

The Fall of Man

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Date: 22 February 2026

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[0:00] Please open with me to Genesis chapter 3. Please open with me to Genesis chapter 3.! If you don't have a Bible and you need one, there are some on the back table.

! Feel free to take that as a gift to you. Our sermon text today is Genesis chapter 3, verses 1 through 13. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

[1:27] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. He said, Who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. This is the word of the Lord.

[2:33] Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, as we do every week, we need your spirit's illumination right now to understand this word that you have given to us long ago.

Your spirit has breathed this out. It is timely and relevant today as ever. God, help us to set aside any preconceptions that we have about what this means, and I pray that you would help us to hear what you want us to hear from this text, and you would transform our hearts.

And would you also, God, help us to see Christ even here at the beginning. In his name we pray.

Amen. In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis explains the dilemma that he faced as an atheist before he came to faith in Christ, and he would ask Christians the age-old question, If a good God made the world, why has it gone wrong?

And C.S. Lewis would readily dismiss their answers, thinking them just a complicated attempt to avoid the obvious conclusion in his mind that there is no God.

But then he realized that this posed a serious problem for himself. And he writes this in *Mere Christianity*, My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust.

[4:07] But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. He says, Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own, but if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too.

For the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies. Thus, in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist, in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless, I found I was forced to assume that that one part of reality, namely, my idea of justice, was full of sense.

Consequently, atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning. Just as if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know that it was dark.

Dark would be a word without meaning. Friends, we all sense in our hearts that there is meaning to our existence.

And what's more, we all sense in our hearts and in our lived experience that something has gone terribly wrong. Now, the explanation to this reality has been revealed to us by God right here in Genesis 3.

[5:34] Now, perhaps you're thinking, Mike, the explanation to that problem cannot possibly be this childish and simplistic garden fairy tale.

And I'd say, if you think this story is simple, you are absolutely right. But if you think that this story is quaint and simplistic, well, I hope that you'll see today that what the Bible presents in a way simple enough for a child to understand is far more comprehensive and far more complex than meets the eye.

Now, if you haven't already, please turn in your Bibles to Genesis 3. I just want to welcome you again. My name is Mike. I'm one of the pastors here at Shoreline. We're walking through the book of Genesis, the beginning of the Bible, the beginning of the history of mankind, and the title for today's sermon is The Fall of Man, very simply, The Fall of Man.

We're going to see in this text today that love for God is the only path to life. Now, in many ways, Genesis 1 and 2 has already been showing us this.

Life is found in connection with the giver of life who is God. But this is then forfeited here. And so, the second part is what we really see that sin leads only to destruction.

[6:50] Love for God is the only path to life. Sin leads only to destruction. And Moses, who was writing this, these very words, that would be his message to the people of Israel. That's what he wanted them to learn.

Choose life and choose blessing. Choose sin and choose death. And we see this right here in Genesis 3. Now, just for a little bit more context here, the creation account is now complete, right? We walked through that over the course of several weeks and it reached its climax in the creation of woman, right? And so far, we've beheld the Almighty God to create out of nothing, right, everything that we see by his word and his power.

We've seen his self-giving love and his overflowing goodness to do that under no obligation whatsoever. And in particular, we've seen his love towards mankind whom he made in his image and in his likeness to love and to worship him, to manifest and to extend his good rule on the earth and then to do that in perfect relationship with one another.

At this point, we said last week, humanity has everything needed to live a fruitful and satisfying and God-glorifying life. This is very good indeed.

[8:03] But then we read next in chapter 3, verse 1, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

And here's the first movement of the narrative. It's temptation. It's the serpent's deception. This new character is introduced into the scene, the serpent. The serpent.

Who is this serpent? Right? We're not actually told at this point who this serpent is, but we are told two things about the serpent that are instructive for us. The first thing that we're told is that he's crafty.

More crafty, in fact, than any other beast of the field. Now the word crafty means cunning or shrewd or skilled in deceit, but it also, in Hebrew, has this connotation of prudent.

It's actually translated all throughout the book of Proverbs as prudent. The same word appears there. And so I think what we have here is the serpent in his craftiness is entering the garden offering his own wisdom.

[9:05] And we're going to see that more later. Now the second thing is he is a creature. He's presented here as a creature, one that the Lord God

had made. The serpent is not self-existent like God.

