

Where Are You?

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Read Genesis 3:1-13

B. It's amazing that the Bible uses so few words to describe the fall of man into sin

1. We like to complicate things with thoughtful discourses on the nature of man, the complexity of intellectual and emotional processes, and reasoned explanations about why people do what they do.
2. The Bible is fairly simple
 - a. God gave them a specific command and warning
 - b. the serpent deceived them into thinking that things were not as God said
 - c. they disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit
3. The results are also simple, but profound
 - a. they did, indeed, know some things they did not know before
 - 1) shame -- they covered themselves so they would not be naked
 - 2) fear -- they were afraid to appear before God because they knew they were naked
 - 3) shame and fear worked in tandem to ruin man's relationship with God

C. One key to this entire event is what is seen in the action of God as he walked in the garden

1. His question -- "Where are you?"
 - a. it's not a question of ignorance as if God didn't know where he was at all
 - b. it's a question designed to elicit a response from Adam and Eve
 - c. the question itself demands an answer that doesn't simply state a location, but a state of being, a condition
2. It is a question that God could ask today
 - a. human beings are still sinning, rebelling against God's will
 - b. though mankind has long suffered from the consequences of the fall in the garden, it is still true that sin affects every one of us
 - c. as Adam and Eve bore shame and fear, so do sinners today bear the same things
 - d. just as God sought the man and woman in the garden, God still seeks for those who hide from him today
3. Ezek 34:16 -- "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick. . . . NASU
4. Matt 18:11 -- "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. NASU

Luke 15:4-10 -- "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I tell you that in the same way,

there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!" In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." NASU

D. Today, I want to ask this question of you

1. To encourage you to think about the answer, I will suggest some answers that might be given by any number of people

2. One or more of them might be your answer – if so, then please consider both the implications and the need to allow God's own answer to resolve whatever problem exists

I. ARE YOU HIDING FROM GOD?

A. A lot of people try to hide from God

1. They hide by doing something similar to Adam and Eve
 - a. they cover themselves and attempt to hide out of sight of God
 - b. the specifics may change, but the basic attempt has not

2. They may use all sorts of things
 - a. some cover and hide themselves with denial
 - b. some cover and hide behind unbelief
 - c. some cover and hide through chosen ignorance

3. Jer 23:23-24 -- "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD. NASU

B. Are you trying to hide from God this morning?

1. You need to know that nothing is hidden from God
2. God is looking for you, not because you've been successful in hiding from him, but because he wants you to understand, and answer for, the place you're in

II. ARE YOU IGNORING GOD?

A. Ignoring God is a common attempt of mankind to avoid dealing with God

1. Like hiding from God, there are different ways that a person might ignore God
 - a. they might simply ignore God altogether and shut him out of their minds
 - b. they might ignore God's word
 - c. they might ignore anything that God might say relative to the kind of life they live
 - d. they might ignore the fact that life has a spiritual element to it and suppress any urge or motivation to know God

2. Jer 6:16-17 -- Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, "We will not walk in it.' "And I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, "We will not listen.' NASU

B. Are you ignoring God this morning?

1. I've known people who attended church assemblies only to spend the whole time trying to ignore the fact that God was working on their minds and hearts
2. I've known people who refused to discuss spiritual matters, rejected outright any attempt to get them to think about the consequences of their choices and behavior
3. I've known people who got angry with God because they could not understand why things happened the way they did, so instead they turned a deaf ear to God
4. I've known people who spent time in Bible class and during sermons totally focused on something other than what was being discussed

C. God is looking for you – do you even know it?

III. ARE YOU TRYING TO JUSTIFY YOUR BEHAVIOR?

A. Justifying one's behavior goes all the way back to Adam and Eve

1. Gen 3:12-13 -- The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." NASU
2. Ex 32:21-24 -- Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?" Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 'I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.'" NASU
3. 1 Sam 15:20-21 -- Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." NASU
4. Luke 10:25-29 -- And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" NASU

B. Are you trying to justify your choices and behavior?

1. Isa 5:20-23 -- Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight! Woe

to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink, Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!
NASU

2. It won't work
 - a. God knows the truth about whatever it is that you have said or done
 - b. the attempt to justify yourself is simply another way of covering yourself and hiding from God

IV. ARE YOU IN A STATE OF RUIN BECAUSE OF SIN?

A. The truth is that sin destroys us

1. Isa 59:9-13

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
And righteousness does not overtake us;
We hope for light, but behold, darkness,
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.
10 We grope along the wall like blind men,
We grope like those who have no eyes;
We stumble at midday as in the twilight,
Among those who are vigorous we are like dead men.
11 All of us growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We hope for justice, but there is none,
For salvation, but it is far from us.
12 For our transgressions are multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us,
And we know our iniquities:
13 Transgressing and denying the LORD,
And turning away from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words.
NASU

2. Eph 2:1 -- And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, NASU

B. Is your life in ruins today because of your sins?

1. God is looking for you?
2. Where are you?
 - a. hiding from God?
 - b. ignoring him?
 - c. trying to justify yourself?
3. Every bit of these attempts is no better than trying to cover yourself with fig leaves, or to hide from the presence of God – it won't work

CONCLUSION

A. Our question is worth considering and answering

B. There may actually be a few other responses to make

1. Someone may be on the road to belief and obedience to the Lord
2. Someone else may be ready to step out in service in some special or particular way
3. There are several who answered God's call in a greatly different way than Adam and Eve
 - a. Gen 22:1 -- Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." NASU
 - b. Gen 46:2 -- God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." NASU
 - c. Ex 3:4 -- When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." NASU
 - d. Acts 9:10 -- 10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." NASU

C. Invitation