

Pride comes before a fall

Readings Genesis 3:1-13 and John 16:5-15

When I first became Christian in 2004, it was with quite a bang. I had a very supernatural conversion and experienced many signs and wonders. My life was a whole new experience, everything was changed in an instance. God had impacted my world! I was high on God, I had no desire for many things from my past, I had been guilty of idolatry worshiping music and desiring the things of the world. But now I was obsessed with God.

God was more than tangible to me, He was real, I had touched him I was completely infatuated with him, there was no purpose to life without him.

Eleven years on and now looking back I can draw many comparisons between those blissful first weeks with God and that of Adam before he disobeyed God. (not that I was sinless like Adam, just blissfully unaware and ignorant to my own sinful nature and more importantly God's uncontainable Grace).

I had been given a glimpse of my sinfulness and of the goodness of God, which had led me to repentance in the first place..... but now to my mind I was born again! A new creation! Created in the Image of God!

Sadly I failed to realise that I was still a man also born to the seed of Adam in his sinful image and so like Adam I desired to increase my knowledge (with the best of intentions).

Yes I wanted to know God

Yes I wanted to please God

But I had these burning desires, I wanted to be someone! I wanted to impress people. You might say "I wanted to be like God, knowing good and Evil" I had no understanding nor discernment of what was of my new Spirit nature nor my old flesh nature.

Adam got what he had wanted a knowledge of good and evil, it just didn't turn out the way he thought it might (well not in the beginning anyway). Having eaten the fruit which God forbid His eyes were suddenly opened... He now saw The Goodness of God which in turn exposed the badness of Adam (he had disobeyed the Perfect God hence becoming the opposite of God which made him EVIL).

It's one of the cliché nightmares; to find yourself naked in full view in the middle of a shopping mall, fully exposed, so that everyone can see your full nakedness. It's horrible to imagine, can you just try to imagine how venerable and embarrassed you would be.

The reality of our sinful nature

Far more embarrassing perhaps (and I borrow this concept from Baptist Pastor Paul Washer), can you imagine if your thoughts were broadcast for the whole congregation to hear across these loudspeakers. Everything you have been thinking this morning the things you would never wish anyone else to know. Worse still every thought you have had in the last week fully exposed.

When God called out to Adam and asked why he was hiding, Adam replied because he was naked. We know Adam was not referring to a physical nakedness because just like us in all his best human efforts he had already fashioned clothes for himself out of fig leaves. If there's one thing I can claim to have learnt on my Christian journey it's that there is no pulling the wool over God's eyes, I

became quite skilled at appearing to others the “perfect Christian” but when God showed me my hypocrisy, I had nowhere to hide!

Psalm 139

God’s light

God knew Adam... and Adam knew it... and he didn’t like it one bit because as John 1:4-5 says.....

The light of God exposes all those things we would rather hide in darkness, a classic comparison of this is when Peter first met Jesus Luke 5:4-8.

Adam and Peter’s reaction to God were much the same, both saw God’s holiness and feared him, which is something to which I can relate. It is no bad thing to stand in awe of God, proverbs 1:7 says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all knowledge!!!! Interesting Adam had received the knowledge of good and evil and has now received the fear of the Lord! Peter likewise, is just starting out his journey with Jesus and he is faced with the knowledge of his own sinfulness and the fear of the Lord. (Peter a simple fisherman now has the beginnings of all knowledge how many philosophers and scientists have strived for such knowledge, and yet never received it). 1 Corinthians 1:18-19

And here’s where I believe it gets most interesting, Adam must surely have remembered God’s words to him “if you eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will surely die” can you imagine then what Adam must have been expecting... I see the cliché image in my mind of the aftermath of a sword fight, the stronger having the weaker defeated on the floor, eyes closed waiting for the final thrust... only to slowly open his eyes to see the stronger holding out his hand to help sword sheaved.

Naturally there were consequence that had to be faced and things got much harder for Adam, and indeed us, but the good news was out God loved Adam, and He loves us.

Adam had had the benefit of knowing God before becoming separated however, As we turn our attentions to the reading from John we see the same Pattern emerging The Holy Spirit first convinces us of our sin (1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.) secondly He brings us to the comfort and knowledge of the love of God BY GRACE. And thirdly he makes us aware of the consequences of not accepting His exclusive truth.

And here we have the answer as to why the Gospel is so offensive, because it hits us where it hurts! All religions except Christianity point to a series of rule that in keeping lead to the reward, that is to say I can be good enough, if I just try harder, I am a good person.....

Isaiah 64:6 states: For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

As Paul tell us in 2 Corinthians 12:9 Gods power is perfected in our weakness, which led Paul to boast of his weaknesses so that Christ’s power would dwell in him. James 4:10 says: humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up, and Proverbs 22:4 Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honour and life.

I spent the last 11 years of my life striving, working and only to find it was all in vain in that moment that I first became a Christian I was complete!!!! I had taken the foundation that Jesus laid down for me and built upon it using wood and straw (1 Corinthians 3:12), it could not withstand the fire of God! And so I have been left with nothing but the foundation that I originally received, as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2:2 I proclaim nothing among you other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified.