

## Couples in the bible

### Adam and Eve

We are beginning a series called “Couples in the bible” and we will be focus in on the Old Testament couples at this stage. As we were preparing our preaching plan at the beginning of the year we felt it would be good to do a series in the Old Testament.

As you know the Old Testament was written before Christ and it is easy for people the think that the OT gives a very different picture of God from the New Testament. And I guess that could be the normal reaction we might have when we open up the OT and read stories of wars, and rules, and regulations and let’s face it there is a fair bit of weird stuff in there and it can very easily seem totally irrelevant.

So because we don’t see it’s relevancy, what we tend to do is spend most of our time in the New Testament, and maybe the Psalms if you are into poetry and stuff like that. But what happens if we do that is that we can miss out on understanding of the big picture of the bible. We can inadvertently fail to understand what God is up to and what God’s whole purpose was in creating mankind and then sending his son to save us.

The OT and the NT is all part of God’s big story, but understanding what the OT is saying is not always easy. Augustine, who is one of the early church fathers, (about 400AD) said **‘the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed’**. When we read the Old Testament it can all be a bit fuzzy, we might get an idea of what God is doing but it’s kind of vague, we can’t quite understand what’s going on, it might be a bit confusing to us, especially if we don’t understand the context, the whole story.

Augustine goes on and says **“and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed”**. When Jesus comes on the scene, he clarifies a few things, he reveals to us the whole purpose of everything in the Old Testament.

So we need to remember that while the bible has an OT and NT and is made up of 66 separate books, it is one big story, it is one revelation from God, one message from front to back, all connected, and it is only when we consider it all that we get the whole picture of what God is trying to say to us.

### God’s Good news Story

Also some people might be tempted to think that the OT is the bad news and the NT is the good news. But that’s just not case, because from beginning to end we see God’s good news story; **that though we sinned**, which we will look at in the Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, **God immediately set in place a plan for restoration/redemption**. And that all through the Old Testament, and of course the New Testament, we see the good news, we see hope given.

The other thing we tend to do with the Old Testament, and sometimes with the New Testament as well. We tend to see the Bible as just a bunch of life lessons – the teaching of values.

- You may read a certain story, maybe Jacob and Esau, and the only lesson we take from that is don't try to trick your brother, because he will come back to get you.
- Or from Noah if you disobey God, then He is going to send a flood and bury you under a bunch of water and drown you, or something else horrific, creating the image of God as a man with a big stick.
- Or maybe we tend look at some of the stories in a more positive way, we say; if you're facing a giant in your life, if you just pick up five rocks and throw them at him, then you'll win.

We tend it take these Bible stories and make them into a glorified self-help book. That these stories are some kind of instructions on how to live a happy life, or instructions on how to get into God's good books. So we can tend to see the Bible as just an instruction manual on how to do things, advice on how to live.

Well it’s not. The Bible is the Good news, not the good advice. This is about God’ Mission, what happened and what He did for us.

So as we look at various couples of the OT we will try to see how these people/couples fit into God’s big story, the first couple will be, of course, **Adam and Eve**.

### Adam and Eve

So we will start at the beginning in Genesis. Genesis 1-3 sets the entire stage not only for the gospel but also our Christian world view. Why do we have so many problems and is there any hope for the future.

In Genesis 1 and 2, which we won't read, it talks about God creating all things, and when he created all things he said; 'it is good'. God creates everything good, because God himself is good.

Then he created us and he said; 'it is very good'. So Adam and Eve were created and placed in the garden, and they were given the land to till and to work and to enjoy the covenant of marriage. Let me just say as an aside that Gen 1-2 is less concerned about how we, and the world, were created, but why we were created, remember the bible is about God and our relationship with him, not a science text book.

So we see this very first marriage in these first chapters of the Bible and we see that this union between man and woman as an amazing picture of God and his people. We see this great situation that God has created, this wonderful paradise.

Now I want us to turn to Genesis 3 and we will read through a fair bit of it.

*<sup>3</sup> The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"*

*<sup>2</sup> "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup> "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"*

*<sup>4</sup> "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."*

This is the core and the basis of all of our sin. **At the end of the day we all want to be god**; we all want to have control over our lives, we all want to call the shots and don't want to be accountable to anyone, and interestingly, this was the same exact sin that Satan himself had fallen into, he wanted to be like God. – Let's read on...

