**The Fall**

Genesis 3

***Why is there evil and suffering in the world?*** This is arguably the most difficult question for anyone to answer. The **secular answer** today is the simple and harsh reality, **“it is what it is.”** Our world is the product of the random collision of molecules over billions of years. Everything developed through the harsh process of evolution and natural selection where anything weak and sick was systematically destroyed and extinguished. The strong survive. The weak are killed. Everything is random and chaotic - there is no reason or explanation - it’s just the way things shook out. So deal with it. Live the best life you can, then you’ll die and decompose with everything else in this dark, chaotic, hopeless world.

***Quite the cheerful worldview, right?*** “Junk happens. Then you die.” That’s what secular humanism offers people. It’s depressing and provides no moral compass whatsoever. In fact, it argues for the selfishness of the strong and the abuse of the weak. If you press secular humanism and Darwinism what you get is **Nazi Germany**.

Today we will see the Christian answer to the question - why is there evil and suffering in the world? It’s in Genesis 3. It’s called ***“The Fall.”*** When Adam and Eve rebelled against God’s one restriction, when they broke that one rule, everything in the world broke down the middle. ***The world was fractured and corrupted and so were Adam and Eve***, and all humans since.

This is a vital point for understanding God and the world. GOD is not the author of evil. God is never responsible for evil. He embodies all that is good and right and pure and holy. “God is light. In Him there is no darkness at all.” So where does evil and pain and suffering and cruelty come from? It is traced back right here to Genesis 3.

We have three parts to our study today. First we will look briefly at the Devil’s playbook to see how he deceived Adam and Eve and how he tries to still deceive us today.

1. The Devil’s Playbook
2. The Fallen World
3. Fallen People

Then we will look at the effects of the fall on the world and finally we will focus on the consequences of the fall on each of us. Genesis 3 explains why things are the way they are both in our sinful hearts and in the world.

Briefly, let’s look at the three plays the devil ran in Genesis 3 that continue to be his go to plays today.

**I.** **The Devil’s Playbook**

* 1. **Question** God’s Word

“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree…’” Genesis 3:1

The serpent slithering into Eden is clearly **the devil**, the fallen angel named Lucifer who had been the most glorious of all the heavenly angels. He tempts Adam and Eve to do what he did - becoming like God, overthrowing God from His throne. But the sneaky snake doesn’t start with that. He starts much more subtly by simply reviewing - in an apparently harmless way - the instructions God had given them.

***“What did God actually say…?”*** That is the fight so often today presented as “that’s just your interpretation.”

* Did God actually say marriage is between one man and one woman?
* Did God actually say not to have sex until you are married?
* Did God actually say that love is limited to heterosexual expressions?
* Did God actually say you can’t look at porn?
* Did God actually say…

And notice how the devil exaggerates the instructions God gave - highlighting the restrictive nature of the rule. “You shall not eat of ANY tree.” Eve rightly corrected the serpent - we may eat of all of the trees, except this one. But the devil got them focused on what they could NOT have to activate their desires. And he tried to open the door to make it acceptable by ***questioning the details of God’s Word and the reliability of God’s Word.***

Notice it is the exact same play the devil used thousands of years later with Jesus.

**I.** **The Devil’s Playbook**

* 1. **Question** God’s Word

“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” Matthew 4:3

Just three verses before this, at his baptism, God the Father had just spoken, “This is my beloved Son.” Now, right away, the devil moves in to question that spoken word. “If you really are divine…”

***Do you see how the devil does this with us still today?***

* If you are really FREE, then you can compromise a little here and there.
* If salvation really is a free gift, then it’s ok to keep this struggle secret a bit longer.
* If God accepts you no matter what, you don’t need to spend time with him everyday - how reasonable is that anyway?

Do you see the craftiness of our enemy? Question God’s Word. That’s the devil’s first and favorite move. Second:

**I.** **The Devil’s Playbook**

* 1. Downplay the **Consequences**

“You will not surely die…” Genesis 3:4

His first move was a question. His second play was ***a direct assertion*** - directly contradicting what God had said. “No one will get hurt. It’s not that big a deal. Don’t worry so much! God isn’t so harsh and unreasonable that he will strike you dead over one little choice. Just relax and enjoy yourself! After all, God wants you to be happy, right?”

