

Life Out Of The Garden

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Genesis. We're in Genesis chapter 3 this morning, and if it's your first time joining us, or your first time joining us in a while, we've been walking through the book of Genesis.

We've taken sort of a slow walk through the garden, and now we're concluding Genesis chapter 3 this morning. And this passage explains a lot about the brokenness in our world.

But even so, I hope you'll notice here that throughout this passage, with all of its judgment, there are brilliant glimmers of hope and gospel promise here in Genesis chapter 3.

So our passage this morning is Genesis 3, verses 14 through the end of the chapter, verse 24. And when you found it there in God's Word, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word.

Genesis 3, verses 14 through the end of the chapter, To the woman, he said, And to Adam, he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

[1 : 46] Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, Behold, The man has become like one of us, and knowing good and evil.

Now, lest he reach out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

[2 : 46] Lord, we pray once more, now again, as we open up this passage. God, would you, would you speak today through the preaching of your word? Would you convict us of sin where there needs to be conviction?

And would you draw each of us to further faith in Christ? We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Sometimes in a house with three boys, and I'm not picking on them, this is probably true of every family, it's not unique to them, I want to be clear, I'm not trying to pick on them, but sometimes in a house with three boys, every now and then, something goes wrong. Somebody gets hurt, something gets broken, somebody takes something that they shouldn't, whatever the issue may be, sin shows up, and the parent steps in and ultimately says, what are you doing?

What's going on here? And all at once, all at the same time, everybody starts explaining what happened, and each person usually explaining what the other person did wrong, and everybody's talking at once, and there's this moment of confusion and blame shifting until eventually, finally, mom or dad says, I've heard enough, and the judgments start to come down.

You go to your room, you drop the toys, you're not playing with those anymore, you drop and give me 50 push-ups right now. The judgments start to rain down. This morning, we're picking up here in the middle of a chapter, and if you remember from last week, we left Adam and Eve pointing their fingers at each other, and at the serpent, and even ultimately at God.

[4 : 31] It's a very tense moment here in the Garden of Eden. They have sinned, they are guilty, they know that they're guilty, they're blame shifting, explaining what everybody else did wrong besides themselves, and now, in our passage this morning, God finally says, I have heard enough, and the judgments start to come down.

This passage this morning teaches us a very clear, but a very unpopular truth, and it's this. Our sin earns God's judgment. Our sin has earned God's judgment, and yet at the very same time, as we read through this passage, hopefully what we'll see is that this passage, at the very same time, gives us incredible hope.

Even in the midst of God pronouncing judgment for sin, there is the promise and the hope of the gospel, all the way back here in Genesis chapter 3.

So let's look here at our passage this morning, and what we'll see is five responses of God to sin. Five responses here of God to sin.

First, here in verses 14 through 15, response number one is that God judges the serpent. God judges the serpent. Look there to verse 14 with me.

[5 : 53] The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field. On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Now we're gonna put our finger there in the second half of that verse, and we're gonna circle back to that at the end, because that second half of that verse is the gospel. And that is the gospel promise, and we're gonna come back to that towards the end.

One of the most significant verses in the entire Bible. But here for now, let's just notice how God curses the serpent. For one, he sentences him to go on the ground, on his belly.

Dust you shall eat. Go eat dust, he says to the snake. Now I have no idea what the serpent looked like before this curse, right? There's speculation. Some say maybe he had legs of some sort.

[6 : 53] Maybe he stood up on his tail. I have no idea. That's not really the point here, is it? The point is God's judgment on the snake. And you notice he didn't engage with him like Eve did.

There's no conversation. There's no back and forth. The serpent doesn't even speak back to the Lord. Once he speaks, it's quiet. And God slams down the gavel.

And he says, because you have done this, because you have led humanity into this rebellion against the Lord, you are now sentenced to go on your belly and eat the dust.

You will be this lowly, slimy, despised creature, this ugly thing. Not only this, we see that there is now a natural dislike between the serpent and the woman.

