

Rebellion – God is rejected

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[0 : 00] wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, did God really say you must not eat from the tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die. You will surely not die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and 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 that they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

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. And he said, who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, oh, the woman you put here with me. She gave me some of the fruit from the tree and I ate it. Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? The woman said, oh, the serpent deceived me and I ate it.

So the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

[2 : 12] And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel. To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing.

With pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. To Adam he said, because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground since from it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return.

Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever.

So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

[4 : 03] Well, as we continue to look at God's story, let's pray and ask for his help. Our Father God, we come before you as the author of this story, this true story, the creator of all things and the ruler over every one of us.

Father, we ask that you would help us to listen carefully to your story, to its truth, so that we may understand who we are, what we have become, and our path of redemption.

Father, we ask that these words would not only give us knowledge and understanding with our heads, but that it would truly show us our hearts and how our hearts can be made new.

We pray for your help in this. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, at a very early age, I decided that I didn't like school.

Maybe that's your story too. I didn't like homework. I didn't like the teacher. And I didn't like the rules. So we started a rebellion.

[5 : 46] One lunchtime, my friends and I began to march around the school building, as if it was like marching around the walls of Jericho. Chanting as we went, we're on strike, as we passed the headmaster's classroom.

Soon, the whole school had joined in, from junior infants right up to sixth class, all of us marching around the school, chanting in defiance of school rules.

It was a deliberate act of rebellion. He was the headmaster. We were the pupils. It was his school, not ours.

He made the rules, and we were to obey them. And we did not like it. So in an act of defiance, we rebel.

Now I think that's a picture of all of our story. In Genesis chapter 3, God tells us the true story of what we are really like.

[6 : 54] It's a story about our deliberate act of rebellion against our loving Creator and the devastating and eternal consequences.

The story all starts with the test to love God. You may remember from last week as we looked at creation, that God in his love provided man with all that he needed.

Look back at chapter 2, verse 8. So as God had created everything, we read in chapter 2, verse 8, Now the Lord God had planted in the garden in the east in Eden.

Eden. And there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

Eden is this beautiful, pleasing and plentiful garden. No wonder it means delight. Everything is there for man to enjoy.

[8 : 00] Nothing going wrong. There's no sadness or hurt. No pain or struggles. In fact, it's in this garden that the man and woman enjoy a perfect, intimate relationship with God.

Look at chapter 2, verse 25. Here's the scene in the garden. The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.

You see, we've got to understand this carefully because their physical nakedness reflects a deeper inner nakedness. Here are two people where there is complete openness between each other, but most importantly, openness with God.

There's nothing to hide. There's nothing to fear. They're completely transparent. There is no shame. There is no guilt. Man and woman with their loving creator in perfect relationship.

This is how God designed the world to be. It is perfect delight. Now, God's beautiful design is going to be maintained by one simple command.

[9 : 22] Go back to chapter 2, verse 16. For this design to be maintained, there is one simple command. And the Lord God commanded the man, 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, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.

You see, our love for God is to be something that's free and spontaneous. It's to be a natural response to God's love towards us.

And the way to demonstrate our love is to obey God. That's how we tell him and show him that we love him, is by obeying him.

So he says to man, don't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, we'll get back to the tree in a minute. But for now, I want us to see that God's command to his people is like a test of their love and loyalty.

It's not temptation because God has given them everything that they need. They have all that they ever need for life. He simply gives this command as a simple way for them to demonstrate their love to their creator God.

[10 : 49] And it's no different for us. Every single day through our words and actions, we are given opportunity to demonstrate our love to our loving creator God.

Through obeying him, we are showing our loyalty and love to him. So first, there is the test to love God.

Second, we see there is a desire to be God because tragically, their love for God turns into a deliberate and intentional rebellion.

First of all, we have the talking snake. Or is it? Have a look at chapter 3, verse 1.

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?

[11:56] Now, I'm sure most of you have a picture in your mind as we read of that little scene. Of this colourful snake wrapped around a tree talking to Eve with a hiss.

Offering this juicy apple in its coil. It's the kind of pictures we see in kids' Bibles. Now, I don't think that's really a very helpful picture at all.

