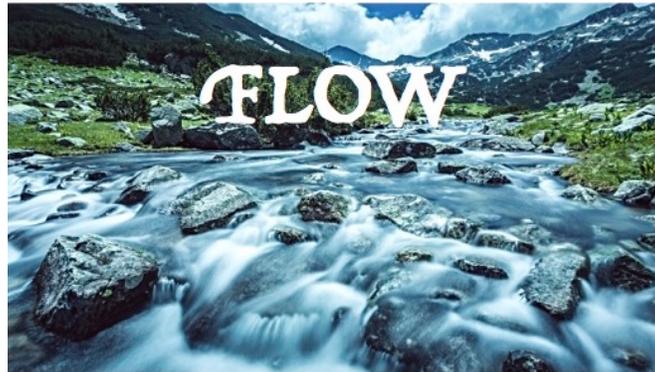


#17 March 23, 2017



Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

1And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Genesis 3:1-13



The Fall

by Diane Anderson

I stared at the shockingly cold water as it gurgled and swirled in a deep pool between the rocks of the stream. I was frozen in fear. A friend from church endured the numbing coldness, encouraging me to take that first step of the crossing to get to the shallow waters beyond. I stood there, hesitating for a seeming eternity, willing myself to just take that first leap. It was getting dark, we needed to cross and get out of the woods to safety. Finally, with much inner prayer, I went for it and my friend helped me bridge the large gap from the shore, over the pool, to the first stone. He was drenched but I was dry. I felt bad for him but crossed the rest of the stream quickly, giddy at overcoming my immobilizing fear. Later, that lesson in trust helped me when my husband and I faced the premature birth of our first child. Then, experiencing God's care in those moments has helped me trust beyond fear in my own continuing health problems.

Satan does that—he works on our fear to prevent us trusting God's love. Eve faced this, *"You will not certainly die... For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* The serpent knew her weakness—a fear that God didn't love her perfectly and didn't want her perfect best life.

Through her lack of trust, sin entered the world and separated us all from God's love. *"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'" They were afraid, and hid.*

God had to make a way for us to return to fellowship with Him. He did that through His son, Jesus. To be close to God, we must trust in Jesus—his death and resurrection.

Satan still uses fear to prevent us from this trust—fear that we will have to give up something held dear, fear of what others might think, fear that the Gospel story isn't true...

Here's what God says,

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

I John 4:18, NIV

Also,

"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation."

Isaiah 12:2, NIV

So, when fear invades and causes doubts and separation from God, we have God's words through King David—a song written when the Philistines captured him—

*"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?"*

*"In God, whose word I praise,
in the Lord, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can man do to me?
I am under vows to you, my God;*

*I will present my thank offerings to you.
For you have delivered me from death
and my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before God
in the light of life."*

Psalm 56:3-4, 10-13; NIV

Questions:

What are areas in your life that are hard to trust to God?

How can you make a change?

How does Eve's story of fear and disobedience speak to you?

What benefits might you have from releasing your fears to be closer to God?

What testimonies of God's care as you trusted Him help you to continue to trust further?

Prayer:

*Dearest Loving Father God,
Thank-you for redeeming me from the Fall. Thank-you that throughout your Word you continually tell me "Do not be afraid." Help me to to trust. Help me to take the thoughts of fear, with which the enemy deceives me, captive and offer them to you and receive your strength, truth and salvation. I love you. May I walk before you in the light of life. May your hope keep me freely close to you. In Jesus's holy name, Amen.*

Extras For Further Help:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrhXIn-zHso>

"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

2 Corinthians 11:3

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:1-8