The snake won't like her and she won't like the snake. Ladies, can I get an amen? Right? I know we live in the country and some of y'all actually like snakes, right?

[7 : 59] But you should know that's not natural. That's not normal. God has put enmity, dislike, division, war, tension, hatred between the woman and the snake.

My wife is a very natural example of this. Okay? If we even see a snake in the yard, I got to personally escort her to the car for like the next two or three weeks. That's just how it goes.

There's enmity there. There's beef. There's conflict. But of course we know it goes deeper than this, right? Because the Lord, he's not just speaking directly to the snake, is he?

He's ultimately here speaking a curse on Satan himself. Satan himself here is judged in the garden. God says that Satan himself will be a low-down, ugly, despised, cursed thing.

And there will be enmity, conflict, war, hatred between the offspring of Satan and the offspring of the woman.

[9 : 07] Of course we should already be clued in here that this isn't physical offspring. Satan has no physical offspring. He's a fallen angel. He can't bear physical children.

But he absolutely has spiritual offspring. In fact, as we look forward to the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us that some of the Pharisees, he tells them directly in the Gospel of John, the reason that they don't receive his word is that they are offspring of their father, the devil.

Now how's that for an insult? Right? The reason you don't receive my word, Jesus says, is because you are the offspring of that snake in the garden. Here we see this is a pronouncement of a spiritual conflict, a spiritual battle that we'll see throughout the rest of Scripture.

A spiritual battle between the offspring of Satan and the offspring of the woman who we know ultimately is Christ Jesus and all who belong to him. So response number one, God judges the serpent.

But then we see, second, response number two, God judges the woman. Here in verse 16. Look there to verse 16 with me. And her judgment is twofold here.

[10:27] On the one hand, childbearing will now be incredibly painful. Verse 16. To the woman, he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing.

In pain, you shall bring forth children. And again, every woman in the room who's ever birthed a child can say amen. Right? A childbirth is pain.

I've seen this firsthand with three different children brought into the world. It looks hard. They call it labor for a reason. It is painful for the woman to bring forth children.

Of course, there's advancements in medicine and every woman's experience is different. But as a general statement, now on this side of the fall, childbearing is painful.

But we should know, again, this pain goes beyond just the physical act of birthing a child, doesn't it? Now, because of sin, there is pain and difficulty with the entire experience of bearing children.

[11:32] Now, don't misunderstand me. Children are an incredible blessing from the Lord. Amen? Now, they are an incredible blessing from the Lord. But now, because of sin, there are all sorts of reasons why this good thing is incredibly difficult and complicated and even painful.

Now, on this side of the fall, because of sin, now there are issues of infertility. Couples who desperately desire to be fruitful and multiply but can't just seem to make that work.

And now, because of sin, on this side of the fall, sometimes that desire to get married and have children for whatever reason is frustrated and a woman stays single far longer than she would ever want.

And now, because of sin, on this side of the fall, sometimes children bring grief upon their parents. I mean, you talk about pain and childbearing. Now, because of sin, there's this experience of grieving, wayward children.

Disobedient children bring grief upon their parents. All of this is because of sin in the world. Now, because of sin, there's brokenness in this area of childbearing. And I'd be willing to bet that every woman who's born a child has some experience and can relate to this.

[12:50] in some way. And one of Eve's primary tasks in the garden was to be, as Adam names her here, the mother of all living. Fill the earth and subdue it.

Fill the earth with the image of God. Be fruitful and multiply. But now, that task is made so much harder by the presence of sin in the world.

The pain, it doesn't just stop at childbearing, does it? There's a whole other aspect here. The second part of this judgment on the woman is that now, because of sin, her relationship with her spouse will be broken.

Eve was made, remember, to be Adam's helper in the garden. But now, this is also made difficult by the presence of sin. God says here, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

Now, at first glance, that sounds like it's not so bad, does it? Your desire shall be for your husband. We ought to want our spouse to desire us, right?

