

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Genesis 3:1-15 (The Seed of the Woman)

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Intro

When things go wrong we want answers. My car won't start. Am I out of gas? Is my battery dead? Is it my alternator? My starter? The fuel pump? My body isn't feeling right. Why am I so tired? Why do I feel light headed? Why am I having headaches? Why am I having chest pains?

We also like to know how things are going to turn out. What problems are they going to find with my vehicle? How much is this going to cost? Will I need a new car? What's wrong with my body? Is it something serious? Do I have cancer?

Often we don't know what's wrong and we don't know how things are going to turn out. Fortunately God has recorded for us what went wrong with his very good creation. And he lets us know how things are going to turn out.

This morning we examine how our world and its people were undone. And we discover what the seed of the woman will do about it.

READ PASSAGE

PRAY

Body

Passage Focus

How the fall occurred, its effects on us, and what God the Son incarnate does about it

Deception...Distance...Defeat

Point 1: Deception (3:1-7)

Explanation

Prior to Genesis 3 this is what's happened:

- 1) God created the world and it was very good = at that time death and sin and pain in childbirth and hardship in working the ground didn't exist (see Gen 3:16-10; Rom 5:12)
- 2) Mankind was positively commanded:

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." – Gen 1:28

- 3) Mankind was negatively commanded:

"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ 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." – Gen 2:16-17

- 4) There was a covenantal structure whereby blessing was conditional upon obedience and disobedience forfeited blessing
- 5) Adam and Eve enjoyed unhindered fellowship with God

- 6) After the 6th day, God's creating work was finished (the world, the heavens, mankind, angelic beings) and everything was very good (Gen 1:31-2:1)
- 7) Somewhere after the 6th day and before the events of Gen 3:1-15 Satan fell (see Isa 14:12-15 & Ezek 28:11-19 where oracles about earthly kings may allude to Satan's fall)

So everything is well when a unique serpent appears. No separation between God and man. No physical death. No spiritual death. No sin in our world (see Rom 5:12). No pain in childbirth. No hardship in cultivating the ground.

This serpent isn't merely a reptile. Another being stands behind the serpent. Revelation 12 and 20 speak of Satan as *"that ancient serpent"* (Rev 12:9; 20:2). Satan is using the snake. And the snake is crafty = knows how to dupe.

The serpent begins with a distortion. God had said, *"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden (2:16)"* except the forbidden tree stressing God's generosity, while Satan says God said, *"You shall not eat of any tree in the garden (3:1)"* stressing God's restrictiveness. Eve basically restates what God said with the exception of *"neither shall you touch it"* which might indicate she viewed the prohibition more strictly than God had said.

Satan then moves from distortion to direct contradiction. In verse four Satan says, *"You will not surely die"* whereas God said, *"for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die (2:17)."* Satan proceeds by saying, *"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* In other words, God is a liar with illegitimate motives. Satan's saying, "God deliberately lied to you because he wants to keep you from something good."

Eve is falling for Satan's craftiness and the appeal of the forbidden tree:

"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." – Gen 3:6

Eve's hunger, the tree's physical appeal, and her desire for knowledge drove her action. She was seduced by Satan's deception, and Adam follows in suit. Adam was present all along. The "you" in Satan's question to Eve in verse one is plural = Satan was addressing more than one person when he questioned Eve. Their knowledge did change and they were now ashamed of their nakedness (3:7)

Shame of nakedness

- 1) Were now conscious of good and evil
- 2) Loss of innocence & new consciousness = nakedness enjoyed by husband and wife in God's presence is now disturbed

Application

Sin happens when God's word is distorted. Like when biblical prohibitions are applied in an overly restrictive fashion. For example, equating "Do not love the world or the things in the world (1 John 2:15)" with you can't play cards or watch TV. Overly restrictive manmade laws make us think God is stingy and foster rebellion. We think to ourselves, "God really is against our enjoyment." A biblical worldview says, "God has given us many things to enjoy, but he's also given us boundaries for our protection." When our focus becomes what I can't do

rather than gratitude for God's enduring steadfast love and his blessings, we might be tempted to disregard God's actual warnings.