*<sup>6</sup> The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.*

Adam is standing right there, watching all this happen. He knows that there is this rule, but he just stands by and watches. This would be the difference between what we call the **sins of commission**, where Eve committed a sin, where we actively disobey, and **sins of omission** where Adam passively watches things happen, we don't step up and try to prevent anything, we just watch stuff happen that we know should not happen.

*<sup>7</sup> At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.*

This is what we do; when we sin, we want to cover up what we have done, because we feel the shame of sin. We all have our different ways to cover up our sin, we hide, we lie, we ignore, we act self-righteousness or we do good deeds to make up for a things we have done wrong. But at the end of the day this does not deal with the sin in our hearts, we try to cover it up, but it never deals with what actually has happened. Let's read on...

*<sup>8</sup> When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

*<sup>10</sup> He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."*

*<sup>11</sup> "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"*

*<sup>12</sup> The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."*

Typical bloke, the blame game begins. It's not my fault, it's that woman you gave me. She gave me the fruit and I just did what comes naturally – I eat.

*<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"*

*"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."*

Women too can play the blame game. Maybe this is the biblical argument for the equality of men and women? Equally stupid!!!

*<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD God said to the serpent,*

*“Because you have done this, you are cursed  
more than all animals, domestic and wild.*

*You will crawl on your belly,  
grovelling in the dust as long as you live.*

<sup>15</sup> *And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring.*

*He will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”*

### The Good News

This is interesting. This last verse is the first instance of the good news, we are only in chapter 3 of Genesis and we see the gospel for the very first time.

God is speaking to the serpent, *He will strike your head* – Eves offspring, humanity, will stomp on your head *and you will strike his heel*.

So God is already saying that his response to our sin will not be this immediate kneejerk condemnation and damnation, but instead he gives us good news, that Eve’s offspring will crush the serpent, Eve’s offspring will crush sin and death.

So already God is giving us the image of a good and gracious God, making all these wonderful things, all of creation, making life itself, and then we come in and mess it up by choosing to disobey. Then God in his grace - rather than condemnation and death - he gives us good news; that there will be a day when the enemy, when sin and death itself will be forever crushed.

Now let’s skip down to verse 20

<sup>20</sup> *Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.*

<sup>22</sup> *Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.*

So he kicks them out of the Garden. Why does he do this? It seems kind of mean. However like everything that God does there is a good reason. He didn’t want them in their sinful state to eat of the tree of eternal life, because then

they would be eternally in sin. So for their protection he kicked them out of the garden and it says...

<sup>24</sup> *After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

He did this again out of his own grace, he did not want them to live eternally separated from God.

So what God is doing here in Genesis 1-3 is not so much telling us how God created the world, but that he did create it good, very good. And he is telling us that he gave us free will, and that we made some choices that were bad, very bad. And that he has had to do a bit of a rescue job to save us from ourselves, meanwhile we are trying to cover up our sin;

- we are trying to fix ourselves up with all these self-help things,
- we exhaust ourselves trying to figure out how to fix our lives by covering ourselves up with fig leaves,
- and hiding behind things,
- and putting on a mask,
- and acting like we can figure this thing out on our own strength.

We take good advice from people, and we have our own ideas and we think we can change everything, but what he’s telling us here is that this is not going to work, **but the good news is this; there will be one that will come and he will rescue us from sin and death.**

Humanity has sinned against a holy God and covering yourself up with your own righteousness or your own good deeds does not make the consequences of sin go away. Someone must pay to buy or redeem this back, you’ve lost everything and someone must pay to get life back.

So the waiting began – waiting for someone to make it right. When Adam and Eve had their first child, they probably thought surely this is the offspring that God has given us, we have a second chance. It’s ‘Adam junior’, a second Adam, he’s going to make everything right. But that didn’t happen.

As we read the Old Testament we see all kinds of different people, we see Abraham, we see Noah and his big ark, surely Noah is the guy who’s going to save us, but he wasn’t. We see Joseph and David, we see all these different

people and we look at them asking, is this it? But man after man, human after human failed.

