

Sin and Temptation

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and open them up to Genesis chapter 3, and this morning we're coming to one of the most infamous chapters of the entire Bible.

If you're just now joining us for the first time, we've been walking through the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and up to this point things have been great. But now this morning what we see is this good creation that we've seen up to this point is about to be drastically changed for the worse with the entrance of sin into the world.

So Genesis chapter 3, our passage this morning is verses 1 through 13, and when you found that in the Bible, then let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word, Genesis 3, 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 of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

[1 : 18] 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.

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? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me, and I ate. And Father God, as we open up your word, we pray that we would see clearly here our sin, our separation from you.

[2 : 48] Lord, this is the root cause of all evil in the world and all evil in us. And so Lord, we pray that we would see it clearly and that it would drive us to Christ in faith. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. You may be seated. I got lunch with somebody this week who was new to the area, and because it had warmed up just a little bit, the tiniest bit, we sat outside.

But because we live where we live, we weren't out there long before we were absolutely eaten up by no-see-ums, and they are back with a vengeance. I don't know if you noticed. And as we sat there, he wondered out loud, well, why in the world are these things so bad here?

And I didn't have a scientific explanation to give him. I'm sure there is one. But the only explanation I could give him was because all the way back here in Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve disobeyed the word of the Lord and plunged God's perfect creation and all of us in it into something called sin. I don't want to be overly simplistic this morning, but sin is the fundamental explanation for everything that is bad and broken in the world.

[4 : 04] All the way from minor inconveniences and things that annoy us like no-see-ums and mosquitoes and poison ivy and things like that, all the way to the most difficult and terrible things that face all of us in this life.

Questions like, why is my marriage so difficult? Questions like, well, why do I feel so alone and depressed?

Questions like, well, why do we deal with things like cancer? Why do we have to face things like death? And of course, as we think about this on a spiritual level this morning, it's the answer to questions like, well, why does the Bible say that each and every one of us are by nature separated from God?

Enemies of God. And why are all of us by nature enemies and under his wrath? Why does anybody die? And why does anybody go to this place called hell?

All of these terribly unpopular topics that no one really wants to think about and talk about. The most basic answer and explanation that we can give for all of these questions is found right here in Genesis chapter 3.

[5 : 21] With the entrance of sin into the world. So let's look here at this passage together. And what we're going to see here this morning is the entrance and the effects of sin.

And this will be our outline this morning. If you're taking notes, that might help you to follow along. We'll see the entrance of sin and the effects of sin this morning. First, we see here the entrance of sin.

Look there with me starting in verse 1. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. The tone kind of shifts here in chapter 3, doesn't it?

We've had God's good, perfect paradise up to this point. And now the presence of this crafty serpent comes onto the scene. And I'll just go ahead and tell you that there are questions that we have that Genesis simply does not answer.

And it doesn't intend to answer questions like about the origins of evil itself. Or questions about maybe the fall of Satan. Genesis doesn't intend to answer these questions.

[6 : 23] It puts us after all of that. And by the time we meet this serpent in the garden, he is already wicked. And he's already bent on twisting God's good creation. The focus here is on humanity and how humanity first sinned.

And the effects of that sin on all of creation and on all of us. So this crafty serpent who we know is Satan, he comes to disrupt this perfect garden paradise.

And he comes with this tried and true playbook of temptation. And I want you to look with me starting in verse 2. And I want you to notice four tactics that Satan uses here in the garden.

And I want you to pay attention to this because these are tactics that he still uses today on each and every one of us. I know we're talking about the very first sin. But unfortunately, the first sin is not the last sin, is it?

This first temptation is not the last temptation. What we see here is a mirror-like representation of something that each and every one of us faces in our day-to-day life. Tactic number one, Satan attacks God's good design.

[7 : 34] We've seen over the past several weeks, haven't we, how God ordered and structured his creation in Genesis 1 and 2. It all began with God. He is at the top.

He's at the center of all things. His word is ultimate. And then God creates Adam and he gives his word to Adam. And then God creates Eve to be Adam's helper.

And Adam and Eve together are called to rule over the animal kingdom. You see that structure and that order. But here's what happens. It's all completely reversed, isn't it?

The animal comes to the person. The serpent comes up to the woman. The woman takes her cues from an animal. And then Adam takes his cues from the woman.

And nobody's listening to God at all. Satan is disrupting, upending God's good design from the very beginning. And he absolutely loves to do this.