Why? Well, we're not told what he looks like. In fact, we're not even told where he comes from. Only that he is a created being.

Look again at verse 1. Now, the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. So, he's not the same as God.

But he is dependent on God. And he is under God's rule. However, when we do get to the New Testament, it does become clear who this serpent is.

[13:03] He is identified as that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray.

Now, some will say, well, the devil took the form of a serpent. Others will say it's the symbol for the devil. But let's get this clear.

Our concern is not what he looks like, but how he works. And I think that's the point of the story. We're interested in how he works.

He is, look at verse 1, the most crafty of all the animals that God has made. So, he's not stupid. He cleverly uses his wit to deceive. In fact, his main means of deception is to question God's word.

[14:06] Look what it says at the end of verse 1. He said to the woman, did God really say, you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

You see, it creates doubt, and it makes us sceptical of God. If God is truly loving, would he really stop you from having everything in the garden?

It's such a subtle question that he puts to the man and woman. It's designed in such a way that we begin to question God and his goodness.

And in fact, such a questioning puts us over the creator of the universe. And slowly and but surely, we allow ourselves to believe that God is really not that good, and that he's maybe this mean kind of God, and he's withholding all the best things from us.

And with a little bit more pondering, we think, well, God is the ultimate party pooper who just says no all the time, and he's out to spoil our fun and ruin things for us.

[15:15] And so we can begin to see the thinking that is behind the man and the woman as Satan comes and twists and distorts what God has to say.

But the devil's deception is also matched by man's willful desire.

Look at verse 2. The woman said to the serpent, We may eat from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.

Now the woman is just playing with truth here. God never said anything about touching the fruit. He said, Don't eat it.

He never said anything about touching it. So she's putting words in God's mouth and making God out to be something that he is not. Verse 4.

[16:20] You will surely not die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

That's ultimately what the man and woman want. They want to be like God. Do you remember what the tree was called back in verse 17 of chapter 2?

It's called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now the knowledge of good and evil is not just knowing the difference between good and evil.

It's deciding for themselves what is good and what is evil. You see, when God made the world, he pronounced everything as good.

After he created each stage, he steps back and he looks and he says, That is good. God decides what is good and evil, not us. He knows what is best for us because he made us.

[17:27] But here's the problem. That's what man wants. We want to be like God so that we decide what is good or evil. We want to be the ones who declare what is right and wrong.

In other words, we've got no longer any use for God. We don't need God anymore because we decide what we should do. Verse 6.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

Now we mustn't think that the fruit is somehow magical. It's not like they eat the fruit and then all of a sudden they've been given this God-like power. Now remember that the tree was a test to show their love and their loyalty to God.

And they fail. Rather than give their love to God, they love themselves. Instead of being loyal to their creator God, they become loyal to their own desires and they follow what's in their heart.

[18:43] They simply long to be God. Now the story we've just read is the story of us all.

We are no different to what happened in the Garden of Eden. In fact, as we follow through in the story, look how it continues.

Have a look at chapter 5, verse 1. Chapter 5, verse 1. This is the written account of Adam's line. So this is a history, if you like, of the whole human race from the beginning of time. Here's a history. Look what it says. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them man. So far, so good. But now look what it says.

[19:51] Verse 3. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

And he named him Seth. Do you see what's happened? No longer are we portrayed as being made in God's image. We now share in Adam's broken image.

We are like him. We have the same desires as him. We willfully defy God and replace God and say, we don't need you anymore. I know what is right and best for me.

In fact, as the story unfolds, it gets even worse. Have a look at chapter 6, verse 5. This is the account of Noah. Chapter 6, verse 5.

And God looks down on mankind and it says, The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all of the time.

[21:05] It doesn't mean to say that man can't do good. Man does do good. But that our motives and all our thinking is only evil all the time.

Everything about mankind, his very inner being, his nature, is to rebel. Just as I, as a young kid, wanted to rebel against the headmaster.

So we all want to live our lives in rebellion against God. We decide what's right. But we have not made things better.

We've only made things worse. In fact, this sorry story doesn't stop there. Have a look at chapter 11, verses 1 to 4.

