

# The Fall of Man

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon teaches that the fall of man is a result of sin, and the solution is to find acceptance before God, which leads to a life of freedom and fellowship with others.*

**Duration:** 25:04

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:8

**Topics:** "Original Sin", "Redemption"

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## Description

This sermon delves into Genesis chapters 1, 2, and 3, exploring God's original purpose for humanity, the fall into sin, and the consequences of sin. It emphasizes the tendency to hide from God and others due to shame, symbolized by Adam and Eve's fig leaves. The sermon highlights the human desire for acceptance, often leading to wearing masks and seeking approval from others. It concludes with the importance of taking personal responsibility for sin, acknowledging failures, and finding acceptance in God rather than seeking validation from people.

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## Transcript

In our previous studies, we've been looking at the early chapters of Genesis, chapters 1, 2 and 3, to try and understand something of God's original purpose for man and how man fell into sin, how the devil deceived him, so that we can learn for our own life because God's purpose for us is the same as it was for Adam. Where Adam failed, we can fulfill that purpose. And if we understand from the scriptures how the devil tripped up Adam and Eve, we can learn lessons for ourselves.

All scripture is given so that the man of God may be perfect, so that we can know about the schemes of Satan. So, continuing our study in Genesis, chapter 3, about how man fell into sin and what was the result of that, and how God wanted man to live by faith and dependence on him, rather than dependence on oneself. Now, what happened as soon as Adam sinned and Eve sinned? The first thing they do is hide from each other and seek to hide from God.

It is one of the results of sin. We want to hide. It says that they both hid among the trees of the garden.

Can you imagine anything more stupid than that? To think you can go behind a tree and God won't see you. Sin makes man pretty foolish. And here is one example of that.

Adam trying to go hide behind a tree and think that he can hide from God. And the other thing is his making fig leaves. They both made fig leaves, it says in verse 7, because they suddenly realized they were naked and they were not willing to accept each other like that.

They were ashamed now. Earlier on, before sin came, it says in Genesis 2, in verse 25, the man and his wife were naked and they were not ashamed. Where there is no sin, there is no need to be ashamed.

We see each other. Now apply this spiritually. That's the way I want to apply this wearing of fig leaves.

Why did Adam and Eve wear fig leaves? Who were they hiding from? There were no others in the garden to see their nakedness. I mean we wouldn't mind being naked in the presence of animals. If there is a cat in your house, you wouldn't be ashamed to be naked in front of that cat.

Who were they hiding from? Who were they covering themselves from with these fig leaves? From each other. Adam didn't want his wife to see his nakedness and Eve didn't want Adam to see her nakedness. It's amazing.

Now the way we apply this spiritually is, you can see in the human race today, the result of sin, how man is trying to hide himself because there are parts in his life he doesn't want other people to see. He's ashamed. We are ashamed to let other people see us as we really are because we fear that they will not accept us.

We hide from God because we think he will not accept us as we are so we try to cover ourselves. That's the meaning of putting fig leaves. And so the end result is all human beings go through life wearing a mask, pretending to be spiritual, pretending to be happy when inwardly things are very different, pretending that everything is okay when everything is not okay because they fear that God will not accept them as they are.

You know, all the works that man does, this whole religion of works is symbolized in those fig leaves. When we try to do something to make up for our sin and our failure, that's the meaning of those fig leaves. Maybe I make some sacrifice for God.

Maybe I go on some pilgrimage. Maybe I do a kind deed to others. Maybe I give money to the beggars to earn my salvation, to earn forgiveness from God because I'm aware of a lot of wrong things I've done.

These are the fig leaves that man has today to try and win his acceptance before God because he feels God will not accept him as he is. And this is what Jesus came to disprove. He came to show man that God loved him so much that he would accept him just as he is.

He doesn't want to leave him as he is. Oh no, God loves us too much for that. He wants to accept us as we are and then change us.

But we don't have to hide from God. We don't have to pretend that we are something. And this is true even in marriage today.

Husband and wife go around with a mask, not being open with each other because they feel if my partner sees me as I really am and sees all the weaknesses in me, he won't accept me. She won't accept me. So I've got to hide some parts of my life from my partner so that he accepts me.

You know, we have a desperate desire, a tremendous desire to be accepted. And it's because we want to be accepted by our fellow human beings that we wear masks. We pretend.

What is the solution for all this? Jesus came to provide a solution for the entire failure of Adam and Eve, which has come down to us today. And the solution is to find acceptance before God. When we know that God has accepted us totally and we have become his children, even though there are so many imperfections still in us, he has accepted us.

When we are sure of that, we are finished with seeking for acceptance from men. That's the answer. We seek for acceptance from men only because we're not sure that God's accepted us.

I want to say to you, my friend, when you're absolutely sure God's accepted you, you'll never again seek for acceptance before men. All of us human beings, we grow up insecure in our relationship with God. And that's the root cause of so many sins.

That's what produces competition even among believers. That's what produces jealousy when God seems to have blessed somebody with things that you don't have. And all this comes from an insecure relationship with God.

