

## The Adam and Eve of it

(Genesis 3, vs 1-20)

“There are certain things we’re not supposed to do, you know that as well as I.” The woman seemed to have made up her mind; there was a look of determination on her face.

“I know what we’ve been told, but is it true? It could just be a ruse to control us.” Her tempter tried again.

“Well, sticking to the rules has always worked in the past. In any case we’ve plenty of freedom, it’s only a few areas where, for our own good, checks and balances are imposed.”

“Our own good, indeed! How do you know the rules are for our own good if you’ve never tried stretching them? They seem to be limiting our right to choose for ourselves. Dad’s always been big on our freedom to choose and yet, when it comes to it, there’s all these prohibitions.”

“There’s only two,” she corrected him.

“But they’re big ones: just think what prospects, what new horizons might open up if they weren’t there. All that knowledge revealed before you, right across the spectrum from good to naughty.” He looked up into the mind’s eye of the woman. He sensed that she was now less sure of her position, but still not fully persuaded of his.

“It’s not just a question of knowledge, what we know, it’s how we handle what we know. Father says information without wisdom is a dangerous thing. We don’t have his capacity for wisdom and so too much information would be harmful. It could lead us to reject our friendship with him. No, we’ve too much to lose. Look at what we have through our relationship with dad, everything we need, peace, joy, contentment.”

“You’re only content because you know no better.” He sought to deflect her train of thought. “It’s nothing like an equal partnership you have with Him. He always takes the lead; He’s definitely the boss. He doesn’t want you to step out and be your own self. If you did it would mean that He would have to work with you as an equal partner: He wouldn’t like that.” He sensed the chink in her resistance open wider.

But she was still not convinced. “I’m not sure I want our relationship damaged.”

“Changed sister, changed, not damaged. It could be so much better with you having the ability to determine your own destiny without any interference. It could be the best of both worlds because I’m sure you could still seek His help and advice.” The best of both worlds: the woman could see something in that, free to do what she wanted in everything. She would become like Him; all knowledge would be hers.

“Well, I suppose there’s no harm in giving it a try?”

“That’s my girl: no harm, no harm at all.”

She was beginning to like the idea and was so focussed on it that she didn’t notice that the creation around her was holding its breath, for its destiny too would be decided by her choice. She looked back across the garden and a touch of ordinariness brushed her spirit. She’d never been this close to the edge before and the unknown out there held a sense of mystery and adventure.

“But could I choose to return to how it used to be if it doesn’t work? You know Father has said that this would be impossible on our own, we would find it too difficult.”

“Oh He’s just being over protective.” He slithered deeper into her thinking as he made the point. “He really wants you dependant on Him; not the free spirit you

should be. There's nothing you won't be able to do when you have the knowledge. Even finding you way back here, to the garden, if you wish."

"Just one small piece to see what it's like," she thought and, in her haste, missed the hint about becoming an outcast.

The initial flavour was good, but it didn't linger, the after taste was empty and dull. She tried to tell the creature who had so invaded her mind how disappointing it was, but he seemed strangely quiet now. Her husband took a bite too, but had to agree that he didn't see what all the fuss was about. But the fruit was addictive. Although it disappointed in the end, neither could resist having another bite. They also decided that they'd better keep it quiet and stay out of the way. "He sees right through us," she said. "He'd know if He saw us."

And that's how it was, a step at a time on a journey out of Eden. As they lost their way in the garden, so the garden seemed to loose it's way with them. More and more effort was required to sustain its bounty. Sometimes there was little harvest at all. They were becoming aliens in the Kingdom as they became strangers to the Father, not understanding how to return to the friendship they once had. It was a trend that would be reinforced by their children in the generations which would come and go, now the offer of an eternal relationship had been spurned. It was a loss that would also leave a God-shaped hole in our being to which only the Father would be able to bring healing and, by doing so, make us a God-shaped whole again. We would endeavour to repair it with other things: the pleasures of life, the distractions of toil, the philosophies of men, but nothing would work.

And so, from time to time, down the ages, we would become religious and try and find the route back to Eden ourselves, up the mountain to God. But all the paths we tried were too difficult. Only the Father would know and be able to provide the way back to His garden. There was the promise that he would do that, but would we listen for His voice and be prepared to follow when He called? We would become very good at finding reasons why we could not.