each one of us.

And I'll never forget what he said to me. He said, Son, please preach the simplicity of the Gospel. It's so simple.

Adam had one promise. Faith, though it be, and he believed God. And God counted it to him for righteousness.

We have thousands of promises. Do we believe God? Promises for sinners. For sinners exactly like you and me.

The Gospel fits every one of us, friends, if we could see ourselves. The way a glove fits your hand, it's exactly suited for what you need. Ever, have you ever cried that out? There is life in Jesus Christ.

There is life in the promises. Life abundant. You see, we have so many promises, as I said.

Last night I was telling a story to a few little boys about white sheets. There was once a prodigal son who went away into a far country, just like the prodigal. And he repented, just like the prodigal.

And he wrote a letter back to his dad. And he said, Dad and Mom, I'll be coming on a train through your backyard. A train track went right through their backyard.

And he said, as I come around the corner on that train, I would love to stop and see you, but I know I don't deserve to come home again. But if, when I come around that corner, you put one white sheet out on the line, I'll jump off the train and I'll come home. But if you don't want me home, which I'll understand, don't put any white sheets out.

And when the train came around the corner, the young man didn't know what he saw. Every line had a white sheet. Every bush had a white sheet covering it.

There were white sheets on the garage, white sheets on the roof, white sheets in the trees, white sheets everywhere. Welcome home, son! And you see, that's the kind of heart God has. He's the heart of the Father who ran to meet the prodigal.

Ran with eyes of mercy, seeing him afar off. Ran with feet of mercy, running to meet him. Ran with lips of mercy, kissing him everywhere.

Ran with arms of mercy, embracing him. Ran with tears of mercy, falling upon his young boy. He says, bring forth the fatted calf and slay it, and put a robe on the son, and put a ring on his finger, a sign of sonship, and shoes on his feet, the seal of sonship.

For this my son was lost and is found. He is alive by grace. Oh, my dear unconverted friend, dear unconverted young person who may be prodigalizing away from home, welcome home.

Come back. Not just to your father and mother, but to the heart of God, to the white sheets of the promises of Scripture. He will welcome you home.

He's never turned away one sinner who's come to Him yet. He who cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out. If Adam can believe one faint, rather confusing promise when we read it the first time, so you ought to be able, by God's grace, to believe in a thousand, ten thousand promises in the Holy Scriptures.

Eve. That was the second name that Adam gave his wife, wasn't it? You remember the first name was back in chapter 2. He called her woman. And woman because she was taken out of man.

Genesis 2, verse 23. Someone has called that Adam's wedding song. And it is.

It's kind of a wedding song. In Hebrew, it's done in poetic form. He turned to his wife and he said, you are woman because you are taken out of man.

You are part of me. You are my flesh and blood. These two shall be one flesh.

This is a beautiful wedding song. And joyfully, Adam embraces his God-given helpmate, doesn't he? But sin interrupts. Sin spoils the first marriage.

Sin threatens to wreak havoc of that relationship altogether. Once they both ate of the fruit, Adam pretended like he didn't even know his wife. He pushed her away.

He was no longer intimate with her. They were no longer best friends. He turned with a kind of disrepute and a kind of disparaging comment about her to God, even disparaging God himself.

He says, the woman, the woman. He uses his wedding song name. The woman, thou gavest to be with me.

She gave me of the tree. And then rather meekly, and I did eat. You see, things are in disrepair.

Continue that way. Adam and Eve are going to be divorced. They're headed for the divorce court.

The first marriage about to break up. But God comes and God intervenes in this disaster. And God says there is another seed to come.

And through this seed, Adam and Eve, you will regain your intimacy because I will put enmity. I will do it. I will put enmity between you, Adam and Eve and your seed, your godly seed.

I'll put enmity between you and the serpent and the ungodly. So God restores. God undoes what Adam had undone.

God interrupts that new league of friendship he made with Satan. God turns it around and re-covenants Adam to himself. Through his promise.

And so Adam gives his wife a second name. The second name is a song of faith. It's a song of faith, you see, because faith is the evidence of things not seen.