Only God could actually be our redeemer because only God is perfect. But then God could not be our redeemer because God didn't break the law, humanity did.

So humanity had to be the redeemer, but we couldn't be the Redeemer, because of our sin, every one of us has fallen short of the glory of God. It is hopeless, we have no future, no forgiveness; things are not looking good here.

Remember what I said, we have to look at the OT through Jesus, in the light of the NT. Turn with me to the Galatians 4:4.

From the OT we know it is going to be a human, but as far as how that is going to work we don't really understand, it's all a bit foggy, a bit dim, but in the NT we see that God reveals to us his plan, his plan to save us. And by the time Galatians is written we have a bit of hind sight to help us.

*Gal 4:4*

*<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came,*

So when Cain and Abel were born, the right time wasn't there, when Abraham was born, the right time wasn't there, when Noah was born and Joseph was born when David was born it still wasn't time yet. We don't know the reason for God's timing ...

*<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law.*

God himself became flesh, he left his throne and put aside his crown of glory, to wear a crown of thorns. He did this to pay back what was lost, to redeem us, to satisfy the justice of a good and holy judge.

God is a good judge, and a good judge does justice. A good judge cannot let a murderer go free because he loves society. A good judge has to judge and wants to protect those that he loves.

*<sup>5</sup> God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law,*

and the reason why

*so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

God sent his own son born, of woman born, subject to the law, to redeem us, to buy freedom for us, because our fig leaves weren't working out. Justice had to occur, blood had to be shed for forgiveness to actually happen for us.

So the Son pays the price and because of that the judge comes around the bench and he adopts that 'lawbreaker' as his own son, the judge comes around the bench and embraces him, call him his own. This guy deserves justice, but he's given Mercy and Grace, not because the judge has cheap grace or cheap mercy. Justice was served, but not on us, but on the cross of Jesus. Christ Jesus Christ paid what we had to pay, we couldn't afford it, but he paid it for us and so the judge was satisfied.

This is the good news.

This is what the Bible is all about and why the story of Adam and eve is so important.

## Couples in the bible

### Adam and Eve

We are beginning a series called “Couples in the bible” and we will be focus in on the Old Testament couples at this stage. As we were preparing our preaching plan at the beginning of the year we felt it would be good to do a series in the Old Testament.

As you know the Old Testament was written before Christ and it is easy for people the think that the OT gives a very different picture of God from the New Testament. And I guess that could be the normal reaction we might have when we open up the OT and read stories of wars, and rules, and regulations and let’s face it there is a fair bit of weird stuff in there and it can very easily seem totally irrelevant.

So because we don’t see it’s relevancy, what we tend to do is spend most of our time in the New Testament, and maybe the Psalms if you are into poetry and stuff like that. But what happens if we do that is that we can miss out on understanding of the big picture of the bible. We can inadvertently fail to understand what God is up to and what God’s whole purpose was in creating mankind and then sending his son to save us.

The OT and the NT is all part of God’s big story, but understanding what the OT is saying is not always easy. Augustine, who is one of the early church fathers, (about 400AD) said **‘the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed’**. When we read the Old Testament it can all be a bit fuzzy, we might get an idea of what God is doing but it’s kind of vague, we can’t quite understand what’s going on, it might be a bit confusing to us, especially if we don’t understand the context, the whole story.

Augustine goes on and says **“and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed”**. When Jesus comes on the scene, he clarifies a few things, he reveals to us the whole purpose of everything in the Old Testament.

So we need to remember that while the bible has an OT and NT and is made up of 66 separate books, it is one big story, it is one revelation from God, one message from front to back, all connected, and it is only when we consider it all that we get the whole picture of what God is trying to say to us.

### God’s Good news Story

Also some people might be tempted to think that the OT is the bad news and the NT is the good news. But that’s just not case, because from beginning to end we see God’s good news story; **that though we sinned**, which we will look at in the Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, **God immediately set in place a plan for restoration/redemption**. And that all through the Old Testament, and of course the New Testament, we see the good news, we see hope given.

The other thing we tend to do with the Old Testament, and sometimes with the New Testament as well. We tend to see the Bible as just a bunch of life lessons – the teaching of values.