I'm not sure that God is happy with me. There are a lot of preachers who add to this by preaching a message that brings guilt upon people. Guilt is the way by which many cult leaders control people in their cults.

Make them feel guilty. Because when a person feels guilty, he is weak. And you can control him, you can manipulate him.

So a lot of preaching is to make people feel guilty. Do something because you feel guilty. And the preaching is directed in that direction.

Why don't you do this? Why can't you do this? The fellow feels guilty and he does it. This is what the Bible calls a dead work. It's not done out of love for the Lord.

It's not done spontaneously. It's done under the pressure of guilt. I want to say to you that God doesn't want you to serve him like that.

He doesn't want you to do anything out of a sense of guilt. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. Not if you feel guilty, keep my commandments.

So the solution comes back to not hiding from God. Don't go behind trees or go behind anything. But come straight before him.

What Adam should have done as soon as he sinned was to run up to God and say, Oh God, I'm sorry I slipped up. Please forgive me. Peter discovered that God loves him and accepts him.

Now when Adam tried to hide from God, one of the results was that he begins to accuse his wife. When a man's relationship with God is broken, it immediately breaks his relationship with other people. And that's why the Bible says we can test our relationship with God by our relationship with other people.

I can imagine that I love God tremendously. But John says in 1 John chapter 4, If you can't love a brother whom you can see, don't imagine that you can love a God whom you cannot see. That is impossible.

How can you love a God whom you cannot see when you can't love this brother whom you can see with your own eyes? We see the same thing here. As soon as Adam's relationship with the Lord was broken, his relationship with Eve was broken too. And not only broken, he begins to accuse her.

And you see that there when the Lord came to Adam and asked him, Where are you, Adam? Did you eat of the tree that... He says, I was naked and I hid myself. He said, Who told you you were naked? Did you eat of the tree which I told you not to eat? Now the answer to that question is yes or no. And the answer in this particular case was just yes.

Yes Lord, I'm sorry I did that. But notice Adam doesn't say that. Sin has corrupted him immediately.

See how quick, how quickly sin does a work in a human being. He who loved his wife so intensely, who said earlier in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 23, and he saw Eve, the living Bible says, he said, This is it. This is what I've been waiting for.

This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. This is a part of me. He was so excited with his wife, rejoiced with his wife.

As soon as one sin came into his life, his whole attitude to his wife changes. He turns to God and accuses his wife. God asked him, Did you eat of that tree? To which he should have said, Yes, Lord.

He doesn't say that. He says, Well, Lord, this woman is the one who gave it to me, this fruit to eat. And remember, you are the one who gave this woman to me to be my wife.

So implying that God, you're a bit to blame too for giving me such a wife. This tendency to blame others for our fault. We see it in children.

I did this mommy because he did that or she did that. You see, it began with Adam. I, yeah, yeah, Lord, it's true.

I ate of that tree, but it's because this woman gave it to me. And it's because you gave me such a woman to be my wife. Now, you know, the number of believers, I'm not talking about unbelievers now.

I can understand unbelievers have that nature. They got it from Adam. Let's talk about those who claim to be born again.

Do you find this attitude in yourself? How much of a salvation have you experienced then? Salvation is to be saved from all the wretched things that the devil put upon Adam. And we just come into the human race. All the wretched things the devil put upon Adam.

I am to be saved from that. That is real salvation. And here is one of the wretched things that the devil put upon Adam as soon as he sinned.

And that is, blame somebody else. Accuse somebody else. Find fault with somebody else.

Find fault with God. As to why he allowed that to happen in my life. Haven't you heard believers talking like that? That proves how little they have been saved.

That proves that they don't even see that such an attitude is sin. And it proves that perhaps they are not really born again at all. Because when we are born again, we are not perfect.

It may take ages before we get anywhere near perfection. But one thing does happen when a person is really born again. He suddenly becomes sensitive to sin.

He may not overcome sin for many years. But when he slips up and falls, he knows it. And he doesn't blame anybody else.

He blames himself. I believe one of the reasons why many Christians don't come to a life of victory over sin is because they have not taken the blame themselves. They blame somebody else.

And as long as we are blaming other people, we'll never be free. It's like that story of the king who went to a prison on his birthday to release some of the prisoners as a goodwill gesture. Actually, he wanted to release everybody in the prison as a birthday gift.

But before releasing them, he decided to go to the prison and talk to these people and find out why they were in there. So he went to the first cell and asked the person, Why are you in jail? And he said, Well, it's not really my fault. I got accused falsely and I couldn't defend myself and here I am.

And he went to the second cell and that fellow had an excuse too. Maybe he said something like, The criminal's face looked like mine and they caught me instead. Or somebody else says the judge had a prejudice against me.

Everybody had an excuse. They were all good people, according to their own minds. They told the king, We don't deserve to be here.

But when he came to the last cell, the prisoner in that cell said, I did wrong. I was bad and I did a lot of wrong things. And that's why I got caught and I'm here.

