

# God Calls Adam & Eve

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Genesis 3:1-13

**Sermon Series:**  
**Calling People to Faith**

*How is God calling you?*

There are now 239 million cell phone subscribers in the United States. Cell phones are ubiquitous today, even in church, which brings me to the issue of cell phones in church. Cell phones interrupting worship have become something of a problem. Churches in some countries, Mexico, Spain and Japan, to name a few, have resorted to installing high tech equipment to jam cell phone signals during Sunday morning worship.

One pastor I know has become so frustrated with cell phones interrupting worship that he has instituted a rule. If your cell phone rings during worship, you make a \$100 donation to the mission fund.

A mother was worshipping with her son one Sunday morning. She was annoyed that her son was fidgeting with his cell phone during the sermon. She nudged him to stop text messaging his friends. Her son smiled and showed his mother what was on his phone screen. It was the very passage the preacher was expounding in his sermon.

Cell phones are elaborate calling devices. We're talking, today, about God calling people. I've never heard of a single instance in which God has called someone using a cell phone, but God calls people.

We clergy hijack this whole notion of divine calling. We talk as if God's call is the sole prerogative of clergy. The Bible has an alternative view. Jesus didn't call a single religious professional to join the ranks of his twelve. His disciples were people with day jobs. They were fishermen, tent makers and accountants. Our English word "vocation" comes from the Latin "vocare," meaning calling. God calls us through our vocations. God calls us to use our gifts and abilities in our vocations, as well as outside of them.

We talk a great deal in this church about our Call-Equip-Send mission. Before we can be equipped for God's service and sent out to love and serve the Lord, we must answer God's call.

How is God calling you? Maybe you're here today by divine appointment. Perhaps God is calling you to let go of a grudge or reach out to someone. God may be calling you into retirement or to marriage or a new career path. God may be calling you to arrest a destructive behavior in your life. Jesus may be calling you to leave your life of self-absorption to follow him.

We are preaching this fall, as evidenced by the bulletin cover, on some of the people God called in Scripture. Some were unsuspecting

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far away?***

before God called them. Most were reluctant, initially, to answer the call. We start today at the beginning, with Genesis, with God's call to Adam and Eve.

The third chapter of Genesis opens with a serpent, who is described as the craftiest creature in God's created order. The identity of this serpent is not disclosed for us here. Later, in the New Testament, we learn of his diabolic identity (Revelation 12:9). There is no attempt here to explain the origin of evil. Our Scripture lesson is preoccupied solely with the genesis of human guilt and sin.

Some people make a big deal out of the fact that the serpent addresses Eve rather than Adam. Some speculate that Eve is more gullible and vulnerable. I don't buy it. For starters, every time the serpent uses the pronoun "you," it's in the tense second person plural. The serpent may be addressing Eve, but Adam is standing in the wings, saying and doing nothing. Adam's role is altogether passive. We are told Eve gives him something to eat, and he simply does as he is told. What a wimp!

This crafty serpent does not begin with a bald-faced lie, his question to Eve is designed to twist the truth a little bit. "Did God really say you shall not eat of the fruit of any tree in the garden?" (3:1).

Eve attempts to set the record straight, but then she overplays her hand: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit

of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die'" (3:3). She contributes to the serpent's distortion by misrepresenting what God has said. God said nothing about touching the fruit.

Eve's embellishment opens the door for the serpent's ruse: "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (3:4-5). If there was any doubt about the serpent's intentions, everything is on the table now. The serpent calls God's motives into question. God must want to hoard this knowledge for Himself.

In quick, staccato fashion, our narrator reports, "Eve took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband and he ate" (3:6). The time-honored tradition that identifies the fruit with the apple has no justification in the text. The only reference to fruit is to fig leaves in verse 7. The tradition of associating the fruit with an apple most likely originates from the common Latin sound of the words evil (malus) and apple (malum).

We are told in verse 7, with biting irony, that their eyes are indeed opened. But their newfound knowledge is not what they had in mind. They behold their own nakedness; so much for the innocence of being naked and unashamed in Genesis 2:25! It's the first recorded instance of cover-up in human history.

