

The Story – The Fall

Turn to Genesis 3 as we look at what we call the fall of man. Because Adam and Eve sinned, they fell from God's grace and favor and blessing; they fell from innocence, from life, from fellowship with God. I suppose we could have called it "the loss" because Adam and Eve lost everything. Why is this story one of the big stories of the bible? One bible teacher, Arthur Pink called Genesis 3 "the seed-plot of the bible." To paraphrase Pink, in this story we find the reason for the fallen and ruined condition of the human race. This is why we are all messed up! We learn about the subtle temptations of the devil and the devastating consequences of sin. We learn how weak we are as humans apart from God's grace. We learn about God's attitude toward sin and the sinner and we see the introduction of God's plan to redeem us and restore us. It's all here in Genesis 3. It starts with Adam and Eve living in a Garden paradise and by the end of the chapter they are banished from their garden home and the tree of life. The rest of the bible is a story of God providing the way for all of the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve (that's us by the way) to come home again, back to paradise and to the tree of life. Let's take a look.

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1 There are plenty of questions to ask about this but we don't have time. Was the serpent a snake? As a result of the curse in v14 he would crawl on his belly so perhaps at this time he walked upright. He could have looked different. Did the serpent speak or was this Satan talking through this animal? Revelation says, **“The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent, called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.”**

Revelation 12:9 Sounds like this was the devil speaking through the serpent. The devil or Satan is a deceiver and an accuser and this is exactly what he did to Eve. He deceived her, casting doubt and twisting God's word. “Did God really say not to eat from the trees in the garden?” when the truth was God said they could eat from every tree in the Garden except for the one tree in the middle!

The devil distorted the truth of God's word and cast doubt on God's trustworthiness and his intentions for Eve and Adam. **“You will not surely die...For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 3:4**

Eve listens to the talking serpent without protest! **“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, also desirable for gaining wisdom, she**

took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” 3:6-7 The truth was, all the trees in the Garden were pleasing to the eye and the fruit was good for food. God said they could eat from all the trees. He wasn't withholding blessing from them, his instruction to not eat from that tree was to protect them from pain and death and the tragic consequences of sin.

Just as the serpent promised, their eyes were opened, but they didn't like what they saw! They had their first experience of shame because they recognized they had sinned. They were sinners. They now had knowledge of good and evil, just like the serpent told them. Now they knew that good is obeying God and doing what he tells you and evil is disobeying God and doing as you please. Now they knew God was good and now they knew they were evil. Now they knew how terrible sin makes you feel. Now for the first time they knew shame and guilt and for the first time they felt the need to hide: from one another and from God.

They sewed together fig leaves to cover their nakedness, to hide from each other and when the Lord came walking in the garden they hid from the Lord as well. **“But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’ 3:9-10**

The immediate result of sin: alienation, guilt, fear, shame. Adam and Eve were created to enjoy fellowship with God and with each other but sin alienated them from God. It separated them from God so they hid from God, their Creator and their source of life and every good thing. They hid from him because of their sin. Let me say it again, sin alienates us from God! I see it in the church. You start sinning, doing things you know aren't pleasing to God and you stop coming to church because you want to hide from God and from God's people. You feel ashamed and you want to hide.

They hid because they realized they were naked. You sin and disobey God. “I don't need God and his rules. I got this.” Then you realize apart from God, you got nothing. Naked and defenseless. Your only strength was walking with him and now you are naked so you make some lame fig leaf clothing to cover up your nakedness, your vulnerability, your weakness.

Adam and Eve never repent and never accept responsibility. They immediately start trying to pass the blame. **“The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me – she gave me**

some fruit from the tree and I ate it.’....The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me and I ate.’” 3:12-13

Adam blames Eve. “I was minding my own business when she gave me some fruit and said ‘eat this.’ You know I was just trying to keep the woman happy.” Adam even tries to pass the blame on to God. “You know you share some guilt in this because you gave me the woman to begin with!”

