

The Fall

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Date: 03 May 2026

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[0:00] We were built to live in this world, a complicated world that continues to grow, but to flourish, to have shalom, to have this wholeness.

And yet we can see every time we switch on our devices, every time we just look outside in the street, we do not see shalom. These last few weeks, we've been going through the accounts of Genesis and Genesis one.

God creates everything that we see right now. He puts everything in place for mankind to flourish. And he said it was good. And then he creates man and woman. He says we were very good. And then last week, I talked about the blueprint for humanity, the blueprint for human flourishing almost. And you see just this shalom that constitutes healthy relationship between man and God because we were dust, but he breathed life into us.

This healthy relationship between man and work because he plonks Adam in the garden. And then he says, work it, keep it, grow it. Use it to glorify me. Be fruitful and multiply.

[1:02] Have dominion over creation. And then he says the one good thing, the only good thing, the only thing that isn't good in creation right now, before the fall, is the fact that man is alone.

So he says it's not good for him to be alone. He's pretty helpless when he's on his own. So let's bring someone in to help him. Not someone who is inferior, but someone who is a complementary fit, a complementary strength to him.

And so he makes woman. And it's all going great because they are naked and unashamed. They are happy. They are going to continue with the cultural creation mandate of human flourishing. And yet in one fell swoop, in one chapter, we see everything fall apart. And today we're going to be going through Genesis chapter three. We're going to see really what happened at the very beginning.

But before we read the scripture, whilst you open it, remember Genesis is the first book in the Bible. So feel free to go there now. As we look at this account, what I do ask that you do is as you're reading it, don't detach yourself from Adam and Eve.

[2:11] Yes, Adam and Eve were the ones that committed this original sin, that triggered off the fall that is where we are, that really leads us to where we are now. We really look and ask God, okay, well, what is there you have for me?

This story is pretty familiar to all of us, whether you are church or unchurched. But let's pray that the Lord really has something for us today. It's to speak into the lack of shalom that we have right now.

And then to see what really he's doing. I'm going to invite two fine young men to come and read the scripture for us. Come on, Andy Jasper, can you join us? The baggy jeans thing is a real thing now, hey?

Like the Backstreet Boys. All right. All right, so we're going to have the Backstreet Boys read to us today. Can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? Genesis chapter 3.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.

[3:18] 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. But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die.

For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. 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.

She also gave some to her husband, was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they saw fig trees, fig leaves together, and made themselves loinclothes.

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. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. He said, Who told you that you were naked?

[4:26] Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate. 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. The Lord said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock, and above all beasts of the field. On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat, all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing.

In pain you shall bring forth children, and your desire shall be contrary to your husband, and he shall rule over you. And to Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorn and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

[5:32] By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. The man called his wife name Eve, because she was the mother of all things.

And the Lord God made for Adam, and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.

Now lest he reach out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword that turned every way, to guard the way of the tree of life. This is the word of the Lord.

Please take a seat. Thank you guys. I realize I completely aged myself by even saying the Backstreet Boys, because that generation don't even know it. So anyway, joke's on me.

[6:33] Human flourishing. Those three relationships are supposed to work in just this wonderful, beautiful, mysterious way where we are in relationship with him, where we work the ground and keep it, but we're also in relationship with each other.

But in one short interaction, with a short conversation, everything is undone. The beauty is completely reversed, and man's dominion is reversed as well.

And we're going to go through this today, and we're going to talk about the topic of sin. The topic of sin is one that's quite hard to talk about, because it doesn't make us feel good. We prefer to talk about hope. We prefer to talk about purpose.

But to talk about sin is something that is disorienting. It makes us uncomfortable to a degree. But when we think about the word sin, what are we thinking about?

What comes to mind? Because until we understand what we actually have, we might have to maybe just unravel a little bit of it before we truly understand what sin is here. What are we thinking about when we think about sin?

[7:33] Sam, when you think about sin, what do you think about? Missing the mark. Missing the mark. Tell us more.