- You may read a certain story, maybe Jacob and Esau, and the only lesson we take from that is don't try to trick your brother, because he will come back to get you.
- Or from Noah if you disobey God, then He is going to send a flood and bury you under a bunch of water and drown you, or something else horrific, creating the image of God as a man with a big stick.
- Or maybe we tend look at some of the stories in a more positive way, we say; if you're facing a giant in your life, if you just pick up five rocks and throw them at him, then you'll win.

We tend it take these Bible stories and make them into a glorified self-help book. That these stories are some kind of instructions on how to live a happy life, or instructions on how to get into God's good books. So we can tend to see the Bible as just an instruction manual on how to do things, advice on how to live.

Well it’s not. The Bible is the Good news, not the good advice. This is about God’ Mission, what happened and what He did for us.

So as we look at various couples of the OT we will try to see how these people/couples fit into God’s big story, the first couple will be, of course, **Adam and Eve**.

### Adam and Eve

So we will start at the beginning in Genesis. Genesis 1-3 sets the entire stage not only for the gospel but also our Christian world view. Why do we have so many problems and is there any hope for the future.

In Genesis 1 and 2, which we won't read, it talks about God creating all things, and when he created all things he said; 'it is good'. God creates everything good, because God himself is good.

Then he created us and he said; 'it is very good'. So Adam and Eve were created and placed in the garden, and they were given the land to till and to work and to enjoy the covenant of marriage. Let me just say as an aside that Gen 1-2 is less concerned about how we, and the world, were created, but why we were created, remember the bible is about God and our relationship with him, not a science text book.

So we see this very first marriage in these first chapters of the Bible and we see that this union between man and woman as an amazing picture of God and his people. We see this great situation that God has created, this wonderful paradise.

Now I want us to turn to Genesis 3 and we will read through a fair bit of it.

*<sup>3</sup> The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"*

*<sup>2</sup> "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup> "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"*

*<sup>4</sup> "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."*

This is the core and the basis of all of our sin. **At the end of the day we all want to be god**; we all want to have control over our lives, we all want to call the shots and don't want to be accountable to anyone, and interestingly, this was the same exact sin that Satan himself had fallen into, he wanted to be like God. – Let's read on...

*<sup>6</sup> The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.*

Adam is standing right there, watching all this happen. He knows that there is this rule, but he just stands by and watches. This would be the difference between what we call the **sins of commission**, where Eve committed a sin, where we actively disobey, and **sins of omission** where Adam passively watches things happen, we don't step up and try to prevent anything, we just watch stuff happen that we know should not happen.

*<sup>7</sup> At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.*

This is what we do; when we sin, we want to cover up what we have done, because we feel the shame of sin. We all have our different ways to cover up our sin, we hide, we lie, we ignore, we act self-righteousness or we do good deeds to make up for a things we have done wrong. But at the end of the day this does not deal with the sin in our hearts, we try to cover it up, but it never deals with what actually has happened. Let's read on...

*<sup>8</sup> When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

*<sup>10</sup> He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."*

*<sup>11</sup> "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"*

*<sup>12</sup> The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."*

Typical bloke, the blame game begins. It's not my fault, it's that woman you gave me. She gave me the fruit and I just did what comes naturally – I eat.

*<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"*

*"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."*

Women too can play the blame game. Maybe this is the biblical argument for the equality of men and women? Equally stupid!!!

*<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD God said to the serpent,*

*“Because you have done this, you are cursed  
more than all animals, domestic and wild.*

*You will crawl on your belly,  
grovelling in the dust as long as you live.*

*<sup>15</sup> And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring.*

*He will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”*

### The Good News

This is interesting. This last verse is the first instance of the good news, we are only in chapter 3 of Genesis and we see the gospel for the very first time.

God is speaking to the serpent, *He will strike your head* – Eves offspring, humanity, will stomp on your head *and you will strike his heel*.

So God is already saying that his response to our sin will not be this immediate kneejerk condemnation and damnation, but instead he gives us good news, that Eve’s offspring will crush the serpent, Eve’s offspring will crush sin and death.

