

Where it all went wrong

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[0 : 00] This is chapter 3, and we have been looking at these first three chapters. There are difficulties! There are difficulties with the chapters, they're countercultural, they call on us to believe what God says, as over against the things that were often told by the media, by the world around us.

It's always been the case. Genesis has always been a countercultural, polemic book. I know there are disagreements over interpretation, but we'll just try and stick to what it says.

But there are good reasons to study Genesis 1 to 3. It is what God tells us as truth. It tells us the things we really need to know, and without which this world limps and struggles morally, spiritually, and intellectually.

Things like, what is it to be human? Things like, what is this world for? Things like, what is human sexuality for? Where does it come from? How is it meant to work?

What does Jesus save us for? What is his agenda? And today, we're going to look at this question, which is depicted for us here in Genesis 3.

[1 : 23] What is the truth about moral evil? In a worldview, and this worldview comes at us from all directions these days, a worldview that we live in an impersonal universe that's just come about by chance, it is just inexplicable that there should be such a thing as evil. It's a moral dimension.

And if you think that the world came about impersonally just by chance, there is just no way that a moral dimension can be explained. But here, it is not explained, so I use this word explicated in the hope that that didn't quite mean the same thing as explained.

But it's set out for us here, and it's set out for us here in these terms, in terms of relationship with the Creator. In terms of relationship with creation, the world he's made.

And also in terms of relationship with ourselves, human beings, in terms of my relationship with myself, and our relationship with one another.

And that's what we're going to look at this morning. So I'll do it in this way. Let me just say, we're only going to do the first 13 verses. That's the plan. And I do hope on the timetable I've left myself time to do the next verses next time.

[2 : 58] We won't get the full awful picture, because this picture just seems rather, well, not quite inconsequential, but you don't get the full weight of it in the verses we're going to look at.

So the first thing I'm going to do is do a little recap. Then we'll go through the text. And then I've got, I think, five lots of thoughts in reflecting on the text.

So that's what we're going to do. First of all, let's do a recap. The recap is of God making the world. God, he did it in six days.

The earth was formless and empty. It had no form. It had no population. And God, first of all, in day one, two, and three, adds form by separating things dark from light, water above, water underneath, land from sea.

He gives form. And then he adds populations, the things that govern the night and day, the birds that are up there, the fish that are down there, and then, in this case, the land animals and human beings.

[4 : 09] And his final stroke is to make Adam, in his image, to rule over this beautiful world. Day seven is a day of rest. I'm agnostic or unsure about the ending of it, because it doesn't tell us it ends.

In chapter two, we looked at the, in more detail, of the wonderful world that God made for Adam and Eve.

Here's a summary of chapter two. We end up with a world which has water. I didn't do the blue for the water, but it's also quite dry. It's sort of a user-friendly for a Middle Eastern reader.

They would know about dry land and the need for irrigation and so on. And we have this garden that God makes. There is a potential for agriculture.

There is the beauty and provision of the garden. And I would like to put in a thought that the idea originally was that the garden would expand to take over the whole world.

[5 : 10] But that's a bit of a speculation, but it certainly makes sense. There's geography, rivers, minerals. There's permission for Adam to use and investigate and have dominion over everything.

But one thing that he mustn't do, which is this tree with the no entry sign on it, you must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat it, you will surely die.

That's one thing he mustn't do. So if you like, God says there are a thousand things that you can do and just one thing that you mustn't do. And that's the word that presides over Adam's rule in this garden.

There's a beautiful woman to be with a man and you think, what could possibly be better than that? It's a wonderful, wonderful world that he is given, that he lives in.

There was just that one but, wasn't there? One tree that you mustn't eat. And as you know from the reading, it all went terribly wrong.

[6 : 28] One thing he mustn't do and he says, oh, I will do it. And we're going to read the story of how that happened. Let's recap about the trees because the trees become quite important and they were described in chapter two.

There were many trees in the garden and in chapter two, verse nine, it says, the Lord made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. So they have attractiveness in an aesthetic sense. They're beautiful and they have functionality. They are useful.

They are good for food. And then there are these two particular trees, chapter two, verse nine, in the middle of the garden with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So about these two trees, these seem to be different to the other trees. There's something more supernatural about these trees. The tree of life, you eat it, you get life.

