

Real Misery East of Eden

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Good morning, I'm Constance St. Clair and I'm a member of the Christ Church Youth Group.

Today's reading is from the book of Genesis, chapter 2, verses 15 through 17, and chapter 3, verse 1 through 24. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

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 if you eat from it, you will certainly die.

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?

[1 : 0 8] 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 not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat from 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 of it 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?

[2 : 1 5] Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? The man said, The woman you put here with me, she gave me some 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, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. So the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you among all livestock and all wild animals.

You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 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 make your pains and childbearing very severe. With painful labor 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 fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat from it. Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

[3 : 18] 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 the 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. The grass withers and the flowers fade.

The Lord for God is forever. Good morning, Christ Church. We asked the question last week, where did everything come from? And we considered our massive universe that we live in.

[4 : 28] We considered the magnificent bodies that we inhabit. And I wanted to follow up on that with two quotes this morning. The first is from Jeffrey Marcy.

He was a professor of astronomy here at UC Berkeley. And this is, he's describing the planets in our solar system. He says this, They're all in the same plane.

They're all going around in the same direction. It's perfect, you know. It's gorgeous. It's almost uncanny. The second quote is from Freeman Dyson.

He was a theoretical physicist and mathematician who taught at Cornell and Princeton. And he said this, he said, And this fits really well with what we're talking about in Genesis 1 to 2 that reveals this absolute yet personal creator God who made everything out of nothing.

Many of the pioneers of modern science, multiple winners of Nobel Prizes in physics and chemistry and physiology and medicine have found Christianity to be a fruitful context in which to carry out their research.

[5 : 52] Cambridge University has a physics laboratory, the Cavendish Laboratory. And over the entrance to that laboratory are written the words of Psalm 111 that says, The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all of them that have pleasure therein.

And at Harvard University, at Emerson Hall, the philosophy department meets in Emerson Hall. It has the words of Psalm 8 engraved in stone above the entrance.

It says, What is man that thou art mindful of him? And that's what we've been talking about. What an honor it is to be made in the image of God. What an honor it is to be the creation of God.

What an honor it is to have been given this task to rule over creation and to turn creation into a temple where everything and everyone is serving the Lord and praising Him.

And yet, despite this incredibly high calling and the dignity that's been bestowed upon us, most people agree that something's off.

[6 : 56] Something is not right. It's not the way that it's supposed to be. We feel it in ourselves. We feel it in our culture. We can describe many of the symptoms of our misery with relative ease, but we find it harder to agree on a diagnosis of the underlying cause.

You know, what the disease, what the disorder actually is. Many social commentators that you can read about pretty much on a daily basis are going to talk to you about restlessness.

You know, the sense of stress and overwhelm that people feel. They'll talk about psychological ill health and the rise of anxiety and depression. They'll talk about the culture of fear that is increasing year over year.

They'll talk about being polarized and our uncivil public discourse. Identity politics, racism, the growth of the extreme right and the extreme left, the breakdown of community, the erosion of ethical standards and basic morality, increasing self-oriented materialism, and the widening inequalities in our economy that result from that.

And I'm sure you could add on many, many more that you've read about. But the question we want to ask today is, does our problem boil down to a political problem?

[8 : 38] Or to an economic problem? Or to a social problem? Or is there something deeper? Is there something more basic, more personal, more spiritual and relational?

And that's what I want to explore here in Genesis chapter 3. I want to talk about living between commands and schemes. Secondly, I want to talk about living as fallen creatures.

And thirdly, about living in the hope of paradise regained. So living between commands and schemes, living as fallen creatures, and living in the hope of paradise regained. First of all, we are living between commands and schemes.

And you can see that in verse 15 of chapter 2. It says, The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, You're 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 certainly die.

We have a slide. And this slide is meant to depict for us the distinction between, I think it's the other slide, actually.

[9 : 47] Is there another slide? There we go. The distinction between the creator, who is sovereign and has sovereign authority and control over his creation and his creatures, and therefore he's independent, and his creatures which are derivative, which depend on God's authority for our existence and our sustenance.

And what this suggests to us, what Genesis 2 tells us, is that our creator God built into his universe certain laws.

Right? So if you go out today, you'll find physical laws out in the world. And if you break those laws, if you jump from a high place and you break the law of gravity, what's going to happen?

You will be broken. Okay? If you break that law, you're going to be broken. And there are certain moral and spiritual laws that God has also built into the world to protect us and to keep us safe.

Right? God is like a good parent who says to their child, hey, you are totally free. Right? You're absolutely free to go out and enjoy the whole house. You can enjoy the entire yard.