He is a creature made by God. And I think there's two inferences that we should make. First of all, supremely, God is his authority. Now to spill the beans here, we know that this is Satan, and I just want to point you to the beginning of Job when Satan appears before God.

Satan is totally subject to the authority of God. And we know that from the rest of Scripture. There's nothing that the serpent can do apart from God's lordship. But there's something else that I think we're supposed to take from here based on the way Moses is presenting this narrative.

And that is that man is the serpent's authority. Humanity was made in the image and likeness of God. humanity was given dominion over all of creation, right?

Humanity was given the role to rule over the world. And so the serpent's proper role is subservient to humanity. Adam and Eve, when they see the serpent come in, should be telling it what to do, not taking his advice.

[10:19] But this just goes to show the craftiness and cunning of the serpent, doesn't it? To lure Eve, who should have authority over him, into, well, what we're going to find out.

Now, of course, we know that this serpent is not some mere garter snake, right? We know because scripture tells us as we read more of scripture, we find out more and more about this serpent. He is, in fact, the devil.

He is Satan. He is the evil one. Paul calls him the god of this world, small g. He's called the accuser, the deceiver of the whole world, the father of lies.

He masquerades as an angel of light. He, as we read before, he prowls around like a lion seeking someone to devour. Now, it is very normal at this point for us to wonder some things that the text doesn't actually tell us.

Like, why is Satan even allowed in the garden? Right? What led to Satan's rebellion against God in the first place? Now, you might have other questions, too.

[11:18] Scripture sheds a little more light on these kinds of things, but there does remain much mystery. And I just want to point out here, it's really important for us to remember as we try to understand this text what the Bible's purpose is.

Right? The Bible is not a book about angels and demons, though it does say things about angels and demons. The Bible is God's message to humanity showing how what we lost in the garden through sin is being reclaimed and redeemed through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Right? The Bible is about how life and salvation, which begins now and extends into eternity, is received by grace through faith in Jesus and in his finished work upon the cross.

So information about the supernatural world, it's brought in as necessary according to what God thinks that we need to know. And so all that to say, we don't need to get distracted by questions the text doesn't intend to answer.

So the serpent is introduced as this crafty creature subject to God and to men, and then the serpent speaks. The serpent says to the woman, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

[12:29] And so the next movement here is Eve tempted. Now we're going to see that there are three parts to this temptation and it begins here in the second half of verse one with Satan's innocent question.

And we know it's not actually innocent at all, right? Is it? As we just said, Satan masquerades as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11.4.

Satan is not trying to gain information, right? So what is Satan doing? What is Satan doing with his question? He's seeking to plant in Eve's mind a seed of doubt, right?

He is seeking to undermine her trust in God. He wants her to question God's word. Jeremy Pierre writes in his book *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* that Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls this the godless question by which man is expected to be judge of God's word instead of simply hearing and doing it.

And then Pierre adds, Satan knew that to undermine faith in God's words was to undermine faith in him. Now we can see the impact of Satan's words on Eve when we see how she responds.

[13:44] Look at verse 2. And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of

the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

We see here Eve's confused response. Now what was it exactly that God had commanded to Adam regarding the trees?

Turn back to chapter 2 verses 16 and 17. Just look over in your Bibles. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. What does Eve add to this command? She says, Neither shall you touch it. Now it seems like Eve is misquoting and misrepresenting God, doesn't it?

It seems like she has added to the Lord's command in a way that makes him out to be overly strict or harsh. Now the reason that I put a question mark after the word confused is because there's actually debate on whether Eve is really misquoting God.

[14:54] It's possible there was more to the command and here we're learning what that more is. It's also possible that Adam himself added this additional layer of protection against violating God's command.

Kind of like how the Navy does with everything, right? Especially with violating nuclear procedures or whatnot. The reality is we really just don't know. And so we leave Eve's response ourselves a little bit unsure and maybe that just underscores Moses' point all the more.

Maybe the confusion is Moses' intention and we're supposed to leave confused. But the serpent said to the woman, verse 4, Here is Satan's sneaky partial truths.

In other words, lies. Partial truth is a lie. In case you didn't know that. Satan, and we're going to see that as we move here. Satan goes from the question that he asks to try to undermine Eve's trust into this just all-out assertion.

