

# Careful What You Wish For...

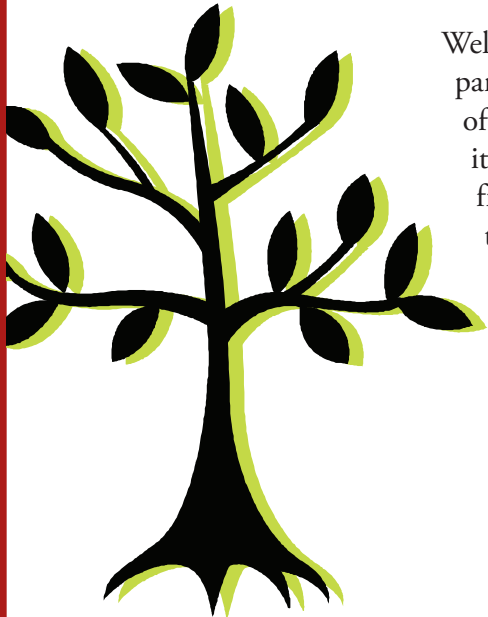


## TouchPoint 4

“The devil made me do it.” ’70’s comedian Flip Wilson made a career out of that line. Geraldine, one of his comedic alter-egos used that line whenever anyone called her on something she did wrong. Even when we knew it was coming, whenever Flip delivered the line, we all laughed. Even though it’s no laughing matter.

We left our last conversation where God had come to personally visit our little planet in the evening. I think He did this every afternoon because He wanted to hear from Adam and Eve, earth’s first two people, how their day had gone. Newly created in a gorgeous, unspoiled world, every day was chock full of incredible discoveries. God wanted to hear the excitement in their voices, and read the delight in their faces as they told Him about the surprises that day had brought. God is actually interested in stuff like that!

God came as usual, but found Adam and Eve afraid and hiding. The unthinkable had happened. Evil somehow managed to penetrate God’s perfect world. How did it happen?



Well, God had set Adam and Eve up in paradise – literally. The original Garden of Eden was their home. Everything in it was perfect and designed for them to freely and fully enjoy, except for one thing. God had placed many trees in the garden, but two were the most important: the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

He told them they could eat anything in the garden they wanted except for fruit from the one tree – the tree of knowledge of good and evil. You can read about it in

Genesis 2:8-9. And you can read the world-famous encounter between Eve and the snake in Genesis 3.1-7.

A serpent, who was really Satan in disguise (also known as the devil), got them to think that God had been holding out on them. He got them to think that if they'd just ignore God's warning they'd become like God themselves. He made them think that God was selfishly keeping some big secret from them, and eating the "apple" would reveal it to them. He conned them into wishing for something they shouldn't have. And you know the old saying, "careful what you wish for...you might get it."

What are some of the things you've wished for in life that you got, but that didn't work out like you thought they would? \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Serpent Was Right**

Well, the serpent was right. Sort of. They did become like God – but only in a tragic sense: they now knew evil. The serpent made it sound so exciting, but once they had personal knowledge of evil, they realized how much they'd lost instead of finding anything they'd gained.

Its first fruits were separation because of fear and shame, then came blame, then followed a curse from God because of their disobedience: hard work (yes, that's a result of sin – read it for yourself in Genesis 3:17-19), tension between the sexes and pain in childbirth (Genesis 3.16). Later as evil continued to spiral, mistrust, hatred, envy, murder, and utter selfishness began to mark humanity's profile.

The deep tragedy here is that they didn't just acquire knowledge of good and evil. Like a virus, evil had become a part of the fabric of their life – and not just their life, but ours, too. I'm going to quickly quote a few verses of Scripture that tell how extensive evil is. The Bible uses the word sin as the resulting actions of our evil. Here's a little of what the Bible says about sin:

**“Like a virus, evil had become a part of the fabric of their life...”**

“...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...” (Romans 5:12)

“The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:2-3)

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Romans 3:23)

“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.” (Isaiah 64:6)

**“There is no one uninfected..”**

I'll weave together what the Bible is saying about sin. Because the first humans became infected with sin, we all inherited the infection. There is no one uninfected, and because of our sinful self, none of us achieve what God had created us to achieve. Even our best efforts come up short, amounting to nothing more than a pile of dirty rags.

