

The sermon

Intro

There's something amazing about us humans. At the same time, there's something horrific about us.

Humans have created space shuttles and submarines, can take pictures of Mars, we've created the internet, we have phones in our pocket that can do anything, we've identified diseases at the cellular level and developed vaccines.

On the other hand, humans kill one another. Humans physically assault one another. Humans verbally abuse one another. Humans lie to one another. Humans slander one another. Humans steal from one another. Humans hate one another. Humans get enslaved by drugs and alcohol, gambling and pornography. Humans get enslaved by phones, video games, social media. Humans get divorced because they can't keep their commitment. Humans are miserable in marriage because they want their own way. Parents and children haven't communicated for years. Siblings haven't communicated for years. Humans need laws because they would do the wrong thing if there were no consequences. Humans need police officers and prisons. Humans need submarines to protect themselves from foreign threats. Humans who trust in Jesus can't stay in the same church and work with one another.

We're all infected. It's not just a few bad guys out there.

So humans can design space shuttles and take pictures of Mars, but we can't end divorce, lying, theft, murder, hatred, etc. Glimmers of greatness, yet ruin abounds. What's easier, designing a space shuttle or telling the truth? It would seem obvious that designing a space shuttle would require more time, effort, learning, trial and error and that not lying is a rather simple exercise. Yet people can do the one, but not the other. Why is this so?

Genesis three tells us how it is that we're God's image bearers created with wonderful abilities and capacity for great things, but, at the same time, we're broken, fallen creatures ruined by sin.

READ PASSAGE

Body

Passage Focus

We'll spend two weeks on the fall. This week how it happened. Next week its effects.

Point 1: Satan questions God's word (3:1-3)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

The idea isn't animals were created with ability to speak but lost that ability at the fall. We have a physical serpent empowered and controlled by Satan. Satan speaks through the serpent. "**crafty**" = tricky, cunning, deceptive. Elsewhere we're told the serpent is Satan.

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. – Revelation 12:9

Satan deceives. Satan ruins.

Everything was "*very good*" on day six. So where did Satan come from? Moses doesn't tell us. Sometime between Genesis 2:25 and Genesis 3:1 Satan fell. Ezekiel 28:11-19 addresses the king of Tyre in language that speaks of a perfect, blameless guardian cherub (angel) who was in the garden of Eden, yet corrupted himself through pride and was cast from the mountain of God. The king's fall is likened to Satan's fall.

Satan knew what God commanded because Satan was there when the command was issued.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

The serpent targets Eve. **Tactic number one: did God actually say that?** God had said to Adam, ***"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"*** (2:16-17).

Satan twists what God actually said, making the command more restrictive. They couldn't eat from one tree.

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ 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.'" – 3:2-3

Eve corrects the serpent. Actually, there's one tree we can't eat from. And if we do, we'll die. Eve must know these things because Adam told her.

At this stage, the serpent has questioned God's word (***"Did God actually say"...***?) and revised God's word, making the prohibition more restrictive (***"You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"***).

Application

Two Satanic methods. **First**, Satan advises us to question God's word.

Is that actually true? Look at the things going on in your life. Does God actually love you? Is God actually working all things for your good? Look at your sins. Does God actually forgive people like you? Are you sure you've actually been born again? Did Jesus actually rise from the dead? Did Jesus actually claim to be God? Does Jesus actually send people to hell? Is the Bible actually inerrant?

The actually's are endless. They might come from a friend, family member, television program, YouTuber, false teacher (in person or online), or the thought might rise from within. What do you do when the actually's come?

When Jesus was tempted to prove he was the Son of God, he quoted Scripture (Matt 4:3-7). When Jesus was tempted to take the kingdoms of the world without going to the cross, he quoted Scripture (Matt 4:8-10).

What do we do when lies come our way? We speak God's word to ourselves. The shield of faith ***"extinguish[es] all the flaming darts of the evil one"*** (Eph 6:16). Faith is stimulated by ***"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"*** (Eph 6:17; Rom 10:17). It seems to me Eve began well.

Second, Satan makes it look like God withholds good from us. God takes all the fun out of life.

One way we might respond is by seeing the good. God gives me food, drink, clothes, shelter, employment, forgiveness, wisdom, a new heart, empowering grace, fellowship, eternal life. Eve could have said, "God gives me abundant fruit to enjoy."

Practical question: how do I respond to "did God actually?" Do I view God as restrictive or generous?

Answer: he's both restrictive and generous!

Point 2: Satan contradicts God's word (3:4-5)

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." – 3:4-5

Satan directly contradicts God's command. You won't die if you disobey God. Actually, things will be better: you'll be like God, with knowledge God's keeping from you.

Application

This is what Satan tells us. **First**, there's no consequences for rejecting God's word. In the Bible, some say, "*There is no God*" (Psalm 14:1). Others say God doesn't see (Ps 94:6-7). Others say there's no 2nd coming (2 Pet 3:1-4).

Today people think I don't need to be born again because I'm a good person. I don't need to repent and believe because God is love and we're all God's children so we'll all be welcomed into God's kingdom. I can enjoy sin now and ask for God's forgiveness before I die. I can enjoy sin without fear because I said a prayer.

Second, going against God's commands is good for you.

Some say it's good to reject God because you can have a good time. Sex, drugs, and rock n' roll. Look at the fun you're missing out on. As a single Christian young adult I couldn't go to the drinking parties with my co-workers. When I was a teenager/in college/young adult, the message was your life will be a lot more fun if you're not a Christian. You won't waste your Sunday morning at church when you could be at the lake.