Adam didn't see the Messiah. But simply, with childlike trust, he believes the promise. He says, your name shall be Eve.

I see in you, Eve, the divine promise will be realized. Life will proceed from your womb. God will carry out his purpose through our seed.

And that seed will include a deliverer who will bruise, fatally, the head of the serpent. And so I see in you, my dear wife, I see in you the pledge of divine forgiveness and divine salvation and divine love. Your name is Eve.

You know what amazes me most of all about Adam's simple faith here? Is that he doesn't offer God any ifs or ands or buts or hows. And I'm always doing that with God. I say that to my shame.

I've had times where I sat at my study desk and I actually pounded my fist on the table in anger against myself and said, why don't I trust thee, Lord? Why these ifs and these ands and these buts? Why not a simple childlike faith? Hast thou not said, all things work together for good to them that love thee? Why can't I believe it? You struggle like that too sometimes. Well, let Adam be your mentor here. No ifs.

No buts. No how will you do it, Lord? Simply believing what God has said. I will put enmity.

Adam, you won't have to do nothing but receive what I say. Faith comes by hearing. You've heard.

Adam's heard. He's believed. He doesn't even ask for a sign.

He's not even a Gideon. He just believes. You see, and that's the character of faith.

That's what saving faith is all about. Saving faith cannot doubt. Saving faith believes in God.

Saving faith surrenders into the evangel, into the arms of God in the Gospel. Reposing in Christ. Clasp Christ.

Trusting in Christ. Luther put it this way. He said, faith is the ring that clasps Jesus Christ who is the diamond.

That's what faith is like. And so faith draws no attention to itself, does it? Our purpose in these four discussions these mornings is not to draw attention to faith itself, but to use the characteristics of faith to bring the full spotlight upon our precious Savior who gives us by faith to live out of Him. That's the point of faith.

I'm not sure if you young men in Wales give your fiancées engagement rings when you are prepared to marry them, but in America that's always done. And when the fiancée gets her ring, she shows it off proudly. And she doesn't do one of these, look at my ring.

She does one of these, look at my diamond. You see, that's what faith does. Adam believes the promise of the Messiah.

He gazes upon the diamond of God's promises. When he sees the luster of the diamond, he loses his ifs and hows and buts. Just as when the bride looks at her diamond, the bride-to-be, she says, yes, my fiancée loves me.

Because this diamond seals his love. Jesus Christ is God's seal of love. And so Adam comes in all simplicity.

He says as it were, though he didn't know the words, nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to thy promise I cling. Naked, come to thee for dress.

Helpless, look to thee for grace. Foul, I to the promise fly. Wash me, Savior, or I die.

Adam's faith puts so many of us to shame, doesn't it? Puts us to shame. One promise, a rather vague one about a coming Deliverer, so little detail. We understand it so much better having the full Bible.

And yet he says, Eve, Eve, there is life. Is there someone sitting here this morning that is saying to himself, even this moment, but can God look upon me? That's Adam. But what about me? Could God ever look upon me? Such a sinner.

You don't know the sins I have in my closet. You don't know how old I am in sin. How hard I am in sin.

How severely I have sinned. How I've cast away the Gospel invitations. How I've dirtied those white sheets of promises with all my iniquity.

Surely God won't have mercy on me. You're wrong, my friend. You're dead wrong.

This is a faithful saying, worthy to be accepted by all, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That's what you are. That's what I am.

To save sinners, Paul says, of whom I am chief. Can you get beyond the word chief? Yet there is room for you, for you. For you, for everyone.

There's room. No one is excluded. And if you think you're so unworthy that God would never have mercy upon you, I'll tell you something, my friend.

Adam was even more unworthy. In some ways, Adam was the greatest sinner that ever lived. He plunged the whole human race into chaos and sin and division and destruction.

All the sin you see in the world around you is the guilt of Adam still today. You know, I once read of a remarkable dream of Hugh MacPhail, a Scottish preacher who came into strange and great darkness on his deathbed. No one could comfort him.