[10 : 57] But just don't touch the stove. And don't go play in the busy street. Because then you're going to be miserable. The creator God says, look, if you want freedom for enjoying paradise, then you should not seek freedom from my moral and spiritual laws.

And this is interesting because our culture seeks freedom from all the time. Right? Freedom from constraints that limit our individualism, our self-expression.

We especially seek freedom from even the things that will cause us to be burned and cause us to get run over. And that's strange because also in our culture, we know that to have freedom for the things that we value, to have freedom to become a master at a sport or to gain mastery over an instrument, to master a field of knowledge or an area of expertise, then you have to submit yourself to the right kind of liberating constraints if you want to ultimately be free to excel in those things and to be excellent in those things.

And what Genesis 2 is telling us is that God gave us this bountiful and these lavish provisions in the Garden of Eden. And he did that so that his image-bearing human beings could carry out their privilege, they could carry out their responsibility as image bearers, as garden keepers, as culture makers, as temple builders, all the things we talked about last week, so that we could, he gave us all these blessings so we could obediently serve God and worship God and we could enjoy life and enjoy his goodness.

Basically what this is telling us is that God gave us one million yeses and he gave us one no. A million yeses and one no.

[12 : 54] And parents, when you tell your kid no, what do they say? Why not? And then what do you say? Because I said so. You don't sit there and go, well, let's have a conversation, let's do a little cost-benefit analysis on what I just, no, because I said so.

Well, something's here in addition to these divine commands, and we read about it in verse 1. It says, Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made, and he said to the woman, Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

Now we're not told how, but we just know that there's this dark power here. It's mysterious. He's taken over one of God's good creatures. Jesus calls this power the devil or Satan.

He says that he's a liar and he's the father of lies. Jesus says that he came to steal and kill and destroy. He told us to pray that God would deliver us from this evil one.

And this is the very same one who came to Jesus when he was in the wilderness for 40 days, and he tempted Jesus. And then he continued to tempt Jesus throughout his ministry all the way to the very end.

[14 : 01] And we need to remember that this is not like Star Wars, where there's this unending conflict between the true force and the dark side, right? God, the creator, and this created angel that's fallen, the devil, are not these two equal and opposite powers that depend on being balanced with each other.

Right? For various reasons, it's another sermon, but the devil is an angel who sought to usurp God's throne and subvert God's kingdom, and therefore he's fallen to a very low place.

And here he is posing a question, did God really say? And what this tells us is that all the books and the movies that we consume that depict evil as something stark and something ugly and something in your face and something obvious, all those movies are wrong.

All those books are wrong. Because evil is subtle. It's low key. It comes to us as something quite attractive and something quite sophisticated.

The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2, he says, we are not unaware of Satan's schemes lest he outwit us. And what he's saying there is that the devil has subtle and shrewd schemes that can outsmart us and outmaneuver us and outwit us, and we need to know what they are.

[15 : 25] So what are they? Well, it's not so much to win us over to a particular argument as it is to cultivate an atmosphere and an attitude.

Right? An atmosphere and an attitude about the word of God and the commands of God. Did God really say? Did God really say?

In that is, are you kidding me? This is ridiculous, isn't it? This is laughable. See, he's trying to curate an atmosphere and an attitude, and if you'll pay very close attention, he uses the word God rather than the word Lord to try to make the Creator seem impersonal and distant and uncaring.

And then he used the word say, did God really say, as opposed to did God really command, because he wants to kind of soften the command into a suggestion.

And then he uses the word any of the trees, not one of the trees, because he wants God to seem like he's not a provider, but rather that God is a prohibitor, that he doesn't want you to enjoy any of the trees.

[16 : 43] You see, what we saw in Genesis 1-2 is that the Lord's authoritative word created everything out of nothing. His powerful commands brought into existence things that were not.

But now there's a question about the precise wording, the precise meaning, the precise motive of the Lord's commandment. Does God have integrity? Is God good?

Are his laws good for people? Is this even a command? Or is it a suggestion? And what is it that these image-bearing human beings should have done right here at this moment when they're posed with this question?

What should they have done? Adam and Eve are right there together. Eve's not alone. Adam's right there. What should they have done? They should have called out to their creator God and said, help.

And then they should have driven this dark power out of the garden. But Adam's silence is deafening. And his inactivity is glaring.

[17 : 47] And Eve proceeds to engage with the question in such a way that she allows herself to be pulled into, and allows herself and Adam to be pulled into this atmosphere and into this attitude.

And here's what she says in verse 2. 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. You must not touch it or you will die.