Expand on what that means. There's a standard that we can't achieve. There's a standard that we can't achieve. Romans 3 talks about that in the sense that we fall short of the glory of God.

If Genesis 1:26, as we were made in his image, to then be able to glorify him through what we do, we miss the mark and therefore we fall short. That is what sin is.

What else is there, Trevor? What do you think about when you think about sin? Archery. Archery. You're going to have to tell us more about what that means. Sin is missing the bullseye.

Sin is missing the bullseye. There we go. It's missing what we were created for. Paul, any thoughts? I'd say just following my own way.

[8:26] Following my own way. Sin is when we choose. When I ask you to think of a sin, you think about the heinous crimes that maybe humanity has been guilty of committing, generations of after generations, but really it's this idea of just choosing self.

It's choosing your own way. St. Augustine calls sin when the soul curves in on itself. When your soul curves in on itself, we weren't created just to curve in on ourselves.

We were created to point to God, point to others, and yet we miss the mark and we curve in on ourselves, and what we have is sin. We're going to look at what sin is here today, and we're just going to go through the passage.

So please go through with me as you read. Actually, we went through this passage as a pastoral team this last week, and we were like, this is like a whole sermon series in itself. There is so much here that we have to unpack, not just intellectually, but actually in our own hearts, because as we look to this, we saw so much of ourselves in Adam and Eve.

Chapter 3, verse 1, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. Wait a second. God created the serpent.

[9:35] The serpent, of course, is just this neutral animal that ends up getting used by the enemy himself to cause really two things. And he really only says two lines here, and the two lines do two things.

It sows in doubt, and the second then leaves deception for Eve to completely take the bite, as we say here. And we see, because of doubt, because of deception, we see the serpent has done his role.

But really, what we're talking about, okay, this is a question that I used to ask myself. Maybe when I was a fairly young man during university, I asked my pastor this. I was like, why did the tree have to be there in the first place? Right?

Like, why did you leave it there in the first place, God? Because, well, obviously that's going to cause us to slip. And then what we really went into was just this concept of free will, concept of choice, concept of love that requires freedom.

Ever since the beginning, when there was the ability to trust God, there is also the potential to mistrust God. That has to be there. If I didn't have a TV at home, and I head out and I leave my kids at home, and I say, don't watch TV now, but there's no TV there, I can't really come home and say, well done guys for not watching the television.

[10:53] It just doesn't work. There has to be that choice to make that decision to rebel against God. It's really just called freedom. And so actually, this is the original sin, where sin enters into mankind, enters into humanity.

But what we also know is that actually, the choice to trust and worship God has always been around, even before he created man and woman, because the angelic beings would do so. And the writers believe that actually, Lucifer, the fallen angel, was the first one to basically say, God, I don't really trust you.

I don't really trust you, and I actually want to be you. I think I, who's ever looked at their boss and gone, hmm, I think I could do a better job than you. So you see Lucifer doing that, and now you see him basically leading the same way.

And so if I was to describe what sin is for me, I would just say a simple mistrust of God. Think about your sin. I'm just going to go in deep here, and think about your sin. If you keep peeling back and ask that question, but why, but why, but why do you do that?

Oh, but why do you do, if you keep going all the way back, the answer is, you don't actually trust God. Sin, to me, is just the mistrust of God. And when you don't trust him, you're like, you know what, God, I don't know if you actually know what's best.

[12:07] I don't know if actually you love me. I don't know if you're actually all powerful. So you know what? I think I'm just going to take control of my own life. Jesus, give me the wheel back. I'm going to do this myself, because I know the direction of where I'm supposed to go.

All of it really comes down to a mistrust of God, and wanting to be him. But the cruel irony in all of this is, we were made to be like God, to be made in his image, breathe his life, yet we decide not that we would just be like him, but that we would be him.

And we end up being these mini-gods that we are basically trying to be in control of ourselves. Man was created first, and then he says, you have dominion over creation, and then from man he makes woman.

But in this one little interaction, we see all of that reversed. Instead of man telling the creatures what to do, the creature essentially leads the man to do what he's supposed to do.