[8 : 32] Anywhere you see sin present, you will see an attack on God's good design. We saw last week how we see the effects of this in marriages. Husbands struggle to lead and to love their wives as they were designed to do.

Wives struggle to help and submit to their husbands as they were designed to do. Sin comes in and jumbles up and confuses the whole thing. We see it in churches.

Women stepping into roles of teaching and authority that are reserved for biblically qualified men. Scripture is not unclear about this. But again, sin comes in and disrupts God's good design.

But most often, you know where we see this most clearly? You know where we see this order and this design of God attacked most often? It's in our own sinful personal rebellion against God.

And we see it in our own lives. When you and I walk in sin, what we are doing is we're saying to God that you're not the authority here.

[9 : 37] I am. That's what sin is. Sin isn't just some minor little mistake, a little slip up here and there, doing something that we shouldn't do. R.C. Sproul, he says that sin is cosmic treason.

Every sin, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is an act of rebellion against the sovereign God who reigns and rules over us.

And as such, is an act of treason against the cosmic king. Sin always attacks and confuses God's design.

Always. Wherever you see that order disrupted, you can trace it all the way back right here to the garden. Tactic number two. He questions the word of God.

He questions the word of God. We see that plainly enough here, I think. But it's so interesting to me. When you slow down and pay attention to the dialogue here in this account, you'll begin to notice that this temptation ultimately is a battle over the word of the Lord.

[10 : 46] Look at this, verse one. He says, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? Now stop there.

Okay, this is a test. Everybody look up. Eyes on me. Don't look at the book. Okay, I don't tell you to do that often. Look up at me. Is that what God said? Did God actually say you may not eat of any tree?

Is that what God said? Yes or no? What God said, you can look back down, was that they could eat freely of every tree in the garden.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they should not eat of it. For in the day that they eat of it, they will surely die. From the beginning here, the enemy completely misrepresents the word of the Lord, doesn't he?

Now look at how Eve responds. Which by the way, first of all, that's mistake number one. Because she shouldn't have responded at all. Okay, word of wisdom to you.

[11 : 45] If a talking serpent comes up and starts speaking to you, you don't have to have a dialogue with it. You just run away and pray. And that's what Eve should have done here.

That's what we should do when we face temptation. You know, you don't have to engage it. You don't have to have a dialogue with it. You don't have to enter into a conversation. With it, you are well within your rights to simply say no and run away.

But Eve speaks. And to her credit, she does correct him, doesn't she? She says, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but now look what she says. 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.

Stop there. Is that what God said? This is like one of those pictures in the magazine where you have side by side and you got to spot the differences here.

It's subtle. Do you spot the differences? God never said, Don't touch the tree. She added that herself.

[12 : 55] She adds to the word of the Lord. And on top of that, this is a little bit harder to see in the English, but what she also does is she minimizes the consequence of disobedience.

Hebrew language does this thing where when they want to emphasize something, they'll sometimes say it twice. And so when God gave this command, what it says is, In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.

In the Hebrew, that is, you will die, die. That's serious. You're going to die, die. It's for emphasis. Don't eat it or you will surely die.

But what does Eve say? Don't eat it. Don't touch it. Or you'll die. She adds to his word. She takes away from his word.

She adds to it to make it sound more restrictive than it is. And then she minimizes the consequence and makes it sound less severe and less serious than it is.

[13 : 55] You see, this temptation is a battle over the word of the Lord. And she is losing. Church, if you want to guard yourself from sin, get yourself in the word of the Lord.

If you expect to fight against the temptation of the enemy, you must know the word of the Lord. So that if somebody says, Did God really say this?

You can look at him and say, Well, no, he didn't. And actually feel like you know what you're talking about because you know the word of the Lord. Or you could say, Well, yes, he did. And here's where he says it.

And here's why he says it. And here's what it means. Because I'm so immersed in the word of the Lord that I can't be led astray by these subtle lies. If we would fight against temptation, we'd better be armed with the word of God.

Not the word as we want it to be, but the word as it is. No additions, no subtractions. The enemy here questions the word of God. But he doesn't stop there, does he? Tactic number three.

[15:05] He outright lies to your face. Look at how Satan responds. Verse four. You will not surely die.

You will not die. Die, he says. The serpent quotes the word of God. He knows it more accurately than Eve does. And he denies it completely.

Surely, you will not surely die. That's an absolute lie. And of course, it doesn't seem like it at first. Adam and Eve, they don't immediately die, do they?

