

Genesis 3

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Genesis chapter 3. Read at verse 8.

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 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, that is, God said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? Man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate.

The Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. And so on. I think we would all agree that Genesis 3 has to be the saddest piece of writing that you can find anywhere.

[1 : 23] I cannot even begin to imagine what it must have been like for Adam and Eve to have experienced the fall.

To have lived in a world where there was no tension, where there was no pressure, where there was no pain, where there was no sorrow, where there was nothing but harmony and peace and joy and delight.

A world that we cannot really lay hold of and begin to properly understand. Yes, we have all these things at one way or another, but we cannot enter into what that world that they were in was really like.

And that's why I cannot even begin to imagine what it was like for them when the fall came about. Because their relationship with God was wonderful.

They walked in harmony with Him. Their relationship with one another was perfect. It was flawless in every way. But for Adam and Eve, the dream that was held out before them, that Satan brought before them to make their world even better.

[2 : 47] Because that's really what Satan was saying to them. You might think it's good. Let me tell you, if you do what I tell you, it's going to be even better.

And ultimately, they believed the lie. They fell for Satan's deceit. And we know, of course, what happened. They fell into a world that they couldn't get out of.

Because the fall was complete. It was total. It was irreversible. The moment they disobeyed, they were, as it were, catapulted into another world, which was so totally, totally different to the world that they had been used to.

Nothing of what had been promised was realized. Yes, Satan said that their eyes would be opened. And Satan said, this, if you do what I tell you, you will become even greater.

It will be an enhancing experience. You will come to experience things that you haven't already. You will become like God. You will know good and evil.

[4 : 04] And the thing was that although Satan, it was all deceit and lies, yet at one level, what he was saying was true.

But he was saying it in a way that what he was really saying, it was distorted, so that the truth was given in such a way that it actually meant it was to mean something other than it was.

And, you know, when you think about it, a lot of life is lived like that. We hear about that expression, and we often use of, it's used in politics, a lot of the likes of an idea of a spin doctor.

Well, you know, to be quite honest, a spin doctor is a liar, because that is really what is happening. The idea is to create a wrong impression.

It's to make you think something other than it really is. It's very clever, very crafty. But at the end of the day, it's a lie. It's mirroring exactly what Satan was doing.

[5 : 17] He's the master of it, of taking an element of truth, of twisting it round to make it appear to be something other than it is. And we've always got to be careful that we don't fall into that trap, because there's a lot of it in society, and it's very easy for us to get caught up in that way.

And if we are deceitful, if we are trying to wrong foot people deliberately, if we are trying to, as it were, pull the wool over people's eyes, so that what we tell them, we're telling them something in order to maybe to gain something for ourselves, or to deceive them for our own benefit, or in any of these things, we are mirroring Satan, because he is the father of lies.

And so this is what we find here right at the very beginning. And of course, Genesis 3 explains to us why the world that we live in is as it is, why we are the type of people that we are, and so on.

And Genesis 3 brings before us God coming into the, we could almost say the debris, the aftermath of what has happened.

That's what we're coming across here, that the Lord God is coming back into the garden. And the Lord goes looking for Adam and Eve, and the Lord asks Adam and Eve questions.

[6 : 47] Three, they're basically very simple questions. And the questions are, where are you? Who told you you were naked? And have you eaten of the tree that I commanded you not to?

Now, when the Lord asks these questions, where are you? It's not that the Lord was looking for information. God wasn't looking for information as if he didn't know.

What the Lord was doing was he was challenging Adam and Eve to come clean, to face up to where they were, to what they had done.

And that's one of the most important things in life that you and I always need to do, because God is doing that with us. It's something we often try and avoid. We don't often, often we, often we try and hide, like Adam.

Often we try and hide away from reality, and particularly hide away from the challenge that God sets out for us in the Word.

[7 : 49] And tonight, you have to ask yourself this. God is saying, just as he said to Adam, that voice called out in the garden, Adam, where are you?

God knew. But he's saying to Adam, where are you now? It wasn't that God didn't know where Adam was. But he's saying, Adam, where are you?

What state are you in? Where are you in relation to me? What is it that you have done? And God challenges us as well, you and me.

And he's asking us the very same question, where are you tonight? Where are you in relation to me? That is the most important question that you can ever ask yourself.

Where are you in relation to me? Are you with me? Are you against me? Because, you know, there's only two categories.

[8 : 46] You're either with the Lord or you're against the Lord. There's no in between. You're with him or you're against him. And this is what the Lord has done.

This is the wonderful thing, really, about Genesis 3, although it's an incredibly sad reading. The wonderful thing is that the Lord God came back into the garden. God would have been completely right within himself to say, Right, Adam and Eve, you have completely blown it.

I am going to leave you to yourselves. I am no longer interested in you, your welfare. You chose to go another road other than the one I set out. You're on your own.

If the Lord God had done that, however bad this world has become through the fall, it would have become 100 times worse if the Lord had left us.

But he hasn't. The Lord is still dealing in his mercy and in his grace. And the Lord who came calling for Adam came calling in mercy.