Now Satan is offering his version of wisdom to Eve. And he forces her to make this choice between God's wisdom and Satan's wisdom.

[16:11] Now what is Satan's wisdom that we see here? Well he says, You will not surely die. That statement is in direct contradiction to what God had said. Satan said, In the day that you eat of it, you shall die.

So Satan is portraying God as the deceiver. Right? Now then he adds, God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened.

So Satan is now making God out to be not just a deceiver, but a withholder of good. Right? As if God is keeping Adam and Eve from their true potential.

As if the very good that God declared about creation could actually be improved upon. Now finally, Satan claims here, you will be like God knowing good and evil.

Satan, just remember their position in creation. Satan is promising an image bearer of God who rules over the creatures.

[17:10] Satan is promising them, the crown of God's creation, an increased likeness to God if they are to defy God's rule. Now as we're going to see in just a few moments, all of these prove to be these kind of veiled partial truths, in other words, they're lies, they're lies.

Now I just want to pause here and consider what this means for our own lives today because the serpent is alive and active in the world today. Paul says in Ephesians 6.12, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against what?

The spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. There is an unseen reality to our existence, friends, but it's very, very real. It's very real. We said earlier that Satan masquerades or disguises himself as an angel of light.

He prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Now what are we to do in the face of such an enemy? How are we to wage this spiritual warfare? The Bible gives us a lot of ways to wage this spiritual warfare.

The first thing is be watchful. Simply to have a situational awareness, know that this is possible, be aware first of all of Satan's devices. We've seen here what Satan does and he does this today.

[18:28] He plants questions in the mind that are going to undermine our trust in God. That's one way you can think about the things that you're thinking. Is it leading you to trust or is it leading you to undermine God's trust?

If it's not leading you to trust in the Lord, it just might not be from the Lord. He speaks half-truths that play to our fleshly desires. realize that this is going on.

Expect that this is going to happen. Now part of it also is knowing yourself. Because all of us are made differently. We have different weaknesses. There's different areas that I might succumb to temptation more readily than you all.

We need to know ourselves. The second thing is resist Satan with God's armor. we are no match for Satan in and of ourselves.

And this is why Paul says in that passage in Ephesians 6, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

[19:32] Now fitted with that armor, and I encourage you to read that passage this week, read Ephesians 6, meditate on that, pray into Ephesians 6, but with that armor we're called to resist Satan.

2 Corinthians 10, 5 says take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And James 4, 7 declares that if we in fact resist Satan, he will flee from you.

Now since Satan's main strategy is to undermine our faith with these questions and half-truths, we need to know the word. We need to know the truth.

The way that we take captive ungodly thoughts is by exposing them to the light of God's word and his truth. And that's exactly what Eve should have done. I reflect on what should Eve have said? There's a lot of things she could have said. She could have been like, what do you have to say, serpent? Why are you coming in here and messing things up? She should have said, no, this is what God said, and God is good, and we trust God.

[20:32] So whatever you're trying to do here, you can take that somewhere else. She should have responded with the truth of what God actually said and then clung to that. No, no, no, God is good. This is what he has to say.

We need to know the word. The word of God is the sword of the spirit. It's our offensive weapon, Ephesians 6.17. Now, as Randy Matthews pointed out here one time, he said there's actually one more offensive weapon, prayer.

Prayer. We need to be prayerful. Randy said that prayer, if you don't know Randy Matthews is a missionary that we support. He actually just got back from Southeast Asia. We've been praying for him. He said that prayer is so powerful that it had nothing in the Roman soldiers' equipment to compare to.

It's the great nuclear bomb of spiritual warfare, Randy said. And so Jesus urged his disciples, watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The last thing I want to say is we should fight in community. Humility recognizes that no matter how spiritually mature.

[21:36] I think I am. I will always be battling my sin with its blinding effects. As long as I walk this earth, that is a reality.

Paul says, therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. Don't fight your sin alone when you have been given the resource of the church, of the saints.

Remember, we quoted this last week, two are better than one. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. Ecclesiastes 4, 9, and 10. We learn a lot here about the nature of temptation, but let's now look at the actual sin itself.

