

The dark path of sin

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Date: 14 September 2025

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- [0 : 00] May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your great glory our supreme concern.!
- Recently I've been reading a new book, Baptised with Heavenly Power, the Holy Spirit in the teaching and experience of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones.
- Some of you might well have heard of Dr. Lloyd-Jones, who was a minister in South Wales and then in London at Westminster Chapel during the middle period of last century.
- I came across this quote from Dr. Lloyd-Jones in the book. We must not come to the Bible to find out whether it is true or not.
- We must come to find the meaning of the truth that is there. We must present the Bible as the word of God.
- [1 : 05] Not the words of men, but the word of the living God. God speaking about himself. God speaking about men.
- God speaking about life. God telling us what he is going to do about a fallen world. God saying.
- God saying. God saying. It seems good to remind one another of these things. When we come to reading Genesis 1, 2 and 3. We do not come to the Bible to hold the Bible in one hand and our understanding of science in the other hand and adjudicate between the two.
- We do not come to the Bible with our understanding or our preferences to judge which one is right and which one is wrong.
- We do not come to the Bible as though we could decide whether or not it is true. The Bible is true and we don't get a vote on that.
- [2 : 16] The Bible is true because it is God's word. All of it. Every word. Every sentence. Every chapter. When something is true, we don't sit in judgment upon it.
- We bow before it. In these life-giving chapters of Genesis, God is speaking to you. God is speaking to all of you.
- God is speaking to me about what it is to be human. About what it is for God to be God.
- About what it is to have sin. About what it is God is doing and has already done. About your sin and mine.
- As they say nowadays, spoiler alert. God has defeated sin. In the sacrificial atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.
- [3 : 19] With nothing in our hands. With nothing in our hands. Naked and helpless, we come to our God. Our Father declares words of truth and grace over us and in us.
- He fills our empty hands with his word of life. That we might know Jesus our saviour. This is our hope.
- That by his Holy Spirit, God will lead us to submit to his gracious word. The passage today, Genesis 3, introduces sin to us.

Not that we should need an introduction. We know sin only too well. But let's be clear what it is we're reading about in Genesis chapter 3.

When you go to the doctor. He or she will ask you about the symptoms you are experiencing. Are you feeling dizzy?

[4 : 30] Are you short of breath? Do you have a sore leg? Is there a rash somewhere on your skin? Whatever it is, the doctor asks you about the symptoms you are experiencing.

Not so that he can treat the symptoms, but so that he can diagnose the disease. If all you do when you're unwell is treat the symptoms, you're not going to get better.

The disease will remain unchecked to afflict your body. The distinction between symptoms and disease is important for us in Genesis chapter 3.

We know it's not difficult to work out that there's a difference between symptoms and disease. The symptoms are what we see. The disease is what is lurking deep within.

The symptoms we experience are sins, plural. The many things we do which arise from our disease.

[5 : 47] I guess if I'd done a wee poll, what do you think we'll put up on the slide under the heading of sins? You might have expected murder and adultery and bearing false witnesses and some of these commandments.

But the slide's too small for all our sins. Have we not noticed the destructive effect of these sins in your life and mine?

Have we not all noticed sins in our life? Have we not all from time to time on Sundays and at other times repainted of our sins?

And yet time and again we fall into sins in our life. It turns out we can't even treat the symptoms. We can't even do that.

And we're still not dealing with the disease. The disease which is wreaking havoc in our lives is called sin.

[7 : 09] A fundamental bias within us that turns us away from God. That turns us away from God's purposes of grace. The actions of Adam and Eve in eating the apple have embedded sin within all humans.

It turns out we are closely tied to Adam's apron strings. Where he goes, we go. What he has done, we have done.

When he ate the apple, we ate the apple. The disease of sin took hold of us all. All of us. Today is the day God has given us to submit to this truth.

Sin has taken hold of you. Sin has taken hold of me. There is no second opinion. There is no other judgment.

It doesn't matter how much science or education or human progress you have. This is the truth. We are disease ridden.

[8 : 25] And the disease is sin. The beginning of our cure. The beginning of our redemption. Is to bow before God's word.

To submit to the truth and depend upon God alone. To do what only God can do. Because we can't do it. Only God can remove this disease from us.

In these verses in Genesis 3. We see the cause of the disease of sin. God's word is rejected.

God's way is rejected. God's presence is rejected. Our own need of God is rejected. These factors which cause the disease of sin.

Then in turn become evidence. Symptoms of the disease. Of the presence of sin within us. Today we are all called.

