*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 17 - 22

“Adam and Eve”

**Monday, July 17 Genesis 2:4-17**

*“The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”*

 Two specific trees are mentioned as holding a prominent place in the garden. The *tree of life* should be understood as having fruit that extends life rather than instantly granting immortality. The tree was not forbidden to Adam and Eve, and we can assume that they ate from it. But when they were cast from the garden, they were forbidden access to the tree. As a result, they eventually died.

 When it comes to understanding the second tree, biblical scholars have various interpretations for the exact meaning of the phrase “knowledge of good and evil.” More important than a precise definition of the phrase, however, is God’s command that Adam and Eve are not to eat from it. The prohibition is clear, and the warning intended to motivate obedience is that disobedience will lead to death. God’s statement that “When you eat of it you will surely die” does not mean that death is immediate – it means that death is assured. As it was for Adam and Eve, so it will be for us – unless by faith we accept God’s forgiveness through faith in Christ.

*I praise you for grace, Lord, which forgives my disobedience. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 18 Genesis 2:18-25**

*“It is not good for the man to be alone”*

 In these verses we encounter for the first time in the book of Genesis the statement that something is “not good.” In chapter 1 the assessment that something was good indicated the successful completion of bringing order and function to the particular area of creation being implemented by God. What is now “not good” is that Adam is alone. Yes, there are many, many other things that have been created in the world beside Adam, but there is a uniqueness about him that sets him apart from the rest of creation.

 The need, therefore, is for someone that is like Adam. The animals, who out of all the creation seem the best possibilities for the task, are found to be inadequate. So, God creates a woman, and Adam’s response affirms that her similarity to him will alleviate his aloneness. She is “suitable” for him because she is like him in their common humanity, and she is a “helper” in the sense that she is able to bring companionship to his aloneness. Further, being like Adam, Eve also needs a “suitable helper” and Adam is that for her.

*You know what I need, Lord, and you provide every good thing. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 19 Genesis 3:1-7**

*“She took some and ate it . . . and he ate it”*

 Genesis brings the serpent on the scene with little introduction and no specific identification, but the New Testament (Romans 16:20 and Revelation 12:9 are two examples) connects the serpent and Satan. What Satan sets out to do is to misrepresent God, and thereby encourage Adam and Eve to justify their disobedience. Essentially, the serpent’s argument is that God is withholding something good from his human creation, and that their taking of this “good” won’t really lead to the consequence that God has laid out.

 While the gods of human imagination (such as the Roman and Greek gods of antiquity) want to prevent people from becoming like them, jealously guarding their divine abilities and status, such behavior is not at all characteristic of the God of the Bible. He is possessed of qualities and characteristics that he wants people to emulate or acquire. God is love – he desires that we love. God is full of grace and mercy – he wants us to be full of grace and mercy. Adam and Eve, however, give in to the suggestion that God is keeping something good from them and they eat.

*I obey your commands, Lord, for you withhold no good thing from me. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 17 - 22

“Adam and Eve”

**Thursday, July 20 Genesis 3:8-13**

 *“Where are you?”*

 We do not need to wait for the eventual death of Adam and Eve to realize that there are consequences for their disobedience. The fact that they found it necessary to hide from the presence of God shows that their relationship with God has changed. Whether or not *they* thought they had done anything wrong, they were certain that *God* considered their eating of the fruit as disobedient to his command. Things are no longer what they are supposed to be.

 In the film *Grand Canyon* a driver gets lost and suffers a car breakdown in a bad neighborhood. As gang members close in, a tow truck arrives, and the truck driver begins to hook up the car, much to the displeasure of the teenagers. The truck driver’s speech to the gang leader captures the bottom line of Genesis 3: “Man, the world ain’t supposed to work like this . . . this ain’t the way it’s supposed to be. I’m supposed to be able to do my job without askin’ you if I can. And that dude is supposed to be able to wait with his car without you rippin’ him off. Everything’s supposed to be different than what it is here.”

*Because of my sin, Lord, the world is not what it’s supposed to be. Amen.*

**Friday, July 21 Genesis 3:14-19**

*“Because you have done this”*

 The church has traditionally referred to this passage as “the curse.” It is easy to see the reason for this in that the term “curse” is used twice and the negative character of the context is obvious. Yet there is also reason to question this label. When we look carefully at the verses, we see that the serpent is cursed and the ground is cursed, but the people are not cursed. It is true that there are negative consequences for Eve and Adam, but their relationship with God is not forever lost.

 God said that when Adam and Eve ate from the tree, they would incur the sentence of death. This punishment is carried out in 3:22-24 as they are driven from the garden and prevented access to the tree of life. What God warned would happen does indeed happen, and life is about to become very difficult for Adam and Eve as a consequence of their sin. But, at no time has God stopped loving humanity, and in Christ he will bring us back to himself. The curse that should be on us was placed instead on Christ as he hung on the cross.

*While I was still a sinner, Lord, you loved me and gave your life for me. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 22 Genesis 3:20-24**

*“So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden”*

 In eating of the fruit, Adam and Eve attempted to gain autonomy and move away from their dependence on God. While Jesus prayed “Thy will be done,” all too often we say “My will be done.” To a certain extent, God says to us “So be it.” God allows our independence, albeit within limits which allow us freedom to sin without being able to change the ultimate accomplishment of his will. His will includes being gracious to us, and when the consequences of their sin exposes them to the difficult environment they are about to enter, God makes clothes for Adam and Eve to provide for their protection.

 Finally, the conclusion is reached as God enforces the threatened punishment. Banishment from the garden and cutting off access to the tree of life are the means by which the death penalty is carried out. Without the antidote to aging, death is inevitable. Ironically, whereas people were originally charged with “keeping” the garden (Genesis 2:15), now that same verb is used as the cherubim “guard” the way to the tree of life, keeping people out.

*Aware of the deadly seriousness of my sin, Lord, I pray for your forgiveness. Amen.*