Eve blames the serpent. “He deceived me and I ate. What can I say?” No one accepts the blame but God holds all accountable. Notice that: **God holds all accountable.** All have sinned and missed the mark. No excuses! Beginning with the serpent, God says, **“Because you have done this...”** and God hands out his judgment. The serpent will now crawl on its belly all of its life. The devil is cursed with the knowledge that the seed of Eve “will crush your head and you will strike his heel.” We believe this to be a reference to Jesus and what he accomplished on the cross when Satan “struck his heel” but Jesus “crushed his head”, utterly defeating him by his death and resurrection from the dead.

“Because you have done this...” pain and death comes into their experience. The woman would feel the pain of death in the very act of giving life. The ground was cursed and would produce thorns and thistles. The man would harvest food by the sweat of his brow until he died and returned to the dust from whence he came. The point in all of this is that the very order of things changed when Adam and Eve sinned. Everything was messed up, everything was affected by the fall.

So what exactly was lost? Everything! Their innocence was lost. Their relationship with God was lost. Their relationship with each other was affected. Death came as a result of the fall. They could have lived forever in the garden but the bible says the wages or consequences of sin is death. They lost health and a life without pain (“pains in childbearing” “painful toil” of the ground.) They lost their way morally. Their disobedience, their decision that they knew what was good and evil for them instead of trusting and believing what God said, that decision left a moral and spiritual stain upon them and their descendants from then on.

Why does all of this matter to us? What difference does the fall of Adam and Eve make to us? Think of Adam as representing the whole human race. As Adam goes, so goes all of humanity. Adam sinned and by Adam, sin entered into the whole human race. The bible says, **“Therefore, just as 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 Adam sinned and sin came into the world. Think of sin like infection/contamination. When sin entered the world through Adam, it infected and contaminated all of his descendants and that means the whole human race. We were born with this sinful contamination, a sinful nature, but don't think that lets us off the hook. “Hey, I was born with this sin problem”, because the verse we just read says, “death came to all men, because all sinned.” Sin was introduced through Adam but we all made the choice to sin. By our nature and by our actions and choices we are all sinners. We are just like our parents, Adam and Eve. Let's look a little closer at their sin and see if we see ourselves.

At the heart of the fall we can see three things, unbelief, rebellion and pride. It's not so much about the fruit, it's about unbelief. Eve refused to believe what God had said. She stopped believing that God had her best interest at heart. She believed the devil instead of believing and trusting God. Can you imagine? She chose the words of a serpent over the words of God! Unbelief. Disbelief. “Did God really say? Can I really trust God? Does God really know best for me?” Eve allowed unbelief to pull her away from her trust in God.

Adam couldn't blame it on unbelief. He wasn't deceived by the devil, he just flat out rebelled against God and what God had told him. “Eat from every tree in the garden, but not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” At issue was whether Adam would let God tell him what was good and what was bad for him or would he decide that for himself. Adam decided to rebel against God's way, God's instruction, God's word. He decided he could know and decide what was good and best for him, apart from any influence from God. That's rebellion.

The bottom line for Adam and Eve and for the devil himself was pride. Pride made Eve decide she knew better than God what was good for her and for her husband. “God was mistaken in saying death would come. I know best and this knowledge of good and evil is gonna be the start of something good for Adam and me!” Pride made Adam say, “I don't need God giving me orders or telling me what's best for me. I'll make my own choices.” Pride is what brought about Satan's fall from heaven. “I will be like the Most High.” C. S. Lewis said, **“Pride leads to every other vice; it is the complete anti-God state of mind.” C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*.** That's Adam, that's Eve, that's the serpent, with a complete anti-God state of mind.

Unbelief, rebellion, pride and sadly, in the heart of each one of us, in our history, in our nature, in our actions, we see these same three things. Here we are, just like Adam and Eve.

Sons of Adam and daughters of Eve in every sense. Refusing to believe God and his word. Doubting that God has good intentions and purposes for us. Doubting God's motives in telling us to refrain from certain things, questioning and doubting his boundaries, his rules, his order, his commands. Believing every other voice rather than believing the word of God our Savior.

Here we are, just like Adam and Eve, rebelling against him and his Lordship in our lives. "I'm going my own way." Here we are, full of pride and arrogance. "I know what's best for me, not you God. Stop telling me how to live. Stop telling me what to do!"