- [9 : 29] To submit to the truth of God's word. To submit to God's judgment upon us. We have sinned.
- And we need God. To be our divine physician. And heal us. The serpent said to the woman.
- Did God actually say. You shall not eat of any tree in the garden. There is a devil. An enemy. Who delights to see all humans infected with sin.
- He takes many forms. But his objective is always the same. That we would reject God's word. Did God actually see.
- The question invites us to sit in judgment. Upon what God said. Or didn't see. The church of Scotland. The church of Scotland. I'm sure you've noticed.
- [10 : 33] The church of Scotland. Is in a greatly weak position. In our day. Not only the church of Scotland. But all the churches. In Scotland. In the United Kingdom.
- In Europe. In America. A great weakness in the church. That weakness is caused. When church people. Approach the Bible.
- In this way. Did God actually see. Did God actually see. What's in the Bible. Yes he did. Sin takes hold of us.
- When we reject God's word. Serpent said to the woman. You will not surely die.
- Our enemy draws us into. Questioning God's word. And contradicting God's word. All of it. Is rejecting God's word.
- [11 : 36] We know what God's word is. If you have a reading ability. That has moved beyond. The Janet and John books. We got in primary one.
- You can read. And know. God's word. For yourself. We know. What God has said. For how many years.
- Have you come to churches. And listened to God's word. Being read. How many times. Have you taken your own Bible. From its shelf. Opened it up. And read God's word.
- You know. What God says. God has made it easy for us. He wrote it down. And he arranged for us. To learn how to read.
- So that we would know. What God's word is. But too quickly. We join in. With the contradicting. Of God's word.
- [12 : 33] We choose to reject. The truth of God. As creator. Preferring the human opinions. Of science. We choose to reject.
- The truth of God's. Making us humans. In his own image. Preferring to form idols. In our own image. And calling them God. We contradict God.
- When we proudly claim. That we know better. How to live. What kind of relationships. We should have. What kind of choices. We should make. When we claim.
- That we are not sick. With sin. When we reject. The reality. Of our sin filled lives. We reject. God's word.
- And we deny. Our need of a savior. How long. Will you continue. To reject God's word. How much evidence.
- [13 : 32] Do you need. That this is death. To you. When will you admit. That you can't. Judge God's word. But for the good.
- Of your own life. And the salvation. Of your own life. You need to submit. To God's word. The sickness. Of sin. Enters.
- When we reject. God's word. The sickness. Of sin. Is displayed. In our lives. Each and every day. Whenever we reject. God's good. And gracious word.

Bend your knees. Bow your proud hearts. Submit to God's words. When the woman saw. The tree was good. For food. That it was delightful. To the eyes. And that the tree. Was to be desired. To make one wise. She took of its fruit. And ate.

[14 : 31] She gave some. To her husband. Who was with her. And he ate. In creating humans. God chose.

The paths. Of risk. God created us. With the ability. To hear him. And know him. And respond. To him. God has built.

Within us. A restlessness. Which longs. After him. God created us. With the ability. To walk in his paths.

Or to turn aside. And choose the dark paths. Of sin. We know. What is good for us. We are not stupid.

People. People. Eat more fruit. And less chocolate. So why don't we do it? Drink less alcohol. And more water.

[15 : 29] So why don't we do it? Drive at the speed limit. Cross at the green man. Use less. Recycle more. So why aren't we doing it?

We know. What is good for us. We are not stupid. People. Live in God's way. Be the people. God has created us to be.

Prefer God's presence. Over our own choices. So why don't we do it? Surely here. The reality of indwelling sin.

Is most clearly seen. You'll remember the apostle Paul. Writing in Romans chapter 7. For I do not do the good that I want.

But the evil I do not want. Is what I keep on doing. I know what I should do. But I don't do it. Now if I. If I do what I do not want.

[16 : 27] It is no longer I who do it. But sin that dwells within me. The great apostle Paul. Inspired by God's own Holy Spirit.

Writes down. God's powerful word. For us. It is sin. Living within me. Even though I know what I should do.

I don't do it. It's like a bias within me. All the time. Pulling me away from God's way. Into the dark paths of sin. And the sickness of sin.

Is displayed in our lives. The sickness of sin. Is displayed in our lives. Each and every day. As we continue to reject. God's good and gracious way.

As we turn our back on him. And choose our own way. When we reject God's life giving way. Bend your knees. Bow down your proud heart.

[17 : 28] Submit to God's way. And they heard the sound. Of the Lord God walking in the garden.