Sin, the heart's corruption. Look at verse 6. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Only a simplistic reading of this verse and these first chapters of Genesis draws the conclusion that the fall of man was merely the biting of a piece of fruit.

[22:47] Complexity of the human heart and the corruption of the human heart in its complexity is revealed right here in this verse. Now, there are five discrete acts that Eve undertakes here.

We're going to walk through these. The first is that Eve saw. Eve saw. Eve saw that the tree was good for food. Now, presumably Eve has already seen the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

many times, right?

It's in the midst of the garden, after all. But before, Eve was operating according to God's truth, right? That to eat of that tree was not good.

She had seen the tree before, but these were occasions to remember what God had provided. She would look at that tree and say, I'm not going to eat that because God said it's bad. Look at everything else that God has given to me.

He is so good. He is so trustworthy. But what happens now? She sees that tree with a changed perspective.

[23:47] A competing wisdom has been offered in place of God's wisdom and this competing truth. Up until this point, notice, God has defined what is good, and God saw that it was good, and God saw that it was good, and God saw that it was good.

Behold, it was very good. And now Eve is defining what is good. That's a problem. See, her thinking has been corrupted. Eve desired.

She has corrupt desires now. Eve saw that the tree was good for food. Good is a value judgment, but then we learn more, that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.

Her corrupt thinking has awakened in her these new and corrupt desires. What is it that she now wants? Is it merely a tasty piece of fruit?

No, no. Eve has been told that she can usurp God's authority, and that she can become her own authority. She's been offered this promise that she can become like God more, and she wants that.

[24:49] She wants that. Her God-given identity as the crown of his creation is no longer good enough in her mind. In her pride, in her unbelief, she desires more, something that she can't actually have.

She wants it. Jeremy Pierre writes, instead of, I am a dependent being using my capacities to rule God's world for God's purposes, it is now, I am an independent being using my capacities to rule my world for my own purposes.

So with corrupted thinking and corrupted desiring, Eve took. She has a corrupt will.

Eve made a conscious choice, there's a choice, of the will, and her corrupted thoughts and her corrupted desires led her to choose, to resolve, to act in a way contrary to God.

Her will has been corrupted. To this choice that she made, it reflects her new commitment to self, rather than to God. She's committed to her own glory, rather than, over against the glory of the creator God, and that's what she was made for.

[26:03] So these are, friends, these are the faculties of the human heart, my thoughts, my desires, my will, that is what makes up the human heart, that is who we are. And at this point, Eve's heart is corrupt, thinking, feeling, willing, and so the battle's lost, the battle's lost here.

Before she even bites that fruit, she's lost the battle. Jesus says in Luke 6, 45, that the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

And so, unsurprisingly, Eve ate. She took action. But I wanted you to see, though, that this is merely the outflow of the heart's corruption.

Right? And I want you to see that the heart's corruption, it involves this egregious rejection of God's rule.

It's placing self on the throne of the heart. It's not just merely biting a fruit. Eve is worshiping herself and no longer God. And so, this is treason.

[27:16] Friends, it's treason against the all-powerful, all-loving creator God. But Eve doesn't stop there, does it? Because the fifth thing is that Eve gave. There is a multiplication effect.

Now, this is going to become a major theme over the next few chapters, and it reaches a climax in the flood. Sin spreads. Mankind was made to spread what?

To spread the life-giving goodness of God, to spread fruitfulness to the world, to spread the knowledge of the glory of God, and now they're spreading sin. And so, this sin spreading is the antithesis of what God had created them to do.

This is the wrong kind of fruitfulness. Now, who did Eve give the fruit to? Anybody? Oh, right, Adam. Now, where in the world has Adam been this whole time? Huh? Now, with striking brevity, Moses records Adam's fall into sin, look in your Bibles there, there's only three words, and he ate.

[28:23] End of verse 6, and he ate. And here's the other thing, Adam's failure to lead. Who was given the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Adam.

Adam was given the command. We talked about how the language of chapter 2 gives this idea that Adam is a priest in the presence of God, in the garden of Eden. He is supposed to work and keep the garden, and part of that is for him to instruct Eve in what the Lord God had said.

He was supposed to lead her, he was supposed to protect her, but what has he been doing? We don't know. He's passively watching the scene unfold. He's not jumping in to guard the purity of the garden.

