

Outside Paradise

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[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is John as well. I'm a regular member here for about 25 years, and I've been on staff for about the last few years. We are currently in a series that looks into chapter 1 to 11 of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, which starts with this word, in the beginning, God.

These words tell us that Genesis, and in fact, the whole Bible is about God, the creator of the world, and his interaction with his creation. So what comes to your mind when you think about God? What about God can we expect from reading Genesis or the Bible? The beginning of Genesis shows us that God created a perfect environment in the Garden of Eden, a paradise for Adam and Eve, the very first pair of humans made in the image and the likeness of God.

They were put into the garden to rule over all God's creatures, in the sea, in the sky, on the ground, while enjoying a relationship with God.

God gave Adam and Eve specific instruction to follow, but instead they disobeyed and rebelled against God. They followed the serpent's voice and each other's voice and twisted God's word.

[1 : 24] They were made in the image and likeness of God, and God treated them as equal, but they sought to be equal with God on their terms. They want to live their life in their own way as they see fit.

And that's how sin enters into God's creation. Sin is not just law-breaking. It is a deep-rooted rebellion in the hearts of humans to reject God as their ruler and want to rule on their own terms. In responding to this serious transgression, God certainly could have destroyed Adam, Eve, and the serpent and start anew. However, through his gracious actions in response to and on behalf of these people, we see the grace of our Creator.

The fact that God instead chose to allow them to live is a manifestation of his grace. Running through Genesis and all through the Bible is the theme of grace showing God's mercy despite human sin.

Genesis 1-11 forms a foundation of how we understand God and his works from creation to a new creation.

[2 : 39] The Bible is about God, our Creator and our Redeemer. What we can and should expect to learn about God from reading Genesis in the Bible is that God is gracious and merciful.

The amazing things we can see from these chapters and all through the Bible is that God's grace increases as sin increases. Our short passage today illustrates God's grace perfectly.

It demonstrates how God brings in his grace to alleviate the mystery that sin brings. Grace is God not treating his creatures as they deserve, but with kindness and mercy, providing something far greater than any expectation.

God provides a couple of things in our passage today. The covering and the sword, and Adam and Eve ends up being outside of paradise.

If you have the St. Paul's app, you can see these three points, and please follow along with your Bible open to the end of chapter 3. Today's passage from Genesis 3.20 begins with this word, Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all living.

[3 : 57] The Lord God made garment of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Previously in this chapter, Adam and Eve sinned against God by not trusting and following what God commanded.

Instead, they listened to the serpent and each other without careful consideration or discussion. Humanity fell into sin because Adam's attitude towards God and his command and the action that followed.

The immediate consequences was that Adam and Eve were filled with shame about their nakedness. In chapter 3, verse 7, then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked.

So they sewed fig leaves together and made a covering for themselves. That's the best I can do. They hide from the Lord when they visited them.

In verses 10, they were fearful and ashamed and they pulled further away from God, the one who created and loves them. They tried to cover themselves by sewing up fig leaves together, which is only temporary and uncomfortable.

[5 : 13] So the very first act of grace after human fall was in verse 21. The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

When it says God made garments of skin, what imagery do you have? Hopefully it's not God waving his hand like a magician saying abracadabra. That would be very far from the truth. The image behind this verse is very bloody because the animal was slaughtered to make that happen. God graciously provided for humans' needs in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves.

But in order to do that, something or someone else had to be the substitute. A life for a life. The consequence of Adam and Eve's sin is that God had to sacrifice some other of his creatures to cover for them.

The use of animal skins anticipates the Old Testament system of animal sacrifice, which is another demonstration of God's grace. Why do I say that?

[6 : 40] Because without God's willingness to forgive and allow humans to approach him, no amount of sacrifice is enough to fulfill the righteousness of God.

No amount of sacrifice by humans can buy God's forgiveness, which is what so many religious people wrongly think that they can achieve. Anyone who thinks they can do enough good deeds to repay for the wrong they have committed in thought and deeds against a creator God is delusional. The best man can do is to cover for our sins against God is a covering that's made with fig leaf against our naked body. We'll have to keep sowing the covering every couple of weeks, and it will only partially cover you.

What God has made with animal skin will last forever and be much more fitting. The good news is that God covers Adam and Eve, and he will also provide cover for his people in the new creation. Paul spoke of a day that God will do that in 1 Corinthians 15, 53-54, and 2 Corinthians 5, verse 4.

[7 : 57] God will clothe his people with immortality, providing the complete undoing of the curse of human sins. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, the mortal with the immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

For while we are in this tent, we're grown and unburdened because we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed instead with our heavenly drawing, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Last Sunday, we explained how this victory covers sin and its curse comes about. Please check our website or our channel on YouTube for a further explanation, a fuller and further explanation.

But in short, this victory over sins and its curse was made possible through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he became the once and for all sacrifice that fulfilled God's requirement in dealing with the consequence of humanity's sin.

[9 : 14] Jesus was a substitute that God sacrificed to provide a covering for humans. Because of his death and resurrection, Christ has overcome the stain of sin, and he clothes all who believe and follow him with his perfect obedience and pure love towards the Father.

Galatians 3, 26-29 says, So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith. Clothe yourself with Christ, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are hers according to the promise. Last Sunday, we also talked about God empowering people to resist the lies of the serpent to become Eve's offspring.