And again, if you pay very close attention, careful attention, Eve makes several telling changes to God's word. First of all, the Lord said, you may freely eat, but Eve said simply, we may eat.

And she left out the key word, free. She's minimizing the provision of the Lord. She's disparaging the privileges that she's been given. She's downplaying the one million yeses.

Secondly, the Lord said, nothing about touching the tree. But Eve replies, God said we must not even touch it. Not only is she adding to the Lord's one no, his one prohibition to make it seem more restrictive than it actually is.

[18 : 58] But she's begun to use the language that the devil's using. She's talking not about the Lord. She's talking about God. Maybe he is distant. Maybe he is impersonal. Maybe he doesn't really care. And the third thing is, the Lord declared, you shall certainly die, but Eve said, you will die.

And she left out the word certainly, which means she's minimizing the penalty for disobedience. And weakening the just consequences for sin. And what this means is that Satan has her right where he wants her.

He's primed her with this atmosphere and this attitude to, he's smoothly and subtly outwitted her and outsmarted her and outmaneuvered her into this distorted and doubting perspective and gotten her to focus on the one no rather than the one million yeses so that God seems like a cosmic killjoy and the ultimate party pooper.

And verse four says, you will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

It's interesting that the first biblical doctrine to be denied is divine judgment. But along with that, the attributes of God are questioned.

[20 : 26] Satan is saying, you know, God's not really good. He's, God's holding out on you. He's not sharing all of the goodness that he has with you and therefore he can't be trusted in you.

You should take matters into your own hand and you should put yourself in the place of God. Now how does this practically apply to our lives this week? Well, number one, first application, is that the devil quotes scripture.

The devil quotes scripture and he does the very same thing when he tempts Jesus. He quotes the scripture and that means that if you're a Christian and if you've allowed yourself to become more literate about our culture than you are literate about God's word, if you're giving more time and energy to bestsellers and blockbusters to the latest and greatest trends to breaking headlines and, you know, insightful op-ed pieces than you are to our sacred scriptures.

You're a sitting duck and you need to change that habit immediately, starting tomorrow. You need a plan for reading God's word.

You need a plan for memorizing God's word because this is how Jesus was able to distinguish between good and evil and how he was able to resist temptation. If he had to do it that way, there's no way that you're going to do it a different way.

[21 : 56] Application number one. Application number two is that we can be naive about nuances. We can be naive about nuances and the way that the devil disguises his malevolent intent in benevolent words.

One of the things I've seen over the past ten years of ministry is that there are many different forms and forces of deconstruction, deconstruction of faith, both in the real world and in the online world that have led a lot of people that I know and love away from God and away from the people of God.

And that means that we need to not be naive. That you need to guard yourself not just against obvious arguments that are vying for your attention and for your allegiance, but you need to guard yourself for more subtle atmospheres and attitudes that you might immerse yourself in.

My friend group, my media environment, the books I read, the artists I pay attention to, the stuff I consume, lest you allow yourself to be slowly and subtly outwitted by these predictable schemes.

And parents, it's your job, and I know it's a hard job, but it's your job to curate and to channel these things for your kids. Do not leave them out there to fend for themselves. The third application is this, that details matter.

[23 : 35] Details matter. Three times here, the Word of God is quoted, but it's never quoted appropriately. It's, first of all, questioned in a misleading way.

Secondly, it's paraphrased with major changes. And third, it's just flatly denied. And if you study church history, you can see that over the past 200 years, the church in the Western world, whenever she's loosened her grip on those primary biblical doctrines and those primary biblical ethics that we are not to lose our grip on, chaos and death just unsurprisingly come rushing in to ruin both the message of the church and the mission of the church.

And this is why at least your pastors and your elders of the church think that the details really matter. And, so sorry about that if we offend you, but it's right here on page two or three of our Bible.

So, this is the thing I want you to see is that you're living between commands and schemes. You're living between divine commands and devilish schemes. There's no getting out of that. That's just where you are.

That's where you're living. Second thing I want you to see is living as fallen creatures. Living as fallen creatures. Verse six is really the center point of this narrative and it says this, 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.

[25 : 12] She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. And what's interesting to me is that the devil is nowhere to be found at this point. His job is done.

Right? Once he's doubted the goodness of God and once he's questioned the truthfulness of God and once he's removed the fear of God, he's out of there.

Once he's deconstructed the command of God and deconstructed the judgment judgment of God on disobedience, Eve and Adam right there together, they believe that they can put themselves in the place of God without any consequences.

And with this attitude that's crept into their heart and with this lie that's gotten into their head, they say to themselves these words from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah chapter 14 says this, I will ascend to the heavens. I will sit enthroned on the heights. I will make myself like the most high God. And from there the dominoes began to fall.