He's not initiating to protect Eve from Satan's lies, and so Adam has utterly failed at his job. And he likewise has been led astray into sin.

So let's just begin right here with application. Men, we are called to be the spiritual leaders of the church and the spiritual leaders of the home. That is our job.

[29:29] To abdicate this role, it not only rebels against God's intention for us, it leaves others vulnerable to attack. Men, we need to take initiative to put on the mantle of leadership that God has given us.

We need to strive to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, and then to lead our wives and our children and others to do the same. Now, for all of us, this dynamic interplay in Eve's heart, it's very instructive for us as we think about our own sin.

You know, I think we probably more often we think about sin as only outward actions. disobeying our parents, speaking an overly harsh word, pornography, I mean, on and on and on.

Now, these are indeed sins. If you read the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is working to correct a mistake that the Jews had that only the external, no, Jesus drives it back to the heart, not just adultery, it's you committing adultery in the heart.

Our sinful actions are the outworking of sinful hearts. And so that means that my outward sin, it's the result of thinking, feeling, willing, that has gone awry.

[30:48] You know, the Christian life, it's a lifelong process to conform not only my words and deeds, but also and especially my beliefs, my desires, my commitments, and conform all of that to the image of Christ.

And so, friends, when we see the outflow of words and deeds that are not like Christ, then what we need to do, we recognize that and say, okay, there's something going on in here, I need to reflect on that, I need to bring that before the Lord in prayer, we need to figure this out, what's going on in here, don't just treat the symptoms, right, we gotta treat the root of what's going on, man looks on the outward appearance, God told Samuel, but the Lord looks on the heart.

So, there's so much more we could unpack here, but we're going to keep moving on for now. So, the serpent has entered the garden, he's uttered his deceitful lies, Adam and Eve now have bought into this temptation and leads to this internal and external rebellion against God and then what happens next, right?

Whose wisdom is going to prove to be true in the end? Is it going to be God's or is it going to be Satan's? And so, look in your Bibles at verse 7. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths.

The rest of the verses in today's passage show us man's alienation. We'll talk about what that means. Now, it's fascinating here.

[32:26] The serpent promised that if they ate the fruit, their eyes would be opened and they would be like God, knowing good and evil. They eat the fruit and it says their eyes were opened.

Isn't that what Satan said? And actually, at the end of the chapter, we're going to see God says they've become like us, knowing good and evil. So was Satan right? The question is, have they become any more like God, really?

They have indeed gained knowledge. Francis Schaeffer writes this, what a useless, horrible knowledge. It is the knowledge of the child whose mother says, don't go near that fire because if you do, you will get hurt.

But the little child goes on in disobedience, falls into the fire, and spends the next three days dying in agony. The child has learned something that it wouldn't have known experientially if it had listened to the knowledge given by its mother.

But what a knowledge. Adam and Eve bought into the lie that they, finite, limited, dependent human beings, could become like the infinite, unlimited, independent God.

[33:40] God has what are known as communicable attributes. Those are attributes that we can imitate. And he has a bunch of incommunicable attributes. They're attributes we can never imitate. God's infinite nature, his unlimited knowledge, independence.

Those are things we can't ever imitate. They thought that they could. That was Satan's lie. You're going to become more like God than you already are. They were already made in the image and likeness of God.

They couldn't have become more like him. Now they bought into a related lie that we talked about earlier, that God was withholding something good from them. That they could attain something good apart from God.

But what has their sin led them to? Not good, but destruction. Right? Satan's promises, they're now exposed as the total lies that they actually were.

See, what we see in the next verses, in verses 7-13, is that not only have Satan's promises come up empty, but they've led to something far worse. Total alienation on every level.

[34:46] Now, alienation is kind of a big word. It means, for your kids here, separation. It means isolation, estrangement. It's the opposite, those are all more big words, but it's the opposite of unity.

It's the opposite of belonging. It's the opposite of harmony. And so that's why, you know, if a foreigner comes to our country, they're referred to as an alien. Why? It's not a derogatory term, it just means they're separated from our country, they don't belong to our country, they are alienated from the United States of America.

Now, we see this alienation on every level. First, alienation between man and self. Now, this is evident from verse 7. Previously, Adam and Eve were both naked and unashamed.