God grants faith to those he chooses to enjoy eternal life with him. Colossians 3, 12-14 tells us, Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved it, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive one another. If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

[10 : 34] God in his grace has provided the covering, the clothing of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Paul says in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 5, Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

God has fashioned us. He is our style. And God's style and fashion for us is Christ, who is the only person who has all this virtue plus love and forgiveness.

When you are clothed with Christ, you will no longer be found naked and ashamed. God has forgiven humanity because Jesus took upon himself the punishment for all our rebellion towards our Creator.

Jesus was clothed with our wrongs to cover for us. And as we put on Christ and be in Christ, and when God see us, he no longer see our trespasses, but we only know the honor and glory of his beloved Son.

That is God's grace. After God made garments and clothed Adam and Eve, it says in verse 22, And the Lord God says, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

[11 : 57] 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 in the east side of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and the flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

This banishing and stopping of humans from reaching for the tree of life is a second act of God's grace. Because of sin, humans now know good and evil experientially.

Humans will continue striving to define good and evil through voluntary and involuntary means. Humans will continue to sin and misuse their ability to define good and evil selfishly to benefit themselves.

And they will keep incurring a penalty of death for their disobedience towards God. God stopping humans from reaching out to take and eat from the tree of life and live forever is an act of God's grace.

[13 : 05] The banishment and the expulsion were at the same time and act of mercy. Banning humans from the tree of life putting a limit to their physical life allowed for their redemption rather than for them to live in a life of perpetual sin in an unredeemed condition.

The time limit on our life is God's gracious action. It's not just a reactive punishment. Paul tells us in Acts 17 verse 26 to 27, from a man God made all the nations that they should inhabit the whole earth and he marked out their appointed time in history and a boundary for their lands.

God did this so that they might seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him though it's not far from any one of us. God put a limit to our physical life so that we no longer reach for the wrong thing that will bring us curses.

But instead, we can use the limits of our time to promise to seek him and reach out for him for he's not far from any one of us. Do you agree that when there's a deadline you are far more motivated and to get things done?

A sword is often also related to judgment in the Bible. Knowing that there's a time we'll all give account can be scary or encouraging at the same time.

[14 : 35] Depends on how you have been living your life. At the end of his second letter Peter reiterated in chapter 3 that God is not limited by time but he gave us an understanding of time and its limit so that everyone can come to repentance.

And with repentance and the help of Christ we'll regain our access to the tree of life in the new creation. That is the picture we are given in the beginning of Revelation 22 the last book and last chapter of the Bible.

On each side of the river stood the tree of life and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations and no longer will there be any curses.

What a tremendous picture. The banishing and the flaming sword are both acts of God's grace. Since human sin the garden of Eden is no longer a paradise but a place remembered as where the

first human foe fell.

God had a new heaven a new earth prepared for those who he choose to be Eve's offspring to share in the victory over the crushing of the shepherd.

[15 : 54] God makes sure we do not get to the tree of life through the old way. So he put a flaming flushing sword to guide the way. The flushing flushing sword is a warning sign saying wrong way turn back.

The word of God is described as a sword in the New Testament in Hebrews 4 and Ephesians 6. The word becomes fresh in Jesus Christ. Jesus opened a new way to God for he is the only way for anyone who wants access to God and eternal life.

Now that Adam and Eve have been sent out of paradise we see God's grace once again in chapter 4 verse 1 to 2. Adam made love to his wife Eve and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said with the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man. Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked of soul. Eve gave birth to Cain outside of paradise but she said with the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.

God went with them into the banishment and expulsion. They were sent outside of the paradise but they were not cut off from God. God was there with Eve helping her in the midst of severe painful labor.

[17 : 17] Eve knew her child came into being with the Lord's help. God did not leave her alone outside paradise to face a consequence of her sin all by herself. God was there with Adam and Eve outside paradise.

God is with them in every moment of their life and God will also be with you in your life and will not leave you alone to face your life and difficulties too. The experience of Adam and Eve is enlightening.

They have sinned and when they sinned they recognized they were naked. They have been naked beforehand in a pure physical sense but they had not yet seen so they were not ashamed.

After they become a sinner their nakedness becomes something more than merely physical. It becomes a psychological nakedness connected to their moral guilt. They were guilty before one another and before God.

And what happened? God came walking in the garden to confirm them in their nakedness. He exposed the sin for sin cannot be hidden in his presence.

[18 : 24] But then he did something tremendous. He clothed them using skin from animals. He sacrificed himself. He kept them from reaching for things that would bring them curses and kept them from going back to their old way.

This is the message of Christianity. We can be fully exposed and yet clothed and covered at the same time. Being clothed is not accomplished with the skin of animals.

When God sent Jesus Christ to die for sins so guilt may be removed he made the most perfect covering for all humanity. Based on Jesus' perfect and atoning sacrifice God would then clothe all who believe in Christ with the Lord's righteousness.

Because of Christ's work God no longer looks at us as sinners but as those who have become righteous in Christ. now we can stand before him rather than hide not because God has been in ignorance of our sin or has refused to care about it but because he has known about it and has dealt with it perfectly.

Now we can cry with Messiah the prophet I will greatly rejoice in the Lord my soul shall exude in my God for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation he has covered me with the robe of righteousness with the Lord's help in God's grace we are no longer naked and no need for shame let's rejoice in the gracious God.

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