And so we see here, the serpent was more crafty, and then he says to the woman, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

[13:14] That was a, hey, can you just verify what he actually said? No, that wasn't it. There's a hint of surprise shock. There's a hint of sarcasm. Ooh, really? Did God really say that that's, ooh, I can't believe he did that.

If you knew what I knew, ooh, then you'd, then you'd take a step back as well. Eve, can you really trust God? Is what he's saying here. Did God actually say, you shall not eat of the garden?

And here, okay, until this point, she's actually, right now she's actually not even called Eve. She's just called the woman, just to note that, okay? He said to the woman, did God actually say, you shall eat, not eat of any of the tree in the garden?

And the woman falls into the trap, and she responds to him. We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 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.

And here's my first point when it comes to mistrust of God. What we're doing here, what we see her doing here is that she mistrusts his word. Note what she says when she replies to his statement.

[14:22] We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 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. Anyone notice, spot the difference here? Look back at chapter two, verse 16, when Adam actually receives the instructions.

He says, 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 it, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. The serpent sows doubt. And actually, the woman here plays right into that trap.

He doesn't say, you shall not touch it. She adds that herself. What's happening here? In some ways, Eve takes the bait and says, actually, you know what?

Yeah, God is strict. He told us not to touch it. God never said not to touch it. So what she's doing, she's overcorrecting, and she's basically implying and projecting this strictness onto God that wasn't there before, and she's saying, actually, let's magnify on that point.

Maybe he is withholding something from us. Twisting God's word, mistrust. How many times have you heard someone say, well, I don't know if I can believe in this Christianity stuff, because you know what? The Bible says all these horrible things.

[15:36] Right? And then you realize, wait, actually, have you read the Bible? No, no, no. We've just heard someone say, and that's the beginning of that mistrust is when actually you just basically twist the words that he says. You see Eve here says, oh, you shall not eat the fruit, but neither shall you touch it lest you die.

God never says don't touch it. She overcorrects. She magnifies his strictness. She adds to his word. When we mistrust him, we start mistrusting what he actually says, and then she has this kind of anxiety that actually we will die from it.

Not only does she mistrust his word, she also mistrusts his heart, because the devil implies, what? God really said that to you? He is withholding good from you. You know how good that fruit is going to be?

You know what will happen to you when you have that fruit? You will be like him. You will be able to see good and evil. You will be God yourself. When in reality, that's not the case.

God isn't withholding good from them. God is withholding good for them, for the future. There's some things that you look at, and you just, I think Christina and I were talking this week, and you know what, sometimes some of the things you see, ignorance is just truly bliss.

[16:47] I talked about last week how our son Micah just has his new hobby of running around naked and unashamed. And I saw him again this morning doing the same thing. And I was reminded again, to be naked and unashamed is so beautiful.

But yet, what we see here is that then Eve starts to take on the role of God. Verse six, 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.

Before we target the man and talk about his stupidity, let's look. Verse six, up until now, only one person looks at something and says that it was good. God himself. And now Eve looks at the fruit and looks at the tree and goes, hmm, that's good.

Of course, a lot of that is happening in chapter two, where in verse nine, God actually creates every tree to be pleasant to the sight and good for food. And yet now Eve looks at it and goes, oh, this is good.

This is a beautiful tree with beautiful fruit. And it looks like it's going to be tasty. So she makes the decision for herself that this is a good, this happens to us where we start to look at things and go, hmm, maybe we are the good judge of these things.

[18:02] Maybe we shall decide what is good and what is not. And then she adds one extra line into this, or the account does anyway, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.

The pursuit of knowledge. The pursuit of being wise. Did anyone go to Harvard University here? You don't be shy.

Don't be shy. Okay. Not in this group. Maybe some other Ivy League university that you guys went to. If you took a look at the logo, the insignia for Harvard University from 1643, you would see three books on the logo.

And you see the word veritas. What does the word veritas mean? Truth. And you see three books. But Harvard University was started as a Christian school.

