

SIN

... small act; big consequences
Genesis 3:8-24 Part 3 / 3
WEFC November 9, 2008

For a few minutes pretend that you are an academic and are able to recall what you were taught about humanity in university. The authorities that were showcased ...

Carl Rogers:

For myself, though I am very aware of the incredible amount of destruction, cruel, malevolent behavior in today's world – from the threats of war to the senseless violence in the streets – I do not find that this evil is inherent in human nature.

Abraham Maslow:

As far as I know we just don't have any intrinsic instincts for evil.

Wendell W. Watters:

The Christian is brainwashed to believe that he or she was born wicked, should suffer as Christ suffered, and should aspire to a humanly impossible level of perfection nonetheless.

Ivan P. Pavlov (20th century Russian physiologist)

Only science, exact science about human nature itself, and the most sincere approach to it by the aid of the omnipotent scientific method, will deliver man from his present gloom and will purge him from his contemporary shame in the sphere of interhuman relations.

Who are we and what happens to us when we act contrary to what we know what to be good?

What gets into a ten-year old boy's mind that he runs away from his Ontario home because his "x-box" privileges were lost and he ends up dying?

What gets into a person's mind to think that taking drugs gives them the best experience in life?

What gets into us that we argue and fight over the silliest of matters that are of no lasting or even short term consequence?

Inside each of us lives a beast with whom we are not comfortable.

Our blackest moment in history was not gas chambers in the concentration camps, nor the slaughters in Rwanda, Russia, Cambodia, China, or Sudan, nor our World Wars.

That infamous claim is reserved for two people spoken of in **Genesis 3**.

... an account that shapes our WorldView in a most unique and uncomplimentary way.

But it saves us from the confusion of the academics that were earlier quoted, statements about ourselves that in the end are misleading, dangerous and unrealistic.

This chapter is filled with **accurate bad** news that is **true**, and when we understand and accept it ... then and only then are we honestly ready for the **good** news.

This chapter tackles how to get the best of life ... and what happens when we go about it the wrong way.

Why do we need to listen to this sermon?

We want to make the most of our lives. Though we may be uncertain as to what that involves, we are convinced that it is out there.

Experience informs us that what we desire neither comes easily or quickly. It takes work, discipline, study, patience ... and more.

Our thoughts are to minimize each – do as little of work as required, avoid discipline, know only enough to scrap by and wait the least amount of time for returns.

Unwilling to go through the God-designed developmental process, we come up with schemes to short-circuit it all.

Cheating or stealing allows us to have what we want without the normal required hard work.

Lying ... building a foundation upon which action can be taken, even if the foundation is flimsy, fragile and an illusion.

... can we get away with it?

We tried it, and we think, “Yes!”

But God shouts, “You can’t do it just any old way!”

... and then **He adds, “There is a way, one that is legitimate and right.”**

Key Thought:

To our personal and independent acts of sin God attaches His frustrating consequences so that we who are stubborn might be squeezed back to godly reality.

Understand it correctly when we say, **God “recycles” us.**

We have been walking through the opening pages of this first book of God’s Word, **Genesis**. The opening two chapters explained God’s goodness ... in a grandiose style.

Adam and Eve refused to accept God’s accurate and authoritative Word as sufficient. They choose, rather, to “re-interpret” matters through their own personal grid ... that which they thought to be good, ... their own subjective, individual opinion, rather than what God’s good objective word became their guiding counsel.

They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ... and we begin in **Genesis 3:7** ...

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

1. God has hard-wired into our make-up alarms that go off when we violate reality

No mention of God is made in this statement. What is identified for us seemingly happens “naturally”.

But it is “natural” only in the sense that God already made us that way when He created us in His image.

He prepared us for good, but when we choose bad, He graciously works at not losing us ... so desirous is He of our good.

Adam and Eve stepped across God’s line intentionally ... and when they did the alarms “automatically” went off ... the same alarms that still are going off today ... the triple alarm system of ...