Every temptation comes with a promise that “no one will find out. No one will get hurt. It’s just a small thing. No one will even notice.” But every small compromise quickly becomes a larger one. ***No sin is isolated, they all grow and compound***, often very quickly.

* The alcoholic considering that first little sip.
* The porn addict hovering over that first click.
* The gambling addict pulling into the track.
* The workaholic saying, “Just one more hour, then I’ll go home.”
* The anorexic saying, “just one more pound.”
* The glutton saying, “just one more donut.”

The devil loves to downplay the consequences. Again, he did this very same thing with Jesus in the wilderness.

**I.** **The Devil’s Playbook**

* 1. Downplay the **Consequences**

“Throw yourself down… ‘He will command his angels…’” Matthew 4:6

The devil knows the Bible! He can quote Scripture with the best of us. The temptation here was for Jesus to abuse his relationship with the Father and presume upon God’s protection with no regard for God’s will. Isn’t that exactly what we are tempted to do all the time? Presume upon God’s protection and forgiveness without regard for God’s will?

The devil tells us it’s no big deal. It’s just one time. It’s just you, no one else will be affected. Lie. Lie. Lie. One more play the devil loves.

**I. The Devil’s Playbook**

* 1. Exaggerate the **Benefits**

“When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.” Genesis 3:5

The knowledge of good and evil - ***what could be wrong with KNOWLEDGE?*** Oh, we know! Parents know. Grandparents know. You have conversations with your children to prepare them for the evils in this world, but you do it gradually because you want to spare them the full knowledge as long as possible.

* They have to know there are bad people out there, so you teach them **“stranger danger”** early on.
* You know there are creepy people who might take advantage so you teach them about their private body parts that no one else should touch.
* You talk about the differences between boys and girls, about human anatomy, mommies and daddies.
* But most of us save the **“full talk”** for age 10, 11, 12 - because you want to preserve that child-like innocence, you want to protect them from the eye-opening knowledge of good and evil.
* We have used Passport to Purity around age 11, 12 with our boys - and they call it “the eye opener.” Along with the material from Family Life Today we also watch The Matrix - because that 24 hour father/son or mother/daughter retreat is a milestone of revelation. You learn things you can’t unlearn. You take the BLUE PILL.
* Ignorance is bliss. If only children could avoid the knowledge of good and evil - but sadly they cannot.

This third play is where the devil appeals to the ***lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life***. He hit all three in the garden. Lust of the eyes - look at this tasty fruit! Lust of the flesh - you will experience something you never have before! Pride of life - you will be like God, you will know things he is keeping from you!

I’ve always thought **Aladdin’s song** was overtly sexual. Kristin says I’m twisted but come on - “No one to tell us no or where to go, or say we’re only dreaming… a whole new world…” A rebellious young man inviting an innocent young woman to step onto his “magic carpet”? Seriously. It’s the devil!

And what was Aladdin’s opening line, “Do you trust me?”

OF COURSE she shouldn’t trust him! They literally just met and he was stealing things.

But the devil appeared in the garden and Adam and Eve fell for his three plays. They bought the lies, took the fruit and ate. And look at verse 6 - one of the most ominous lines in Scripture.

“She took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband ***who was with her***, and he ate.” Genesis 3:6

“For evil to win all the devil needs is for good men to do nothing.” That was certainly true for Adam. He was there the whole time. He watched the whole scene unfold. Would YOU let YOUR wife chat it up with a SNAKE? Wouldn’t you step in at some point and say, “Uh, honey, are you frequently talking with the animals? Doesn’t this seem a little strange?”

It was like **Adam wanted to see how it would play out**. He wasn’t brave enough to take the fruit himself first. But he was dying to see what would happen. When Eve didn’t keel over dead immediately he figured it must be safe enough - and he wanted to taste it so bad.

