

## Welcome

When Pastor talked to me about preaching this morning, he mentioned that he and Pastor Sarah were planning on spending some more time in the book of Revelation—but they had already started to plan out that schedule, so I could preach about anything I wanted to...except the book of Revelation...so I pretended to be real upset and disappointed and I “reluctantly” agreed to find another topic.

But then I went back and listened to the sermons from the last 2 Sundays...and I got a little bit excited...

You do remember that Jesus wins right?! Despite all the darkness and brokenness and messed up-ness of the world...Jesus still wins—and He wins spectacularly. Someday, the whole Universe will be set right and thousands upon thousands of people and angles will gather in front of God’s glorious and glowing throne and forever sing to Him “Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power Forever and Forever!” And we get to be a part of that! It is an amazing promise, and it is a glorious hope, and I really am excited to go back to Revelation and read and study and learn more about all that the Bible tells us about the Age to Come...but I made a promise that I would talk about something else...

So I started to think about how amazing that will be...and how things are clearly not that way now...and how that is the way God always intended things to be...but how things are clearly not that way now...and I started to wonder why—why are things not the way God always intended them to be? And to find those answers we have to jump all the way from the very end of the Bible back the very start of the Bible... and look at the story of **Paradise Lost**

## Intro

The very first words of the Bible are *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* And then the Book of Genesis uses very poetic and beautiful language to tell us the story of how God carefully and meticulously crafts the Heavens and the Earth.

- He speaks light into existence, and He calls the light “Good”
- He splits the waters to make space for the sky, and then He calls the sky “Good”
- He gathers up the waters and He fills the land with plants, then He calls the land and plants “Good”
- He speaks the sun, moon, and stars into existence, then He calls them “Good”
- He fills the seas with fish and the skies with birds, then He calls the birds and fish “Good”
- He creates all kinds of animals to live on the land, and in one final creative act, He forms man in His own image and breaths His breath of life into the man.
  - And God gives the man—Adam—everything he will need...He sets Adam in a Garden that provide him with food. And then from Adam’s rib, God creates Eve—a partner and helper for Adam (because it is not good for man who was created in the image of God—who Eternally exists in loving community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be alone). And He gives Adam and Eve a job—a mission: They are charged with governing and ruling the world and filling it with reflections of God’s Goodness and Grace.
  - Then God looks over all He has created, and He pronounces that it is “Very good!” Adam and Eve are in a perfect Garden, they are in perfect relationship with God and perfect relationship with each other. The Bible tells us that they were naked, but they felt no shame—they didn’t even notice.

- And then God rests...not because He is tired, but because He is done. What He has made is very good and He is a God who knows when to say “enough”.
- So, Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden and they are plugging away at governing the world and filling it with reflections of God’s Goodness and Grace and there is one rule that they have—they are forbidden to eat any of the fruit from the tree that is in the center of the Garden—The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- But one day a serpent begins to have a conversation with Eve—and surprisingly Eve doesn’t seem to be too bothered by this...It turns out that this serpent is Satan, and he deceives Eve by telling some really clever lies about God. Eve takes some of the Forbidden Fruit and eat it...then she gives some to Adam and he eats it too.
- And in that moment, the whole universe breaks! Right away Adam and Eve realize that they are naked and so they start to hide. They cover themselves with fig leaves and they try to hide from God.
- But God won’t allow them to remain in broken relationships. He quickly and directly brings them to a place of confrontation in order to deal with their sin!
  - And after Adm and Eve both try to shift the blame and make excuses, finally God speaks...

-Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3, starting with verse 14

## I. What God Says...

### A. God Speaks to the Serpent

**-Genesis 3:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

*"Because you have done this, you are cursed*

*more than all animals, domestic and wild.*

*You will crawl on your belly,*

*groveling in the dust as long as you live.*

<sup>15</sup> *And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,*

*and between your offspring and her offspring.*

*He will strike your head,*

*and you will strike his heel."*

1. Super harsh!
  - a. No chance for the serpent to give a reply or make excuses.
  - b. The curse is spoken directly on the serpent by God!
  - c. "Crawl on belly and eat dust"...posture of defeat and humiliation.
  - d. Not only is there a direct curse on the serpent, but the whole created order is thrown into chaos.
2. Animosity between serpents and humanity...
  - a. The rule of humanity over the animals is broken.
    - i. The mission was to govern and rule the natural world...there was supposed to be cooperation and harmony, now there is rebellion and animosity.
  - b. But there is a lot more going on here that we will come back to...

## **B. God Speaks to Eve**

### **-Genesis 3:16**

<sup>16</sup> *Then he said to the woman,*

*"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,*

*and in pain you will give birth.*

*And you will desire to control your husband,*

*but he will rule over you.”*

1. No direct curse on Eve. Eve is not cursed, but there are consequences for her choice.
2. She (and all women) will have pain in pregnancy.
  - a. The mission of being fruitful and multiply to fill the Earth gets much harder for Eve.
3. This next part is a bit tricky to translate...She will either have desire for her husband, or she will have a desire to control her husband, but in the end, she will find that she is controlled by him.
  - a. Notice that the consequence of sin is always the unraveling of the good things God has created.
  - b. God set Adam and Eve in a beautiful, loving, mutually beneficial relationship—now that relationship will be characterized by conflict, competition and strife
  - c. Sin always destroys our relationships..... even the closest and most trusted of relationships!