Sin happens when we listen to wrong sources. Eve listened to Satan rather than God. Where do you look for moral values? Where do you look for guidance? What drives your purpose for existence? Unbiblical sources = unbiblical worldview. When we go to credible sources (e.g., Scripture, gifted teachers in the local church, books and articles by wise authors who are submitted to the Bible's authority and accuracy) we gain **discernment** = the ability to distinguish good from evil, wise from unwise, helpful from harmful.

And sin happens when something forbidden becomes appealing:

James 1:13-15 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.

We go after what is forbidden when our desires are out of whack. Eve wanted forbidden knowledge more than she wanted to obey God. She forgot what she already had (food from every other tree, God's presence and care) while desiring what would destroy (the forbidden fruit).

Illustration:

This is how advertisements work. They appeal to our desires with a basic logic. They tell us, "You are missing out on something very desirable." God says, "Your soul will find satisfaction in relationship with me." Advertisers insinuate, "You're really missing out without this car or laptop. Look how much better life would be if you had these!" Satan whispers, "You're missing out on something really good because you're clinging to God's word. Wouldn't life be better if you just threw off God's restrictions? Wouldn't (whatever forbidden pleasure it is for you) bring you pleasure?"

What's the antidote to Satan's enticements? Trusting God's word & his character! That's where Eve failed.

Point 2: Distance (3:8-13)

Explanation

Having eaten of the forbidden tree, sin has disrupted the conscience. They're ashamed. They're afraid. They sense God's displeasure. So they hide from God's presence. When it speaks of "God walking in the garden in the cool of the day (3:8)" or God asking, "Where are you (3:9)?" this is what's called **anthropomorphic language**:

"a way of speaking about God in human terms" – Gregg Allison

Anthropomorphic language isn't literal. God isn't a physical being leaving footprints. And God isn't confused as to where they are. The point is they are afraid of God's presence, and God is questioning Adam to draw him out.

When questioned, Adam admits he's hiding because his newfound awareness of his nakedness has made him afraid (3:10). When questioned about his violation of the covenant stipulation, Adam placed the blame on Eve and God:

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

It's Eve's fault because she gave me the fruit. And God, it's your fault because you gave me Eve. If you never gave me the woman, I wouldn't have done it.

When questioned Eve places the blame on the serpent:

"The serpent deceived me, and I ate." – Gen 3:13

There's excuses and a difference between Adam and Eve. Eve sinned because she was deceived while Adam sinned knowingly:

“and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” – **1 Timothy 2:14**

Application

This pattern holds true today. Sin separates us from God. When we sin we run, like Jonah did. When a believer engages in behavior they know is wrong they begin to slack on church attendance. They hide from God by failing to meet with God's people. At home they begin neglecting prayer and Bible meditation.

This is better than the alternative: engaging freely in sin without being troubled by it. Or twisting Scripture to justify your sin. This is a dangerous place to be in: a seared conscience. It's better to be running from God and convicted by your sin than to flaunt your sin without shame.

Have you ever seen this pattern play out? A friend in a Bible study I taught began dating a girl who claimed to be a Christian but wasn't. This led to her moving in and sexual immorality. First Bible study attendance ended. Then church in general. For about 9 months. But conviction of sin remained. Through church contact he eventually broke off the relationship and returned to fellowship. But he didn't come back until the relationship ended. Like Adam and Eve, our sin makes us ashamed and we hide from God.

If you're tempted to hide from God and his church, it's better to confess your sin and turn to God for help. God helps us overcome sin in the local church community where there's help to battle sin. Better to battle your sin with God's help than to run from God. Counseling and discipleship is available here.

