

Covered with Fig Leaves

We pick up the story with Adam and his wife having just eaten the Fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and evil *and* Blessing and calamity. In their attempt to self promote they have disconnected themselves from God and His Life/Light source. Where there was once a Life provision (the Blessing) for them, they are now connected to satan and they are a stripped being.

Satan who only has hatred to give has made them connected to his spiritual force of death (the curse) and they now have discovered that they are naked.

Naked defined: (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

1. *Not covered by clothing*
2. *Devoid of customary or natural covering*
3. *Scantily supplied or furnished*
4. *Unarmed, defenceless*
5. *Lacking confirmation or support*

Blessing defined: (Oxford Dictionary)

1. *God's favour and protection*
2. *A person's sanction or support*

Cursed defined: (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)

1. *Execrated (a loathing for somebody, a declared curse, the denouncing of somebody); afflicted; vexed; tormented; blasted by a curse*
2. *Devoted to destruction*

Adam immediately looked at his nakedness and used the solution to cover himself with the leaves of a fig tree. The problem was he was just dealing with his physical manifestation of being "spiritually dead" (or cursed). So even though he was now covered with fig leaf clothes, when God came to have His regular evening conversations with him he was still terrified. Adam's own words shows he still considered himself naked and knowing he wouldn't be able to solve this problem through his own wisdom's efforts or ability. He needed God's solution to have a connection with Life or the Blessing.

Genesis 3:7-10 ^(AMP)

⁷ *Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves apron like girdles.*

⁸ *And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*

⁹ *But the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, Where are you?*

¹⁰ *He said, I heard the sound of You [walking] in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

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The reality is man's wisdom and the physical coverings made from plants are not capable of resolving the "naked" problem for a "sinful man" standing before God. Mankind now a part of death or darkness needed something more than a covering of plants to interact and function with God and His Light.

God knew this and had a plan. He first revealed a bit of it when He shed the blood of an innocent animal to cover Adam so he could stand before Him with his "sin or death" covered. With this bloody skin covering in place they could now make an arm's length connection to God and receive again at least a partial "Blessing" for Life. Let's look deeper at what Hebrews tells us about "Without the shedding of blood there is no covering for man's sin nature before God".

Hebrews 9:22 ^(AMP)

[In fact] under the Law almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins.

I realise that this animal blood sacrifice was before there was the "Law" but to think the blood is only in the Law exclusively and not used here, is to miss the deeper meaning of the work of the blood in God's plan. Remember, long before the Law we see Abel's animal sacrifice in Genesis 4:4, Noah's in Genesis 7:20 and Abraham's in Genesis 22:13. All these men were following the original pattern of the first covenant blood sacrifice God completed with Adam.

In the Garden of Eden God was providing the foundational beginning of His plan for man's Salvation at Calvary using Jesus' own Blood. These temporary animal blood coverings used here were just a "type" for Jesus' Blood. Jesus' Blood that was shed on the Cross had the Power to do much more than any animal. His Blood would be used to finally completely remove and not just cover man's sin. After Jesus' death, sinful mankind that had become separated in the Garden was now completely cleansed and again able to have a full connection with God. Jesus' Blood was the completion of Adam's animal skin coverings God started in the Garden of Eden.

A quick recap for those confused by Cain's rejected offering. Naked Adam was cursed by Satan instead of connected to the Blessing (God). For life Adam needed to a connection with a life source (God) but the sin/death in his life prevented it.

Solution: God covered Adam with the bloody skins of the animal as a type of Jesus Blood that was shed from before the foundations of the earth were laid. God used this "arm's length connection" to bring a Blessing into Adam's life so he could survive under the curse of Satan. The curse that desired to steal, kill and destroy all of mankind. Adam's children therefore, also needed to be covered by a blood covering (now a burnt offering) due to their inherited spiritual death from Adam's fall. The burnt offering was the second step of the plan revealed that would end the power of sin.

This explains why Abel's offering was accepted whereas Cain's wasn't. Cain's plant based offering was a repeat of the fig leaves coverings we saw earlier, whereas Abel's used God's shed blood skin solution that points to Jesus. It was a temporary blood covering while mankind waited for Jesus' final solution.