Dr. James Kennedy came from afar to comfort him. His elders tried to comfort him. His ministers in the neighboring vicinity tried to comfort him.

His wife tried to comfort him. Children, nothing worked. And one night, Hugh MacPhail had a dream.

And in the dream, he heard music. And he saw large golden gates, like the gates of heaven. And when he heard music coming from the left side, he saw Old Testament saints, Moses, Abraham, David, walking along.

And the gates went open. And the music played. And the people walked in.

And just as the Old Testament saints walked in, the voice said to him in his dream, Hugh MacPhail, can you go in with them? Can you go in with a David who committed adultery and murder? Can you go in with Moses who struck the rock? And a whole list of things. And Hugh MacPhail said, Oh, no, Lord, I'm a greater sinner than them all. There's no room for me.

And the gates shut. And in his dream, he got near despair. But then he heard music again.

And along came the New Testament saints. Along came Denying Peter and Doubting Thomas. And the gates again went open.

The question came again. And again, Hugh MacPhail said, No, Lord, I'm a greater sinner than them all. Then came the ancient church fathers, the reformers, Scottish covenanters.

He couldn't go in with any of them. And then came along his own elders and the people in his church. He knew all their faults and weaknesses and their sin and their besetting sins.

He pastored them. And the gates went open. And the voice said, Can't you go in with them, Hugh MacPhail? He said, No, Lord, I'm a greater sinner than them all.

Finally, there was one lone individual that came. And the music stopped. And an old man came hobbling along.

And Hugh MacPhail's heart began to pound. And he thought, Is the gates going to go open for this man? And before the voice came, he said, Who is he, Lord? Who is he? And the voice said, Hugh MacPhail, this is Manasseh, who has filled the streets of Jerusalem. From one corner to the other with the blood of the saints.

Can you go in with him? And he awoke from his dream. And we don't believe divine revelation through dreams. We have the full scripture.

But God can, on rare occasions, apply a dream after we awake with scriptural truth. And as he meditated on that dream, he realized that there was room for the greatest of sinners. He called his wife.

He said, Go call Dr. Kennedy. Go call the ministers. Tell them if there's room for Manasseh, there's room for old Hugh MacPhail in the gates of heaven.

But I say to you this morning, friend, that if in his dream it had been Adam, it would have made even more sense because the blood of all ages rests upon Adam. And if Adam could believe with simple faith in the simple promise of God, do you not have a warrant also so to believe? Why are you not believing? Or rather, what are you believing in? Nothing but the blood of Jesus will do for you. Your sin is too crimson.

The dye in the wool is too great. You need the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Well, Eve also had sinned.

And she had sinned first, Paul says. And she had turned out to be a bad helpmate, a bad wife. She had interrupted marital harmony.

She destroyed the innocence of the garden. She was involved in the imputed guilt to mankind, not as a covenant head, but as one who tempted the covenant head, Adam, to fall. What could Eve expect? She could only expect at best that she was to become the mother of sinners living under the death sentence if she were to be a mother at all.

She was condemnable. It seemed there was no future for Eve but a painful, miserable motherhood. In pain you shall bring forth children.

And you women know how much pain it is to have a child. God wasn't lying. It's no fun to go through that pain.

But what did Eve have but pain for her future, for everything? Who could restore her relationship with Adam? Who could give her obedient children? Who could give her restoration with God? But suddenly, there in the garden, Adam turns to her and says, Eve, there is life. And Eve receives that promise and believes the name, the song of faith that Adam sings, believes her own name. How do we know that? Well, we know that from chapter 4, verse 1. And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare can and said, I have gotten, in the original Hebrew, the man from the Lord.

Here he is, the promisee. That's what she said. This is the Messiah.

This is the one who will deliver us. She believes, you see. So she was obviously in a frame of faith.

She obviously believed that promise along with Adam. So when Adam gave her that name, she celebrated with him and when she received her first child, she believed that the promise of God was on its way. Yes, that it had arrived.