**The first sin of MAN was PASSIVITY**. Adam’s great failure was that he did nothing. When his wife needed him most, he stood there and watched her being tempted, watched her reaching for the fruit. 1 Timothy 2 tells us “the woman was deceived, not the man.” Adam was not fooled by the devil’s lies. He knew it was straight up rebellion. But he did it anyway. He failed to protect his wife. ***Then he condemned the whole world for the sake of a single bite.***

The woman’s sin was naively believing a snake. The man’s sin was failing to love his wife or the world, anyone or anything except HIMSELF and what he wanted right then and there.

And with that fateful bite, the world cracked on its foundation. The world that God had pronounced VERY GOOD was ***suddenly broken*** - **FALLEN**. We will see five consequences for the world and five for people - just a minute or two for each.

**II.** **The Fallen World**

* **Dissension**

“I will put enmity between you and the woman…” Genesis 3:15

Enmity means **conflict**. Tension. Fear. Violence. This is God’s curse on the serpent, but it represents a fracture and consequence for all of creation. The PEACE - shalom - harmony and relationship that existed in God’s good creation was broken, damaged, corrupted and replaced by enmity, conflict, chaos.

“You will strike his heel but he will crush your head,” is a preview of the cross. The devil would strike Jesus’ physical body but in the process crush his own head. The fact that snakes strike people, biting our feet and ankles, is symbolic of the brokenness in all of creation. But this dissension, this enmity, will be restored into perfect peace when Jesus comes back. Listen to Isaiah 11.

**II.** **The Fallen World**

* **Dissension**

“The lion shall eat straw like the ox.The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra.” Isaiah 11:7-8

In the garden of Eden there were no carnivores. Adam and Eve were vegetarians and so were the lions and tigers and bears and snakes. There was no DEATH in the original creation. No violence. Only perfect harmony, safety and peace. That’s what will be restored in the new heaven and earth - SHALOM - peace. Enmity replaced by harmony.

But for now, our world groans in its bondage to decay. The second and third consequences to the world:

**II.** **The Fallen World**

* Difficulty & **Disasters**

“Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it…” Genesis 3:17

***Work was part of God’s GOOD original creation***. It is built into the image of God in us to work, to be productive, to create and organize. But work now is damaged by the fall. It is difficult, frustrating - we earn a living by the sweat of our brows under a hot sun.

It’s significant to notice that **the curse did not fall directly on Adam and Eve**. God redirected the curse first upon the serpent and then upon the ground. Ultimately, rather than cursing humankind, Jesus came to absorb the curse for us on the cross. But we see God’s mercy right here, just moments after the great rebellion, choosing not to destroy Adam and Eve right then, but directing the curse instead to the ground on which they stood.

And we feel that curse still today. Life is difficult. Painful. Frustrating. Sad. This world is damaged and broken. This is why there are hurricanes and wildfires, famines and earthquakes. All of these difficulties and disasters are reminders to us that this world is not our final home - this is not how it is supposed to be.

Fourth and fifth consequences for the world:

**II.** **The Fallen World**

* Disease & **Death**

“Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you…” Genesis 3:18

**Why do people get sick?** Why do loved ones die? The answer is right here in Genesis 3 - because of the fall. There was none of that in Eden. No disease. Not even a sniffle. No cancer. No COVID-19. No illness at all. Just health and strength, muscles and joints that were designed to last forever. No arthritis, no tendonitis, no tinnitus.

And, of course, there was no death.

**II.** **The Fallen World**

* Disease & **Death**

“You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:19

***“Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.”*** As we lower a loved one into the ground we remember these words. God formed Adam from the dust of the ground. And Adam’s body eventually dissolved back into that same carbon-based dirt.

But again, ***that was not how it was at first***. Adam and Eve could have lived forever in that perfect garden, walking in harmony with God, each other and all of creation. Their bodies were made to live forever, if they just ate from the tree of life. But after they sinned, God had to cut them off from that tree so they didn’t eat from it and live forever in their sinful, broken, fallen state. Even being kicked out of Eden was a mercy from God. Even death is a blessing to be released from these weak and fragile bodies.

At the moment that Adam and Eve bit into that fruit, look at what happened to our world.