In the cool of the day. The man and his wife hid themselves. From the presence of the Lord God. Among the trees of the gardens. All humans.

You and I. All of us. We have all been made. To live in the presence of God. Our home. Is with God. But look at how we have learned to live.

We hear God coming. And we hide ourselves. Do we really think. That the God who created the eye. Can't see us. Through our tattered fig leaves.

He sees right through our pretenses. And our disguises. It is said. That you can fool some of the people. Some of the time. You can't fool God.

[18 : 29] Any of the time. How did we learn. To think we could hide from God. Why would we want to do that.

We deceive ourselves. Imagining that if we can hide our sin. From God. Then it isn't really sin. And it's not really a problem.

It's like when you know you're not well. And you choose not to go to the doctor. Or you choose not to take to your bed for the day.

And rest up. You imagine that you're not well. And you can keep on going. Has that ever worked out for you? Has anyone ever got better that way?

Hear the truth of the gospel. It is real. It is real. You really are sick with sin. And hiding from God. And hiding from yourself. Is not going to make it any better.

[19 : 32] It will only make the disease worse. Come into the light of God's good presence. Tear off your tattered fig leaves. And be genuinely present with your father.

He already knows the truth about you. And he still loves you. Why would you hide from that? The sickness of sin.

Displayed in our lives each and every day. As we continue to hide ourselves from God and his presence. Hiding is not the answer. It is a symptom of the disease.

Bend your knees. Bow down your proud heart. Submit to being in God's presence. The man said.

The woman you gave me. She gave me the fruit and I ate. How shameful this is. How utterly predictable.

[20 : 35] How often this has been our response. It is not my fault. Someone else did it. I have not done anything wrong.

You surely can't blame me. I don't have any sin in my life. I don't need any forgiveness. I don't need a saviour. Our first instinct.

Is to blame someone else. To claim. To claim. That there is nothing wrong with us. You are not going to get better from any illness.

Until you admit that you are ill. You are not going to be ill. You won't begin to journey out of the dark paths of sin. Until you. You singular.

You on your own. For your own sake. Confess that you are sick with sin. That is what Adam should have done. When God approached him in the garden.

[21 : 41] It is not her fault. It is not your fault. I did it. It is my sin. You cannot put the blame on someone else.

That is why Genesis 3 is here in the Bible. To teach us that sin is our problem. Our disease. And we need God to save us.

The sickness of sin is displayed in our lives. Each and every day. As we continue to reject God's good and gracious word. When we deny we have any sin.

When we reject our God. Who sent us a saviour. Bend your knees. Bow down your proud heart. Submit to God being your saviour.

And your need of him. Is it not clear? Is the diagnosis not accurate?

[22 : 47] You, me, all of us. We are sick with sin. This disease has taken hold of us. We have tried treating the symptoms.

And we can't even do that. We need help. We need our God to cut this disease of sin. Out of our lives.

All the rest of the story of the Bible. We are only at chapter 3. Every other chapter after this. Is God dealing with our sin. That's the whole story.

When God says to you. Come and live in my story. He says. Come and live. In my dealing with your sin. There is hope for us.

In the Father's love. And our saviour's death. There is a way back to God. From the dark paths of sin.

[23 : 49] There is a door that is open. And you and me may go in. At Calvary's cross is where we begin. Where we come as sinners to Jesus.

Don't wait till next week. We are going to hear more about this next week. And the week after. And the week after. But don't wait till then. Do it now. Submit to the truth of God's word.

Now. Cry out to God. In your sin stricken life. And God will bring you to the open door. Which you and I need to enter in.

There is no other way to treat our disease. Our sin can only be overcome. When it is nailed with Jesus to the cross. Come to the cross.

Plead with Jesus. To remove your heart of sin. And watch it die on the cross with him. Come as a sinner to Jesus.

[24 : 56] And he will heal you. He will be your cure. And your medicine. His cross. Is our only hope. Over sin.

Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Lord God.

Many days we've looked for the way. Back to you. We've looked in a thousand different places. And none of them have worked.

By your grace. Open our eyes to the truth of your word. That we might confess. Our disease.

Take us by the hand. And lead us. Lead us on your way. To the door which Jesus has opened.

[25 : 57] That we might come home to you. To the door which Jesus has opened. Where our sin might be ripped out from us. Bring us to the cross.

And leave us there. Till you do your sovereign work. In our lives we pray. We need you. We need our saviour.

Amen. We sing together. Jesus. Lover of my soul. Amen. .