[13:58] Amen? You can say yes, that's okay. We ought to want that, but not like this. If you look just a few paragraphs later, it might be on the next page or just down a few paragraphs here in your Bible.

Genesis 4, verse 7. Genesis 4, verse 7. We see this exact same combination of words here and it clues us in to what's meant back here in chapter 3.

Here in Genesis 4, God is speaking to Cain. You remember this story? Right before Cain is about to commit the very first murder in human history.

What does God say to Cain? It's the exact same language. Listen to this. Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.

Of course, we know what happens next. But here's the thing. Sin doesn't desire you in a good way. Sin doesn't want you in a good way.

[15:00] It doesn't want to cuddle up with you and love you. Sin wants to overcome you. Sin wants to destroy you. And God is saying here, you must rule over it.

Now, because of sin, on this side of the fall, the wife will desire to rule over her husband. Now, because of sin, a God-honoring marriage where the husband loves and leads well and the wife respects and submits well, that is hard to come by.

And now, because of sin, the wife, she won't like those old-fashioned words like submission or helper. She'll want to overcome her husband and rule over him and that desire on this side of the fall will often be frustrated by an authoritarian husband who will rule over her.

We should know again that all of this is a result of sin. And everywhere you see broken marriages and broken families, broken households, tensions and power struggles and arguments and fights, all of this can be traced back here to the garden.

The result of sin in the world. But ladies, he's not just singling you out. And now, third, we see God's judgment on the man. Look there to verses 17 through 19.

[16:29] Here we see God's judgment on the man. He says in verse 17, because you have listened to the voice of your wife. Now stop there just a minute. I mean, this is a test, okay?

If you're sitting next to your wife, you better answer this very carefully, okay? I'm going to ask you a question. Should you listen to the voice of your wife? You can answer. Yeah?

It's not a trick question. The answer is yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. You should listen to the voice of your wife. I'll be the first to tell you, man. I try. I try to listen to the voice of my wife, and she can tell you depending on the day, the week, how good of a job I'm doing.

Husbands ought to listen to the voice of their wives. They have a good, different perspective, offer different gifting, different wisdom. It's a complimentary relationship. Men ought to listen to their wives.

Pastors ought to listen to wise women in their congregation. Simply listening isn't the issue here, is it? The issue is that leader Adam, head Adam, leader Adam, listened to the voice of his wife as she led him into sin.

[17:44] That's the issue. The issue is that Adam allowed the voice of his wife to steer the ship, and she steered the whole thing right into an iceberg. This is God addressing passive Adam.

Men, husbands, do not be passive Adam. Take up your call to love and to lead your wife, to love your wife as Christ loved the church, gave himself up for her.

Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I command you, you shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Now, because of sin, Adam's task to rule over the world and to guard and to keep the garden, to rule and subdue the earth, now that task is made much more difficult.

[18:57] Now because of sin on this side of the fall, instead of only bearing fruit, now his work bears thorns and thistles. In other words, now because of sin on this side of the fall, work is really, really hard.

Amen? Fellas, I know you understand what I'm saying. Work is hard. I hear some of y'all talk about your work. I get tired just listening to you talk about your work.

You get up early, you grind yourself to the bone all day long, you come back home, you eat, you sleep, you go do it all again the next day. On this side of the fall, work is still good.

Work is still good but it bears thorns and thistles. And these thorns can take a lot of different shapes, can't they? It can come in the form of a job you don't even like doing.

Do you know you just have to do something to make ends meet so that you can eat the bread of the ground? It can come in the form of labor that just seems meaningless or unfulfilling. You don't even know why you're doing what you're doing.

[20:04] You just know you have to have a job. You have to do something with your life. And maybe you have a hard time seeing how your work fits in with the grand plan of God for you and the world and you don't see how your labor means anything ultimately with God and His glory.

It could be your work environment, your boss, your co-workers can be thorns in your side. Amen? Right? We've all experienced this in our time at work. Whatever it may be now on this side of the fall, work is hard.

