

Title: The Summer Road Trip Begins – Trouble in Paradise
Date: May 28, 2017
Subject: Problems in husband wife relationship as seen in Adam and Eve
Scripture: Genesis 3:16

Homework check. What thoughts did you have about heaven this past week? Verses or songs? What did you learn or have refreshed? When you read verses on heaven hopefully you noticed that nearby were guides about how to live in the here and now. SHARE.....

When I spoke last week about anticipating things in this life, it might have been clearer if I would have phrased it as the peril of over anticipation or unrealistic expectation.

The Road Not Taken is a famous poem by Robert Frost. “TWO roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both...I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.” It’s almost as if he regretted the road he chose.

There will be no regrets for followers of Christ who follow the road of Jesus Christ who said he is the way. He described the highway to heaven as a narrow road with a small gate that leads to life (Matthew 7:13, 14). Two of the last three weeks we studied heaven as our goal with Mom’s Day thrown in the middle. The end of Hebrews 11 talks about people of the Old Testament who had faith in the Lord not receiving on earth what had been promised. “But God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40). The people of the Old Testament are fellow travelers with us. There are many life lessons for today that we can learn from their experiences with the Lord.

So let’s take an epic summer road trip with the saints -- the greats -- and maybe a few of the not so greats, the “ain’ts.” The last group could be ain’ts because they ain’t as great as the greats or they ain’t people of faith in God. We can learn from non-followers what not to be like. As we visit people and places we’ll gain insights about God, ourselves and how to live.

The best place to begin is at the beginning with the first man and woman in the book of beginnings -- Genesis. Adam and Eve have a lot to teach us – how to fight against sin and temptation or should I say how not to, God’s design for marriage as between male and female, gender identity, free will as the first couple had a choice whether to obey God or not when it came to eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Go another direction -- a specific aspect of the curse brought on by Adam and Eve. The results of sin begin to be recorded in Genesis 3. Read the entire pronouncement of the curse to get the overall effect.

READ Genesis 3:14-19.

REREAD 3:16 and the last phrase of it. The male female relationship, more specifically the husband wife relationship changed and became a contest of the wills. The insights apply if we have a spouse, will be in the market for one at some time or are single. We can better understand what's happening and why and then respond in keeping with God's plan.

The Lord was more intimately involved in the creation of man than with the rest of creation (2:7). He didn't just speak and *voila* there was Adam. The Almighty, like a potter with clay, took time to uniquely form a man. Then he breathed into him the breath of life. Adam was made in the image of God. This doesn't refer to physical appearance, though most people picture God to look like people. Isn't that interesting how people make that jump in logic? Adam was given a mind, will, emotion, and the ability to choose. Eve would later share those same characteristics as she was also made in the image of God. John Piper, "that if God created us in his image AS MALE AND FEMALE, that implies equality of personhood, equality of dignity, mutual respect, harmony, complementarity, and a unified destiny" (Manhood and Womanhood: Conflict and Confusion After the Fall, sermon 5/21/89).

God saw it wasn't good for man to be alone. Man needed a companion so that the two could team together to do the work. Who can imagine what Adam would have done with the planet if left to himself? Yes, Jean's and my house is still in one piece, but barely. The Lord made someone suitable (2:20-22). He made Eve. Adam was put to sleep so the Lord could perform surgery to remove a rib and then close up the place. Some might say the Lord had to do it this way as Adam couldn't take the pain like women have to when they give birth. The bad news is that there probably was no pain, no side effects. Some ridicule the idea that God used a rib to make a person. The first use of stem cells?

Woman was created to be beside man. Somebody said, "Woman was taken not from man's head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trampled upon, but from his side, under his arm, to be protected, and closest his heart to be loved." Marriage was instituted (2:24). They became one in every sense of the word – physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and all the "allys." One new being.