We too excuse our sin saying, “it's someone else's fault.” Whether it's blaming it on Satan (Satan's deception), or people close to us (Eve's influence), or our circumstances (God gave Adam Eve for a wife), we're quick to avoid responsibility. And what happens when we shift responsibility? We remain stuck in sinful patterns and estranged from God. Overcoming sin starts with accepting responsibility. It's my fault even if my circumstances are hard. Even if I have difficult people in my life. Even if people have done hurtful things to me. Even if I've been deceived. Sinful patterns can be stopped in their tracks when we humble ourselves and confess our sins. Shifting the blame doesn't solve our predicament.

To non-Christians:

The Bible says we're all alienated from God because of our sins. Our sins against God separate us from God. Sin = breaking God's moral law. As long as we deny our guilt, we remain under God's judgment. Hiding from God leaves us separated from him. Hiding leaves us ashamed of our sins. Hiding leaves us fearful of God's punishment. Our guilt requires the seed of the woman.

Point 3: Defeat (3:14-15)

Explanation

God doesn't leave Satan unpunished for his deception. "Because you have done this" = Satan's accountability to God. God's punishment isn't random or fickle. God's punishment is based on violations against his moral order. Affronts to his holy character.

The serpent is cursed "above all livestock and above all beasts of the field" = serpents weren't the only animal life affected by Adam's sin. Eating dust was a sign of humiliation and "all the days of your life" stresses permanence.

But the curse went beyond the physical serpent. There would be enmity between Satan's offspring (= the world) and Eve's offspring (= believers). A particular offspring would bruise Satan's head whereas Satan would bruise his heel. With the full biblical storyline, we see that Jesus is Eve's descendent who will deliver this fatal blow to Satan. Satan will harm Jesus (bruise his heel), but Jesus will get Satan in the head where the blow will be fatal. A curse on the serpent = Satan loses.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, **born of woman**, born under the law,

Hebrews 2:14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that **through death** he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

The eternal Son of God, Jesus, became man to destroy the works of Satan:

1 John 3:8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Application

If Satan's deception brought distance between God and man. If Satan's shrewdness led to man's shame, Jesus is the one who undoes what was done in the garden.

Satan distorted man's view of God's generosity while Jesus came to secure abundant life (= more life) for sinners (John 10:10). Satan contradicted God's word while Jesus came "to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). Satan accused God of withholding good while Jesus came to serve us by dying for our sins (Matt 20:28).

Jesus delivers a fatal blow to Satan by rescuing us from the destruction wrought by Adam's sin: spiritual death (= separation from God, fear of God, shame over our sins) and physical death

Jesus delivers a fatal blow to Satan by restoring what was lost in Adam's sin:

- 1) Peace with God through justification (declared not guilty and pronounced righteous)
- 2) Can run to God instead of from God = fellowship restored
- 3) Defeat began in regeneration (being born again) where we are no longer enslaved to sin and have new ability by the indwelling Holy Spirit to fight sin
- 4) Defeat is finalized at glorification where we receive heavenly bodies that can't suffer, die, or sin (Satan will be sentenced to the lake of fire shortly after)
- 5) Present sufferings are temporary
- 6) God wins and his very good creation will be restored

To non-Christians

Reconciliation with God comes through Christ alone. Jesus took the full punishment of God's wrath against our sins so that we might be forgiven. When we trust in the finished work of Christ not ourselves, we experience peace with God. No more dread of God's judgment. No fear of being found out. No more shame. No more running from God. God welcomes us despite ourselves because of what Christ did. If we repent and believe.

Have you taken Satan's bait? Are you ashamed of your sins? Are you hiding from God? Run to Christ. In Christ there's full pardon, rest for our souls, and wisdom for navigating Satan's lies (Matt 11:28-30). In Christ we see God is self-giving and keeps his promises (see Gen 3:15).

Conclusion

Deception: Satan deceived Eve and Adam went along with it.

Distance: Satan's deception left Adam and Eve ashamed and they hid from God.

Defeat: At the cross Jesus defeats Satan.