### C. Finally, **God Speaks to Adam**

#### **-Genesis 3:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> *And to the man he said,*

*“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree*

*whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,*

*the ground is cursed because of you.*

*All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.*

<sup>18</sup> *It will grow thorns and thistles for you,*

*though you will eat of its grains.*

<sup>19</sup> *By the sweat of your brow  
will you have food to eat  
until you return to the ground  
from which you were made.  
For you were made from dust,  
and to dust you will return.”*

1. The ground is cursed—no longer will it yield its food without work and labor!
    - a. Since Adam was trusted to rule the Earth and be God’s image-bearer in the world, it is the world that carries the penalty for Adam’s rebellion against God.
    - b. We think sin is “no big deal” but sinning is tossing a live grenade into our lives!
    - c. Now, growing the food he needs to survive will be hard work. His mission to move the world forward is still intact, but it will be much harder now!
  2. Adam will return to the dust.
    - a. Here is the death that God warned about. God’s warnings are never empty or wrong!
- D. Every part of creation is affected by sin!
1. The curse on the serpent reminds us that all of nature is broken.
    - a. The world is against us now. Animals rebel, the weather rebels, our health rebels
  2. The judgment against Eve reminds us that our relationships are broken.
    - a. Those we trust let us down...We fight and disagree and desire to control and consume one another!
  3. The judgment against Adam reminds us that having enough will always be hard.
    - a. The world will not yield it’s provision for us without a fight! We will always long for enough...and even when we have enough, we will long for more!

4. But if we look carefully, we will see that the mission has not changed...it has just gotten harder. Adam and Eve are still called to carry the image of God into the world and fill it with His goodness and Glory...they just carry a broken image into a broken world now!

## II. What God Does

<sup>20</sup> Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.

<sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. <sup>24</sup> After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. **-Genesis 3:20-24**

- A. God provides clothing for Adam and Eve.
  1. God provides a better way for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness—they cannot be innocent again, but they can be covered and protected.
  2. Notice that God made clothing from the skins of animals...now, I’m no veterinarian, but when you take all the skin off an animal, I think the animal dies. So an animal had to die to cover up the consequence of their sin...We will see this again and again!
- B. Finally, God removes them from the Garden.
  1. So they find themselves covered in shame, kicked out of Paradise, with broken hearts and broken bodies...Truly the weight of sin is finally understood!

C. This is still where we find ourselves...outside of Eden...outside of the good story that God has always wanted to tell with each of our lives...living under the crushing weight of all that is wrong and broken in our world.

1. We still believe that God tells good stories...that God is good and we are still called to fill the world with reflections of His Goodness and Light, but the world is so broken and so dark!
2. This is why the Story of Revelation stirs something deep within our hearts. We know it is true—it is the highest form of true—it is a picture of the Universe as it was always supposed to be! It is what we long for from the very core of our being—to be in perfect relationship with God again...to be in perfect relationship with each other again...to live in a world that isn't broken!

### III. **But, Don't forget about God's Promise**

A. But we must not miss a promise hidden in this story.

B. Back when God was declaring His judgment on the Serpent, we read this:

C. *And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,*

*and between your offspring and her offspring.*

*He will strike your head,*

*and you will strike his heel." -Genesis 3:15*

1. This is more than just a folk tale about why all sane humans hate snakes...This is the Bible giving us a taste of the celebration of Revelation all the way back in Genesis.
2. God promises that the offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, while the serpent strikes at the heel of the man.
3. Who is the offspring of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent? This is Jesus! What is the strike on the heel? That is the cross!



- a. This is the promise that God already had a plan to make things right! This is the worship scene of Revelation promised way back in the opening chapters of the opening book of the Bible!
- b. The curse of sin is not permanent! The rest of the story of the Bible will bring us to Jesus and then unpack what Jesus has done for us!

D. Let me show you just a little bit...

1. Sin breaks nature, but God promises that He is going to fix it!

a. **-Romans 8:20-22** <sup>20</sup> *Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope,* <sup>21</sup> *the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.* <sup>22</sup> *For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

b. The world groans under the weight of sin...but it will not groan forever! Jesus wins and all of God's Good plans will come to pass! All of creation will be filled with His Light and Glory one day!

2. Sin breaks our relationships—but God gives us a blueprint for restored relationships

a. **-Matthew 5:43-45** <sup>43</sup> *"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy.* <sup>44</sup> *But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!* <sup>45</sup> *In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.*

b. We are left sorting people into categories of loved or unloved...friend or enemy. But God promises that in His Kingdom—when we all truly reflect His light and glory—there is enough love for everyone. And He still calls us to bear His image in the world by being so filled with His love that it spills out of our lives onto

everyone...even those who have set themselves against us and set themselves against God.

3. Sin puts us at war with our possessions and threatens to keep us from having enough, but God promises to meet our needs!

a. **-Matthew 6:31-33** <sup>31</sup> *"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?'* <sup>32</sup> *These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.*  
<sup>33</sup> *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

- E. No matter how broken your life gets because of sin, Jesus has a way to rescue you and give you life!

## Conclusion

This morning, I want to invite you to ask God to show you where sin has left your life broken. It could be your sin, it could be the sin of someone close to you, it could be the ongoing effects of the sin of Adam and Eve...living in a broken world.

- **Has sin broken your relationship with God?** Has it left you ashamed and hiding from Him. Know that because of Jesus, you can come home! You don't have to hide from God anymore!
- **Has sin broken your world?** Are you a victim of Natural Evil—a broken body, a broken dream, a broken heart that is of no fault of your own? Through Jesus, God is restoring all things and fixing all that is broken! You can carry your broken things to Him today!

- **Has sin broken your relationships?** Is there fallout from lies or betrayal or disappointment in your life? God offers forgiveness and His empowering presence to lead you into new life and new hope and restored relationships!
- **Has sin left you empty and with not enough?** God promised that He knows what you need and just like He provided for Adam and Eve—both before and after they sinned—He will provide for you!
- **PRAY**