This is the result of sin. And I'll tell you the worst job I ever had was for one summer, praise God, just one summer. I was a landscape architect in Daytona Beach, Florida at a golf course.

And if you know anything about me, I do not do yard work. I'm not skilled in that way. It was blazing hot. There were gators on just about every single hole. The course itself was going bankrupt.

So they didn't even have money to provide the right tools and really ultimately they just didn't even care. Every time I showed up, there's a new leak on a new hole that I had to go fix every single morning for a summer.

[21 : 15] I'd clock in and they would hand me a bucket, a shovel, and a clamp. And they'd tell me go fix the hole. Go fix the leak on hole 13, whatever it was.

The clamp was for the leak once I found it. But the problem was wherever you see water coming up out of the ground isn't necessarily where the leak is. You know, water runs. The pipes were about five feet under the ground.

That's what the shovel was for. And by the time I found where the water was coming from, they didn't even bother to turn off the water. That's what the bucket was for. Every day for an entire summer, I did meaningless, repetitive, frustrating, difficult work, and I felt it more than ever.

Thorns and thistles. Thorns and thistles. By the sweat of your brow. Adam's work here is made incredibly difficult.

But church, that's not even the worst part, is it? Look there with me verses 22-24. The worst effect of all falls on both of them.

[22 : 22] Here in verses 22-24 and here we see forth God's judgment on all people. Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.

Now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore, the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the chair of him and the flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Now, because of sin, on this side of the fall, Adam and Eve and all mankind with them are now driven out of the Garden.

They are now driven away from the presence of God. They are banished from the Garden of Eden with no way back in, no way back to purity, no way back to innocence, no way back to God.

[23 : 34] And this angel stands there with a flaming sword to make certain there is no way they could possibly come back even if they tried. now that sin has entered in, childbearing is difficult, marriage is difficult, work is difficult, life is difficult, but we ought to recognize the worst part of all of it is that now on this side of the fall, our relationship with God is difficult.

Not just difficult, but for sinners our relationship with God is impossible so long as sin remains. You know, we are often so aware of all of these other effects of sin, aren't we?

We all live on this side of the garden, we all live on this side of the fall, outside of the Garden of Eden, we know the effects of sin in the world firsthand. It's no secret that childbirth is painful, it's no secret that work is hard, that marriage is often hard, that we have tensions and difficulties and problems in every sphere of life, we realize that things aren't quite right and we complain about it, but this judgment is the worst of them all and so many people go through life without giving it a single thought.

We should realize that the worst possible effect of sin isn't our broken relationship with our spouse, it isn't our broken relationship with our children, it's not our terrible jobs or poor health, it isn't even death itself.

The worst effect of sin is that we are by nature banished from the presence of God and under His wrath. We see it here in the garden, don't we?

[25 : 26] Sinful people cannot safely dwell in the presence of a holy God. We are separated from God because of our sin. I told you this was an unpopular truth.

This is hard pill to swallow, isn't it? Sinners like me, like you, by nature and by choice are separated from a holy God, but we praise God that because of His great mercy and grace to sinners like us, it doesn't have to be that way.

Here, even in this passage filled with judgment, we get glimmers of hope, don't we? We're going to walk back through and see these glimmers of hope that maybe somehow, someday, God is going to do something to make all of this right.

God is going to step in and do something to fix what's been broken. God is going to do something to bring sinners like us back into His presence and this was His plan all along.

So, fifth, let's look back through and see God responds to sin with mercy and with hope. You know what mercy is. Mercy is God withholding what we deserve for our sin.

[26 : 45] That's what mercy is. He's holding back what we deserve in this passage. Again, although it's full of judgment, it is absolutely bursting with mercy.

Where do I see that? Look back at the text with me. For one thing, Adam and Eve don't drop dead the minute they sin, do they? The wages of sin is what?

It's death. What did God tell them? When you eat of the fruit of the tree, you will surely die and yet here we see they're alive.