[7 : 43] You keep on eating it, you keep on getting life. If you keep on eating it, you don't die, you live forever. And my understanding of it is, which I think makes sense, that they were free to eat from that tree.

You're free to eat from any of the tree but one. And they were free to eat from this tree. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I think it's best understood that this knowledge is not mere information but the ability to decide something.

So it's not information about good and evil but deciding which is good and which is evil. So it isn't knowing what a law says so much as being a position to make law.

So you would use the word no in that sense if you were working out what to wear to go to work.

Now which shoes shall I wear? Say, which shoes shall I wear? Shall I wear the ones that are really comfortable but are not particularly shiny? Or shall I wear the very shiny ones which kill my feet by the end of the day?

[9 : 06] What am I going to do? You say, I know what I'm going to do. I'll wear the red shoes instead. And when you say, I know what shoes I'm going to wear, the I know is really saying, I've made a decision.

And that is what this tree is about. Knowing good and evil in the word of, we will decide what's good.

We will decide what's evil. And God says, if you reach out for that, take that and eat that, you will die.

On the day that you eat it, you will surely die. Or as it's more literally, dying, you will die. You definitely die. Okay. Those are the two trees that we need to know that before we go any further.

So let's look at the text. So we introduce the serpent. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.

[10 : 14] And we notice that the narrative slows down now. We had Adam naming animals. I don't know how long that took him, but it's all in a sentence or two.

But now we get a blow-by-blow account of each thing that gets said almost in slow motion. Here's the serpent, the snake, in Hebrew, the Nahash.

And the serpent, we're told, is more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.

Now let's pick up on the made. He's a made thing.

He's not an eternal thing, an unmade thing. He's a made thing. So this teaches us that evil hasn't always been in sort of equal balance with good, yin and yang.

It says that, this is what it's telling us, that the good God made everything. And in some way, which we're not told about, that included the serpent.

[11:26] Not eternal, but made. And he's crafty. Now the servant was more crafty than any of the other wild animals the Lord God had made.

We're thinking about that word crafty. It's like our word shrewd. It can have, oh, in Hebrew it's arom, and it's linked.

And I couldn't work out how it was linked, but the dictionaries say it was linked with the word for naked, which comes up later, erom. I suppose if we wanted to do that sort of play on words in English, we'd say nude and shrewd.

The servant was more shrewd. Shrewd can be good, and it can be bad. So a shrewd businessman is not necessarily a dishonest businessman, but he's clever.

And he sees where things are going to lead. And he's one step ahead of everybody else. There's a good, I think this is a good description, Proverbs 15, 14, which uses the word shrewd in, I think, a positive way.

[12:43] It's the word translated as prudent. And here's what the shrewd man does. It's Proverbs 14, 15. A simple man believes everything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.

A simple man just takes in everything. Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah. But a shrewd man, a prudent man, gives thought to his steps. Now, where's this going to lead?

What will happen two steps after this? Probably thinking, if he was a shrewd businessman, oh, what's in it for me? So the serpent has this quality of shrewdness.

And as we know from the rest of the Bible, the serpent, the snake, sometimes referred to in the book of Revelation as the dragon, is none other than our great adversary, Satan, the great adversary, God's great adversary.

And here he pops up in the garden as this snake. All sorts of questions come to mind. How did that happen? Why is he a snake? And I don't know the answers. I'm just telling you what it says.

[14:01] We're to think of it this way. It's like a user guide. If you do it this way, you won't go wrong. There was the snake. More crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God has made.

And he said to the woman, has God said you may not eat from any tree of the garden?

It's a funny sort of question. It's almost a statement. So God said you can't eat from any tree of the garden. Interesting to have a conversation with the snake.

The snake says this. And the woman replies to the snake, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but, find my place, 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.

So she's expanded on what God actually says, hasn't she? Because God never said, you mustn't touch it. She's added that bit.

[15:21] But she's still got the idea, we will surely die. And then the snake says, you will not surely die. So first he sort of raised it as a sort of question, and now he makes a statement contradicting what God has said.

You know, you won't surely die. And you won't surely die, because God said this, because he knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, you will be like God, or you'll be like God's, knowing good and evil.