Today we're told ditching historic/evangelical Christianity will make you a better person. You'll be compassionate not condemning. Loving not hateful. Tolerant not judgmental. Ditch the fear-based approach to God. Embrace compassionate and loving views of God. Ditch oppressive views of women, sexuality, parenting, etc. It's better to practice your faith privately than in a church setting. Organized religion is bad! Churches subject us to an echo chamber of hate.

Whether we're rejecting God's commands (nothin' but a good time) or historic doctrines (be a better person), we're rejecting God because we think it will be good for us.

God's commands make for a flourishing life. The Creator of life knows how to do life. So he's spoken to us. And if we're perceived as hateful and lacking compassion, there may be something wrong in our approach. We might be lacking in Christian virtues. On the other hand, we may be called hateful and compassionless because we agree with God's word. In which case, we deal kindly with people while saying whatever God says is just and right and good.

Practical question: do I believe there's consequences for rebelling against God? Do I believe God's commands are good for me?

Point 3: Disobedience springs from our desires (3:6)

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. – 3:6

Eve acts quickly on Satan's counsel. She wants the forbidden fruit for three reasons:

1. "*good for food*" = it will taste good.
2. "*a delight to the eyes*" = it looks good.
3. "*desired to make one wise*" = she wants this knowledge.

Led by her desires, she eats. Adam's been there for the whole conversation. Eve hands him some fruit. He eats immediately.

Why did Eve fall for Satan's temptation? Because she accepted his lies. Nothing bad will happen to me. Good will come my way.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. – James 1:13-15

Eve's desires overruled God's command. Eve ate of the forbidden tree because she wanted to.

Application

We do what we do because we want to. Why did I do that? Because I wanted to. Why didn't I do that? Because I didn't want to. What we love, what we want steers the ship.

We are what we desire. So it's critical to shape our thoughts and feelings with God's word. Sanctification/spiritual progress is, in part, the process of wanting God's ways in increasing measure. Eve wanted something more than she wanted obedience. So she disobeyed.

Today we break God's commands because we want something else more. We don't evangelize because we want relational peace. We don't tell the truth because we don't want the consequences. We don't pray because we'd rather play on our phone. We don't share because we want more for ourselves.

Practical question: where are my desires leading me?

Point 4: Disobedience brings fear and separation from God (3:7-10)

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. – 3:7

When they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, something changed within them. Now they thought to themselves, I need to cover myself up. The human experience changed.

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. – 3:8

Something inside them told them I need to hide from God.

God is spirit, so we shouldn't think of God literally, physically walking in the garden. They detected God's presence and they wanted to avoid it.

But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" – 3:9

God knows where Adam is. That's why he asks the question.

And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." – 3:10

Adam tells the truth. He was afraid of God because he was naked.

Application

Having access to forbidden knowledge sounded good. Now things are worse. Fellowship with God is disturbed. Awkwardness, shame, fear have entered the human experience.

Satan insinuated nothing bad will happen to you. He lied. Satan insinuated eating of the forbidden tree will be good for you. He lied. Disobedience didn't turn out well for Adam and Eve.

Practical question: has disobeying God ever turned out good for me?

Point 5: Disobedience triggers blame-shifting (3:11-13)

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" – 3:11

God knows the answer. He's forcing Adam to explain himself. Each "you" is singular indicating only Adam is being questioned.

The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." – 3:12

Adam immediately shifts the blame. You gave me the woman. The woman gave me the fruit. It's her fault for giving me the fruit. It's your fault for giving me the woman.

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." – 3:13

Eve tells the truth. She might be subtly shifting blame.

Application

Blame-shifting. I never gave blame-shifting much meditation until parenting. I ask a question to a child about their behavior and immediately I'm bombarded with a flood of excuses and a detailed description of how all the other children behaved. No, that's not what I was asking about. I was asking about what you did. The flood of excuses and what others did is rehashed. It's like an automatic mechanism. No, I was asking about your behavior. Don't tell me what they did. Don't tell me what they did to you. Tell me what you did. I have to fight to get an admission. I have to ask penetrating questions to get to the motives. Parents, we have to help our children see why they do what we do.

A parent doesn't coach blame-shifting. But we might model it.

What about the impact others have on us? Sometimes we sin because we're provoked. The serpent gets Eve to question God's word. The serpent contradicts God's word. The serpent gets Eve to question God's character. The serpent gets Eve to desire what's forbidden. Eve hands Adam the fruit to eat. The serpent impacted Eve. Eve impacted Adam. But Eve's still responsible for her sin. Adam's still responsible for his sin. Same with us.

A condescending, mocking, rude individual might provoke us to respond in anger with words that aren't grace-giving. They had a part in our sin. They're responsible for provoking us. On the other hand, we're responsible for our sinful response. We could have responded in a God-honoring way. We could have taken time to pray and meditate on God's word before responding in kind.

We need to think about how people are impacting us. We need to be controlled by God's word rather than people.

Practical question: do I own my sin and my character flaws?

Conclusion

We've learned that Satan plunged us and our world into ruin by instigating the first humans to disobey God. As a result, sin and death came into God's very good world. As a result, we're born into the world as sinners by nature. So we sin. We do life our own way, break God's commands, and subject ourselves to God's judgment.

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Genesis 3:1-13 (Whose Voice Are You Listening To?)

Pastor Eric Dubois

Next week we'll learn about the serpent crusher who came into the world, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to undo Adam's sin by dying on the cross. On the cross, God treated Jesus as if he lived our sinful life. If you trust in Jesus, God will treat you as if you lived Jesus' perfect, sinless life.

We can be rescued from sin and death through faith in Jesus Christ. Turn from your sins by trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection. If you do, rivers of living water will flow from within you. Your desires will change. You'll love God's word and want to please him. Tell us if you believe.