And so three books, two of them would be open because there's a pursuit of truth. That's what education is. But the third book would actually be closed. The third book would be closed because the Puritans believed that actually there's some knowledge that cannot be attained.

[19:02] That they were putting a limit on human wisdom going, some things will only be revealed at the end, which is why two out of the three books are open, but one shall remain closed. 1643 is what the logo looks like.

But if you fast forward just a couple of hundred years, you see the insignia take on different shapes. But if you look right now, all three books are open. Man has become obsessed with the pursuit of knowledge.

Man has become completely satisfied with scientific advancement, technological progress. But here's the problem. You look at where we are now as humans, we've probably never been smarter. There is an intelligence that we've created that far outweighs our own intelligence. And you've heard this maybe a few decades ago where actually science is the one that's going to replace our religion and faith.

And yet you see all the technological advancement. We know more than we ever, ever have known in the past. And yet we are more lonely and isolated and sad than we ever have been.

[20:09] Maybe, maybe the writer of Ecclesiastes was right when he said this. Ecclesiastes chapter 1 verse 18. For in much wisdom is much vexation.

And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. We've been obsessed with this pursuit of knowledge to become wise in our own eyes to the point where we can say that we are God, that we can control the different things of creation.

And yet, this ancient wisdom here says it leads to vexation. It leads to sorrow. Do you get that? Now, of course, there's some good things that come with what we've been able to learn and find out about ourselves.

And yet, what we see is the pursuit of knowledge ends up putting us in a place where we actually feel as though we are God, that we can control things. and that leads to the sorrow.

That leads to the isolation. That leads to the pain. And so, what happens here? She wants to be wise and then she passes to her husband, Adam.

[21:20] Note, he was the only one that actually got the instruction from God in chapter 2. So, what happened here is God tells Adam, hey, you're going to work and keep this garden. You're going to name all the animals but there's one thing you can't do, eat from that tree.

And so, he's supposed to pass that message on to Eve and yet, he doesn't do it. Even worse is when she talks to the servant, he's actually there. He's actually standing there silent.

And then, she eats the fruit and then she passes it to him and then he still doesn't say anything. And then he eats it himself. The stupidity of Adam is on show right here.

This wasn't how he created man to be. And yet, here we are seeing this silent man allow the situation to continue to unfold and lead us down this slippery slope.

And what happens? The moment that happens, they think they're eating the fruit and they'll suddenly have this just enlightenment. They'll see what's good and what's evil. That there will just be this glorious side that they see and yet, what happens is this grotesque anticlimax.

[22:34] Those three relationships that were supposed to be all interwoven and connected in this beautiful way, it starts to fall apart because they suddenly see each other and that first wall comes up.

They look at each other and they are disgusted. They are ashamed. ashamed. The moment we choose to mistrust God, the thing that's introduced into humanity is shame.

What is shame? Shame is just feeling bad about who you are yourself. It's feeling that you are fully seen and fully known and yet not fully loved. That is what shame is and we see it completely on show here and they do something which actually is quite comical.

Verse 7, And then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. So they covered each other up, saying, we don't want to look at each other.

We're going to cover them, cover each other. We're going to hide from each other. And from that moment, that relationship, that intimacy, that vulnerability, that authenticity is gone.

[23:40] It is beginning to unravel. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, verse 8, in the cool of the day. You can imagine this.

And maybe those of us in Hong Kong, we really resonate with this. It was just a cool, nice day in a garden without humidity. The humidity was probably at a 40% manageable rate. And it's just breezy.

And they're just walking and they hear his sound. And here you see the second relationship completely unraveling. First, there's a war between them now. That's why there's fig leaves. And the second is they actually hide from him.

Which, of course, if you just took the picture of that scene, it would be comical. You have two people covering themselves with fig leaves, hiding behind a bush from Almighty God, their creator. Okay?

So what happens here is they hear him and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. This tells me one thing, just on a side note. It would have been so nice. This must have been a regular thing.

[24:37] That they could recognize the sound of him walking in. That's what we were built for. That we would be in a garden walking regularly, intimately, vulnerably with God without any shame. And yet this time they hear him and they hide.

Now God knows where they are and God knows what's happened. But he comes at them with some questions. Which again just highlights the grace of God. How many of us we are so used to when we've done something wrong that actually the authority to figure is going to come and come out with the stick without any questions.

Just come and straight away deliver punishment. And yet God doesn't do that. He just asks questions. And he says, where are you? Knowing full well where they are. That is the grace of God on show right here.

And of course they hide. And they said this. Actually he talks to Adam. Because he's the one who's responsible. I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid is what Adam says. Because I was naked and I hid myself.

God replies to him. Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? Side note here is when we are hiding from God. Isn't it just beautiful and just such a relief that he still comes pursuing us?

[25:43] How many of us have been trying to run away, hide from God? And yet what we see here, what the gospel is, what the whole gospel message is, that Jesus is running towards us, coming towards us, pursuing us.

And of course he says, well I was trying to hide from you. And then here comes, the first thing that comes is shame. The second thing comes and it happens all the time. It happens in my household. It happens with my children.

It happens with me and Christina. It happens with you. Because when there's shame, the next thing that it leads to is blame. So what happens here is Adam turns to God and says, well, well, this is what happened, God.

The woman you gave me told me to eat the fruit. So he blames two people. He blames God and then he blames the other person. How many times have you made a mistake and your default reaction is blaming someone?

Whether it's God, say, God, this is just too hard. Why did you even do it like this? This world is so broken. It's your fault that we're here. It's your fault that I'm stuck where I am. Well, how many times do we blame someone else?

[26:44] That shame always leads to blame because what we're trying to do is trying to deflect the shame. We're trying to deflect. Okay, people actually know that we are fallen. What I need to do is make that excuse. I don't know if we actually needed to learn that.

I think that just came naturally to us. I look at my children and they do exactly the same. Like, wow, this just happens. Maybe they learn it from me. But can you see that that is in all of us? The woman you gave me told me to eat.

And yes, even though I did hear from you directly what I shouldn't do, and I should have really told her, but I didn't tell her properly. And then when she told me to eat it, I just decided just to eat it.

Okay, it's really my fault, but I'm going to blame someone else first, is what's happening here.

I think first thing is followers of Christ is we get, well, actually, can we just own up to the things that we've done? Can we be the first to say, actually, my bad, I'm sorry. Recognizing, acknowledging of our human fallen nature and saying, well, yeah, that is me.

Worries me. Romans 7, when Paul says, look, I know what I should do, but I don't do it. And I know what I shouldn't do, but I still do it. What a wretched person I am. But thanks be to God. Can we be the people, can we be the first people in our communities, in our workplace, to actually put our hand up and say sorry?

[27:56] We're all running from fear. We're all running from shame. But what if we were freed from all of that? What if we were liberated from that? So when we make mistakes, we actually have the freedom to be able to apologize straight away.

Wouldn't that be good? I think that would free up so much of society's problems if we were just willing to acknowledge and say sorry ourselves. Shame, instead, leads to blame.

Of course, something else that we try and do when we have shame is we try and cover it up ourselves. We blame other people for why we've made these mistakes. And yet we also create fig leaves for ourselves.

What are the fig leaves of society that we have? You don't feel good about yourself. You don't feel as though you are a worthy, loved, human being that's worth knowing. And so you cover yourself up by trying to inflate your bank account.

That you try and throw yourself into work, pursue your career, fulfill every ambition you have. And that essentially is just your fig leaf as well. What about the relationships that we have?

[28:58] The relationships were severed here. But actually now we use relationships to be our fig leaves, to make us feel better about ourselves. We look at the people around us and let them dictate how we feel about ourselves.

That is essentially a fig leaf as well. The society of Hong Kong, whether it's the money, whether it's career, whether it's just how fun... All of these things we're trying to prove to other people that we do have use, that we do have worth, that we can be admired, that we can be respected.

