

Genesis 3:21
The LORD God
made garments of skin
for Adam and his wife
and clothed them.

Stepping into Eternity

Waking up to the events of the Las Vegas shooting yesterday changed my mind about this week's devotional. Everything I had written sounded frivolous compared to the tragedy, of one man killing nearly 60 people and injuring hundreds more in one five-minute attack. In that instant, and over the next few hours, 60 people stepped into eternity - with or without God.

When we read Genesis and the account of the Garden of Eden, we see the immediate and painful separation from the LORD when Adam and Eve choose to sin. The Garden illustrates man's relationship with God, a place where He and man walk together in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8); a relationship we can only imagine compared to the difficulty life today. Adam and Eve can go anywhere and do anything *except* for one thing - they are not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:17).

Now centuries have trivialized this tree, so that now we see going against the LORD as "eating an apple." However, if we instead describe that moment of Adam's and Eve's sin as devising their own plans, wanting their own way, disobeying the LORD's commands, I believe we can all relate.

What we see is, in that moment, man experienced immediate separation from God. The mind that before was at rest and in union with God now experienced anguish and suffering. The eye that beheld each other's nakedness with purity (Genesis 2:25), now turned away in shame. The person previously able to walk in the *presence of God*, now hid (Genesis 3:8) – preferring the darkness and shadows instead of the pure light of God. The Creator knew what had happened, but still His immense love kicked in, for He was thinking ahead - to us.

He killed an animal to make garments out of the skins to cover their nakedness (Genesis 3:21). The scriptures say God "clothed them," again showing that personal, touching emphasis on His care. When you consider

that Adam's and Eve's nakedness now represented their sin and the animal skins represented the first blood sacrifice, it's not a stretch to fast-forward to the crucifixion of Jesus and identify His sacrifice for the sin of the world. If you've ever wondered how Jesus' shed blood has anything to do with your sin – here's the connection.

Now, God is eternally pure and man is impure. He cannot be in God's presence. This isn't a petulant God who looks down his nose at us and waves us away. This is a God of purity, and majesty, and beauty beyond measure; and man walked in this purity, and majesty, and beauty until he chose to do things his own way. So now, God HAS to evict Adam and Eve from the garden, from His presence, and it is here that we see the gaping yaw of separation from God, the One with whom we were created to be one.

But still God is not done taking care of His creation, for remaining in the Garden of Eden is the tree of life. Genesis 3:24 tells us that "after God drove man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life". Had God not blocked man's way back into the garden, and had Adam and Eve eaten from the tree of life, man would have lived *eternally separated* from God.

More specifically you and I would have lived eternally separated from God. Which brings me to the events of yesterday.

While we live on this earth, God's mercy keeps the way open and gives each person every opportunity

- to turn to Him
- to understand the reason why Jesus Christ died on the cross
- to connect our sin with His death and resurrection
- to realize that Jesus' blood covers our sins, and
- to bring us back into relationship Him

I understand some will say that the person who pulls the trigger is the one who should bear the cost of separation from God. However, our salvation has only to do with us and God. It has nothing to do with what anyone else does or does not do to us.

There is a reason Christ needed to die on the cross. Because Adam and Eve sinned, we were born separated from God. But God provided the way for us come back into relationship with Him, through Christ's death, and that is our salvation. The work of Christ is done – but we must acknowledge our sin, and our need for salvation, *while we live*. The moment we cross the veil from this world into the next the opportunity is gone.

You can do this easily –

- Confess your sin
- Acknowledge your need for God to cover your sin through Christ's sacrifice on the cross
- Ask Jesus into your heart and
- Be saved.

For if you confess with your mouth, and believe in your heart, that Jesus is LORD, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

If you have questions or need prayer for salvation, feel free to email me at rjhughes006@gmail.com. You can also reach out to our church pastors at <http://www.calvarychapelsalinas.org/>

Blessings.