Kyle Yates about Eve, "Created for fellowship and companionship, man could enter into the full life only as he might share love, trust and devotion in the intimate circle of the family relationship....She was to be one who could share man's responsibilities, respond to his nature with understanding and love, and wholeheartedly co-operate with him in working out the plan of God" (Wycliffe Commentary, Genesis 2:18).

Adam and Eve had the perfect environment. They were in perfect fellowship with the Lord. They could always hear the audible voice of God. Richard Strauss summarizes what happened, "Adam instinctively

knew that Eve was made from him; she was part of him; she was his equal; she was his complement and counterpart...He drew her to himself in tender love. She ended his biting loneliness and filled his life with happiness. She was just exactly what he needed. And nothing brought her more satisfaction than the assurance that her husband needed her so very much. What intense and indescribable pleasure they found in each other's company! How they loved one another! Side by side they lived and labored in perfect harmony, sharing a sense of mutual interdependence, enjoying a freedom of communion and communication, possessing a deep-flowing affection that bound their spirits to each other...

“Oh, there was an order of authority in their relationship. Adam was formed first, then Eve...And Eve was made for Adam, not Adam for Eve...But she was his helper, and in order to be an effective helper she had to share all of life with him. She was with him when God issued the command to subdue the earth and have dominion over it and, consequently, she shared that awesome responsibility equally with her husband. She did everything a helper would be expected to do. She assisted him, encouraged him, advised him, and inspired him, and she did it with a spirit of sweet submissiveness. Adam never resented her help, not even her advice. After all, that is why God gave her to him. Neither did she resent his leadership. His attitude was never tainted with superiority or exploitation” (Richard Strauss, *The Honeymoon is Over—the Story of Adam and Eve*, bible.org).

Then something happened. They disobeyed God and it was impossible to keep the sin hidden. The Lord found them and pronounced the consequences for their lack of trust in him and for their resultant actions.

It's more commonly called “the curse.” It was no big deal for the devil. He already was condemned, living under a curse and would face judgment. He wanted to bring God's ultimate creation down with him. He didn't care about what would happen to the snake he used as a tool. He was trying to destroy relationships.

The man and woman, and therefore all people aren't so much under a curse as are punished. They could be restored. Satan couldn't. The ground was cursed which led to Adam's punishment of work becoming laborious toil. The pain of childbirth is mentioned as punishment for women. That's a whole study in itself.

As said, we're focusing on the aspect related to interpersonal relationships. The key word is desire. It's been understood different ways. The woman would desire physical intimacy with her husband though a result could be pain in childbirth. Nothing wrong with that desire. Adam and Eve were told before their sin to be fruitful and multiply. Some think it's the desire to be married and loved. Nothing wrong with that.

The desire seems to naturally align with the last part of the verse “and he will rule over you.” The same wording about desire is used in 4:7 where Cain is told that sin is crouching at the door and desires to have him but he must master it. He didn't. He let it master him. The same is true here. Eve desires to have Adam's place, his responsibility. She already showed this attitude when the devil crouched at her door with an offer he

said would open her eyes, make her like God and allow her to know good and evil (3:5). Probably would have been a good time to talk with Adam. “Honey, what do you think?” Not sure Adam would have been much help though as he was right there and could have spoken up.

Sin leads to abuse of the authority structure and refusal of the authority structure by supplanting the authority. The man and woman fight for control. They seek to be in charge. The desire to dominate, rule over, subdue or exploit. Disregard even disdain for the other. Drift apart, paying less attention. Preoccupation with stuff. Bitterness, resentment, and rebellion.

The easiest place to see the subjugation of women is among pagan people groups. They subject women to nothing more than property that could be bought, sold, discarded and even killed. Even among the Jewish people the woman would be bought from her parents to become the bride and she could be divorced on a whim such as burning supper. Women were viewed as inferior and the devout Pharisees included in their prayers thankfulness that they were not a woman.

What do we do about the rift Satan has created and tries to widen? Keep eyes on Christ and his grace. Christ’s ultimate victory is first pointed out in the Bible in 3:15. True Christianity has guided people in their attitudes, thoughts and actions.