And so when Adam calls his wife's name Eve, there is little doubt that a new life expectancy surges through the breast of this woman who committed the very first sin. And new hope arises out of the darkness of guilt and sin that is focused on the promised seed. And the tie that now binds Adam and Eve together is stronger than ever before.

Because it's a tie in the Lord Jesus. Adam and Eve find each other back in the promise. Dear young people, may I just say to you one sentence.

When you look for a helpmate in life, let that be your number one priority. Look for a partner with whom you have a common bond in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because that time will last forever.

Beauty, external beauty will fade. Internal beauty will abide forever. Adam and Eve receive a new cement.

Their marriage is cemented by the blood of Jesus, the promised seed. And they are bound together inseparably through faith in Christ. And God knows they needed that faith, for they were soon expelled from paradise.

And soon it became true. Thorns and thistles, Adam, you will face in your hard work. And Eve, you will experience the pain of childbearing.

And perhaps even more pain in childrearing. The challenges. A mother goes through in this sinful world.

Rearing children are unspeakable. How will Eve get through? How will Adam sustain his hot labor? Well, they are cemented through faith in Jesus. But now simple, childlike faith always gets tested, doesn't it? God delights to test His people, to strengthen them in the simplicity and the childlikeness of their faith.

Cain doesn't prove to be that sinless Messiah. He's a naughty boy. He goes the wrong way.

He does things his parents don't want him to do. He says things they don't want him to say. He's got an anger.

He's got temper in him. What a disappointment. Where's the promise? Is this the man? This naughty boy, is this the man from the Lord? What of God's promise? And then the staggering deep waters of cruel murder.

Oh, my friend, what Adam and Eve went through. They were so disappointed with Cain that when Abel came along, they named him Abel, which means vanity, emptiness, transitoryness. Their expectation, the breadth of their expectation was almost knocked out of them.

But they named their boy Abel. Their faith had not died. We know that.

But their faith must have come to a low ebb. Surely they must have struggled when they dealt with Cain as a young boy with things like David struggled with in Psalm 42 and 43. Where is thy God, the scoffers say.

Such a boy. Such a promise. How can you bring God's providence and God's promise together? You know that struggle in your life.

Providence of God seeming to cross lines with the promises of God. His name is Abel. Transitory.

Vanity. Just a breadth. They're in the dark tunnel of doubt.

But it gets worse before it gets better. Cain rises up and he slays his brother Abel. You know that, boys and girls.

You know the story. He kills his own brother. Can't you see Adam and Eve? You can hardly resist imagining sitting together in their living room.

Cain is gone. They don't know where he is. He's a vagabond wandering somewhere.

They've lost him. And they have to bury their other son. Suddenly they have no children.

With the promise of the strange seed. And no children at all. Oh God, what of thy promise? Adam.

In their better moments, Adam, it's all our own fault. We sin in the garden. Yes, Eve, it's our own fault.

Let's get down on our knees, my dear wife. Let's cry to God for mercy. Is there yet hope? Is there yet a way in this impossible promise? Is there a way out of this dark tunnel of doubt? And Eve becomes pregnant again.

What happened? We don't know all what happened. But we do know this, that faith had been revived. God's people had their ups and downs in their seasons of faith.

Oh yes. But faith was revived. And by the time Seth was born, Eve says, his name is Seth.

Restitution. God is restoring what he has taken away. God's promise is not death.

They still believe the simple, naked promise of God. And they live 900 some years. Adam 930.

Can you imagine how many generations of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren they saw? And talking to them all, telling them about the fall, telling them about the promise, and then seeing before their very eyes two lines, two seeds, developing the seed of Cain to seven generations, climaxing in that ungodly

Lamech who would kill people out of mere pleasure, and the seven lines of generation coming to the number of fullness in the godly seed, climaxing in Enoch who walked with God and was taken. And they saw in the godly seed that God from generation to generation was fulfilling His promises. And dear friend, if you have a child or a grandchild tonight who is walking in the ways of God, you have a visible picture of the promises of God and Jesus being fulfilled before your eyes.

Praise be the Lord. And so Eve and Adam began to see more and more of God's promises being fulfilled, not knowing it will still be 4,000 some years before Jesus Christ is born, but living out of the promise, not staggering in the midst of adversity. Now finally, God does one more thing in this chapter to help Adam and Eve throughout these long centuries of living by faith.

And you can find that in verse 21. Unto God, unto Adam also, and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them. God gave them the verbal promise in verse 15, and He gave them the visible confirmation, much like we would have today in a sacrament in verse 21.

Here God visualizes the gospel. Have you ever stopped to think how Adam and Eve must have felt when God took animals, perhaps lambs, we don't know, and killed them before their very eyes. There had been no death in all of Eden until that moment.

Physical death. Recently, I was in Brazil and we were driving down a highway. You know, we get so used to seeing animals, small animals here in America, deer, laying on the side of the road.

We think nothing of it. We just try to avoid them. But it struck me.

There was a large horse on the side of the highway. Killed. A horse.

There were vultures on top of the horse, eating the flesh. What a picture of what we deserve. What a picture of the fruit of sin.

Don't you think Adam and Eve felt that way? God killed animals before them. They loved God's creation. They were the keepers of that creation.

And God kills and sheds blood. This is no mere daily act of God. This is a solemn moment in the lives of Adam and Eve.

And they cannot fail to understand the message that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And we know they taught that to their children, no doubt, because Abel came with blood and Cain did not. And Cain knew better.

And he wanted to come in a bloodless way before God. So this was God's picture of the Gospel. God was telling them, I will bring that seed through to your salvation somehow through a way of blood.

Adam and Eve, your blood will not do. You cannot save yourself, but I will save you through the seed from the woman through a way of blood. So what does God do? God strips away all their fig leaves.

He strips away their fig leaf righteousness and their filthy, ragged righteousness. And He gives them the white robed righteousness of His only begotten Son through bloodshed. My dear friends, as I close this morning, may I ask if that has happened in your life also? Have you lost all your fig leaves, all your excuses before God, all your piety, all your repentances? Have you lost everything that you can adorn yourself with God before God? Can you say, Hebrews 4 verse 12, I have become naked and open before

the living God with whom I have had to do, and I could not stand before Him, but only in Jesus' dress, in His blood and righteousness.

My friend, we have to lose everything. We have to lose our worthiness. We have to lose our unworthiness.

We have to lose everything. You see, there are only two religions in the world. There's the religion of fig leaves, religion of works, or there's the religion of skins, the religion of bloodshedding, the religion of Christ.

By nature, we all come to God with our fig leaves. By nature, we all want to meet God with a fig leaf religion. By nature, we all want to stand before God with our church going and our outward demeanor and our social graces and our kind little outward deeds to our neighbor.

We want to come with a clean conscience. But God says no. Come as a sinner.

The only true way to come before me is to come just as you are. Perhaps you heard of that wonderful story of a king who called an artist into his palace and he said, I'm very bored in this palace. I'm bored with all the decorations.

I want you to paint me a painting of something that has never been painted and erected and hung in a king's palace before. And the artist went out and found a poor, filthy, bearded, dirty beggar. And he said, will you come to my studio? I want to paint you.

And the beggar said, yes, I'll come. Just give me a couple hours. I'll be right there.

You know the story. He shaved, he dressed, he got all nice and clean. And he came to the painter, the artist.

The artist said, I have no need of you. Don't come to God as a Pharisee. Come to him as a publican.

Come to him as a sinner. Come to him just as you are. Lay your fig leaves before him.

Say, Lord, I'm a sinner. I can't pay for my sins. I can't be perfect.

I can't meet any of your conditions, Lord. They can only be met in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress.

In flaming worlds and these arrayed, the joy I lift up my head. Believe, friends, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Don't rest and don't think you're really alive until you too can cry out as you see the gospel.

Eve, life, life outside of me, life in the man from the Lord, the God-man from the Lord. Emmanuel, God with us, the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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