*Introduction*

When God made Adam, He made him in the image of God. He also made him His helper, for we read in Genesis 2:15 ***Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.***

In the following verses we see some of what that entailed, all the different animals were brought to Adam and he gave them names.

It seems quite clear to me that in those early days of creation, that there was a perfect relationship between God and Adam. It was normal for God to walk with Adam “in the cool of the day” and Adam, although naked, was not ashamed.

You can almost imagine God speaking with Adam and saying something like “Well, how’s your day been so far”, and Adam saying “Oh, good, I’ve named the Kangaroo today, and the Zebra”.

God was concerned for Adam, he saw that all the other creatures and animals had mates, but Adam at this time was on his own.

So God caused Adam to go into a deep sleep, took out one of his ribs, and from it made the woman, to be his partner.

Did you know that the woman was not called Eve, until after the fall (Gen 3:20).

God is the God of relationships, He created man to have a relationship with him, and he created woman to have a relationship with the man and in so doing, instituted what we call marriage

***Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Gen 2:24 (NKJV)***

We all, I’m sure, hold an idyllic picture in our minds of what the Garden of Eden was like, a perfect paradise, and of course it was. But it had the potential for things to go wrong. There was untested innocence.

When God made space for his human beings to occupy, he made it in such a way that there was the potential to walk WITH Him or walk AWAY from Him.

Adam and Eve were created to live by trust – trust in God’s word.

Unfortunately they failed and entered into sin.

As managers of God’s estate they had responsibilities and tasks for which they were accountable. But they did not trust what God said and so sinned.

God created us to have a relationship with Him, but he trusted us with the freedom to choose whether to love Him or live independently of Him.

One of the most devastating consequences of sin is not just that it breaks God’s law, but it breaks His heart as well. In the book of Genesis God asks a number of questions.

These questions are: Where are you? Who told you that you were naked? What is this you have done? Why are you angry? and Where is your brother?

We are only going to look at 2 of them this morning, those being:

1. Where are you?
2. Where is your brother.

These two questions are all about our relationship with God the Father and with those around us, and particularly those within the family of God.

It has to be said that when we look at these questions, we should not look at them as accusations from God but the loving entreaties of a Father who has the deepest concerns for us.

1. **Where are you?**

We must be mindful at the outset that God did not ask this question because he lacked knowledge of the couple’s whereabouts, or being accusing. He asks the question out of a desire to restore the fellowship that Adam and Eve had broken.

Before the fall, Adam and God had walked in a completely harmonious relationship, they were not strangers to each other, but now the Father God, who is unwilling to give up on the relationship and seeks out Adam and Eve with a desire to reconcile and re-establish that friendship.

God comes looking for them, asking the searching question “Where are you?” you can almost hear a cry of pain in the question.

This question, on one level, is a theological question that is foundational to everything else. It is also a question that is saying to each one of us *“where am I in relation to God?”*

Nothing is more important than this question.

Where are you in your relationship with God this morning?

A broken relationship with God means we are living in sin, we are disconnected from the Father, which we were not created for.

A famous Welsh preacher Dr Cynddylan Jones put it like this

*“The worst thing about being a sinner is that one has to live with perpetual homesickness”*

We have been designed and created to worship and be in a relationship with God, and when we are not we will constantly seek to fill that need with something else, or someone else.

The soul’s home is God. No matter what we try and replace it with, friends, hobbies, work, marriage or even Christian service, we will still suffer that homesickness, because none of these things will satisfy.

If you do not know God this morning through Jesus – Isn’t it about time you came home?

The prodigal son realised that there is no place like home, after he had tried everything and his so called friends had left him – he went home to a watchful and waiting Father

Prior to being disobedient we read that Adam and Eve were both naked, but felt no shame. (Gen 2:25)

Yet when God asks “Where are you”, they were hiding, trying to cover their nakedness and shame.

When we are not right with God, we too, fly into hiding and try and cover up the truth of our condition with something else.

Some turn to ‘Religion’ in the hope that with all its multitudes of religious practices it will cover the truth. But if there is no personal relationship with the Creator through His Son, Jesus Christ, it is nothing more than rituals, rules and idolatry!

R C Sproul states *“Religion is not the fruit of a zealous pursuit of God but the result of a passionate flight from God”*

A little boy, when asked to give a definition of the word ‘idol’ said “Something that doesn’t work”. Although that little boy was thinking of ‘idle’, his answer was correct.