Recognition:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened

It now became self-evident that they knew what they wished they did not know.

God had spoken of GOOD and EVIL, and though they had experienced much GOOD, EVIL remained for them that was to be avoided.

Now there was a “new” understanding ... a painful and sad understanding.

God knew good and evil ... He loved the good and hated the evil.

When they ate of the fruit of that tree, they activated a deadly switch where now they were strangely opposed to the good and drawn to the evil.

It is like cancer. God knew cancer, “evil”, as does an oncologist – a cancer specialist. He knows about the disease and what it does, BUT He does not experience it Himself.

Now the first couple knew evil, “cancer”, experientially.

My father had cancer ... and he knew what it does to a human body and went through surgery to fight it because it was a part of him.

It was no theory, but a living reality within him ... and that is how Adam and Eve **knew** sin ... they **knew** it through experience and lived with it.

It was the recognition ... that now they were undone.

They themselves were not in favor of what they had chosen.

They kicked themselves wondering how it was that they could have been so foolish to make such a dumb choice.

... in other words ... they were **self**-accused and **self**-condemned.

The man walked over to the perfume counter and told the clerk he'd like a bottle of Chanel #5 for his wife's birthday.

"A little surprise, eh?" smiled the clerk.

"You bet," answered the customer. "She's expecting a cruise."

God had said, “No”, not to restrict them, but to spare them.

They were now dealing with a new reality.

... they realized they were naked

Realization:

Nakedness, a few lines earlier was a reference to wholesome innocence.

Now the definition changed.

Before there was nothing to hide, nothing of which to be ashamed.

Now, because of what they had done their nakedness became threatening. They were no longer pure and clean.

They had been dirtied by sin and it was best not to flaunt it.

What had been perfect now no longer was.

- **Self-giving gave way to Self-gaining**
- **Continuity to Disruption**
- **Devotedness to Division**
- **Gratitude to God turned to Glorification of Self**
- **Interdependence to Independence**
- **Completing the other to Competing against the other**

The new knowledge was anything but gratifying.

With their lives overpowered by sin, they tried to maintain some normalness and thereby attempted a recovery of their losses ... a hoped for return to the good old days.

Recovery:
they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves

They used fig leaves to cover their bodies in an attempt to hide the shame of their hearts.

They tried to hide their guilt with physical coverings.

They attempted to cover their character with clothing ... an impossibility, but a tactic still prominent in our day.

I'm dressed well, normal, in style ... everything is okay ... but our dress does not reflect our hearts.

Hardwired into their makeup ... and ours is the reality that when violations are committed, alarms go off ... alarms that are designed to get us to deal with problems ... but all too often when alarms go off the tendency is to do what the first couple did, declare that they are a false alarm and dress as if everything was normal.

With their good relationships (between God and each other) now deteriorated, they became more concerned with their personal unhappiness than they were concerned with what was right and wrong.

They valued personal feelings more than they did the reality and truth.

The first couple was aware that they have just botched things up.

They had broken into God's turf on which there was to be no trespassing ... a sign that had been put there for their benefit ... and were about to be caught red-handed.

It is one thing to know that we have done something wrong. It is entirely another matter to face the one we have wronged.

God ... would He come at them screaming and hollering? Would He be in a rage?

Apparently, they were not going to take any chances.

Adam and Eve have just stained all of God's excellent work. They have infected it with their sin.

... and we read ...

Genesis 3:8-13

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

God "recycles" us.

2. God refuses to let us off the hook ... and He also refuses to give up on us

In the most awkward moment in history, God pulls it off.

Do not miss what we have just read ... for this is what we need to hear ... God's reality - the personal refusal to "readjust" or "reinterpret" His word balanced with the refusal to give up on His most prized work – mankind.

God is never on the horns of a dilemma when it comes to our sin.

Here is what He does ... a brilliant and gracious act.

We make the mess, yet God, being God, takes the first step in helping clean it up.

Adam and Eve chose to hide rather than face reality.

