

You'll remember last week that we saw the miserable deception where Satan was able to convince Adam and Eve to trust what he said over the word of God. He enticed Adam and Eve to ignore God's clear Word that if they were to rebel and take the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die.

Over the past 3 1/2 chapters we've seen that God has created everything from nothing and that he has blessed humanity out of his great love. Today will see something else revealed of God's character, that he is a compassionate judge.

This morning we're going to look at the passage in three blocks.

**The Confrontation** (vv. 8 to 13) where God comes and questions Adam and Eve about their disobedience.

**The Judgement** (vv.14 to 19) where God judges Adam and Eve and establishes a new order.

**Gracious Provision** (vv.20 to 24) where God gives Adam and Eve something they couldn't give themselves.

Before we go any further why don't we pray and ask God to help us understand His Word?

Heavenly Father we thank you that you have preserved your word through the ages. We pray today that as we look back to the very beginnings of humanity, that you would help us to see our own sin through your eyes, to understand clearly that you are a judge, and to look to the great hope we have of provision of a future with you in the Lord Jesus in whose name we pray, Amen.

### *The Confrontation*

In verse eight we see a stark contrast to God's created order in the first two chapters of Genesis. Instead of a life of freedom, of perfect relationship with God and enjoying that perfection, fear has entered the world. Adam and Eve's eyes had been opened when they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and now they fear God.

As he comes to spend time with his creation he calls out 'where are you?' verse nine. The sad reality is that in Adam's heart he was deeply afraid of God because of his nakedness and so together he and Eve have hidden away.

God questions them; “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” God knows the answer but what he offers Adam is an opportunity to come clean, to be honest, to shed light in the darkness, to declare their rebellion and to seek forgiveness.

But Adam doesn't repent, he shifts the blame. Instead of squarely facing up to his own rebellion Adam points the finger at Eve for giving him the fruit and infers that it is God's responsibility that he was led astray because God made her. He's moved from expressing his awe and thankfulness to God when he described Eve as 'bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, the perfect complementary partner' to trying to lay the blame with God. He's questioning God's perfect intent, “hang on a second, you put here here.....”

Next Eve is presented with an opportunity to explain. God asks her 'what is this you have done? Eve too presented with an opportunity to come clean, just like her covenant partner she points the finger at someone else “the snake deceived me and I ate.”

Neither Adam nor Eve has admitted their guilt. Neither of them has come to God and repented. They have tried to blame others instead of taking responsibility for their own actions, for their own denial of the Word of God.

We see here a broken relationship. Things are now askew between Adam and Eve, and creation and the Creator. God made Adam and clearly instructed him, we saw it in chapter 2 verses 16 and 17, Adam hasn't led his wife, he has rebelled with her.

They have 'swapped the truth for a lie', Romans 1:25. And so now dispelling the serpent's lie, God pronounces judgement.

### *The judgement*

God begins with a curse in verse 14. This creature will crawl on his belly. He will slither and he will eat dust with his food. This slithering, serves as a reminder and a warning.

In Indonesia we had a few run ins with snakes, and every time the hairs on my neck bristled, my heart started beating, I don't know about you but snakes awaken a real sense of fear in me, of horror.

This creature is a visual aid of the fall to make us wary of sin and its destructive power.

In verse 15 the influence behind the conduct of the snake Satan himself is judged. He has won this battle by causing the rebellion of Adam and Eve, but ultimately he will lose the war. He will cause

pain as he strikes at the heel of humanity, he will strike mankind and fill them with venom. Just like the poison from a snake's bite it will mar us, God's perfection will be altered, but that disfigurement won't last forever.

We see it don't we?

We see the disfigurement and the impact of this poison so clearly described in the Romans reading this morning. The culture of Rome at the time of Paul's writing is disturbingly close to home.

In the world around us we can see Satan's influence, the ongoing whispered lie that we can define what is good, this sees God's natural order, the perfection of creation, off kilter in every way. Through the rebellion of Adam and Eve our depravity is total. Sexual relationships and desires are warped which we saw in Romans 1 vv. 26 and 27. Minds are warped and unable to even see God (verse 28) and out of that warped, debased mind flows all manner of unrighteousness.

But in the face of great sin there is an even greater hope. There is a God at work restoring his people, a God who indwells his children. A God who will complete the good work He has started in us, in us fallen wretched creatures.

The offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent and he will strike his heel. A pointer to the work of the Lord Jesus who will be scourged and marked by the poison of Satan resulting in earthly death, but in that act of obedience to the Word of God Jesus will ultimately crush Satan's head, his defeat is sure and certain.

Having pronounced a curse and judgement on the Serpent and Satan, in verse 16 God addresses Eve who is now only too aware that she is not God, despite her earlier aspirations to be like God. We can note here Eve's not cursed like the serpent but she is given two great afflictions.

The first is pain in childbearing which will be very severe. Childbearing doesn't just speak about pain in birth. There will be pain and anguish in the raising of children for mothers, some of you will know this. The deep hurt felt in the experience of raising children is a result of this sin. That feeling, that deep anguish which comes from the place of a mother's love for her children is a result from a fallen disconnect with God, it was never meant to be a part of life in this world.

Neither was the ongoing war between men and women which frames the second consequence for Eve. “Your desire will be over your husband and he will rule over you.” In this moment we see the birth of feminism and male domination. Because of the fall, relationships between men and women are now off beam. Women will rise up against and over the men they are designed to be perfect partners too.

Men, will dominate women and exercise mastery instead of leading them lovingly. In our own lives for some of us we will have experienced and known the outworking of this, we've seen broken marriages, or abusive spouses. This is our real experience. dear brother and sister if you've been harmed in this way I am so sorry. It's not God's intention that men and women should be at war with one another, there should be no battle of the sexes, but the judgement that Eve receives means that this discord will echo down through the ages.