Now they feel shame. They feel shame at their nakedness. And so they attempt to cover themselves up with these fig leaves. Sin, it makes us uncomfortable in our own skin.

Now we experience shame, now we experience fear, and more than that, we experience all kinds of other psychological problems. We can't even understand ourselves. Why we believe what we believe, why we feel what we feel, why we choose what we choose and do what we do.

[35:56] We no longer live out our God-given identities. We struggle to view ourselves rightly. We're alienated even from ourselves. Then we see this alienation between man and others.

The shame of nakedness. It's not just a self-perception. It's the shame of being exposed before others. Adam and Eve immediately feel this. The first effects are these two alienations.

This also shows up in verse 12. After God comes to Adam and he says, hey, did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat from? He's like, oh, she told me, it's her fault. Then he goes to the woman and she says, no, the serpent told me.

There's this alienation between Adam and Eve. Adam's blaming his wife. That alienation will become even more apparent next week when we look at the curse of God as a result.

Alienation between man and nature. God had given mankind dominion over the earth to use it for the flourishing of humanity and the flourishing of the world.

[37:01] Now we actually see these two instances of them misusing creation. First, them taking fig leaves and sewing them up to make these vain coverings.

That's not what God gave them those for. And then they're hiding behind these trees. The trees were a source of life and nourishment and good. And now they're using the trees to hide from the Lord.

Now this alienation from nature is going to show up even more next week. The last thing, the most fundamental thing, the most tragic thing, is alienation between man and God.

Now it's most fundamental and most tragic because it's actually this separation that leads to all the others. I want to read verses 8 through 10. Look at verses 8 through 10. And they heard the sound

of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.

[38:06] here comes the transcendent yet personal God. He made them in his image and likeness. He came down to dwell with them.

He's walking in the garden to fellowship with them. And what do they do? They run and hide. They are now ashamed. They are afraid of God.

Their sin has made a separation between them and their God, Isaiah 59 2. And so under the weight of that shame, under the weight of that fear, they hide. And then when they're exposed, what do they do?

They shift blame. It's not my fault, really. There's nothing new under the sun, is there? You know, we employ the same tactics today.

We feel the guilt and the shame of our sin and so we try to hide from it. And we do this in a variety of ways. We do this by denying it. No, that's not what I said. Right?

[39:04] We do this by minimizing it. I mean, they're only words. They're only words. I didn't do anything. We do it by justifying it. You know, my harsh words, they were needed to get through to them.

And then when none of those work, then we shift the blame on to somebody else, right? Well, don't you know what she said to me first? The bigger picture here, friends, though, is that because of sin, we experience total alienation in our lives.

We are alienated from God, we are alienated from ourselves, we are alienated from others, we are alienated from nature. Now, those words don't sound shocking to anybody in this room because they are our lived experience.

This is what we experience every day in fallen bodies, in a fallen world. We feel disconnected from God. Where is God? Right? We feel disconnected. We experience shame and fear and not only that, anxiety and depression and all kinds of other psychological problems.

We experience strife and conflict in our relationships due to our own pride, due to others' pride, due to selfishness and greed. We misuse and abuse the world around us and it misuses and abuses us, right?

[40:17] Like this blizzard that's coming tonight. Friends, you know, the Bible helps us make sense of this dual reality, right?

there remains so much good because God made a good world, Genesis 1 and 2, but it's right alongside this unrelenting evil. We see this, we sense this, we feel it deeply, we want deliverance from it.

And, you know, we attempt all kinds of things to try to deliver ourselves from it, don't we? We feel this alienation and so we throw ourselves into sports, right? We hope that there we're going to find the satisfaction that we're looking for.

We pursue career success, we pursue happy marriages, we pursue financial security, maybe that will do the trick. We put all our energy towards raising good children, right?

And we seek to have identity rooted in that. We strive to be doers of good, hoping that our deeds are going to give us relief from the voice that says, you don't measure up.

[41:21] Friends, in the end, none of these things solve our problem of alienation. And then when this overwhelms us, we look to other things to numb the pain. We look to endless scrolling on our phones, on social media.

We look to alcohol and to drugs and other forms of escape. And not all the things that I mentioned are inherently bad. But the thing is that none of them solve our problem of alienation.