Sinners, rebels with breath in their lungs, sinners who get to enjoy so many of the good gifts of God. Even on this side of the fall, there's a glimmer of hope here. Even in the way Adam names his wife, she's the mother of the living.

There's a glimmer of hope here that even though they're banished from the garden, even though they now live in the sin cursed world, even though they've blown it and they know they deserve judgment, yet God is merciful to sinners.

[27 : 50] I see his mercy there in verse 22. The Lord himself prevents Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of life. God himself takes measures to make certain that Adam and Eve aren't stuck in this state of sin for the rest of eternity.

There's a possibility here, even with death looming in the background, maybe God will make another way. All over this passage, even in judgment, God is showing mercy to sinners.

Yes, we believe God is just. Yes, we believe God is full of wrath against sin, but we also believe God is merciful to sinners.

He's slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. He is patient towards sinners, not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

If you are not a believer, you should recognize that you are absolutely swimming in an ocean of God's mercy, even this very minute.

[28 : 59] But please don't presume upon it. This judgment here is delayed. We don't know for how long, but the time of judgment will come. And this delay between our sin and His judgment, that delay is meant to call you to repentance.

repentance. He's not done, is He? Look there, look there, what else God does for sinners here. In the midst of judgment, verse 21, we also, we see hints of atonement.

The Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them. You remember how they responded earlier in the chapter? When they sinned against the Lord and they realized they were naked, what did they do?

They went grabbing for anything they could find to cover up their sin. They grabbed some fig leaves and they sewed them together to try and cover up their shame. They tried to cover up their own sin and shame by their own feeble efforts.

But here, God says, that's not going to cut it. You can't cover up your own shame. You can't do anything to cover up your sin and hide your sin from me.

[30 : 09] You can't cover yourself, but I I can cover you. And how does he do it? He covers up their shame here by sacrifice.

Garments of skins. And don't you see here an echo of the gospel? It's as if God is telling them and us, in order for your sin to be covered, it's going to require sacrifice and I have to be the one to do it. the same echo will continue through the sacrifice of bulls and goats in the temple and these sacrifices that cover the sins and remove the shame of the people temporarily until Christ Jesus, the lamb who was slain from before the foundation of the world, comes and gives his life as a perfect sacrifice to bear our shame and to atone for our sin.

Do you see God's mercy in this passage? There's an even clearer picture of his mercy and his hope here. Circle back with me to verse 15 here as we close. Verse 15 is as I said here we see the clearest display of God's mercy towards sinners in this promise of the gospel.

Look at verse 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

[31 : 45] This verse is the promise of the gospel. God promises that all of this pain that you and I feel on this side of the fall, out here, out of the garden, all of the brokenness that you and I experience, all of the difficulties of life, all of the tragedies and the griefs and the toil and the labor, all of it will be done away for good because I will send someone born of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent.

We rejoice that despite Satan's best efforts to keep this promise from coming to pass, God has done exactly what he promised.

Jesus Christ is the promised offspring of the woman. Jesus Christ, the serpent struck his heel at the cross, but Jesus crushed the serpent's head by rising from the grave, never to die again, so that now sinners like you and I can be counted as sons and daughters of God by faith in him.

This promised seed of the woman, he wore a crown of thorns upon his brow. He bore our curse so that now he stands to say to banished sinners like us, all that the Father gives to me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Friend, the bad news is our sin has earned God's judgment. But the good news of the gospel is that God is merciful to sinners.

[33 : 37] His mercy and his love and his grace towards sinners like me and like you is seen and found only in the promised seed of the woman, Jesus Christ.

Lord, we praise you for this promise of the gospel. We praise you that Christ has come, that he has crushed the head of the serpent. And Lord, we praise you that he will come again to finish what he started.

And Lord, we ask now as we engage in this spiritual battle as sons and daughters of God, Lord, we ask for your strength and we ask that we would walk in the victory that Christ has won for us at the cross.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.