Be controlled by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). This command comes shortly before the material about marriage where husbands are told to love their wives and wives are told to respect their husbands. Love as in 1 Corinthians 13. Stuart Briscoe clarifies what agape love is. “Agape is not the kind of love that says, ‘I’m going to derive pleasure from you by possessing you.’ Agape doesn’t say, ‘I’ll love you just as long as you love me.’ Agape is a decision that says, ‘I’ll be primarily concerned with your well-being, regardless of your condition, and irrespective of your reaction’” (May 2017 Experiencing Life).

Focus on biblical roles. The two have become one. Focus on the combined self instead of the individual self. Christ has removed any aspect of inferiority that the woman might feel or the man might try to place on her. They are spiritual equals (Galatians 3:28). God instituted headship, you could say, for the ease of operation and for sake of sanity. Adam was made first, so man is in the position of most responsibility. Someone has to take the lead. Like ballet dancers. Someone has to lift the other or throw or catch or whatever they do. Headship and leadership aren’t based on the consequences of the Fall. It goes back to the creation order itself. Play the role the Lord has given.

The Genesis account shows how easy it is for blame to get passed around. When God confronted Adam and Eve and the serpent, he got the blame game. Adam said, “This woman you put here with me. It’s

her fault. I was fine until she came along.” Eve said, “I’m not sure what I can tell you. I was tricked, bamboozled, deceived by the serpent.”

Kent Crockett tells the story, “One day when my son Scott was two years old, I heard him crying. I went into his room and my daughter Hannah, who was four, was there also. A plastic bat was lying on the floor. ‘What happened to Scott?’ I asked. Hannah answered, ‘He hit his head.’ ‘On what?’ She pointed toward the bat on the floor and said, ‘The bat.’ ‘Where was the bat?’ She said, ‘In my hand.’” (Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook*, p. 50). Poor little guy. We learn the blame game pretty early on. Don’t play the blame game. Take personal responsibility.

Strauss, “Adam doubtless had a flawless physique and ruggedly handsome features. And he was made in God’s own image. That means he had a Godlike personality—perfect intellect, emotions, and will. He possessed a brilliant mind, undiminished by sin. He had faultless emotions, including tender and totally unselfish love, the love of God Himself. And he had a will that was in complete harmony with the purposes of his creator. Women, wouldn’t you like to have a man like that? Physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually perfect!

“But let me tell you about Eve...Adam must have gazed at Eve with awe and appreciation. This was God’s creative genius at its best, unblemished grace and beauty, pure loveliness of face and form. Fashioned by the hand of God Himself, Eve had to be the most gorgeous creature who ever walked the face of the earth. And like Adam, she was made in God’s image. Her mind, emotions, and will were unaffected by sin. What man wouldn’t go for a woman like that?”

A woman was walking along the beach when she stumbled upon a Genie’s lamp. She picked it up, rubbed it, and a Genie appeared. The amazed woman asked if she got three wishes. The Genie said, “No. Due to inflation, constant downsizing, and fierce global competition, I can only grant you one wish. So, what’ll it be?” The woman didn’t hesitate. She said, “I want peace in the Middle East. See this map? I want these countries to stop fighting with each other.” The Genie looked at the map and exclaimed, “Lady, these countries have been at war for thousands of years. I’m good but not THAT good! Make another wish.” The woman thought for a minute and said, “Well, I’ve never been able to find the right man. You know, one that’s considerate and fun, likes to cook and helps with the housecleaning, is romantic, gets along with my family, doesn’t watch sports all the time, and is faithful. That’s what I wish for—a perfect husband.” The Genie let out a long sigh and said, “Let me see that map again.” (Preaching Now Vol. 4, No. 5 2/8/05.).

After Adam and Eve’s sin, there is no such thing as the perfect man or woman. That leaves us as imperfect people trying to live in an imperfect world. But with God’s help as we seek to put into practice his principles we can work to overcome this part of the “curse.”