Here we are, like Adam and Eve, refusing to take sin seriously. "It's just fruit. Eat it." There was no thought toward consequences, no thought toward how this would affect their relationship with God or each other. It just looked good, it looked like it would taste good. "I just didn't see how it could be such a big deal, so I ate the fruit." We act just like that. "It looked like fun. It didn't seem like a big deal." Sin is a big deal! Stop treating it like it is nothing.

Here we are, like Adam and Eve, refusing to accept responsibility, trying to pass the blame. "I couldn't help it. It's my mom's fault. It's how I was raised. My dad abused me. I'm a victim."

Here we are like Adam and Eve, refusing to repent, trying to hide our sin, hide our weakness, hide our powerlessness. But here is the truth, like Adam and Eve, we are fallen. We are lost. We've been driven out of our garden home. We are alienated from God. We are naked. We've got nothing and nobody. We are rebellious, proud, unrepentant, we are dying, we are lost, and like Adam and Eve, we can't do anything to fix this on our own. We can't get back to the garden. We can't get back to the tree of life. We need a Savior!

I've got good news. That passage we read from Romans 5 said sin and death came through one man, Adam. A few verses later that passage tells us, "**For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.**" **Romans 5:19**

Sin came through one man, Adam and because of that sin, we've all sinned and missed the mark. But through the obedience of Jesus, through his death and resurrection, salvation has been secured and made available to all who will repent of their sins and turn to him and believe. The bible says, "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22 We all have been contaminated and because of that we've all sinned. But Jesus has the cure for

that sin contamination! You don't have to remain dead in your trespasses and sins. If you will turn to Christ and surrender your heart and life to him, he will give you eternal life!

Adam and Eve were hiding in shame but God came looking for them, calling to them. He still comes looking for us, calling to us. He wants to save us, to provide for us. Notice the bible says after the fall **“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” Genesis 3:21** In that action we see a foreshadowing of our salvation. A sacrifice was made, an animal was offered to secure a covering for them. Here we stand, naked and ashamed before God, and God provides a covering for us. Through the sacrifice of His own Son on the cross, he provides a covering for our sins, covering them with his mercy, his forgiveness and his grace.

James Boice told of a conversation he had with a young man who had been attending his church. The young man felt burdened by his sin but he was thinking of not attending because coming to church made him feel worse. Boice told him the closer we get to Jesus we become aware not of how good we are becoming but of how sinful we really are. Our eyes are opened to the truth of good and evil and we see we are evil. Pastor Boice then told him a story about a man who was all dressed up and on his way to a party. A car came by and ran through a mud puddle and splashed this man's clothes. Boice said, “It was dark outside, so at first the man thought the damage might be slight. He could tell he was wet, but since it did not look too bad, he thought he would just go on to the party. Ahead of him was a streetlight. When he got about halfway toward it he looked down at his clothes again and realized the damage was greater than he had thought. He was worried but thought he would still go on. At last he came and stood beneath the light and now saw the damage with the full illumination of the light upon it. And he said, ‘My goodness, it's much worse than I thought. I'm going to have to go home and change my clothes.’ [Boice said] I told this story to make the point about sanctification, but when I got to the end and repeated the party goer's last comment – ‘My goodness, it's much worse than I thought. I'm going to have to go home and change my clothes’ – this young man responded in a wistful voice, ‘But I don't have any clean clothes.’ [Boice said] It was the point to which the Scriptures – whether in Genesis or Romans or any other part – would have us come. They would have us see that we do not have any clean clothes in order that we might come to Christ who alone is able to provide them. These clothes are the clothes of Christ's own righteousness. In them we are able to stand before God.”

It's much worse than we thought and we don't have any clean clothes. The fall was more devastating than we thought. We are lost. We are sinners. Like Adam and Eve in their fig leaves we are clothed only in the filthy rags of our sin. We don't have any clean clothes but if we will repent and turn to Jesus he will clothe us and cover us with his own righteousness. He will forgive us and make us whole. Through Adam came sin and death, but through Christ there is redemption and salvation. It's the good news that is ours in spite of the fall.