[9 : 50] Because he's really saying to Adam, Adam, I want to deal with you. It's awful what's happened. But it's not the end. That's what we see a little later on.

And so the Lord is challenging us all tonight. Where are you? And the thing is, like Adam, we're often trying to hide.

Maybe tonight you're hiding from the Lord. You're here, and yet you're hiding. You're here, and that's a great thing. You're under the Word. That's a great thing. You've come to church. That's a great thing.

But you're still hiding. You've built barriers. You are hiding behind barriers that you have built up. And these barriers are, yes, they allow you to come to church, but they're preventing you from dealing with God face to face.

You won't own up and look at where you are. It might be religious barriers. It might be self-righteous barriers. I think that's one of the favorite barriers that people build up.

[10 : 53] The reason I say that is I had a self-righteous barrier for quite a long time. I'm just as good as these Christians.

That's what I used to think once upon a time when I would look at people in the church, and I'd say, I'm just as good. Well, the thing is that there are many people who may not be Christians who outwardly and maybe morally are just as good and maybe better.

But the fact of the matter is this. Are we right with God? And there is only one way that we can be right with God is by accepting God's provision for us in Jesus Christ.

So whether we have self-righteous barriers or religious barriers or the barriers brought about, built up because of family backgrounds or whatever it may be, these things don't stand up.

We've got to say, Lord, if you're outside the kingdom, you've got to face up and say, Lord, I'm still outside. And the Lord is saying, well, where are you?

[12 : 04] He's challenging you to come in, to come into the kingdom. Because that's a place of peace. It's a place of security. It's a place of safety. It's a place he has provided, made a way possible.

And so the Lord calls to Adam and he says, where are you? Adam, you have to own up. So Adam then says, oh, well, Lord, he says, I was afraid.

Because, he says, because I was naked and I went and I hid myself. It's because of my nakedness, Lord. That's why I ran. That's the only reason I ran away.

And the Lord said to him, who told you you were naked? You see, what Adam is saying is really the most absurd thing possible.

Adam says, I ran to hide because I was naked. And the Lord is saying to Adam, aye, but you were always naked. When God created man and woman, he created them in the beauty of the body.

[13 : 10] And he created them and brought them together in nakedness. And they were at peace and content because there was no sin. There was no sense of shame of any description.

So we see here that something has happened. It's not the nakedness that is wrong. It is something that has happened. Adam is trying to blame the nakedness.

But God says, you were always naked. That's the way I made you. That's how I made you and Eve. You were together like that. And everything was all right.

What have you done? And it's then, of course, that Adam has to come clean of what he has done. Because what he did in taking the fruit was what changed everything.

And the nakedness that Adam is complaining about isn't just the sense of not having clothes. Although when they fell, it changed everything.

[14 : 18] Because all of a sudden, there was this incredible sense of vulnerability. Of being utterly open.

And it's like the other person could see all the flaws and all the faults and everything that was wrong. And, you know, that's one of the things that the fall has done to us and for us.

It has left us always trying to cover up. Because we don't want to be known. You see what happened in the fall? What happened was when man and woman took of the forbidden fruit, they lost what they had.

What did they have? They had been made in the image of God. In the knowledge, in the righteousness, in the holiness of God.

And that is what they lost. And that sense of innocence was gone. And then they started trying to cover up. And that's still to this day trying to cover up.

[15 : 29] We are always trying to cover up. We don't want people to really know what we're like. Say, for instance, you've got visitors coming to the house. Somebody phones and says, Oh, we're on holiday.

We're going to come to the house. What do you do? Well, I would say most people would have a wee tidy up. Because you don't want people arriving to see just how it is.

We want to try and make things look better. Supposing you flew off the handle. And you went into a rage at home.

And people walked in and you didn't know. You'd be mortified. Why? Because people were seeing a side to you. That you were trying to never let them see.

And that's kind of what we do in life. We're not wanting, we don't want people to see the real us. And that's part of the problem. Because from the moment that sin entered into this world, we have it there, Adam trying to cover his nakedness.

[16 : 42] When he was completely content and at home, unashamed. They both were told that. And they were not ashamed. Then all of a sudden, everything has changed.

We don't like to be seen. I often think that this is part of, you know, we like to see other people. But we don't like other people to see the real us.

We like to see. I think that's part of, I suppose, the success of what we term as reality TV just now. Where we're seeing, where we are able to sit and watch others living out their lives.

But I don't think we would like it if it was turned the other way around. Maybe that's part of what CCTV is about. And we're oblivious to it. But we're quite happy to watch, but we don't like really to be seen.

So there is this amazing sense of trying to cover up. And Adam says, you know, I was afraid. And that's what the fall has done.

[17 : 57] It has brought fear into our heart and into our lives. And I believe it's also one of the reasons why a condemning spirit is within people.

I believe this is all tied into the fall. When we judge others, it all comes back to this. When we put down on other people, we do so in order very often to elevate ourselves.

See what they're doing. I'm not doing that. And the thing is, sometimes we're saying, see what they're doing, not aware that you're doing exactly, or I'm doing exactly the same thing ourselves.