No, not physically at least. But we know that this death, this consequence of the sin here is much more than just physical death. The apostle Paul says in Romans chapter five that sin came into the world through one man, that's Adam, and death through sin.

So death spread to all men because all sinned. They will die physically eventually, and we die physically because of sin.

[16:14] Church, death is a terrible enemy. The more I see it, the closer I get to it, the more I experience it, the more I hate it. Death is a terrible enemy.

The devil lies here. They will die. But an even bigger issue here is that sin brings spiritual death. Adam and Eve are about to be banished from the presence of God.

And for the first time, that close, intimate communion with the Lord that they've enjoyed and God's perfect paradise is about to be broken. They may be alive, technically, but they are dead.

You know, to be physically alive, but spiritually dead, that's not much of a life at all, is it? It's a mirage.

It's a lie. To be physically alive, but spiritually dead, sadly, that's the natural state of every single person that's born of Adam.

[17:20] You realize, it is possible for you to be physically alive, breathing, thinking, acting, walking, sitting here, listening, sitting here, singing the songs, and hearing the word.

It's possible for you to be physically alive, but spiritually dead. And this is our natural state because of sin, which is why Jesus says, you must be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

The devil lies. You will not surely die. He tells him another lie in verse 5. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Just zoom out and think about how ridiculous this is. Adam and Eve are made in the image of God, are they not?

They are the only creatures in the world that are made in the image of God. No one else, no creature in all of creation is more like God than them.

[18:27] They don't need to take cues from a talking snake on how to be made like God. It's a lie. Church, we should know that the devil was a liar from the beginning.

And everywhere he exerts his influence, he does it through lies. And you see what he does here. He oversells the benefits and he undersells the consequence of sin.

You see that? You'll be like God. You'll be wise. Think about how it'll benefit you. And don't worry about the consequence. You won't die.

He oversells the benefits and he undersells the consequence. And church, isn't that always how it is when we face temptation? You think about whatever that is for you.

Whatever you tend to be led astray by, be that pride, or lust, greed, or anger, or selfishness, sins of the tongue and of speech like we spoke about this morning in Sunday school.

[19:30] In that moment of temptation, you're not talking, you're not thinking about consequence. You're thinking about benefit. How can this serve me? Take a step back and you realize it's always a lie.

Sins, pleasures, are never worth it. The enemy baits the hook. He doesn't want you to see the hook. He covers it up with this delicious, appealing bait. Whatever it is that appeals to us, which is what we see in this fourth tactic here.

Number four, the enemy plays to our desires. This is how temptation works. Look at verse six.

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. First of all, can we talk about Adam here for a minute? Where was Adam the whole time this was going on?

Where was Adam the leader? Where was Adam the head? Where was Adam the husband? Where was the guardian there? The man in the garden?

[20 : 47] He's supposed to be the godly authority, the protector. Where was Adam this whole time? He was right there with her. He just stands by and lets it all happen.

Passive Adam stands by and watches as this snake lies about God and then tricks his wife. But both of them here make this fatal mistake.

This is what they do. Listen to this. They make this fatal mistake of trusting their desires. others. You know we live in a culture that will tell you things like follow your heart.

Right? If it feels good, it's okay. If I want to do something or like something or be something, if it's what I desire, nobody can say no to me or it's not affirming to me.

It's not loving to me to deny me of my desire. Listen, our desires cannot always be trusted. Our feelings cannot always be trusted.

[22 : 00] Our emotions, how we feel about something cannot always be trusted. Feelings and desires and emotions are wonderful things when they follow the truth.

Only when they follow the truth. Otherwise, don't trust them. James tells us each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Here we see Eve is tempted by the lust of the flesh.

She sees that it's good for food. She's tempted by the lust of the eyes. It looks good. And she's tempted by the lust of pride.

It's desired to make me wise, make me like God. And all of it is too much. So we see that she saw it was good to be desired. She took it, she ate it, and her husband who was with her who should have stopped the whole thing took and he ate.

[23 : 13] And now, second, we see the tragic effects of sin. Look there with me starting in verse 7. We see these effects of sin.

We'll see this throughout the rest of the chapter. I had to stop somewhere. We're going to stop at verse 13. Well, for one, they felt shame. 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 loincloths. for the first time, mankind, they felt this awareness and the shame of their nakedness.