**The Fallen World**

* Dissension
* Difficulty & Disasters
* Disease & Death

***The world cracked on its foundation.*** Dissension replaced peace. Difficulty and disaster replaced blessing and safety. Disease replaced health and strength. And - just as God had warned them, “in the day you eat of this fruit you will surely die,” so death began to work in Adam and Eve as soon as they started to digest that fruit. It did not bring the life and blessing the devil promised. It brought death and curses upon them, all of their offspring (including us) and the entire world.

Now let’s look at the consequences of the fall for each of us.

**III. Fallen People**

* Guilt & **Shame**

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Genesis 3:7

**The knowledge of good and evil**. Their eyes were opened. Up to that point they had been naked and unashamed. They walked around the garden without fear of judgment, without a thought for what anyone thought of their bodies. They were just like the animals in that sense - no concern for how they looked.

But the first impact of the fall was shame. Suddenly they felt exposed. They felt vulnerable.

**III. Fallen People**

* Guilt & **Shame**

“And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.” Genesis 3:7

I can’t imagine that fig leaves worked very well as clothing. Couldn’t have held together very well. Couldn’t have been very comfortable. But Adam and Eve were desperate to be covered.

**III. Fallen People**

* Guilt & **Shame**

“And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.” Genesis 3:8

The God they had walked with openly, freely and joyfully in the garden was suddenly terrifying to them. They knew that God was holy and that they were now unholy. ***Their sin caused them to hide***.

**Guilt is feeling you DID something wrong**. ***Shame is feeling you ARE something wrong***. The fall introduced both. Adam and Eve knew they had done something wrong. They broke the one rule. The rebelled against God’s clear command. They were guilty.

But on top of that they were ashamed. They felt that something inside of them was unworthy - it was dirty, defiled.

The **good news**, brothers and sisters, is that all of these effects of the fall have been addressed at the cross of Jesus Christ. He bore our guilt for us. He was exposed for us to cover our shame. He died to save us from death. He was cast out of fellowship with the Father so we could enter the shalom of a reconciled relationship with God.

But back to Genesis 3. ***God pursues the sinful couple.*** He calls them out of hiding. He confronts their sin in verse 11. “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” Significantly this question was addressed to ADAM, the first one created, the one responsible. The one to whom God had given the original commands. And how does Adam respond? Does he take responsibility? Does he own up to his mistake? Ah, men are so typical...

**III. Fallen People**

* **Conflict** & Blame

“The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit.’”

Genesis 3:12

“It’s her fault.” And really, Lord, if you think about it, it’s YOUR fault, because you gave her to me…

Now, why do I like **Star Wars**, and particularly the Empire Strikes Back? I freely admit it’s a lot because of Han Solo - and the epic exchange with Leia, “I love you… I know…” But I think as men ***we relate to Han*** because he is a man’s man. He is tough and independent. He takes risks and gets the girl.

But Han is a man’s man. **He does NOT take responsibility**. Whenever things go wrong with the Falcon his immediate response is, ***“It’s not my fault!”*** Even when he wakes up from being frozen in carbonite, what were his first words to Jabba the Hutt? “It’s not my fault!”

More recently I love MegaMind. The evil genius is always hard on his minion, called Minion - which is kind of a degrading name anyway. But when MegaMind comes back to “apologize” to his one friend in the world he says, ***“Minion! You were right! And I was… less right.”*** I use that line a lot.

We all like to deflect responsibility? Why? Because of Genesis 3. The Fall. The devil uses the same playbook to trip us up. And we follow Adam and Eve’s exact playbook when we fall.

**Conflict, enmity, tension** - is built into this world. And it is especially built into our relationships today.

***But the gospel calls us away from conflict and blaming to confession***, repentance and reconciliation. When we understand what Jesus did for us on the cross, it should move us to take full responsibility for our sin - not to point fingers at anyone else, but to fully admit, that was on me. I failed. I chose the wrong thing.

Consequence 3 for people.