So the serpent challenges this fundamental issue, what God says. And you remember that for all the physicality of the garden, the thing that keeps it all in its right place, and if you like, keeps it all beautiful, is not the physicality, but the relationship with God, which comes in the form of his words. And it's those words that the serpent is challenging. The woman has repeated, but she's pushed it in the direction of restrictiveness.

And I was pondering this. Yeah. How far has she gone in doing this? Seems to me that she's sort of taken half a step in the wrong direction.

[17:06] And what the serpent is doing is denying God's truthfulness and querying God's goodwill, querying his motivation.

It's basically saying, he hasn't said this because he's got your best interests at heart. He said this because he's insecure and jealous and wants to keep you down and doesn't want you to share his goodness.

That's the way the serpent is going. Of course, Satan hasn't stopped doing that. That's a very classic thing for him to do, isn't it?

So, one current battleground on this is sexual relations, where our world says, oh, the way that God says to do it is restrictive and he just wants to stop you having fun and why shouldn't you?

And God is saying, I've given a form and an order for your good and if you follow that, that'll be the best for you.

[18:22] And the world says, no, it won't. The nature of Christian faith relates to this, doesn't it? The nature of Christian faith is to believe God's Word, to relate to God, not just in the physicality of what we do outwardly, but in the relationship that is, that takes the form of His words to us and how we receive those words in faith and in obedience.

and that's what Satan threatened in those days and he still does that, doesn't he? I mean, the simplest way for him to do that is just to get Christians not to listen to God's Word, to be too busy to listen to God's Word.

The whole relationship sort of dissolves straight away. And the human legalism that the woman is tempted to of going further than God says and making things more restrictive than God actually says, well, that goes on today as well.

Let's follow the narrative. Verse 6.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom, so think what she saw.

[20:06] She sees it's good for food. That's good, isn't it? It's good to see things that are good for food. God has said the tree is good for food so she sees it's good for food.

And she sees it is pleasant to the eye. Now let's just think of that word pleasant because it's not quite as neutral as it might first appear.

It's a word which means desirable. Now when God described it using the same word, there's sort of a positive feel.

It's a desirable tree. But as we read it in this paragraph, it takes on a little bit more of a sort of an unhealthy colour.

It's desirable. And she says it is did I miss this out? It's pleasant to the eye, so desirable for the eye, and desirable, different word here, for gaining wisdom.

[21:15] Desirable, this is, now let me just see whether I've put this in my notes. Don't look for a minute. Let me just see whether I've gone down here. Yes, I have. Okay, so I won't try and say too much. This word desirable, we'll look at it in a moment.

It's the word for covet. Covet meaning to want something, but with the thought, want something that isn't yours. Want something that you can't have.

So, first of all, let's say as it stands, these are all good. Good for food, attractive to the eye, attractive, no, attractive to be made wise is a different thing.

But there's goodness here. And let's just think of these words which I've already started doing. The first word, to want. To want.

There's a slight difference. There's a movement from something being attractive. You say, that's really nice. To something, say, that's attractive and I want that.

[22:18] I want that. And it is to be coveted to make you wise. So, coveting moves us beyond just desirable to say that's something that I can't be happy unless I have that.

Coveting, that's the word for it, is a strange thing, isn't it? Before this thing was shown to you, you were perfectly happy. Before this thing was advertised, you were perfectly happy.

When you had an iPhone 5, you were perfectly happy. Now there's an iPhone 6. Now you can't live another life until you have an iPhone 6 or whatever number they're on now. You see, to covet, what number is it?

Seven. Seven, there you are. Good man. So, this second word is exactly the word used in the commandments, you shall not covet.

And this wisdom, this is not the word for shrewd, this is a word for prospering. So, David, have I got a reference? This, no, let's see this one, 29, Deuteronomy 29, 29, I think it says, you will prosper.

[23:33] in all that you do. 29, no, that's not right, is it? 29, 9. Carefully follow the terms of this covenant so that you may prosper in everything that you do.

So, it's not just a wisdom of cleverness, it's a wisdom of succeeding. You'll get on, you'll succeed, you'll gain if you do this.

and she's looking and she's seeing that this is something desirable. And something actually desirable to help you get on. Something that works, something that produces whatever. and it's all full of irony, isn't it? Because as I'm, as I was, as I'm trying to explain, some, you could do, these things are good in some way of putting them, but as we are in this chapter, they've, they've taken on a different color.