We are estranged from our maker. And until that reconciliation occurs, we will go on feeling this alienation deep in our souls. But how are we to bridge that gap?

Paul says in Romans 3, no one is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless.

No one does good, not even one. You say, but Mike, I do good things. I do good things sometimes. Well, sure you do. But then James 2 reminds us that if you break one law, you're a lawbreaker.

[42:28] Right? You're a lawbreaker and it's a lawbreaker before a holy and perfect and righteous God. But the Bible says still more than that. We're certainly guilty because of the sins we commit or the good that we don't commit.

But just like Eve, the problem runs deeper than that. The problem is in our hearts. Friends, we don't just sin. We are by nature sinners.

We are by nature, Paul says, children of wrath. We are, as Romans 5 teaches, we are born in sin because we are born in the race of Adam through whom sin and death entered and then spread to all humanity and that is the desperate plight of the human condition.

But friends, that is not the end of the story, is it? That's not the end of the story. Because thousands of years later, a man came. He stood face to face with evil and he did not succumb to its temptation. His driving pursuit was not the glory of self, it was the glory of God, his father. Where Adam failed, he perfectly succeeded. And then he in another garden, in the garden of Gethsemane, was faced with the hardest choice that a man has ever faced.

[43:48] He could either fulfill the will of God, go to the cross as a curse for mankind, endure forsakenment from the father whom he had known and loved from eternity past, or he could reject that and go his own way.

Once again, though Adam failed, Jesus Christ did what nobody else could have done and he succeeded, he perfectly obeyed the will of God for our redemption.

He himself became the solution to our unsolvable problem of alienation. Friends, do you know what that means for us? It means that you no longer need to hide.

You don't have to hide anymore. You can come out into the light of the gospel. We don't need to deny our sin. We don't need to blame others for our sin. We can own it and repent of it and find full and free forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ.

And when we do that, friends, our relationship with God is restored. The thing that we were most made for were reconciled and in him there is life and there is love and there is joy forevermore.

[44:56] And now by his power, the sin that once held us in bond, that power is broken. We can actually overcome sin. We can gain victory over sin. And one day the very presence of sin is going to be banished from his sight and ours.

Friends, if you have not this day trusted in Christ, I urge you to do that today. Trust in Jesus Christ and in his sacrifice. It is the only way to life. It is the only solution for this problem, the Genesis 3 problem that you know in your heart is reality.

For all those who belong to Christ, let us look to Christ and to his example. He stared evil in the face and said, no, I will not give in.

I will live for the glory of God alone. Let us like Jesus. How did Jesus do it? He wielded the word of God. Satan did too, but he spoke them as lies.

Jesus knew the word. He wielded the word and said, no, I love and I know my God. I love and I know the word. And Jesus used that to diffuse the enemy's lies. Friends, let's do the same.

[46:02] Christians, let's do the same. But here's the other thing. We can't do that in our strength. Right? So finally, let us depend on Christ and in his power.

We need to trust in Christ and his sacrifice or else this battle is already lost. We need to look to Christ and his example. We need to depend on Christ and his power. Right? Through the spirit, we can actually overcome the enemy.

We can fight the indwelling sin in our hearts. Paul says in Romans 13, 14, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.

This is a daily dying to self, is it not? Every single day, many times a day, I die to myself. I put on the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul talks about the armor of God in Ephesians 6, he's talking about Christ.

Put on Christ. Make no provision for the flesh. And you know, Jesus teaches us to pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. It's got to be our daily cry.

[47:05] We need his help. Friends, love for God is the only path to life. Sin leads only to destruction. And we can this morning, we can thank God because he made a way for us to get off the path that we were on and back

on the path of life through his son, Jesus Christ.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we rejoice in the gospel of Jesus Christ because Genesis 3 is not the end. It's only the beginning. It indeed, it shows us the depravity of humanity. It shows us the craftiness of Satan and the corruption of the human heart and the total alienation that we experience as a result.

But we know that the second Adam, Jesus Christ, he did what Adam couldn't do. He succeeded and he has become for us light and salvation. He has become for us wisdom and righteousness. And by faith in him, our deepest problem is solved. And so we thank you, God, for loving us so much. Even while we were your enemies, you sent Christ to die for us.

[48:17] We pray this in his name. Amen. Amen.