I deserve to be here. And the king told the jailer in a very sarcastic way, with a sense of humor. He said, You seem to have a lot of good people here in this jail.

A lot of people who have done nothing wrong and they're all here. But there's one man who says he's bad. Only one.

Now we don't want to keep this bad person in the midst of all these good people. So let's release him. Let him go.

So he doesn't spoil all these good people. So he released that man. Why was he released? The principle is because he acknowledged that he had failed.

What Adam could not do. You see that when the Lord asked Eve, Did you do this? She also does not take the blame. She says, The serpent.

Remember this, my brother, sister. That as long as you have this habit of blaming circumstances, blaming your upbringing, blaming your parents, blaming somebody else for your failure and not willing to take the blame yourself. You will never experience a full salvation.

And I must tell you that in 47 years that I've been a believer, I've met very, very, very, very few believers who have the habit of taking the blame themselves. I've met numerous believers who are blaming other people instead of themselves. Think of the thief who hung on the cross next to Jesus Christ.

What was it that took him into God's kingdom? It was just one thing. Crucifixion was the worst type of punishment that the Romans would give to anyone. It was reserved for the absolutely worst criminals for whom there was no hope.

Other criminals would be given lesser punishment like jail for so many years. But the really bad ones were crucified. So when these thieves were hanging on the cross, one of them turned to the Lord and said, Save yourself and save us.

Luke 23, verse 39. He was saying, Save me. I don't deserve to be here.

Maybe a few years in jail, I've done a few bad things. But certainly not crucifixion. But the other thief, he said, How can you speak like this? He said, This man has done nothing wrong but we, Luke 23, verse 41, we are getting what we deserve for our deeds.

You see how he was the opposite of Adam? Whereas the other thief, the first thief, he was just like Adam. He was not to blame. He doesn't deserve any punishment.

But this thief said, I deserve crucifixion. I don't deserve just a few years in jail. I deserve to be crucified because I'm such a terrible criminal.

You know what happened to him? He went to paradise that day. Paradise is made by God for those who've learned to take the blame themselves. Adam was kicked out of paradise because he wouldn't take the blame.

The thief went into paradise because he took the blame. You remember the story of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke chapter 18. The Pharisee appeared as if there was nothing wrong with him.

He said, I'm a good man. I'm not doing all the wrong things that other people do. He blames others.

That fellow is an adulterer and that fellow is a thief and that fellow is like this and look at this fellow praying over here. He's another cheat. But as I, I do a lot of good things.

I fast and I pray and I do all that. And that other sinner standing there, he wouldn't even lift up his head to heaven. He said, Oh God, I've got nothing to say.

I'm just a sinner. I'm 100% to blame. I don't blame my wife.

I don't blame anybody else. It's me. And Jesus said, that man went to his house justified just like the thief went to paradise.

And the other person who thought he was better than everybody else who looked down on others trusted in himself that he was righteous. He got rejected. So, that's one of the important lessons that we can learn from Genesis chapter 3. And one more thing we can learn from there is the tremendous power of fellowship.

I personally believe if Adam and Eve had stood together when the devil was talking to them, talking to Eve and Adam and Eve had stood together and Adam replied to the devil as Eve's head, they would not have sinned. There's strength in unity. Two are better than one, it says in Ecclesiastes 4. If one falls, the other can pick him up.

And when the enemy comes, if two are together, they can resist him and overcome him. That's the other lesson we learned from Genesis 3. There's a value in fellowship. Seek to build fellowship with others because Jesus said where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst.

There's a tremendous presence of the Lord when two believers are united in spirit without any accusation of one another or any such thing. God can do amazing things. And that's why the devil fights against unity among believers like anything.

He says you got to wait till you agree on every little thing before you're united. That's not true. My unity with people is not based on some doctrinal agreement.

It's based on a common love and loyalty to Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. So if Adam and Eve had been together there, they would not have fallen. When Eve was talking to Satan, Adam could have said hang on.

Eve, don't you remember God told us we shouldn't eat from that tree. If they had reminded one another, they could have protected themselves from the attack of Satan. Think of a husband and wife.

Really seek to be one, to remind one another, to warn one another about Satan. What a fantastic power that will be in that home. But the devil is determined to make sure it doesn't happen.

And so we see here that that is how failure came. And we notice here that the Lord cursed the serpent. He cursed the ground.

He cursed the serpent. But he did not curse Adam and Eve. God made a provision for the failure of his children.

That's a wonderful thing we learned there. God's tremendous care even where man had failed. He said, okay, Adam, before I send you out of the garden, I want to give you one piece of good news.

I made a provision for your salvation. The woman will give birth one day to a son and he will crush the head of the serpent who deceived you. And that's what happened when Christ came.

And so we can experience a salvation from all the effects of Adam's sin. But we can learn lessons from Genesis 3 that even where we have failed, if we are honest, God can lift us up from there. He's made a provision for our failure before we fail because he knew that we would fail.

What a wonderful salvation. God bless you.

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