In these marred relationships between men and women there is great sin but for followers of Jesus there is a great hope.

God sends us his Holy Spirit who helps wives submit to their husbands, and husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church. For the Christian, this judgement is real, we live in its shadow, but it is not the end of the story. Through the work of the Lord Jesus in us by his Holy Spirit we have a great hope now. Our relationships can be improved. The relationships between men and women can be characterised by love and grace. There is an even greater hope for the future when men and women will live in perfect harmony with one another, no longer usurping or dominating but in full and free equality living a life of worship with their God in the new heavens and new earth.

Having pronounced a judgement on Eve God turns his attention to Adam, Adam who is the most culpable. His rejection of the Word of God is brought into sharp relief. There was no trickery or deception in Adam's case. God makes it clear that Adam has abdicated his responsibility. The consequence is that instead of enjoying a life of abundance, of fruit, of food, all available freely, Adam will sweat, toil, he will do the hard graft of work, to get enough to survive. This struggling to subsist will be a reminder that all is not as it should be, that the world around us is not as God intended,. And this work, this need to provide ,will bring the same anguish that the woman has as a mother.

This work for Adam will be hard because the very ground is cursed, verse 18, it will spring forth thistles and thorns until at the end of Adam's days, he will return to the dust. He was taken from dust and to dust you will return. God had warned Adam that when he ate of the fruit he would surely die, and so now the trajectory of humankind is one of decay and death.

Last week we saw Adam and Eve reach for divinity as they took the fruit. Adam and Eve wanting to be like God, dethroned him and crowned themselves, they rebelled. The final piece of Adam's judgement is a reminder of his true impotence, he will become as dust. All Adam and Eve's ambitions of divinity are scattered on the wind.

Adam's sin in rejecting the Word of God and trusting a lie was a great sin, but there is a great hope. For anyone who puts their trust in Jesus, will never truly die. If we believe, if we hold fast to the Word of God there is a promise of eternal life. We will be raised from dust to imperishable bodies, one Corinthians 15 verse 22 tells us for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Or verses 42 to 44 of the same chapter 'so will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'

What a great and glorious hope that for those of us who trust in Jesus our future is not simply death and scattered dust, but life eternal. Through his death on the cross our sin is forgiven, through trusting that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead we will share in the same future.

Alan P Ross summarises the chapter brilliantly; they sinned by eating, and so would suffer to eat; she led her husband to sin, and so would be mastered by him; they brought pain in to the world by their disobedience, and so would have painful toil in their respective lives; and the serpent ruined the human race, and so he would be destroyed. These declarations missed the inevitable consequences of disobedience. As long as sinful life exists all of this evil consequence will continue, for all of it will be repeated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, A. P. (1998). Creation and blessing: a guide to the study and exposition of Genesis (p. 148). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Through these judgements a new order is established it is not the perfect created order that God intended it is marred, and fallen, but it is not a new order without hope.

Adam accepts the new reality that life will go on. He names Eve meaning 'life giver.' They will live in this new world, although things have radically changed because of sin. There will be death, toil, anguish, shame, but even in the next action God's compassion towards His creation is evident.

### *The Provision*

Over the last three weeks we've seen the expression of nakedness; and how at first Adam and Eve felt no shame. It was the perfect created order. Where they related perfectly to one another and their God. It is a beautiful image.

After the rebellion, eating the fruit that God had told them would lead to death, they knew their nakedness. They tried to hide it and hide it feebly with leaves in verse seven of chapter 3 and at the beginning of this passage their nakedness, the fear of exposure and the shame of their sin are synonymous. And yet we see a great hope.

Verses 22 to 24 don't look very hopeful. Adam and Eve are sent away from God's presence, and he places a guard at the entrance to the Garden of Eden so that they may not enter in and take the fruit from the tree of life but that is not the end. In Revelation chapter 22 verse 14 the tree of life appears again and we read of those who washed their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. The robes signify our guilt and shame. They are washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus so we are able to enter into the city God's new Jerusalem, his dwelling-place and may take that fruit and eat and live forever.

We have a hint of how God will do it, in verse 21. God covers their shame, he covers their nakedness, with a death. God provides for Adam and Eve what they can't provide for themselves, and he does the same for us.

We cannot atone for our own sin, we know that we can't stop sinning, not for an hour, even isolated alone in Level 4 without external influences we still choose to do things our way instead of God's way.

the covering for all our sin and the shame that is associated with it has to come from beyond ourselves. What a great and glorious truth that our inability, or our lack of desire to obey the Word of God is covered by God himself. It is covered in the Lord Jesus as he bears the weight of our sin and carries our guilt and shame to the cross of Calvary. The creator of the universe who made everything by his word blesses us. He does what we cannot do for ourselves and in his love, grace, and mercy, he carries the penalty for sin establishing a new order of redemption; and points us to the sure and certain hope of a future where the curse of sin and the consequences of the fall will be no more for any of us who would look to the second Adam, the perfect, and righteous one, the Lord Jesus.

Why don't we pray and thank Him?

Heavenly Father we thank you for your goodness to us we thank you for what you reveal to us about the nature of sin and our own hearts before you and we pray that in the power of your Holy Spirit you would be at work in us helping us as we are able during this time to look to the Lord Jesus for a different order. Heavenly Father keep firmly before us the hope that we have in you that this life of toil and strife and difficulty is not the end, overwhelm us with joy that you have provided for us what we can't provide for ourselves, salvation in and through the Lord Jesus. We ask it in his name and for his glory. Amen.