You know, we have all felt this with our sin. Have we not? Even non-believers, you know deep down that your rebellion against the Lord is wrong.

And when the temporary pleasure of that sin washes away and passes away, often what we're left with at the end is shame. And notice what they do with it.

[24 : 14] Look how they try to handle it. They go and they try and cover themselves up. They grab whatever they can find. They sew fig leaves together. They make themselves loincloths.

They try by their own efforts to cover up their shame. Every single one of us does this, don't we? We feel shame. We sin and we feel that shame.

And instead of running to the Lord as we ought, we try some man-made method of covering it up. Sometimes this is just how sin works.

Sometimes the very thing that brings us shame is the same thing that we turn to to try and cover it up and make us feel better. It's this tragic, endless cycle.

We self-medicate with drugs or with alcohol or with pornography. It's this endless depressing cycle.

[25 : 12] Or on the other end of the spectrum, maybe we try and cover ourselves up with good things, things that we think will please God with religion or good works.

Maybe if I just try harder. Maybe if I just do more. Maybe if I'm just a little bit better next time. Listen, that's not the answer either. All of these are feeble attempts to cover up our fundamental problem, which is this.

We are all sinners. We are naked and exposed and guilty in the sight of God and the answer for us isn't just to try and do something to cover it up as much as we want to.

We can't do anything to cover up our shame. The answer is come to Christ. Only Jesus can cover our shame. He bore our shame.

They experience shame in the garden. We also see that because of their sin for the first time they experience separation from the Lord. Verse 8 They heard the sound of the Lord 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.

[26 : 28] For the first time there is now distance separation between them and God. For the first time they are afraid of the Lord and they try and hide themselves away from them and what a foolish thing that is.

Can you imagine? The Lord God who owns all and sees all and knows all you cannot hide yourself from God but what a tragedy it is that they even thought of this for the very first time sin has entered in and severed the relationship between man and God and they are afraid.

I know this has never happened to you but it's kind of like when you're driving down Highway 17 going about 25-30 miles an hour too fast and you hear a siren behind you and what do you do? Well you just kind of inch over to the right hand lane and hope maybe just maybe they'll just pass right by you and show you some mercy maybe they won't see you maybe they're not they're not coming for you you hide but you know in your heart that they have every right to pull you over and write you a ticket you know that you're guilty you just hope that he passes you by you know there's an echo of this account here in Genesis with Adam and Eve hiding amongst the trees of the garden hiding because of their sin there's an echo of this all the way at the end of the book in Revelation the return of the Lord the day of the Lord the wicked hide themselves in rocks and in caves and they beg that the rocks might cover them up that they might be hidden from the wrath of the Lord but for them it's too late here God we see he doesn't pass them by and God certainly could have come in wrath right away that very minute but instead look how he look how he approaches them he comes gently and graciously asking these these probing rhetorical questions he's like a parent with a disobedient child son what were you thinking son why did you do this where where are you who told you not to eat of the tree who told you who told you that you were naked have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat and we know that the day of God's wrath is coming but here we see this is this is the Lord graciously pursuing sinners but even so the effect of their sin is obvious their sin has brought separation between them and God and so it is with each and every one of us our sin has earned us separation from God and we cannot hide ourselves from him

Hebrews chapter 4 says no creature is hidden from his sight but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account but instead of coming to him and owning their sin and repenting to him look what they do here in verse 12 we see another effect here of their sin look what they do they blame shift they shift the blame onto anybody and everybody else besides themselves look how quickly Adam goes from rejoicing over his bride here in chapter 2 to throwing her right under the bus here in chapter 3 this woman not just this woman but this woman that you gave me she gave me the fruit and I ate y'all the honeymoon is over he blames his wife and essentially he blames God this defective helper that you gave me that's the problem it's her fault the Lord turns his attention to the woman and he says what is this that you have done what does she do well she turns and points the finger at the serpent the serpent deceived me and I ate

[30 : 49] Adam points his finger at his wife he says it's her fault he points his finger at God he says it's your fault she points the finger at the serpent says it's his fault no one here is owning their sin before the Lord no one confesses no one repents no one takes full responsibility for their own sin I wonder when was the last time that you simply fully completely owned your sinfulness before the Lord you didn't blame shift point the finger at someone else you didn't say I'm sorry but you didn't give any excuse any extra explanation you simply before the Lord said I am a sinner you see my sin I know my guilt and I bring it before you would you have mercy on me a sinner let me ask it like this when's the last time you really practiced repentance and faith those are two pretty key terms that we need to understand church repentance and faith because this is what it means to be a