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Genesis 4:3-7 ^(AMP)

³ *And in the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground.*

⁴ *And Abel brought of the firstborn of his flock and of the fat portions. And the Lord had respect and regard for Abel and for his offering,*

⁵ *But for Cain and his offering He had no respect or regard. So Cain was exceedingly angry and indignant, and he looked sad and depressed.*

⁶ *And the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why do you look sad and depressed and dejected?*

⁷ *If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin crouches at your door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.*

This record of Cain gives great insights into the Heart of God so let's point out some things for our benefit.

1. Cain knew the voice of God and didn't act surprised when God spoke to him
2. Both Abel and Cain knew what to do but Cain wasn't doing it
3. God told Cain that to do well or not was his choice
4. God warned Cain that sin has intent and he must master it

Cain using his own method had tried to give to God the bloodless offering that couldn't cover his sin nature and in doing so opened himself up to an attack by satan. See how sin is always progressive into satan's will for our lives?

How many of us have done this same thing? We knew we were not to do something a certain way and instead of submitting, we forge onward only to discover we are now much farther into the trap. Like Cain, we have also responded to God in pride, judgements and give Him attitude.

This is how we find Cain even when God came to question him, amazingly Cain still in defiance talked back to God. It wasn't until Cain realised the full ramifications of his sinful state that he cried out to God for help.

Genesis 4:14-15 ^(AMP)

¹⁴ *Behold, You have driven me out this day from the face of the land, and from Your face I will be hidden; and I will be a fugitive and a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.*

¹⁵ *And the Lord said to him, Therefore, if anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark or sign upon Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.*

To me the story of Cain's mark is the clearest message of Grace I have ever realized. Here we see that God covered Cain for his protection even though he was the first murderer in the history of mankind. Later on in Hebrews God would discuss how while Abel's blood cried out for vengeance Jesus' Blood

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spoke louder of Mercy. (James 2:13 ^(NIV) “...Mercy triumphs over judgment”.) I thank God for His Grace and Mercy for us all! Even while in sin God still cares for us and will always answer us in a time of need.

Hebrews 12:24 ^(AMP)

And to Jesus, the Mediator (Go-between, Agent) of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks [of mercy], a better and nobler and more gracious message than the blood of Abel [which cried out for vengeance].

The Truth is God just can't help Himself and in His Love for us He does everything possible to have a full and personal connection with us. This is best demonstrated at the moment of Jesus' death (which made our complete sin cleansing possible) when God ripped from the top to the bottom the separating curtain between Himself and mankind. At the moment and first opportunity God restored the unity that was lost!

Matthew 27:50-51 ^(AMP)

⁵⁰ *And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit.*

⁵¹ *And at once the curtain of the sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook and the rocks were split.*

With this Blood's covering man would no longer need to have the blood of animals to atone for his sin if he accepted Jesus as his Savior. Jesus' innocent Blood now shed for all of mankind had paid the price no animal blood could pay. Sin could now be completely cleansed out of our lives and a personal "one on one" relationship between God and mankind had been restored.

1 John 1:7-9 ^(AMP)

⁷ *But if we [really] are living and walking in the Light, as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin and guilt [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations].*

⁸ *If we say we have no sin [refusing to admit that we are sinners], we delude and lead ourselves astray, and the Truth [which the Gospel presents] is not in us [does not dwell in our hearts].*

⁹ *If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].*

So now do the self check. How do you feel about being in a close personal relationship with God? Are you sensing exposure, sin, guilt or separation? Are you working hard to keep yourself qualified but in fact covering yourself with fig leaves instead of just accepting Jesus' sacrifice? I am all about living Holy before God but Holy living is a result of a heart change and not a qualification to be in God's Presence.

Isaiah 64:6 ^(AMP)

For we have all become like one who is unclean [ceremonially, like a leper], and all our righteousness (our best

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deeds of rightness and justice) is like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away [far from God's favor, hurrying us toward destruction].

We all must allow the Grace of God to work in our lives and receive the Mercy of God that He desires to give us. We must "take it" or "accept it" to open ourselves for Life/Light connection with God Himself.

