

Falling

- John and I went visiting during the week: Mrs Helen Suttie
 - before Christmas fell and broke her hip!
 - she'd been walking to the hairdresser when she slipped on some black ice;
 - next thing she knew she was down and in agony - unable to help herself, unable to get up....
 - she's making a decent recovery - but the fall not only damaged her hip, it has damaged her confidence - as such falls do so many
- **That's what falls do**, they generally **break** things and leave behind them a legacy of **damage**; they **take away** our ability to **control** what happens to us, our confidence to do what once was so easy and natural

Background

- *Some recap/introduction*
- This week we come to what is known as "The Fall"; the time when sin entered God's good and perfect world.
- God stood back at the end of his work of creation:
 - he surveyed the universe, the stars, the planets, the vast galaxies - it was good.
 - he saw the sea and the dry land, and all the vegetation they supported - **good!**
 - he saw the animals - the birds, the insects, the mammals, the fish - from the tiniest gnat to the great Blue Whale - and he saw that it was **good**.
- And he looked on man, humanity new created, humanity in relationship with Himself, and in relationship with itself, male and female, and it was **VERY good**.

It's broke!!

- YF round at our house on a Sunday night; shortly after Mark was born one of the male members of the YF was holding him; all was well....
 - then Mark started crying; hungry or something;
 - with a look of startled bewilderment, Mark was handed back to Helen with the immortal words **"its broke!"** - **and the subtext was "I can't fix it!"**
- The passage that we read earlier describe how the world **"got broke"**, how it all went wrong:
 - and in doing so **exposes for us something of how sin still operates in the world.**

(v.1) 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'?"

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- Did God really say? Is that what he meant?
 - *(notice that what the devil suggests is NOT what God said!!)*
 - put doubt into Eve's mind
 - same tactic that many advertisers use today;
 - most blatant example that I can think of is the IBM adverts - group of executives round a big conference table having a panic since their systems have gone down... person at top of the table finally asks **"whose job is it to make all this work together?"**... answer comes back **"that'd be yours!!"**;
 - *tag line: that's when you realise you are ready for IBM!!*
 - advert is based on fear, uncertainty and doubt - making people wonder whether they have done their job right, whether they have covered all the bases, fear in case what happened on the advert happens to them!
 - This is what the serpent, Satan, is doing here - starting Eve doubting God's goodness, his integrity, his purposes...

(vs.2-3) 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.'"

- On the surface, Eve's initial reply looks good:
 - she goes back to what God said, she is responding to the (deliberate) error that Satan has made;
 - but, dangerously, she has in fact added to what God actually said!
- In 2:17, God said: "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
 - he didn't say they couldn't TOUCH it!!
- Maybe doesn't seem a big thing, but there is an important principle:
 - we must be careful always to come back to what God actually says in the Bible, not what we think he says, or what we half remember he said when we were taught it in Sunday School, or wherever;
 - this is one of the reasons why we preach from the Scriptures week in, week out - so we are continually re-exposed to God's word!
 - this is one of the reasons why we should make it our habit to be here to hear what is said, why we should read the Bible ourselves regularly, why it is a good idea to take the opportunities afforded for further study of God's word (Housegroups, etc)

(vs.4-5) "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- The devil's next tactic is to flatly contradict what God said; not mere doubt now, but outright opposition:
 - he lies about the consequences of sin, of disobeying God's law;
 - he says, "its not as bad as all that, you'll be OK! In fact, you'll be more than OK - if you don't break God's law, you'll miss out!!"
- This is simply wrong - flatly contradicting what God said.
 - and it is still a tactic the devil uses today;
 - "no one will know"; ... "it'll be fun"; ... "you'll be rich, and that will make you happy"; ... "if you do this, you are simply being true to yourself!" ...
 - and so it goes on - these are the kinds of lies the devil feeds us each time we make a decision; lies, damned lies!

(v.6) 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.

- And so, the temptation having been placed in front of her, Eve caves in, and Adam is no better.

Consequences

- Satan's lies are exposed as the consequences of their actions start to take effect:
 - immediately they feel different - they are ashamed, they feel naked, exposed before each other and before God, they feel their guilt;
 - their relationship with God is instantly ruptured - where before they used to walk with God in the garden, now they are afraid, running and hiding, cut off from the Lord that made them, the most intimate and true of friends.
 - they seem unable to take responsibility for their own actions, trying to shift the blame onto others (how true is that of the way we act today!)
 - God's curse comes upon them - including death itself, and culminating the concluding verses of the chapter:
 - So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden... (v.23)
- All this is true for us, both in our experience and in the ultimate reality of our situation:
 - we recognise those features of temptation, that twisting of God's word, that deception about the consequences;

- and we certainly recognise the guilt, the breakdown of relationships - with God and with others;
- and we see around us that as all sin, so all die.

- And so we need to do two things:
 - **most critically, receive the remedy for sin that Jesus alone offers;** whole OT points to man's failure to fix the brokenness that enters the world in these verses; it is only sorted in Jesus perfect sacrifice on the Cross, his offer of forgiveness to those who repent, who turn and say sorry, who put their whole trust in him;
 - **and also learn from the tactics that Satan used here and uses so often still,** that as Christians, saved by grace, we might learn to resist the devil's tactics, and not give in to the temptations that come our way.