[26 : 23] We see that she saw the physical value of the food. She saw the emotional pleasure of its aesthetic beauty that it was pleasing.

And she saw the spiritual potential of advancing her interests. And she, and again, Adam's right there, but she trusts her impressions more than she trusts God's instructions.

And she substitutes her values for God's norms. And what she does in this moment, she becomes autonomous. That word autonomy just means auto means self and nomos means law.

She became a law unto herself. She became the interpreter of reality. She became the one who would say, this is good and this is evil.

And her heart and her head led her finally to this illicit reach of autonomy with her hands. Now, again, how does this apply to us?

[27 : 34] Well, I think many of us, if we're honest with ourselves and our own hearts, we say this, we say, you know, if I obey God, he's going to keep me down. If I obey God, I'm going to miss out and I'm not going to be happy.

And if I obey God, I'm going to cut myself off from better options and I won't be all that I want to be. I'm not going to thrive, I'm not going to flourish. And so, I'm not sure that God is enough for me.

I'm not sure God's goodness is enough for me. I'm not sure I can trust the good will of God for me. I need to broaden my horizons. I need to take matters into my own hands. And here's three particular ways that we do that with respect to power and money and sex.

First of all, with power, we say, you know, I know the Bible says not to hold a grudge against this person and not to seek revenge and that I should humbly forgive this person and go serve this person, but oh, I don't want to.

And I'm not really sure I can trust God in that. Or with money, we say, I know the Bible says that I shouldn't spend all of this on myself.

[28 : 42] I know that I'm supposed to give at minimum at least 10% of this away to other people and other causes, but I'm not really sure I can trust God with that.

Or with sex. You know, even our secular friends know what the Bible says. about sex. That sex is not a product to be consumed outside of marriage for our personal fulfillment, but rather it's a gift to be stewarded inside the safety of an exclusive, permanent, whole life covenant commitment between a man and a woman.

And we say, I know, but I'm not sure I can trust God in that. And with every single one of these, money, sex, and power, we say, yes, you know, but my way seems good.

And my way seems pleasing. And my way seems desirable. And if I trust God, if I obey God, then I just won't be happy. And meanwhile, God is saying to us, oh, my children, I am your Lord.

Your life is a gift. The world is a gift. gift. And I want you to live as if your life in this world were not your possession to do with whatever you want with it.

[30 : 03] But rather, I want you to live as if I'm God. And I want you to live as if your life is dependent upon my power. So please don't eat the tree. Please don't walk through the door.

Please do not put yourself in the place where only I deserve to be. please respect my no so that you can enjoy the one million yeses that I've given you.

Verse 7 says that then the eyes of both of them were open and they realized they were naked so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. And 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.

There's 20 more sermons in here and so I'm going to be brief. But this reminds me of the book of Proverbs.

[31 : 11] It's our book of wisdom in the Bible. One of our books of wisdom. And Proverbs 14 12 says there's a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death.

And what happened here is that the evil one promised life but he delivered death. And he always does that. He promises life delivers death. Death entered into our souls.

Death entered into our friendships, our marriages, our families, our work, our leisure. And worst of all death entered into our relationship with our creator God. God, we're told he comes by for his customary afternoon chat with his beloved creatures, his partners.

But now the very thought of God's presence leads them to duck and cover, right? To hide over behind the trees from God. And if you read on, you know, they'll ultimately confess their crimes but only after running from God and evading God's questions, changing the subject multiple times, shifting blame, accusing their neighbors, minimizing responsibility, justifying themselves.

And these fig leaves, these fig leaves are a desperate act of self-protection. Where once there was innocence and they were unashamed and they were open, now in their sense of guilt and shame and fear, they feel that they have to hide not only from God and from each other, even they have to hide from themselves behind protective barriers.

[32 : 50] Our alienation from God and from each other and from the created world and from our very selves is absolutely tragic. It's absolutely heartbreaking. And again, there are more applications of this for our work and our dating and our marriages and our parenting than we have time to chase down.

But what I want us to focus on as we close are God's questions. Because God asks some questions and he says this, he says, Adam, where are you?

It's a poignant and profound thing. The first thing God does is he asks a question. And he says, where are you?

And who told you that you were naked? And have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? And what is this you have done? Four questions.

He asks him not because he's ignorant or because he needs more information or because he doesn't know the answers. He asks him because he's a loving father and he's a gentle counselor and he refuses to abandon his image-bearing creatures.

