

## God Laughs

### Forty Days of Humour and Devotion

**Day 1** “It is the woman you gave me!” Genesis 3:1 - 19

Did you ever wonder why we find things funny. The comedian steps toward a banana peel. We hold our collective breath. Will he step on it? Will he ‘slip’ and do an embarrassing prat fall? Inevitably he does and we laugh. Why? Because slipping and falling is a part of the human experience. While I have never literally slipped on a banana peel (I actually do not know anyone who has.) I have most definitely ‘slipped.’ Whether it is an actual fall, a slip of the tongue or our slip was showing, it is a shared experience. Alexander Pope penned the immortal words, “to err is human” and in doing so he captured truth.

It is rarely funny, though when I am the one falling. Humour needs its distance! Anything hitting too close to home is nearer to tragedy than comedy, but, oh how funny a blooper accomplished by someone else can be! Have you ever stumbled walking down the sidewalk and stopped to stare at the pavement behind as if it conspired to trip you. In your mind you say, “It can not be my own clumsiness it must be the fault of the ‘uneven’ walkway!”

Blame-shifting is only a nano second younger than erring! We look around, then, to see if anyone has noticed. If we have been seen we make a demonstration of disgust with the offending pathway and collect our dignity and stride on. The loss of dignity, our and attempts to regain it, amuse us if it is not our dignity at play.

The first such ‘err’ set the stage for bloopers and pratfalls yet to come. Until that moment the axiom “to err is human” was not at all applicable or remotely true! The human race was in its earliest of laps when the first error was committed. God had been clear to our progenitors, “And the lord commanded “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...”” He did not explain why, for the Creator does not answer to the created. In his wisdom he simply forbade that which would bring incalculable harm to his beloved creation.

You know the rest of the story, but as an author I must needs retell it. They chose to eat the forbidden fruit, seeking equality with God! Because our forebears chose self-centred rebellion, thus setting a similar course for all of humanity, they were no longer fit for a sinless paradise such as Eden. Their choices made life in this environment untenable. This led to a separation from their Creator and the idyllic creation. They now were faced with life in a thorn riddled world and the inevitability of death. One might say that Eve was duped, that she was deceived into eating the forbidden fruit and I am sure that would be her explanation. But it is no real explanation it is but an excuse! Yes she was tempted, but it was her decision to give in. The serpent lied and cajoled and she fell for it despite the clear knowledge of God's one demand.

While Eve's excuse was lame Adam has none at all! "She gave some to her husband; and he did eat!" No trickery, no deception, no persuasion needed. Adam simply ate!

I recall getting into trouble with my little brother. We came home muddy and wet from playing by the pond, near our home. We tracked the filth into the house where I was met by an angry mother. I took the brunt of the punishment with the words "You are older! You knew better!" ringing in my ears. Adam was the senior and yet he seems to be the easiest 'mark' of the two. It is no wonder he goes down in history as the one responsible for the epic fall!

Now caught with a mouthful of forbidden fruit, very much like a toddler with his hand in the cookie jar, Adam points the finger. Perhaps better said he points the fingers, for he has multiple scapegoats! With one he points squarely at the woman, his wife! It is this woman. She is to blame. Ignoring his own autonomy and his responsible place in creation he attempts to shift the blame!

I find this so humorous because I recognize this finger pointing excuse making in me. It is comical in him because it is so real and tragic in me! Caught 'red handed' he does not hold up his hand to assume responsibility but instead so lamely tries to deflect blame. No reasonable adult (or child) would fail to see through his poor defenses, and yet by reflex he foolishly attempts to shift responsibility.

Even Adam in all his naivety must have realized that pointing at the woman was not going to fully absolve him, he next resorted to pointing to God. Have you ever noticed that when things go well we easily pat ourselves on the back, but when trouble comes, we are much more likely to lay the blame at God's door?

It is not just the woman, but it is "the woman you gave me!" How could God have acted in such folly as to create this creature that would bring him so low? His twisted logic seeks to absolve himself and to blame God. In the sin but also in the excuse making Adam paved the way for humanity as we now experience it. The all-knowing God does not even consider the feeble excuse making then, nor does He today!

Our efforts to avoid responsibility by pointing fingers must seem ludicrous to the omniscient (all knowing) God. How often am I the unwitting comedy in my own tragedy?

I have not yet described the dire consequences of this 'humorous' exchange, because the comedy get seriously unfunny quickly. Innocence is squandered!

The Fall is far, and universal! While we smile at the comedy, comedy itself is a by product of this great loss. I cannot imagine what was laughable before but now we laugh at our own expense. H.L. Menken is credited with saying, "When you point a finger there are three pointing back at you" and it rings of truth. This is, perhaps, why Jesus warns against judging, lest we be judged!

I find this inept excuse making by Adam really quite amusing until I recognize that I share this feeble trait as surely as I share in his Fall. Paul pens in Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short..." We are all in need of a Saviour. I am so glad that I have one! Because Jesus rescued me I can laugh at my frailties knowing that Jesus has paid the consequences so I can be freed and forgiven.

The serpent thought he had won but, God gets the last laugh! Playwright and poet John Heywood wrote "He who laughs last, laughs best!" and I think he was surely right!