Not bad things, but good things that sort of get out of proportion. good things that pull you beyond what, what they ought to do.

[24 : 50] So, she sees this and the, the text goes into it's a really slow motion and it says, she took some and she ate it.

and she also gave to her husband who was with her. Now, what it actually says, she gave to the man who was with her.

And it's interesting the way the story's told because at this point we're focusing on the woman and the way that she sees this as desirable and has this attractiveness to it and she takes it and eats and she also gives some to the man who happened to be there with her.

Word for husband and man are the same thing. But you notice the way that he's described. It isn't that, you know, they talked about it and prayed about it or something but she, the focus is on her and the bloke also happens to be there and he gets given some as well.

And he ate some. just a single word. He ate.

[26 : 12] He ate. But in that moment something has been broken.

something has changed in this relationship with their maker and that something affects the whole history of the world from then on.

It affects we live with the consequences of that now. It's not clear from the text, it just says he ate in those simple words.

But what what a momentous thing that was. Let's find out what happened. What happened next? Then the eyes of them both were opened.

They knew that they were naked. It's a strange thing, had they not noticed this before?

[27 : 32] I mean, of course they had. but some change has come now in their perception. They knew that they were naked. Nakedness in the Bible from then on mostly means a condition of vulnerability or of shame or of bereftness.

You know, it's prisoners who are stripped naked. It's people who are really in the lowest point of their lives who are naked.

It wasn't true for Adam and Eve, but they suddenly see we're naked. And it says that they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

I wondered about sewing because had they yet invented the needle to sew? And I looked up the word sewing. It has a broader meaning. It's usually to do with making things out of textiles.

So when I say textiles, I mean foldy-bendy things rather than bricks and mortar. It's what you do with foldy-bendy things and it's usually to do with clothing.

[28 : 48] So I don't know, if you take fig leaves, is there a way of twisting them together so that they don't fall off you? I don't know, but they did something. They constructed using fig leaves and they made coverings for themselves.

The word covering usually means something of a belt. It can mean armor, but we're assuming it's a sort of loincloth. So it's interesting that the sort of areas that they now feel they need to cover are sexual areas.

I hasten to add that the sin was not a sexual sin, but the shame and the feeling they need to be covered seems to go for the sexual areas.

things. Then, verse 8, the man and his wife heard, I would say voice, the voice of the Lord God as he was moving, walking, moving can mean either, in the garden, in the cool of the day.

The cool is the breath of the day. The sort of part of the day when the breezes are blowing and it's nice to walk around. Middle Eastern garden, probably wouldn't walk around under the very hot sun, wait till it cool down a bit.

[30 : 12] And here's the voice of the Lord God as he moves in the garden in the breezy part of the day. It doesn't tell us what his voice is saying, but it's his voice.

The sound, the voice will be better. And what do they do when they hear the voice of God?

It says they hid from the Lord God in the trees of the garden. So his voice comes and whereas before they might have gone and said, yes, let's have a conversation.

What are we talking about? What are you saying? Couldn't quite hear what you were saying. Heard your voice. But now when they hear the voice of God in that direction, they run off in this direction and they use the things that he has given them, the created things, the creation, to hide behind. So something's changed, hasn't it? Something's got broken. they hid in the trees of the garden. Now what happens next?

[31 : 29] I'll say again that we don't see the full awfulness of this as yet, but what does happen next? So there's the picture we're building up with the man and the woman and the trees and the snake somewhere and that tree and the fruit.

And God asks three questions. Interesting, isn't it, that God doesn't immediately say, right, that's it, finish.

I did say in the day you eat of it, surely die, that's it, finish, close, title credits, end. He takes it much more, what should I say, patiently, than that.

And he asks questions. Where are you? Where are you? It's a very interesting question, isn't it? God might be asking you the same question. Where are you? It's designed to make us think. Where are you? Are you hiding?

[32 : 36] Why are you hiding? What's the problem with coming out? Why can't I see? Where are you? And Adam replies, I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked so I hid.

Interesting chain of thought here, isn't it? I heard you in I heard you in I heard you in I heard you in I used to go and meet with you, but now what's entered into our relationship is fear and guilt because I feel bad coming to you and I'm hiding.

I heard you in I was afraid because I was naked.