Idolatry, whether religious or not – does not work.

Instead we, and the Church should focus on our relationship with the Father through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of calvary.

CHRIST SAVES – and CHRIST ALONE!

**Where are you and I in relationship to God?**

Nothing can be more important than our relationship with the Father, He misses us deeply when we are not in fellowship with Him.

1. **Where is your brother?**

If “Where are you” was the great theological question, then when God asks Cain (Gen 4:9) “Where is your brother” must be the great social question.

God is not only concerned how we relate to Him, but also how we relate to our brother.

These 2 issues always exist together and cannot be separated.

We cannot love God without loving our neighbour.

God does not put this question to Cain when he is at the altar, but when he is out in the field, stopping him in his tracks, as it were, in the midst of his working life.

Our worship of God cannot be in isolation, away from the cares of our neighbours, our brothers.

We simply cannot have a relationship with God without relating to other people.

A W Tozer said *“If you want to evaluate how close is your relationship with God then look how close you are to others, especially those to whom you relate on an ongoing basis.”*

Your relationship with your brother is a good indicator of your relationship with him.

When God asks you today “Where is your brother”, it will not be reference to (hopefully) anyone you have killed, but to that person we have gossiped about, dealt with unkindly, slighted, patronised, disregarded or ignored.

The late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who as a young boy survived Auschwitz, wrote this:

*People sometimes ask me “Where was God in Auschwitz?” I believe that God was there Himself – violated and blasphemed. The real question is, “Where was man in Auschwitz?”*

The point that I am making here is that we are inescapably relational and therefore social beings. ‘To be’ it has been said ‘is to be in relationships’.

We were not created to be just individuals or alone, we need to be in relationships, with God first and foremost, then with each other.

One philosopher stated “Relationships should never be “They – I” but “We”.

Many years ago, when church pipe organs were pumped manually, a little boy who did the pumping was heard to say “We played well today”. The organist overheard him and asked “What do you mean ‘we’? I played well today”

The following Sunday the organist sat down to play, pressed the keys, but nothing happened. As the organist sat there nonplussed, a voice from behind the curtains said, “Is it “WE” or “I”?.

Cain’s response to “Where is your brother” was **Am I my brother's keeper?"**

**Gen 4:9 (NKJV)**, It was a flippant response in order to divert responsibility.

You see, this response actually shows us just how far Cain was alienated from community. But also in one sense he is right. We are not ‘our brother’s keeper’. Only Zoo’s and Museum’s have keepers.

Yet, although we are not to control people, we are meant to accept responsibility for knowing where our brother is an whether or not he is in need.

Just as we saw a few weeks ago, we are told by Paul “***carry each other’s burdens***”(Gal 6:2).

We tend to have relationships with people of like mind, for instance:

Stamp collectors – stick together

Bell ringers – pull together

Sports fans, walkers, enthusiasts, you name it, they all come together in relationships built around there own particular theme.

In the book of Acts we see that same thing happening.

***Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.***

***Acts 2:41-47 (NKJV)***

Those who gladly received the word, accepted Christ and were baptised became a community in relationship with each other. People from all walks of life with nothing in common, became brothers with a common theme – JESUS.

As such, they shared their possessions, ate together, worshipped together, just as it should be.

They did this because they were close in their relationship with the Father, through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Conclusion*

We have been created in the image of God and to have a relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ.

When the Father asks you the question “Where are you?” he is also saying “Where’s your brother?”

When he says to you “Where’s your brother, he is also saying “Where are you?” in your walk with Him.

They always exist together. We cannot claim to love God and hate our brother.

**Where are you this morning?**

Are you trying to divert attention from God by running to other things. Are you feeling homesick? That God shaped hole within you – are you trying to fill it with worldly things that will not satisfy?

We are all good at putting things in the way of restoration and forgiveness, we say things like “we’ll do it tomorrow” or “It’s not that important”

Our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with each other is of the utmost importance. It certainly is with God, and should be with us.

The “Where is your brother” question invites us to come together, to relate to one another in the way that Christ relates to us.

This morning He is saying – Come home. Come Clean. Come open. Come together.

These are the ultimate issues of life. They call us to be responsible and responsive to men and women, open to God and open to one another.

But we can only stay responsible as we stay responsive to God.

If you are willing, not matter how weak you feel, He will provide the power.

Amen