As the whole story begins to unfold before us. Chapter 11, verse 1. So now there's a large population in the world, but nothing has changed.

[22:09] Chapter 11, verse 1. Now the whole world had one common language. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and they settled there. And they said to each other, come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.

They used brick instead of stone and bitumen for mortar. And here's the point. Then they said, come, let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.

They're wanting to make a name for themselves, placing themselves above God. It's just another act of rebellion. We don't want God's name to be great.

I want my name to be great. I am God. I declare what is good and what is evil. And so we have a picture of our sorry story.

Continually through time, we hear God's word, but we twist it and we deny it. We allow ourselves to believe the lie that God is not good and that he's only out to spoil our fun.

[23:28] We ponder over our choices and decisions and we decide we know what is best and right for me. We desire to be God. We rebel against him and we replace him with me.

We no longer have any need of God because I am now God. So, there is the desire to be God but when we rebel against God, there are devastating and eternal consequences.

Look at verse 7 of chapter 3. Our innocence is lost. Chapter 3, verse 7. So, after taking the fruit, chapter 3, verse 7, then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked.

this isn't just a physical awareness. All of a sudden they are conscious of what they've done. For the first time in their lives, they are now living with this terrible weight of guilt and shame that has come upon them and in desperation, look at the rest of verse 7, they sewed fig leaves together to make a covering for themselves.

You see, they're no longer enjoying this intimacy with God and with one another. They're now trying to literally cover up their shame. They're trying to hide away but this outward act of covering is not going to do anything.

[25 : 19] It's like a sticky plaster on an open wound. Verse 8, then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

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.

Do you see, man sees his own shame. He sees what he has done and God sees his rebellious heart. Intimacy is now replaced by hiding.

The joy that they had with God is now replaced by fear. They're no longer walking with God. They're now running away from God trying to get away because they're too ashamed and they do not want to be with him.

And that's what happens when we rebel. we lose our deep intimacy with our creator God. We no longer have that unity with him and that relationship.

[26 : 37] Instead of his friends, we've become his enemies. Instead of fellowship with him, there is this broken separation. But not only is our innocence lost, but we now live in a world where there is not blessing, but curse.

Look at verse 14. The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals.

Verse 15, and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. You see, instead of the harmony between man and creation, there's going to be this fierce battle which is going to be played out between mankind and Satan.

And his objective, as always, is to turn people away from the loving God and the goodness of his word. And that's his scheme and that's what he's doing to us today. And that battle gets played out every single day in a thousand different ways as we continue to declare what is good and what is right.

But with our rebellion comes pain and suffering, verse 16, to the woman, God said, I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing, with pain you will give birth to children, and your desire will be for your husband.

[28 : 05] That is, you will long to rule over your husband and he will rule over you. And isn't that our experience in life?

Families and marriages and relationships, they all begin to break down because we love ourselves more than we love God and we want to be the boss and we want to be in charge.

But perhaps the worst of all of this is death. Look at verse 17. To Adam he said, because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree from which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. cursed is the ground because of you. Verse 19. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you will return.

In the beginning, everything lives. Now, everything dies. Have a look again at chapter 5.

[29 : 21] Look at the account of humanity. See the picture that is unfolding. So, in verse 5 of chapter 5 we read, altogether Adam lived 930 years and then he died.

Verse 6, when Seth lived 105 years he became the father of Enosh. Now, look down at verse 8. Altogether Seth lived 912 years and then he died.

Verse 9, Enosh had lived 90 years and he became the father of Kenan. Verse 11, Altogether Enosh lived 905 years and then he died.

On on and on it goes through the history of the world and for every mankind everyone dies.

And one day somebody will stand over our grave and they will say ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

[30 : 25] The giving of life is now replaced with the pronouncement of death. What God had said at the beginning was true. You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die.

we may not have experienced death ourselves but we've experienced in the sense that we've all lost loved ones.

Death brings pain and heartache. It takes those we dearly love. It steals away our joy. It's a curse that we live with day in day out.