[34 : 10] He doesn't vaporize them. He doesn't vaporize them. He doesn't give them a verbal lashing. He doesn't give them a physical beating. He doesn't do any of that. He just asks these questions, inviting them to open up, inviting them to reveal themselves, inviting them to confess their wrong, inviting them to take responsibility.

And in this moment of rebellion, in this moment of defiance and of treason, this moment of an attempted overthrow of the government of the universe, the attempted de-godding of God, God is so gracious.

God is so merciful. God is so merciful. It's absolutely breathtaking and that's where I want us to close with, we've talked about living between commands and schemes and living as fallen creatures, but I want to talk finally about living in the hope of paradise regained.

Living in the hope of paradise regained. Many people around us are living in cynicism. They're living in despair. They're living with a sense of nihilism.

And Christians reject that. Christians absolutely resist that because of this slide that I think you had a preview of earlier, but we'll pull back up.

[35 : 31] We believe that the good creation of God was here before the fall of humanity. We believe that the common grace of God in his good creation continues despite all the effects of our fallenness.

We believe that the redemption of God reveals the power of his special grace to save us from our fallen condition. And we believe that all the tears and the thorns of our fallen reality will be no part of the new creation of God.

Now where do I get all that? Well if you pay attention to verses 14 to 24 and what the Lord says and does even in the midst of his just judgment of these sinners, you'll see that he sovereignly and majestically does at least five incredibly gracious acts.

And I'll just list them for you. First of all, he goes straight to the source of evil and he curses it. He curses the serpent, he curses the devil, he curses the ground that human beings work.

But notice that he does not directly curse his image bearing creatures. That's the first act of grace. The second act of grace is that though this man and this woman have broken God's image in themselves, God provides for them.

[36 : 49] He provides protective clothing for them. And in order to do that, an animal's blood had to be shed, an animal's life had to be taken in their place and a satisfactory substitute was provided in order for God to cover over their guilt and their shame.

God's third act of grace is that he removes them from the garden completely. And by removing them from the garden, he prevented them from eating from the tree of life and remaining in that state of disobedience and sin permanently.

But rather he puts these angels, he puts these cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life and to the living God himself until something can be done to permanently deal with their sin.

And that's why, by the way, cherubim, these great angels, are woven into the curtain of the temple to separate sinful human beings from the holy presence of God. The fourth thing that God does is that he restrains and counteracts all the devastating effects of sin and says that evil will not destroy the enduring goodness of my creation.

Eve will become a mom. Adam will become a dad. Babies will be born. Life will continue. Weddings will happen. Marriages will mature. Families will grow.

[38 : 14] Work will be done. Culture will develop. And the fifth gracious thing that God does is he gives this mother promise in verse 15 about future relief and an ultimate victory.

victory. And in that verse he says, verse 15, 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. An offspring of the woman is going to come and be terribly wounded, but he'll crush the head of the serpent.

A great representative of the human race, a great person who bears the image of God is going to come and he's going to suffer horribly, but he's going to bear the curse and the just judgment that we deserved and he'll do it in our place.

And in that way he will win a victory over evil and he'll release us from all the effects of the curse and he will win a victory in triumph and glory. So friends, what do these five actions of God's grace tell us about God?

[39 : 26] They tell us that we are the hiders and God is the seeker. They tell us that we are hiding but God is seeking us. And we see that in the end of the gospel because we find Jesus there at the end of the gospel and he's in a garden.

And in that garden he's talking to God about a tree. He's talking about his cross. And though we said not your will but my will be done, Jesus says the opposite.

He says not my will but your will be done. And though we put ourselves in the place where only God deserves to be, God and Jesus Christ came and put himself where we deserve to be.

And in that moment he decided I'm going to take all their thorns upon my brow. And I'm going to put all their sins on my shoulders. And I'm going to go to that tree.

And I'm going to experience hell. And I'm going to battle with the devil. And I know I'm going to be laid in the dust. And in that moment what happened, the veil of the temple with those cherubim was torn in two and the way to God was opened up.

[40 : 42] And through the resurrection of Jesus, death changed into life. And he was able then to clothe us with his righteousness and with his life. And one day we're going to share in his glory.

So I'll close with these words about the hope that we have for paradise regained. The Apostle Paul says this in Romans 5.

He's talking about the second Adam. He says, For if by the trespass of the one man death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

And consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification in life for all people. 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.

And just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Friends, have you received God's abundant provision of grace in the ultimate Adam?

[42 : 08] And do you have this gift of His obedience and of His righteousness and of His justification? And are you reigning in eternal life with Him?

Let's think about that as we come to this table in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Thank you.