There's an experience from my younger days that brings this home to me. I went to a boarding high school in the beautiful hills of western North Carolina, and there met a fellow student who had come to school that year who had obviously never been away from home before. His parents sent him with 10 brand-new



packages of underwear and T-shirts, each with 3 to a pack. I suppose they did this so that he wouldn't have to wash clothes too often. What they hadn't accounted for was the pile of dirty laundry that would be stacked up after a month! 30 pair of underwear and 30 T-shirts made a pile about 3 feet high! The number of visitors to his room plummeted in tandem with the rise of the pile of dirty underwear! When I

read the Isaiah text, I can't help but think of my friend and his ever-growing pile of dirty underwear and T-shirts in the corner. The Scripture says that my good stuff amounts to such a pile of dirty laundry! If that's my good stuff, what's my bad stuff like?!

One more text. And it's a sobering one.

“For the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23)

Whoa! That's an arresting thought! All this time we thought that sin and evil was just an inconvenience to be worked around, or a tragic but natural part of life we all have to live with. But a death sentence? Isn't that a little over the top?

Some think they can mollify God by claiming that they don't do everything bad. Some think they deserve God's wink because they are trying so hard to do better and maybe even are successful much of the time. Some even think that God is just too kind, if there's a God at all, to really demand death for sin.

**“Evil is not just what we do,  
it's what we are.”**

But they miss the point. Evil is not just what we do, it's what we are. And to God's pure character, sin is an anathema. It simply cannot co-exist in a universe that God created for perfection. God's goal is the total eradication of evil, not just its abatement.

Once every couple of months our pest control service comes around to spray house to keep our bugs at bay. The service and we both know the service can never really kill all the bugs. The bugs are never really gone – so we settle for abatement. God will not.

God cannot stand for relationships to be defined by separation and mistrust. His or ours. He hates sin because it is so abhorrent to Himself, and because of what it does to us.

Every story of mistreatment or torture or abandonment or thievery or murder or molestation or selfishness or manipulation causes such pain in the heart of God – both for how it violates His own character, and because of the pain it causes us. God simply cannot live with the pain of evil and what it does to himself and to his creation.

So that means drastic steps will have to be taken. God will have to destroy evil as it exists in every form in order to return everything to Revelation 21/22 condition.

Sobering dilemma we face. If it's true that God is real and that evil is real and that He cannot exist with evil and that we are evil both in what we do and in what we are, then we who are evil must be destroyed in order for the universe to be made right once again.

There is nothing in the Christian Scriptures that will refute this awful fact. Sin will be destroyed. That's the only way God can make Revelation 21 and 22 happen.

Before you begin to think that things are so bad that there's no point in sending

for TouchPoint 5, I want you to read all Romans 6:23:

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

If you think that maybe there's a window of hope after all, you're right! God will destroy evil. These words don't mean He won't do that. But they do mean there is a way through this to live forever. That way is Jesus, the Son of God. He's who I've been anxious to tell you about. But now that you know the mortal problem sin is to God, I think you'll appreciate Jesus more! So on to TouchPoint 5! •

# Be Careful What You Wish For

## Questions

What was it that the serpent somehow managed to get Adam and Eve to think about God? (that he was holding out on them, depriving them of something they deserved and should have)

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In what way were the serpent's words truthful?

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In what way were they lies?

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After reading about the encounter with the serpent, who gets the blame for evil in the world?

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What universal human experiences are now a part of each person's life because Adam and Eve listened to the serpent? (sin/death)

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Evil is not just what we do, it is what we \_\_\_\_\_.

What will God ultimately do to evil?

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What does the Scripture go on to say after it tells us that "the wages of sin is death?"

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Please send this answer sheet, either by e-mail or land mail  
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