Candidly speaking this is the point in which I often find myself struggling. I still find it hard to accept that the price has been paid in full and my previous unworthiness has been completely removed. I must like you choose to accept that we are no longer naked, lacking confirmation or support.

This is where I remind myself that God's Plan was established from before mankind ever separated himself from God. God knew we would fall given free choice but wanted us to choose Him and not be a robot without connection options. I just have to accept the Cross that stood between Heaven and hell and reaches from before the foundations of the earth were laid... all the way to all of eternity coming.

Revelation 13:8 ^(AMP)

And all the inhabitants of the earth will fall down in adoration and pay him homage, everyone whose name has not been recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was slain [in sacrifice] from the foundation of the world.

We all must just accept the reality of the cleansing Power of Jesus' Blood through the sacrifice on the Cross and that He is Faithful to make us free from a sin identity. Only free of this identity can we walk with confidence right up to God and have the conversation with Him for what we need.

Hebrews 4:16 ^(AMP)

Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].

If you need a further story from the Bible to help you, go to the parable of the prodigal son. He found himself disconnected from his father and without any quality of life or support.

It was in this failed condition he hatched a plan that he would work for his father as a servant to re-establish a connection. Surely he thought, his father would accept him back if he worked for the connection. (The point to note here is he was trying to earn a father connection instead of inheriting it.)

We know he practiced his speech a long time and the moment he could tell his father he declared he would work for his father not as a son but as a servant. It was a reasonable plan I suppose but his father wouldn't have any part of it. A father that had looked long and faithfully for his son's return would not accept him back with works. The father knew a connection to his son must be a gift he could not earn. He instead with Mercy and Grace as a gift placed a ring of authority on his hand... a robe of honour on his shoulders... and prepared a feast of celebration. The prodigal son had to just receive the son-ship with his father and would never be allowed to ever earn it. Remember his father even hugged him while he still smelled of barnyard pigs; I am sure without great love a powerful challenge for a Jewish man!

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Luke 15:16-24 ^(AMP)

¹⁶ *And he would gladly have fed on and filled his belly with the carob pods that the hogs were eating, but [they could not satisfy his hunger and] nobody gave him anything [better].*

¹⁷ *Then when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have enough food, and [even food] to spare, but I am perishing (dying) here of hunger!*

¹⁸ *I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight.*

¹⁹ *I am no longer worthy to be called your son; [just] make me like one of your hired servants.*

²⁰ *So he got up and came to his [own] father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity and tenderness [for him]; and he ran and embraced him and kissed him [fervently].*

²¹ *And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son [I no longer deserve to be recognized as a son of yours]!*

²² *But the father said to his bond servants, Bring quickly the best robe (the festive robe of honor) and put it on him; and give him a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet.*

²³ *And bring out that [wheat-]fatted calf and kill it; and let us revel and feast and be happy and make merry,*

²⁴ *Because this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! And they began to revel and feast and make merry.*

It is a story for our benefit and ties into the fall of man and the Life in Jesus' Salvation. Just like the prodigal son standing there dirty and unworthy, we must do the same and accept the Love God has for us. Make the decision to accept that God's Mercy and Grace makes us worthy to go before the Throne boldly. From this position it is easy to have Faith in God that His Love is greater than sin.

And if you still "feel" anything but full restoration just remind yourself it is not about you. It is about a Heavenly Father that in Mercy and Grace planned for us. The Loving Father who forged solutions of full restoration that satan never saw coming. It is about a Love so strong that GIVES us full release even in our failure. Believing you're unworthy is really a rejection of the Love of God and what was completed by Jesus on the Cross. A backwards prideful position that somehow says your failure is bigger than God.

The God of Love that is willing to call us His own children and desires a connection in which He can support and supply our every need through the Blessing. The choice is yours so have faith in God!

Mark 11:22, 24 ^(AMP)

²³ *And Jesus, replying, said to them, Have faith in God [constantly].*

²⁴ *For this reason I am telling you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe (trust and be confident) that it is granted to you, and you will [get it].*