The fall has distorted everything. And then we see it, it develops. And we see that the excuses come. And straight away, Adam begins to blame Eve.

You see, there's tensions. Tensions have arisen. This is the awfulness of the fall. You know this, I think many a night, Adam and Eve must have tossed and turned when they thought of what they did.

[19 : 08] Because, you know, sometimes at night when maybe if you haven't had a good day, your sleep can be disturbed. You're thinking over what you've done, and you say, oh, I could have done it differently.

I shouldn't have done that. How do you think they must have slept? The question sometimes, how do you sleep at night? Well, that must have been a question sometimes for them.

How did they sleep at night? When you think of the world that they knew and they lived in and they loved, and then the world that they were plunged into.

And so tensions began to arise. Tensions between themselves and God. Tensions within themselves. Tensions between one another. Tensions between one another. And straight away they begin to blame one another.

And you see, Adam, Adam, first of all, he's trying to run away from God, and then he tries to blame God. Tries to run away from God. And you know, this running that Adam does at the very beginning is still happening to this day.

[20 : 14] Every attempt that is made to remove God, the influence of God, the influence of Christianity, whether it's in our schools or our classrooms, whether it's in Parliament, whether it's in the workplace, wherever it is, it finds its source here.

Adam is trying to get away from God. And there is this movement that's gone ever since, where people are trying to push God out of the picture.

Because you see, we're accountable and we don't want to be. We don't want to face up. We don't want to hear the call. Where are you? Because God is calling to each and every one of us.

And remember, one day we're all going to have to appear before the Lord. He is going to demand an account from every single one of us. And you know, there's a picture given to us at the end times in the book of Revelation, where we have the most extreme form of cover-up, where people are going to be calling upon the rocks and the hills to cover them and to conceal them and to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

Because they cannot bear facing the living and through God. That's what started. It started in Genesis 3 and it goes all the way through life.

[21 : 35] My friend, tonight, don't run away anymore. Because, you know, if you spend your life running away, remember, you've still got to face the Lord. You still have to. It's an appointment you can't avoid.

You're going to have to meet Him one day, stand before Him one day, and give an account of your life. And on that day, you and I will be known to each other in a way that we've never known ourselves before.

We will see ourselves in a way that we have never seen ourselves before. Because everything will be brought up.

All that we really are. And there is only one way that we can stand face to face with God and not be ashamed.

And that is by the covering of Jesus. By accepting Him. There is no other way. We can make every kind of attempt. We can try and push God out of the picture.

[22 : 36] We can build our own, try and build our own way to heaven. We can have all our own ideas. None of them will work. At the end of the day, nothing. It will all collapse. There's only one thing.

God is going to speak to you personally, face to face. It's an appointment, as I said, you have to keep. So please, please, please get that covering now.

Adam and Eve tried to make coverings for themselves out of fig leaves. But it wasn't, it's not, that wasn't the covering they needed. And you know, this is a wonderful thing in Genesis.

It's that God made a promise, even in the debris of Eden. He made a promise of somebody who was going to come and crush the head of Satan.

And of course, that was Jesus. Jesus. And Jesus is the only one, the only hope for our life. Because you see, Adam was not only trying to run away from God, he was actually blaming God.

[23 : 45] Oh, God says, what have you done? I see the woman, Adam says. See the woman that you gave me. She gave me the fruit.

See how twisted Adam has become in such a short space of time. He's actually blaming God. He's saying to the Lord, it's your fault, really.

That's what sin does. Sin is always making excuses. Always trying to hide. Always refusing to face up. The Lord strips everything away.

So they are face to face with where they are, where they're at. And the awful thing is that that, of course, everything brought death in.

And the fall is affected. It's affected everything. That's why we are where we are today. That's why relationships are so many casualties in relationships. That's why there is so much hatred and antagonism to God and the things of God.

[24 : 53] That is why there is so much upheaval and sorrow in this world. That is why there is death. If Adam could have seen as he took that fruit, what he was going to do.

It wasn't long until one son lay dead. Another son was banished. And he saw the body returning to the dust. It's a fearful picture.

You know, there's an awful lot of people and they're trying to work out how are we where we are. Well, this is how we are where we are. But I don't want us to end in despair.

Because God didn't leave us in despair. And God has promised us salvation in and through Jesus Christ. And he promised us seed to the woman.

And that seed, of course, will we follow through Genesis, through Seth, the line of Seth, and right through into Abraham and follows right on to Jesus Christ. And that is the great place.

[25 : 56] It is the only hope that we have in life. The only salvation that is for us is in Jesus Christ. As we conclude, we have to ask that question tonight.

Where are you? Are you in Christ? Or are you out? It's only you that can answer that question.

Your husband, your wife, your father, your mother, your son, your daughter. They can't. Only you. Please face up to it.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we ask that we might indeed face up to where we stand and where we are in the presence of the living and true God.

We give thanks that although Genesis 3 paints that awful picture, that we have the great hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. that God came in mercy into the garden, calling, Where are you?

[27 : 02] And that he has not left us to ourselves, but that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Bless us then, we pray. Do us good and take away from us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen.