



From The Pastor's Heart . . .

Adam and Eve were in the garden. And the first thing God told Adam and Eve was: "Don't." "Don't what?" Adam replied. "Don't eat the forbidden fruit," God said. "Forbidden fruit? We got forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve . . . we got Forbidden Fruit!" "No way!" "Yes WAY!" "Don't eat that fruit!" said God. "Why?" "Because I'm your Creator and I said so!" said God, wondering why He hadn't stopped after making the elephants.

A few minutes later, God saw the kids having an apple break and was angry. "Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" God asked. "Uh huh," Adam replied. "Then why did you?" "I dunno," Eve answered. "She started it!" Adam said. "Did Not!" "DID so!" "DID NOT!!" Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own.

But what does that have to do with anything? Well, it's summer. And summer is a time when the children and youth are out of school. It can be frustrating trying to keep them occupied until school starts again in August. But it can also be a time of rejoicing. Through summer activities like VBS and youth camp, children come to faith in Christ.

Psalm 74:17 says, *"Thou hast established all the boundaries of the earth; Thou hast made summer and winter."* The Psalmist says—summer was made by God. We can give thanks for this period when the world seems warm, enjoyable and so full of opportunities. And above all, we can all quietly be joyful because we have a God of unmatched shoes. Consider the following story.

A man was commissioned to paint a picture of the Prodigal Son. He worked hard, determined to create an image truly up to telling this most famous of parables. Finally, the day came when the picture finished. The scene was set outside the father's house, and showed the open arms of each as they were just about to meet and embrace. The man who commissioned the work was well pleased, and was prepared to pay the painter for his work, when he suddenly noticed a detail that he had missed. Standing out in the painting above everything else in the scene, was the starkly apparent fact that the father was wearing one red shoe and one blue shoe. He was incredulous. How could this be, that the painter could make such an error? He asked the painter, who simply smiled and said, "Yes, this is a beautiful representation of the love of God for His children." "What do you mean?" he asked, puzzled. "The father was not interested in being color-coordinated or fashion-conscious when he went out to meet his son. In fact, he was in such a hurry to show his love to his son, he simply reached and grabbed the nearest two shoes that he could find. He is the God of the Unmatched Shoes."

That's why we truly give thanks to God for summer. It is because He, in Jesus Christ, is rushing towards us no matter the season. In summer, he celebrates with us no matter how we are dressed.

See you Sunday: Looking Up, Reaching Out, Going Forward.

(Hopefully with matching shoes.)

From My Heart To Yours,

Bro. Bob

rkjoyce@shadyshoresbaptist.org