Do you remember what the serpent said to the woman about eating the fruit? The subtle lie? He said you will not surely die. Do what you like. Live how you want. Don't believe this nonsense about God judging people.

[31 : 39] It's not true. but they did die and God will judge. In fact how God responds shows how seriously God takes our rebellion.

Look at chapter 3 verse 23. So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

And after he drove the man out he placed on the east side of the garden of Eden cherubim or like angels and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Shut out. Separated from God. This is God's fair, right and just response to our rebellion.

In God's judgment we are eternally separated from the source of all life and all love. You see when we rebel we invite God's judgment upon ourselves.

[32 : 54] And this is my story. And this is your story. It's a story we don't like to hear.

but it's true. Well thankfully mixed in with our story, our tragic story is a story of hope.

In the chaos and in the disorder and in the death that we see all around us, God speaks a promise. Chapter 3 verse 15.

This is what God said. I will put enmity speaking to the serpent, to the devil. He says I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head and you will strike his heel. You see from the woman, from this human race, one special person is going to be born and that person will come and crush the devil.

[34 : 09] Defeating him, destroying him, restoring our broken lives and renewing our disordered world. How do we know?

Well have a look at Romans chapter 5. Romans chapter 5. Here we see the promise that God had given.

We're reminded, first of all, of what we are like. Romans 5 verse 12. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, so he's talking about Adam and his rebellion, 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.

you see, it's making that clear picture that we are just like Adam. We've all messed up.

We will all die. We will all face God's judgment. But here we see the promise. Here we see the hope. Verse 17. For if by the trespass or the rebellion of one man, death reigns through that one man.

[35 : 45] So just because of rebellion, this world is now under the curse of death, and everything is broken, and everything is going wrong. Look what it says at the rest of verse 17.

How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Ralph talked about this at the beginning, just as we sang those songs. In some ways we're all under Adam, the Adam of the Garden of Eden. But now a new Adam has come, Jesus Christ, one who obeyed God perfectly, one who never did anything wrong, one who did everything that was right.

And he comes and he takes all our guilt and all our shame and all our rebellion and he takes it on himself and he is punished and he is judged for me and for you so that we can receive his gift of life, so that we are now covered in his righteousness, so that God no longer sees the guilt and shame but now treasures us and welcomes us as his own son.

through the death of Jesus Christ, Satan is crushed and defeated and life is ours to receive.

[37 : 13] The promise of Jesus Christ who comes to give us life so that we no longer have to live in rebellion but now we have new life and we can follow his way and do what God says.

But you know what, that's not the end. Just have a look at Romans chapter 16. Look at the way this is put. For all those who have received Jesus Christ and who are following Jesus Christ, look what

he says to us.

Chapter 16 verse 20. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Isn't that amazing? What he's telling us here that as we, as people who have been put right by Jesus, begin to share and preach and proclaim and share the good news of Jesus Christ with other people, as we tell the gospel to other people, they're also set free from the power of Satan.

They're also released from the curse of death and judgment and they are given you life through Jesus Christ. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

[38 : 39] As we share the story of Jesus Christ, lives are changed, lives are transformed and they receive the life that only God can give.

This is our true story. A story of rebellion, but how we are rescued and how we join in with that rescuer Jesus Christ and share that same good news story so that others are also rescued from the predicament that they are in.

may God give us opportunity to share that story with the world around us. Let's pray.

Father, please help us to see ourselves clearly.

Please help us to take off those rose-colored spectacles that we have on that see us from our view. help us to see ourselves from your view.

[40 : 03] And would you teach us to keep running to the Lord Jesus, the one who has come to deliver us, the one who has come to cover us in righteousness, no longer suffering under guilt and shame, but treasured and treated as your own son.

thank you that life is ours today through Jesus. And we pray that we would share of that same message and that people would be set free from following the ways of Satan so that they may follow the Lord Jesus and live for him.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing in celebration which picks up some of those themes, I will glory in my Redeemer whose priceless blood has ransomed me.

Mine was the sin. That's the reason why Jesus had to die was because of my rebellion. But he sets me free to live a life for him. So let's stand together as we sing.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[41 : 32] Amen. Amen.