

Genesis 3:8-15

Today I'd like to start out by looking at the love of a **father**. I find it rather interesting that while **Father's Day** is being celebrated today, many people will hardly even **notice**. On the other hand, **Mother's Day** is a fairly **important** family event. Most people make a pretty big deal out of **Mother's Day**, but **Father's Day** kind of falls by the wayside. I wonder **why**? Are fathers less **important** than mothers? Do fathers **love** their children **less** than mothers? Of course not. Our father simply shows his love for us in ways that are **different** from our mother. Our text today gives us the opportunity to speak about a father's love. Although such love doesn't always look the **same** to us as a mother's love, nevertheless, it is **there**, and it is just as **strong**.

There can be no greater example of a father's love than the love which our **heavenly** Father has shown toward us. In our text today **Our Heavenly Father's Love** is revealed to us in two ways - first through **probing questions** and then through **precious statements**.

The **probing questions** came after mankind had fallen into **sin** by eating the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In our text, God came to the Garden of Eden to walk and talk with Adam and Eve, as He had done in the past. But, this time nobody seemed to be **around**, so God asked the **first** of His probing questions, "*Where **are** you?*" Now, God **knew** where Adam was, but He asked this question, and those which **follow**, because He wanted **Adam and Eve** to give the **answers**. Perhaps that seems a little **silly**, but what God was **doing** here was using **questions** as a **teaching** tool. All good teachers have the ability to use **questions** to draw **answers** out of their students. You see, if a student has figured out and given an answer **himself**, that answer means much **more** to him, and he will remember it **longer**, than if the teacher simply **tells** him the answer. God was asking **probing questions**, because He wanted Adam and Eve's **answers** to make a **lasting impression** on them.

Notice how Adam responded. He said, "*I heard You in the garden, and I was **afraid** because I was **naked**; so I hid.*" Did you ever give an answer to a question, and then immediately go, "Oops! I shouldn't have said **that**"? Well, that's probably what **Adam** did in our text. With his own words, Adam had given a clear **revelation** to his heavenly Father that he had recently acquired a **sinful nature**! Adam had **always** been naked, and it had never **bothered** him on any of God's **previous** visits to the garden. But our text reveals what **sin** had done to him.

Not only was he **ashamed** of his **nakedness**, but he was also **afraid** of his heavenly **Father** - the **only** Father he **had** - the same Father who had **made** him; and who had given him a **wife**, and a wonderful place to **live**, as well as **dominion** over all the animals. God had shown **love** to Adam - but **sin** had made Adam **afraid** of that gracious God.

Adam **knew** what was wrong. He had directly **disobeyed** the only commandment God had given to him - "*Don't eat from the tree in the middle of the garden.*" Adam **also** knew what the **consequences** would be for his disobedience. When Adam looked into the **mirror** of God's command, he saw the verdict - "*You are **guilty!** You will surely **die!***" Now, Adam didn't **want** to die, so the only chance he **had** was not to let God **find out** what he had done - or so he **thought**. So, Adam began telling **half-truths**, that is, He started beating around the bush. Instead of telling God **exactly** what he had done, Adam simply told God that he was **afraid**, and he hoped God would let it go at that.

But God loved Adam **too much** to let him get away with **hiding** his sinful actions. Those actions had to be brought out into the **open** and be **confessed**, so they could be **dealt** with and **forgiven** - even though Adam was terribly **afraid**. Have you ever been afraid to tell your father when you did something **wrong**? As children, it is terribly **frightening** to know how **powerful** our earthly father is. He seems so **big**, and so **strong**, and so **smart**. Some children become so frightened, that they immediately resort to telling **lies** in order to **hide** their sin. But somehow, our earthly fathers always seem to **know** when we are lying, and our **lying** only makes matters **worse**. Then of course, when we have done something bad, it is **equally** as frightening to realize how **wrong** we have been, and to contemplate the **punishment** which we **deserve**. I can think of a number of times from my youth when I had done something wrong, and my mother spoke those dreaded words, "*Just wait until your **father** gets home.*" The hours seemed like days, as I waited for my dad to get home from work, and all the while I wondered what horrible punishment lay in store for me. Usually, it wasn't nearly as horrible as I had anticipated, but one thing was **certain** - he **always** wanted to know **what had been going on**.

I think **most** fathers are like that. While they already know what they are going to say, they still ask lots of **probing questions** like, "*Where have you **been?***" "*Who have you been **with?***" and "*What have you been **doing?***" And the reason they **ask** is because they **love** us, and they are **concerned** for our physical and spiritual welfare. If they didn't **care**, they wouldn't even **ask**. We need to

remember that our **fathers** have been in trouble in the past too. And generally speaking, whenever it is possible, they want to help us **avoid** trouble, **before** we fall into it.