What's he saying there? Is he saying because I've got no protection against you because you can see into me, you can see me as I am and I didn't want that. I was afraid because I was naked so I hid.

God asks his second question, who? Who told you that you were naked? Now where does this all come from? I know the serpent was shrewd and now you're nude, but where does this all come from?

[34 : 09] Does it come from eating that fruit, that tree from which I commanded you not to eat? Is that where it's all gone wrong? That one thing that I said where I wanted you to trust me, that trust has been breached and broken?

To which the reply comes. Notice how he does reply. He doesn't say, yeah, my fault, I'm wrong. He says, actually, the woman you gave, he doesn't say put, he says gave, you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.

Interesting reply, isn't it? Come back to it in a moment, but you can see where we're going with this. He's saying, well, you gave me this woman and she gave me the fruit, I mean, what could I do? And then to the woman, the third question, what is this you have done? What have you done? It's a very deep question, isn't it?

What have you done? And the woman replies, the servant deceived me and I ate.

[35 : 36] And in Hebrew, there's a nice, I'm only an amateur, I just get this from books, but the word for serpent, you remember, was Nahash and the word for woman, you remember, is Isha and the word for deceive is Nashah and so you get in this little sentence, these three words, Isha, Nahash, Nashah and it sort of all fits together.

I can't, if I really practiced I could read it from Hebrew, but you've got this sort of the serpent deceived me and I ate. The woman said the serpent deceived me and I ate.

Well, that is as far as we're going to go this morning, but let's reflect on it in five ways.

so let's reflect on the unsolved conundrum of the origin of sin. When I say it's an explication rather than an explanation, I don't know whether that's the correct use of those words, but it doesn't explain sin.

It just tells us the story of it. And we can say a number of things. We can say it is a mystery how this all went wrong because God made everything good.

[37 : 04] And we're told that over and over again. It's good, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's very good. The thing that wasn't good was for the man to be alone, but that was sorted out. Even the fruit was good.

It's not God's fault. fault. And if we attempt to blame God for sin, in particular our sin, we are just not getting it.

It is not God's fault. And it wasn't a built-in fault in Adam. You know, by a washing machine it has a guarantee for a certain period of time and your microwave oven.

We had a microwave oven and about the second time we used it it went I thought that doesn't sound right and it broke. We wouldn't do anything after that. We sent it back and they gave us another one.

That's good. Because there was a fault at manufacture. They sent it to us wrong. And the Bible is not saying that God manufactured Adam wrong.

[38 : 19] So you say send it back, it's your fault, you didn't do it right? When Adam was made, he was made in the image of God and he was made good. Now he had the capacity as we see to choose wrongly.

I think that's part of being made in God's image. God has the capacity to choose and take praise or bear blame.

And Adam has this too. rocks don't have that capacity. You know this, don't you? So if a rock falls on somebody's head and kills them, you don't say, rock, you naughty rock, you are going to go to prison for a long time for doing that because it is not on the nature of rocks to bear blame.

But if somebody threw the rock, you would say, now you, standing up on that cliff, throwing that rock, you are to blame for that. See, human beings take praise and take blame, rightly so.

And what about the serpent? All we're told is in that sentence, presumably his fall predated Adam's sin.

[39 : 37] Now we're not told. It's a conundrum, it's a mystery. We're not told how Satan fell. If we were to ask, I think God would say, well, actually that's none of your business.

In C.S. Lewis' book, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, do you know where I'm going with this?

There is a star called Ramandu who is in charge of an island.

It's a beautiful story, you should read it if you haven't done so already. And he's in charge of the island because he did something wrong and therefore is being put in charge of this island and the children ask him, what did you do wrong?

And he says, it's not your job to know the nature of faults that stars can commit. It's none of your business. It's none of our business.

Our business is with our human sin. sin. And what God says about our human sin is, when you human beings sin, you don't say, ah, it's because of Satan or it's because of society or it's because of my upbringing or it's because of what other people did to me.

[40 : 56] When we sin, those things might have a component to it, but the bottom line is, when we sin, it's our fault.

Some people go through their whole lives with a catalogue of sin which they just refuse to say, that was my fault. They go through life saying, oh, it's my circumstances, I couldn't help it, oh, this, and God says, when are you going to get it?