Christian to be a Christian you must repent of your sin and put your faith in Christ Jesus if you have not done this you are not a Christian and if you are a Christian then you start to realize this this is a whole lifetime worth of faith and repentance I need to repent every day I need to remind myself to trust in the Lord every single day but it happens it starts now it starts once have you have you repented and believed the gospel repentance begins with fully owning your sin confess it own it I am a sinner I blew it I'm totally powerless to defeat it I can't cover myself up I can't hide it from you you see me for exactly who I am and so what can I do but lay myself out before you and ask you to

completely just have mercy on a sinner like me that's repentance and then faith is completely trusting

Jesus Christ in your place say I failed I'm a sinner I cannot come back into the presence of God on my own account and so I trust what Jesus has done is sufficient that's faith I trust what Jesus has done he has done it for me I trust that Jesus is the true and better Adam and I want to be counted in him have you trusted in Jesus are you trusting him right now we just sang the words to this new song new to us anyway let me let me remind you of what we just sang Christ the true and better Adam son of God and son of man who when tempted in the garden never yielded never sinned he who makes the many righteous brings us back to life again dying he reversed the curse and rising crushed the serpent's head

Christians are those who trust by faith that Christ Jesus is the true and better Adam who succeeded in my place where the first Adam failed you think about the passage that we just read earlier this morning from Matthew chapter four did you make the connection where the devil comes and he takes Jesus up to the mountaintop you remember how Jesus has been fasting in the wilderness for 40 days at this point he is worn out he not well fed he is not in a paradise like Adam was he is out in the desert about as tired and hungry as a person can be and right in the midst of his vulnerability here comes that snake again the devil we're meant to read this story right alongside the story here in Genesis chapter 3 the devil comes and he tempts

Jesus with the same old tired playbook the exact same way he tempted Adam and Eve in the same way that he tempts us the tempter came to him and said if you are the son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread take and eat he's tempted with a lust of the flesh but he answered it is written man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God how does Jesus battle the enemy is with the word of the Lord the devil comes and he tries another tactic he tries the lust of pride he took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him if you are the son of God throw yourself down for it is written he will command his angels concerning you and on their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone and now the devil is quoting scripture last tactic the devil took him up to the very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory that's the lust of sight and he said to him all these

[36 : 42] I will give you if you will fall down and worship me Jesus said to him be gone Satan for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him!

only shall you serve Jesus succeeds where the first Adam failed the first Adam failed in the garden Jesus here he perfectly resists all temptation Jesus perfectly obeys the word of the Lord not just here in this one instance but a whole lifetime of perfect obedience and by doing so Jesus secures what the first Adam lost Jesus secures for himself and all who are included in him eternal life in paradise in perfect relationship with the Lord for all who are included in him by faith he goes even further than that doesn't he in a shocking display of love he lays down his own life to save his bride to protect her from the attack of the enemy the first

Adam blamed his bride the second Adam takes the blame in her place the first Adam let the serpent win the second Adam crushes the head of the serpent the first Adam brought sin into the world and with it death the second Adam paid for the sins of the world and gives those who are in him eternal life the first Adam brought in shame the second Adam bore our shame should I keep going?

The first Adam descended into death the second Adam descended into death as well but death couldn't hold him the second Adam rose from the grave never to die again listen to this the first Adam heard take and eat and it led to death but now the second Adam he says take and eat this is my body which is broken for you take and eat and it leads to life I love how in God's providence we get to come to the Lord's table today do you see the connection here at the table we see visibly and tangibly portrayed for us held out to us the broken body and the shed blood of Christ it's an opportunity for us again for repentance and for faith and for turning and for trusting would you this morning behold the broken body and shed blood of

Christ would you lay eyes on it with eyes of faith this morning would you see it as good see it as desirable would you see it as life for you and then would you take and eat would you repent and believe the gospel as we partake this morning of the broken body and shed blood of Christ he freely offers himself to you this morning would you come let's pray Lord we praise you father for your grand plan of salvation to save sinners by the blood of your son that although we see ourselves in this account of sin and temptation that all of us are guilty lord we praise you for your mercy and

grace is held out to us in the gospel of Christ and we thank you that in him lord we can regain and recover what our first father lost perfect relationship eternal hope life forever with you we love you lord we pray this in jesus name amen