**III. Fallen People**

* Suffering & **Pain**

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing.” Genesis 3:16

Just as the world experienced disease, pain and death, so that brokenness was manifested in people as well. Verse 16 implies that there would always have been SOME pain in childbirth, just as there would have been SOME challenge in work in the garden. But that “surely” means “greatly” multiply. And the pain that resulted to people was not just in childbearing - it was in every area of life and health.

Consequence 4:

**III. Fallen People**

* **Sin** & Death

“Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin.” Romans 5:12

When sin entered the world it brought death with it, for ***“the wages of sin is death.”*** As Moses cried out to Israel in the giving of the Law, “I set before you today life and blessing, death and curses… now choose life, so you and your children may live!”

***The weapon that Death wields is SIN.*** What people fear is not death. Death itself is just a physical passing from one state to another. What is terrifying about death is the SIN that is on you and in you. That is the terrifying sword that the demon of death holds over people. That is our final consequence of the fall, still in Romans 5.

**III. Fallen People**

* **Condemnation** & Separation

“As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.” Romans 5:18

Death places you before Jesus, the judge of all people. If Jesus looks at you and sees your sin upon you, the verdict is GUILTY and the sentence is CONDEMNATION. John 3:36 says,

**III. Fallen People**

* **Condemnation** & Separation

“Whoever does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” John 3:36

***The only thing a holy God can do with sin is to condemn and punish it.*** Just as a good judge must look on a guilty person and pronounce them guilty, with a fair sentence proportional to their crimes, so God - who is the ultimate just judge - must apply justice where there is sin. He cannot do otherwise, for that would make Him unjust and guilty of injustice. Go back to Romans 5.

**III. Fallen People**

* **Condemnation** & Separation

“As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.” Romans 5:18

Take in this gospel reversal! The judgment, condemnation and infinite wrath that was hanging over you like an executioner’s sword did not fall on you - it fell on Jesus!

Just as the one sin of Adam brought sin and death to all people who are born in Adam, so the one act of righteousness of Jesus on the cross ***brings justification and life to all who are born in Him!***

Imagine the **giant angel**, radiant in holiness and glory, who was stationed at the entrance to the garden of Eden and equipped with an enormous flaming sword. Because Adam and Eve were corrupted by sin they could not come back into Eden or that flaming sword of justice would fall on them and kill them. They would be burned up in the justice of their condemnation.

But ***that sword of justice did not fall on Adam and Eve*** who deserved it. Instead, that sword of justice fell on another man, thousands of years later - a man who did not deserve it at all. The only man who was truly innocent, unstained by sin. The only man who perfectly fulfilled all righteousness. But that man, the Lord Jesus Christ, willingly laid down His life, placed himself under the flaming sword of God’s righteous fury, so that sword would never fall on you and me.

So for us who belong to Jesus by faith, **there is no fear in death** because the weapon of death - SIN - has been removed. Death is simply a passing from this life into the life we were truly made for. It is simply the doorway from this dark, broken, fallen world into paradise with the Lord who made us and loves us.

One sin led to condemnation for all people. But one act of righteousness opened the door of salvation to all who will come to Jesus in faith.

**III. Fallen People**

* Guilt & Shame
* Conflict & Blame
* Suffering & Pain
* Sin & Death
* Condemnation & Separation

***Look at what Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross!*** He took our guilt, He bore our shame. He, the Prince of Peace, experienced conflict as the Father turned His face away - He was forsaken. And though we were to blame He said, “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.”

Whatever ***suffering and pain*** we experience in this life, it is nothing compared to the unimaginable and infinite agony Jesus endured for us on the cross. For He who knew no sin BECAME sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. He, the Righteous One, was condemned so we could be justified. He, the eternal Son of God, was separated from the Father, so we could come home to the Father.

***The devil will lie to you and point you in any direction EXCEPT to the cross***. He will question God’s Word, downplay the consequences of sin and exaggerate the benefits of this world. But this world is dark and dying - as you feel in your bones already. Your own heart is dark and dying. You feel your guilt. You know your shame. But that is why Jesus came - to rescue you from this fallen world and from your fallen, sin-filled heart.

Come to Jesus today!

Let’s pray.