Meeting God, an experience in the past that had been delightful now was a nightmare.

God comes looking for Adam and Eve.

God calls, Adam responds: "God, I'm afraid, embarrassed to meet You because I lack clothing."

God knows that their innocence is gone. He knows they have sinned ... and He opens the door for him to come clean.

Adam doesn't budge.

God brings things out into the open.

Adam, before your nakedness was never an issue. Why now?

What you have just said indicates only one thing, that you have crossed My line. Could it be that that has occurred?

Adam blames God.

"The woman you put here with me (the one that earlier thrilled him so that he said, "She is not bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh) she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Adam's Theology:

God is responsible for wrong because He is the one behind everything.

Adam's Law:

Whenever wrong is committed, it is never really my fault.

God works through the mess with great patience and detail.

He turns His attention to Eve who indicates that the devil deceived her.

... and as for the devil, God wastes no time on hearing him because he has nothing worth listening to.

God refuses to let us off the hook.

God does not ignore matters.

He does not make any excuses.

The curses of God are spoken ... against the devil, Eve and Adam.

To the devil come the words of God, "Eat dust you scum bag".

You thought yourself brilliant in using the Woman to wreak havoc on My work.

I, God, "recycle" people.

I will do better than that. I will use the Woman, her offspring destroy you.

What you used for the purposes of destruction, I God will use to redeem.

God does not curse either Eve or Adam.

To woman God gives His judgment.

Here are the two outstanding contributions of Woman in God's creation. These were here signature contributions.

Childbirth, a tremendously joyful event, will now be accompanied by pain ... a reminder that the entrance of every new life is the necessity to deal with sin in the midst of joy.

Marriage, the greatest of human relationships, where she was designed to compliment her husband, she would now find the discouraging reality that she would compete against him.

... a reminder that even the closest of relationships, sin infiltrates, penetrates and corrupts love.

Here, where you would least suspect, there would be plenty of evidence of sin's effectiveness.

... a reminder that God was needed where we would think we were the strongest and most protected.

The two prime areas in which she was to shine in and make her unique female contribution

- Having Children
- Complimenting Her Husband

... were now going to be filled with hassle.

To man God gives His judgment.

Adam signature work or male contribution was to provide for his wife and children.

Work, a good thing, would now become frustrating ... as the returns on his labor would be limited.

There would be the constant battle with his work becoming infested with weeds.

Death - He would work the soil and in the end the soil would win, and he would be buried in it at his death.

Two vivid reminders that we cannot have our own way and succeed ... and even more, ... sin does lead to our own death.

God refuses to let us off the hook ... and He also refuses to give up on us.

God promised us deliverance through this One, whom we today recognize as Jesus Christ, the One who destroyed both the devil and sin.

Adam latched on to God's Word.

He began to see God's plan ... and indicated his personal alignment with it.

Genesis 3:20

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

Eve was the one who ushered in death.

But God refused to give up on them, and realizing the words spoken to the devil and God conquering him through the woman's seed, Adam "names" **his wife Eve ... because she would become the mother all the living.**

God does more.

He clothes them.

But He also sends them out of the garden.

... in conclusion ...

Key Thought:

To our personal and independent acts of sin God attaches His frustrating consequences so that we who are stubborn might be squeezed back to godly reality.

The importance of **Genesis 3** comes in this:

Contrary to the authorities stated at the beginning ...

We are born neither good or neutral. We are born sinful.

From our first parents on we are all carries of their cancer genetics.

That means that we are looking for a solution to our sinfulness.

This may be a tough pill to swallow, but when swallowed means that we have crossed the first major hurdle in being changed.

This angel named Carruthers was called in to the heavenly front office and informed by St. Peter that he had been picked for a special assignment—to go down to earth and make a list of all the people who had misbehaved.

Two months went by. Then one afternoon the angel came flapping wearily through the Pearly Gates and collapsed on a golden stool by St. Peter's desk. "Sir," he said, "you don't know the magnitude of this job. I'm going to need some help."