But when you sin, the only thing to do is not to try and explain it, but to confess it. I was wrong.

I am to blame. It's my fault. I need to be forgiven. Well, the unsolved conundrum of the origin of sin. It was Adam's responsibility, he got it wrong. When we sin, it's our responsibility, that's what sin is. Second thing, the nature of temptation.

[42 : 09] The challenge against living by faith in God's word. That's what's challenged here, isn't it? That fundamental thing.

You don't get that from a chance universe, you get that in a universe made by a personal creator who speaks, and that our whole world, our whole relationship, works through this thing, will we trust what he said?

Christians are still tempted, aren't they, to not trust what God has said. The particular temptation, the particular, what am I trying to say, the particular slant is, in this case, to cast doubt on God's generosity.

tea. That was the temptation, wasn't it? God doesn't want you to enjoy life, God doesn't want you to have a full life, he wants to restrict you, he wants to withhold things from you, he wants to keep you low and menial, whereas the opposite is true.

God gave all this wonderful world, and God is the same God today. He's not aiming to restrict us and to spoil things for us.

[43 : 26] That's Satan's lie. What, that's how, that's the temptation that he brings, to cast doubt on God's generosity.

And to take things that are good, and to push them beyond their boundary, to overreach on things that are good. That's how temptation works.

Temptation takes things that are good, and pushes them too far, overreaches.

To overreach on desire and success, those are the particular words that came out, wasn't it, to say, I want that, I can't be happy until I've got that.

You know, how many traps Satan sets with a desire and a promise for something, which gets into the heart, say, I can't be happy until I've got that.

[44 : 30] If I just do it God's way, that won't work. I've got to, I want that thing to overreach on desire and success.

We want to be a success, we don't want to be failures, do we? the worst thing, it's a really horrible thing to think about oneself or to have thrown at you, you're a failure, you're a loser.

But God says, if you follow what I say, if you walk with me, you will not be a failure, you will not be a loser. That's the way temptation comes, you see.

One of the Puritans said, to show the bait and hide the hook, which is exactly what Satan does here. To show the bait, here's a juicy little bit of things that you could swallow, and inside it is a hook which will catch you.

Nature of temptation. To promise, what Satan promises here, divinity. You will be like gods. And what actually, he turns out, is that he almost makes them like animals.

[45 : 49] They become sub-human. That's what sin does. It makes us sub-human. Nature of temptation. The nature of sin.

To forsake being a creature dependent on relationship with God via what he has said. profoundly the nature of sin for a creature, for a human creature, to say, I don't need God.

I don't feel my need of God. I won't depend on God. I can do it all by myself. I don't need him. I particularly don't need what he says.

I don't need to trust him. I don't need to look to him. I don't need to express any dependence on him or any thanks to him. I am going to be free of God.

He says that is the essence of sin. That's the, that misstep that you could put into a sentence which just breaks everything.

[47 : 07] the nature of sin to make ourselves God. Like the parable that Jesus told about the tenants in the garden, tenants of the field, the owner asked for fruit and the tenants were unwilling to give fruit to the land owner.

And when his son came along they hit him on the head and killed him because they didn't want, and then they said because then the vineyard, the field will be ours.

And we will no longer be tenants but we will be landlords. That's the nature of sin, to want us, for us to be God.

To be law makers, sometimes the emphasis is on law breakers but here the emphasis is on law makers. We decide what's right and wrong.

I decide somebody quite recently had a celebration in which the song said I did it my way. Song by Frank Sinatra, Essence of Sin.

[48 : 24] Sorry? And now the end is no. And now the end is no. Yes, that's right. Yes, yes, yeah, yeah, to overturn the order of creation.

You don't notice the subtlety of this. But in the garden we have the beast controlling the humans. It's supposed to be the other way around, wasn't it?

We have the beast controlling the humans. A rather subtle way but that's what ends up. we end up with the man taking leadership from the woman.

Realize this is controversial, I'll try and state it carefully, but the order of it was that the man was there and the woman was help, so there's a partnership, there's an equality, but there is an order.

And do you remember how the man was described? The woman took and ate and gave some to the man who happened to be there, the bloke that happened to be there. And the order of this has been subtly changed.

[49 : 35] And the man doesn't say, hold on a minute, I want to think about this before I do that. He just takes the leadership that the woman finds herself taking.