So already God is giving us the image of a good and gracious God, making all these wonderful things, all of creation, making life itself, and then we come in and mess it up by choosing to disobey. Then God in his grace - rather than condemnation and death - he gives us good news; that there will be a day when the enemy, when sin and death itself will be forever crushed.

Now let’s skip down to verse 20

*<sup>20</sup> Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.*

*<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.*

So he kicks them out of the Garden. Why does he do this? It seems kind of mean. However like everything that God does there is a good reason. He didn’t want them in their sinful state to eat of the tree of eternal life, because then

they would be eternally in sin. So for their protection he kicked them out of the garden and it says...

*<sup>24</sup> After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

He did this again out of his own grace, he did not want them to live eternally separated from God.

So what God is doing here in Genesis 1-3 is not so much telling us how God created the world, but that he did create it good, very good. And he is telling us that he gave us free will, and that we made some choices that were bad, very bad. And that he has had to do a bit of a rescue job to save us from ourselves, meanwhile we are trying to cover up our sin;

- we are trying to fix ourselves up with all these self-help things,
- we exhaust ourselves trying to figure out how to fix our lives by covering ourselves up with fig leaves,
- and hiding behind things,
- and putting on a mask,
- and acting like we can figure this thing out on our own strength.

We take good advice from people, and we have our own ideas and we think we can change everything, but what he’s telling us here is that this is not going to work, **but the good news is this; there will be one that will come and he will rescue us from sin and death.**

Humanity has sinned against a holy God and covering yourself up with your own righteousness or your own good deeds does not make the consequences of sin go away. Someone must pay to buy or redeem this back, you’ve lost everything and someone must pay to get life back.

So the waiting began – waiting for someone to make it right. When Adam and Eve had their first child, they probably thought surely this is the offspring that God has given us, we have a second chance. It’s ‘Adam junior’, a second Adam, he’s going to make everything right. But that didn’t happen.

As we read the Old Testament we see all kinds of different people, we see Abraham, we see Noah and his big ark, surely Noah is the guy who’s going to save us, but he wasn’t. We see Joseph and David, we see all these different

people and we look at them asking, is this it? But man after man, human after human failed.

Only God could actually be our redeemer because only God is perfect. But then God could not be our redeemer because God didn't break the law, humanity did.

So humanity had to be the redeemer, but we couldn't be the Redeemer, because of our sin, every one of us has fallen short of the glory of God. It is hopeless, we have no future, no forgiveness; things are not looking good here.

Remember what I said, we have to look at the OT through Jesus, in the light of the NT. Turn with me to the Galatians 4:4.

From the OT we know it is going to be a human, but as far as how that is going to work we don't really understand, it's all a bit foggy, a bit dim, but in the NT we see that God reveals to us his plan, his plan to save us. And by the time Galatians is written we have a bit of hind sight to help us.

*Gal 4:4*

*<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came,*

So when Cain and Abel were born, the right time wasn't there, when Abraham was born, the right time wasn't there, when Noah was born and Joseph was born when David was born it still wasn't time yet. We don't know the reason for God's timing ...

*<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law.*

God himself became flesh, he left his throne and put aside his crown of glory, to wear a crown of thorns. He did this to pay back what was lost, to redeem us, to satisfy the justice of a good and holy judge.

God is a good judge, and a good judge does justice. A good judge cannot let a murderer go free because he loves society. A good judge has to judge and wants to protect those that he loves.

*<sup>5</sup> God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law,*

and the reason why

*so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

God sent his own son born, of woman born, subject to the law, to redeem us, to buy freedom for us, because our fig leaves weren't working out. Justice had to occur, blood had to be shed for forgiveness to actually happen for us.

So the Son pays the price and because of that the judge comes around the bench and he adopts that 'lawbreaker' as his own son, the judge comes around the bench and embraces him, call him his own. This guy deserves justice, but he's given Mercy and Grace, not because the judge has cheap grace or cheap mercy. Justice was served, but not on us, but on the cross of Jesus. Christ Jesus Christ paid what we had to pay, we couldn't afford it, but he paid it for us and so the judge was satisfied.

This is the good news.

This is what the Bible is all about and why the story of Adam and eve is so important.