The anthropomorphic language of verse 8 is rather striking: "They

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heard God walking in the cool of the day.” From the outset, Yahweh isn’t aloof; He is altogether personable and approachable.

God calls Adam, “Where are you?” (3:9). God doesn’t ask where are you hiding? God asks a more philosophical question, “Where are you?” Where they are in this moment is far away from God.

Adam’s response is rather pitiful: “I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself” (3:10)

“Who told you were naked?” (3:11) Before Adam can reply, God asks a second, penetrating question: “Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?” Everyone joins in playing the blame game. Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the serpent and I’m sure, if given half a chance, the serpent would have blamed God for making him this way. Notice what Adam says to God about Eve, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and I ate” (3:12). Somehow it’s God’s fault now for giving Eve to Adam.

When God calls Adam, he hides. Imagine hiding from God. But, hey, people do it all the time.

God’s question, “Where are you,” is not an inquiry to determine their location. God already knows their whereabouts. God’s question is more existential. Where are you in relationship to God? Are you close or far away?

Some of us, like our first parents, are trying to hide from God. We are ashamed, so we hide our-

selves. Imagine trying to hide from God. How futile!

There are lots of ways we can hide from God. It’s possible to hide from God, even in church. We can come to church and pay our respects to God, yet keep God at arm’s length. Who wants God rummaging around in our personal affairs? Who knows what He might find there?

In the Snow White fairy tale, every morning the wicked queen would ask the mirror on the wall, “Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” Everyday, the mirror would answer, “You, O Queen, are the fairest of them all.” This pleased the queen to no end, since she knew the mirror on the wall could speak nothing but the truth. But one day the mirror tells her something she doesn’t want to hear: “You, O Queen, are fair still, but Snow White is fairer still.”

We hide from God because God’s mirror is brutally honest. It exposes our darkness. And God only knows we’d rather keep the darkness hidden. God brings things to light, and some of it ain’t pretty!

I’ve had conversations with people through the years who have registered their intellectual objections to the Bible. People will sometimes say, “I just can’t believe the Bible; it’s so full of errors.” I often respond along the lines of “You know, that’s interesting, I’ve given most of my life to studying the Bible and I am struck by its accuracy. Could you show me one of those errors?”

***God is not out to get you. God is out to love you, forgive you and give you life.***

Invariably, I will hear them say, “Well, you know, I actually haven’t ever read the Bible.” Their objection is not really an intellectual problem, after all. Some people don’t want God in their lives. They’re afraid of what will be exposed.

The Bible tells us plainly we can’t hide from God. Jonah tried to hide from God. God called Jonah to preach to the Ninevites, but Jonah didn’t want the job. He had read the travel brochures about Tarshish, so he boarded the first ship headed in the opposite direction. Jonah was trying to “...flee from the presence of the Lord” (Jonah 1:3).

What was Jonah thinking? How can someone flee from God? Where can you go to get away from God? Even in the belly of a great fish, Jonah couldn’t hide from the Lord.

Psalms 139 speaks about the impossibility of hiding from God:

“Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your  
presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are  
there;  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are  
there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
And settle at the farthest limits of  
the sea,  
Even there your hand shall lead  
me,  
And your right hand shall hold me  
fast.”

Joe Louis was the world heavy-weight boxing champion from

1937 until his retirement in 1949. In 1946, Joe Louis defended his title against a skilled boxer named Billy Conn. Louis was warned to watch out for Conn’s great speed, his tactic of darting in to attack and then moving quickly out of striking range. In a famous display of confidence, Louis said about his cagey opponent, “He can run but he can’t hide.”

You can run but you can’t hide from God. But here’s the best news of all. You don’t need to hide from God. God is not out to get you. God is out to love you, forgive you and give you life.

Sure, Adam and Eve lose paradise, but they don’t lose God. There is one pervasive promise in Scripture that extends from the opening words of Genesis to the final curtain call in Revelation. “I am with you. I will never leave or forsake you. Lo, I am with you always! ”