God wanted to help **Adam** too, but Adam was already **past** the **preventative** stage. He was already **in** big trouble. So the **next** step was to get Adam to **confess** his sin, in order that the Father could tell him that the sin was **forgiven**. Therefore, God asked two **more** probing questions. “*Who **told** you that you were **naked**? Have you eaten from the **tree** that I commanded you **not** to eat from?*” Think of how Adam must have been sweating and squirming. His heavenly Father had hit the problem right on the head, and he would **have** to confess. But true to sinful human form, Adam decided that he wasn’t going to take the rap **alone**, so he passed the buck to his **wife**. In effect Adam said, “Yes, I **did** it, but it wasn’t really my **fault**.” “*The woman **You** put here with me - **she** gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.*” Do you recognize the **selfishness** and **ingratitude** in Adam’s answer? At first he had **gladly** received Eve from the LORD as a great **blessing**, but as soon as **sin** had entered his heart, he blamed **her** for his downfall. Unfortunately, **Eve** doesn’t come out of this looking any **better**. She was guilty too. But **she** passed the buck for **her** sin on to the **serpent**. Both Adam and Eve were unwilling to take the **blame**, and **face** the problem. It seemed so much **easier** to simply **ignore** the problem, and blame someone **else**.

Sad to say, throughout the 29 years of my ministry, I have seen the same thing happen in far too many marriages. On their wedding day both husband and wife **thank God** for the wonderful **spouse** He has given to them. But as soon as financial, or social, or sexual problems set in, then all of a sudden that person who was such a **blessing** becomes **impossible** to **live** with. That **spouse** becomes the **cause** of everything which is **bad** in life. So instead of **working** on their problems, they get a **divorce**, or **move in** with someone else. And as if that attitude isn’t sad enough all by **itself**, then think about the fact that it is really **God** who is being **blamed** for all these problems. Instead of admitting their **own** sinfulness, what they are really saying is that it is **God’s** problem - because if **God** hadn’t given them that spouse in the **first** place, their problems would never have started. Isn’t it amazing how **crafty** and **deceptive** the devil can be in convincing us to **cling** to our **sins**, and to **run away** from God’s **forgiveness**?

But getting back to the Garden of Eden, even though there was nobody else left to **blame**, the **serpent** probably would have found some kind of lame excuse for **his** sin too - but God didn’t even give him the **chance**. Since Satan was using

that serpent for an evil purpose, God put a **curse** on it. In the future, the serpent would be considered among the **lowliest** of the animals, because of the part it had played in man's temptation. Then after the LORD had meted out the **serpent's** punishment, He turned His attention to **Satan** himself. Now remember, there were also two broken human beings carefully and fearfully **listening** - waiting to hear what kind of **punishment** God had in mind for **them**. But as odd as it may seem instead of giving them **punishment**, God gave them a **precious statement**. God had received a **confession** from Adam and Eve - not the kind of confession He had **hoped** for - but even a **weak-kneed** confession is better than none at all. Therefore, God made a **precious statement** to Satan - a statement which would completely change the lives of those two **wretched** human beings, as well as the lives of all their **offspring**. This statement is the first promise of a **Savior**, and it is recorded in Genesis 3:15, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will **crush** your head, and you will **strike** His heel.*"

God was talking to **Satan**, but the eternal **benefits** of that **precious statement** would belong to **mankind**. Out of **love**, and love **alone**, the heavenly Father would send a **Savior** to crush **forever** the power of Satan. The price that Savior would have to pay was a bruised **heel**. While that doesn't sound like a particularly high price, the **poisonous** bite of Satan - inflicted on Jesus as He hung on the cross, thus **crushing** Satan's head - was powerful enough to **take** our Savior's **life**. But thanks be to God, it was **not** powerful enough to **keep** it. Once again **Our Heavenly Father's Love** would prevail.

My dear friends, our heavenly Father **loves** you very much. In fact He loves you **so** much, that "*He **gave** His one and only **Son**, that whoever believes in Him shall not **perish**, but have **eternal life**.*" God in His **love** provided us with a **Savior**, without whom we could not **live** - at least, not **eternally**. As you go through life, don't try to **hide** or **deny** your **sins**, nor **run away** from your God, but rather boldly **confess** your sins, and confidently receive the **forgiveness** which He lovingly offers, resting assured that **Our Heavenly Father's Love** will **always** prevail. Amen.