"Impossible," St. Peter replied tersely. "We're shorthanded up here as it is. You'll have to go it alone."

The angel struggled to the door. Then, suddenly, he was struck with an idea. "Saint Peter, suppose I made a list of all the people who didn't misbehave. It would be much shorter and I could finish it in a week."

"Good thinking," said St. Peter.

The angel returned to earth and, as promised, he was back in a week with his list. St. Peter studied it and passed it on up the chain of command. Shortly, an order came down to write a letter to everyone on the list, commending them for their good behavior.

At this point, the fellow telling the story turned to his friend. "You know what else the letter said?" he asked.

"What?" replied the friend.

"AHA! So you didn't get one either."

God does not wink at our sin because of the damage it has done and is able to do.

Sin is awful and it is seriously opposed to God and all of His creation.

Though we are special, we are unable to enjoy that specialness.

We carry the shell of what we were to be.

Sin hollows out the image of God.

Recall what we stated last week?

The IMAGE OF GOD is God's built in gift to us that gives us the capacity to KNOW AND LOVE Him and others correctly and with feeling.

That God-connection is hollowed out. The space is there, but nothing right is filling that space.

Sin attempts to do it in its way ... and that is why we go for it.

Sin advertises itself as our best hope, our best chance.

Sin attempts to imitate reality.

It pretends to offer hope through its strategies and means.

But when sin acts, it always under-achieves, under-delivers, and incorrectly projects genuine results.

It always leaves us embarrassed because we once again see that what it offered it is unable to provide, we realize that it has once again made up play the fool and we are left to pay the bills.

Sin stifles God's truth, God's WorldView.

We often end up mimicking therapy by putting a “Christian” spin on the matter.

... and so God tells us that **Though we are special (made in God’s image) we are able to enjoy that specialness only with God’s reinvestment.**

Sin gets so taken up with itself, it takes its own “journey” so seriously that it has no time to hear or see of what God has done in Christ Jesus and His journey to the cross.

Wherever we may be in our journey, we still carry the image of God, maybe rather empty of it, but God is ready to invest

... only if we are serious and sincere.

God knows that therapy won’t work.

Spiritual bandages are useless.

Only His investment in Jesus Christ takes sin and our situation seriously enough.

... and it is Jesus’ death on the Cross and subsequent resurrection from the dead, the indicate God’s powerful and successful defeat of the devil’s operation.

... His gift to us to deal with our most serious problem, sin.

God knows and we know that we have a serious problem ... our very heart, our very being is filled with plugged arteries, and heart disease has taken us down.

How ridiculous to put a bandage on a person’s chest when they are having a heart attack.

God harshly and ruthlessly deals with sin, so that its grip on us is fully released.

Genesis 3 leaves us with the reality that **God dominates and never permits sin to have the final word.**

That is good news.

- > The next time you feel like GOD can't use you, just remember...
- >
- > Noah was a drunk . . .
- > Abraham was too old . . .
- > Isaac was a daydreamer . . .
- > Jacob was a liar . . .
- > Leah wasn't pretty. . .
- > Joseph was abused . . .
- > Moses had a stuttering problem . . .
- > Gideon was afraid . . .
- > Sampson was a womanizer . .
- > Rahab was a prostitute . . .
- > Jeremiah and Timothy were too young . . .
- > David had an affair and was a murderer . . .
- > Elijah was suicidal . . .
- > Isaiah preached naked . . .
- > Jonah ran from God . . .
- > Naomi was a widow . . .
- > Job worried too much. . .
- > John the Baptist ate bugs . . .
- > Peter denied Christ . . .
- > The Disciples fell asleep while praying . . .
- > Martha was a workaholic . . .
- > The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once . . .
- > Zaccheus was too short . . .
- > Paul was too religious . . .
- > Timothy had an ulcer...
- > AND ...
- > Lazarus was dead!
- > NO MORE EXCUSES NOW. God can use you to your full potential.