He just accepts that leadership. And in the garden, the man was supposed to keep it and guard it. So, in the garden, the man should have kept the garden and guarded it and expelled the evil snake.

But what ends up happening is that the man gets expelled from the garden because of the evil that entered there. So, everything is just sort of subtly topsy-turvy.

Nature of sin. The effect of sin. There's more on this, but at this point, to make us aware of guilt, who has not had the feeling which makes you say, I feel really bad about this?

I feel really bad about what I said. I feel really bad about how I treated so and so. I feel really bad that I forgot to something or other. That's part of human experience now.

[50 : 55] We know the guilt, the effect of guilt, and this is what Adam and Eve suddenly find. It makes us hide from, hide ourselves from others.

Adam and Eve, I suppose you could say they didn't snuggle up together and have one big fig leaf to cover both of them.

They had fig leaves reach of them. They wanted to hide from each other. Whereas before, there had been a total openness, and I'm sure that the physical openness is showing the psychology of it as well.

They're open towards one another. They now want to hide from one another. I wouldn't want so-and-so seeing into my life to that extent. It makes us hide from others, and it makes us hide from God, to make us hide from the voice of God.

In John's Gospel, Jesus says, people are either moths or woodlice. If they're moths, they go towards the light. If they're woodlice, they hide away from the light.

[52 : 07] Do you know this verse because their deeds were evil? John chapter three, I think it is. And by nature, we turn into woodlice to hide from God.

Maybe you're doing that today. Maybe you're hiding from God and you're using some created thing to hide behind. God. And the way that what God is saying is, where are you?

With the aim of getting you to come out and reason with him and talk to him, with the aim of getting so that you can come into the light. That's a big change.

That's a 180 degree change. Sin makes us hide from the voice of God, and sin makes us pass the blame on to others. What is my problem?

Satan is my problem. What is my problem? Other people are my problem. What is my problem?

Those people there. What is my problem? Actually, we're always passing the blame on to other people.

[53 : 19] But God says, until you come to this point, you will never solve your problem. You must say, my problem is me and my sin.

Not God, not other people, but me. The reaction of God to sin. There's more to come on this.

But isn't it rather wonderful that God asks fair and just questions? That's fascinating part of this text, isn't it?

Where are you? Who told you? What have you done? They're all designed to make people think. I would say they're redemptive questions.

They don't close the door, they open the door, don't they? They say there's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. There's a door that is open that we may go in. And God is asking these questions to engage them, to sort of bring them back.

[54 : 29] Maybe God's asking you questions. Why do you do that? Why are you where you are? Why do you think that?

They're redemptive questions. One of the great redemptive questions in the Bible is this, why will you die? Why do you carry on going in the opposite direction to me when I'm holding out my hands and saying, this is the way towards me.

We can sort this out, we really can. Come let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are red as scarlet, they shall be white as wool.

Well, we'll look at some more of that next time. But see what Adam did. He broke it. He made it wrong.

And the answer lies with another Adam who can put it right again. We need an Adam who lives by trusting the Father's every word.

[55 : 41] We need an Adam who trusts and trusted his Father in the worst situation, who could say, at the extreme situation, into your hands I commit my spirit.

We need an Adam who does not snatch at being godlike, but is willing to make himself of no reputation, to humble himself, to be a servant, to be obedient, even unto death.

God, sorry, an Adam who does not hide from God, but who every day of his life, in every moment, lives in front of the face of God, beholding the smile of God, listening to the word of God. God, and an Adam who has the power not just to do things for himself as an individual, but somehow has the kindness and the authority to gather us up into his triumphant life and obedience. One who has the bigness to say, I can do this and I can include you in it as well. And the good news is that there is such a person.

[57 : 08] That's brilliant news, isn't it? There is such a person. Somebody's done it. And in case you're wondering who I'm referring to, I'm referring to Jesus, who had another tree on which he died, and Adam spoiled it all by one crunch of a fruit, Jesus put it all right by this one sensational act of obedience in which he died on the cross.

And in that one act of mighty obedience, he put everything right for all his people to bring righteousness to multitudes of people by his one stupendous act of obedience. We're going to sing something. We're going to sing something. We're going to sing something. a little little little!
Maybe we're going to Thank you.