

Genesis: Foundations of the Christian Faith

“The Effects of the Fruit” (Genesis 3:1-15)

There’s nothing better on a hot summer day than a big slice of juicy watermelon! I may not be the best at picking one out at the farmer’s market, but I know a good one when I taste it. You cut into it and you see a beautiful pink color. It’s good right from the moment you cut into it, but somehow it gets better when you put it in the fridge for a little while to let it chill. Then with each bite, it refreshes you and cools you down. That juice runs down your chin dripping all over your clothes. What would happen, though, if you ate the rind of that melon? Or what would happen if that melon was actually rotten? What refreshed you before would make you sick. When the melon is good, there are benefits, but the effects of eating bad fruit or what you shouldn’t eat are disastrous.



The Bible speaks of many trees in the Garden of Eden, but two of those trees are named. The Tree of Life which presumably if Adam and Eve ate its fruit, it would confirm them in their imperishable physical life and make physical death impossible. The other was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God gave them one command. They could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The effect of eating that fruit would do so much more than just make them sick. It would be disastrous and death causing not just for Adam and Eve, but for all people as sin would enter the world.

Adam and Eve, like the rest of God’s world, were perfect at creation. Many often wonder why God would put such a tree there in that garden. This wasn’t God tempting Adam and Eve with something so enticing that it would be hard for them to resist. They had a perfect ability to keep that one command. So that tree was an opportunity for perfect mankind to live their perfection by obeying God’s one command. Yet Satan, a fallen angel, would use that tree to do just the opposite. He would use it masterfully in his temptation of Eve to get mankind to fall from perfection into sin souring their perfect relationship with God and each other.

The Bible says that Satan, who came in the form of a snake, was more clever than any other wild animal. From his first words, we hear him wedging his way in with what seemed to be a simple innocent question. “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden.’” Then Satan builds on it with a bald faced lie. “You certainly will not die. In fact, God knows that the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Adam and Eve were created in God’s image, perfect and holy like him, but the one thing they were not was God. Satan used that fact to tempt Eve to be unsatisfied with simply being in God’s image.

After hearing Satan, that fruit all of sudden looked so juicy and wonderful to eat. It seemed to have the extra benefit of gaining wisdom. So she ate that forbidden fruit and gave some to Adam who was with her. I’ve often wondered how that fruit tasted. Did it taste sour or rotten in their mouths? No matter what it tasted like, the effects of the fruit were immediate. It was not so good and wonderful. Their eyes were opened alright. They knew evil, but only because they experienced it and had done it. Shame and guilt filled their hearts as sin entered the world. There is a lot we could talk about in this chapter when it comes to sin and the effects of the fruit, but today I want us to think especially about how eating that fruit affected relationships beginning with man’s relationship with God.

In their shame, Adam and Eve realized they were naked. So when they heard God coming into the Garden, they hid from him. When they were perfect, man did not fear standing in God’s presence. In fact it

seemed that God visiting them in the garden was in some way a regular occurrence. Now the very sound of the holy God coming caused fear and terror. Satan had succeeded in souring God and man's once perfect relationship. Not only do we see their fear at standing in God's presence, we see the extent of Adam's fallen state.

When God confronts Adam, Adam tries to deflect the guilt away from himself as he first of all blamed Eve. In the same breath he blamed God as well. It was almost as if he resented God for the woman he had previously rejoiced over when God placed her in his life. "The woman you gave to be with me - she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." What once was perfect and harmonious is now filled with man's shame, guilt, fear, blame and resentment. That same blame and resentment now also filled Adam and Eve's once perfect relationship as husband and wife.

Blame came so easily and quickly even though they were each without excuse. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed Satan. Yet the effects of the fruit on Adam and Eve's relationship was more than just blaming each other. Adam was filled with resentment for Eve because she gave him that fruit even though he should have stopped her from even eating it in the first place. With that resentment, you see the discord and lack of harmony as selfishness began to assert itself replacing perfect love for each other. Adam and Eve cared more about themselves and what they wanted.

Adam and Eve only had one command and they broke it. God has given us ten that he says we need to obey perfectly. When we look at God's ten commandments, you could say they deal with relationships. The first three speak specifically toward our relationship with God. The last seven speak specifically toward our relationship with other people. Every disobedience of one of those commands is "sin". How often do we see ourselves sinning in thought, word, and action? Now look at every one of your relationships and see just how our sin affects them too. Every relationship is soured by the rotting rind of sin starting with our relationship with God who gave those commands.

Does your own guilt and shame move you to fear the very thought of standing in his presence? Would you rather hide what you have done and flee from God instead of confessing what you have done even though you know you cannot hide from him? Do you want to deflect guilt any way possible even if its blaming God himself just so you can avoid feeling so guilty? Our sin sours our relationship with God filling it with disobedience, guilt, shame, fear, and blame.

What about our human relationships? If sin has affected our relationship with God our creator, surely the rotting rind of sin has to affect those too. Do you find yourself easily blaming someone else for what you do? It's so easy isn't it? Then does the finger pointing drive wedges causing resentment and discord? Instead of love, how often do you see selfishness asserting itself in your relationships? Tasting the fruit of our sin, it is a sour, rotting taste in our mouths. Yet look at how God deals with fallen sinners who are living the effects of that fruit.

God's command was simple. If Adam and Eve broke that command and ate the fruit, they would die because of their disobedience. Yes, Adam and Eve would die eventually, but at that moment God reacts not with punishment. His immediate response is to act in grace, undeserved love, to restore his relationship with man that had been soured by sin.

We see God's grace in how he came to the garden. He didn't come with thundering judgment. God simply called to them. "Where are you?" God called. Obviously God who knows all things knew where Adam and Eve were, but he asked anyway to draw Adam out so that he could confess. Instead of confessing the

action, Adam gave an excuse pointing to his shame and fear. "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself." Then God asked another question again with the intent to draw out that confession. "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam and Eve couldn't hide what they had done any longer.

Despite Adam and Eve's reluctance to confess their sin and acknowledge their own guilt, God continued to deal with them in grace making a promise, a promise to send the Savior who would take their sin on himself and endure their sin's punishment for them. As God spoke to Satan, to him they were a pronouncement of his defeat. To Adam and Eve, they heard God fill their sour, rotten tasting mouths with the sweet taste of his saving grace. **"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head and you will crush his heel."** (vs. 15) We'll dig deeper into God's promise next week, but we rejoice in this today: the effects of the fruit of sin would be undone and wiped away by the fruit of God's grace on display in the offspring of the woman - Jesus. Through his death on the cross our sins are wiped away and forgiven. What once soured our relationship with God and our relationships with each other has been taken away as if they were never there.

When you taste that juicy watermelon, it tastes so sweet on a summer day like this one. It's exactly what you want. When we taste the fruit of God's grace in all its sweetness it's what we need. Hearing that promise of grace, let its juices run down your chin today and every day of your life. No longer do we fear standing in the presence of God. Shame and guilt do not fill our hearts any more because Jesus bore our shame and our guilt for us. Oh sweet that taste of grace is! As that sweet juice runs down your chin, the tendency is to wipe it away. Don't. Let it keep running down your chin so that it fills your whole life.

Rejoice in God's saving grace! Live in God's grace every day desiring to obey his commands out of love for him. Approach him in prayer that simply trusts his promises. Live your relationships with each other free of the blame, selfishness, discord, and resentment that so often strains them. Instead may selfless love fill our marriages, our families, our friendships, and every relationship we have with those around us living the effects of the fruit of God's grace every day. Amen