And we accumulate all these different fig leaves in our lives and cover ourselves up. Yet to God they look silly. The fig leaves that we have.

Of course, Eve herself then passes the blame on further. And she says, the serpent deceived me and I ate it. So she realizes that she was deceived.

Here's something else about deception. If you are being deceived, you don't know that you are being deceived. I know that sounds like an obvious statement, but I just need to say it again.

[30:07] You yourself don't actually know that you are being deceived. Because that's the very nature of deception. You might be sat here going, well I'm justified in how I feel about that person because they did me wrong.

Or actually, I am actually in the right here. And they're in the wrong. And I should blame them. And yes, whilst that may be the case, but the whole point of deception often is actually we just simply

don't know what we don't know.

And when we're being deceived, then actually we fall right into it, thinking that we're in the right. Again, this is where, as a follower of Christ, can we be in positions where we go, look, I think I'm right.

But let me also pray Psalm 139. Lord, would you search my heart? Would you test my thoughts? How many of us have thought that we are right, but actually find out much later that we were not? Right? And so then by that very definition, maybe there's some things, some values, some perspectives that you're holding on to right now are not fully correct.

Actually, maybe the world's views have deceived you. They've deceived me. So as Christians, can we be in a place of humility and go, look, I want to humble myself and submit myself to this.

[31 : 22] Because I believe this is the truth. But some of my own opinions, some of my own thoughts, some of my own views on politics and on the economy and on relationships, I'm just going to humble myself and say, I don't actually truly, no, only one does, and that is God.

I'm just going to humble myself under this word, just in case I am being deceived, because the devil is everywhere prowling, looking to deceive people. Can we be in a place of humility that allows us to be able to do that?

So anyway, God asks Adam, he asks the woman, he doesn't really give the serpent a chance because he knows what all the serpent is up to. And then he jumps into the curse here.

And those three relationships that we talked about last week, you see him addressing each one. So he talks to the serpent and he says, actually, you will lie on your belly all the days of your life. You shall eat dust and you will have enmity.

Basically, there's two groups of people that are going to be. There's going to be one group that trusts God and there's going to be one group that does not trust God, is what he's saying here. This is verse 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

[32 : 26] From this moment on, in this world, in humanity, there will be two groups of people, the group that trusts me and the group who do not. And they will be at odds. They will be at war with one another.

And I don't even need to go into the recent geopolitical tensions to highlight what this looks like. This happens everywhere, not just on a global scale between countries. This happens between, within countries.

This happens all the way down to within the families, people who trust God and people who do not. All comes from this first moment here. And then he says to the woman, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing.

In pain, you shall bring forth children. Childbirth, painful. Josh, it's going to be painful. And I joke about this with the guys, but wear gloves, man.

Wear gloves. When your hand gets squeezed, it is painful. And then no one cares for you afterwards. No one remembers you. I'm just going to stop there.

[33 : 31] I'm not going to tell any more jokes. Because Christina does listen. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.

This makes me sad. This is the beginning of where man rules over woman. Not in a loving way, but in an abusive, possessive kind of way.

This wasn't meant to be. Man was supposed to have dominion over the creatures, yet it ends up listening to the serpent. Man was supposed to be able to love and lead the woman that was placed in his care, and yet he stays silent.

And what you see now is the sexes will now be at odds. One will seek power and authority and use over one. And the other, the woman, desiring intimacy, will never get it from the man.

Not in the way that it was intended from the beginning. But now you see what the fall has done, is put that divide between man and woman. And it's heartbreaking. And then he says to Adam, You were created to work.

[34 : 58] And work wouldn't have been that hard. Can you imagine work before the fall? Hey, you're going to work and keep this garden. And you're going to eat this food. Oh, there's the food. Boom. You eat it. Mmm. Nice. Delicious. You move on. It would have just been such an easy way to work.

And yet what we see now is that since he mistrusted God and allowed sin to enter into mankind, work will now be hard. The ground that you work will now be filled with thorns and thistles. It will be hard.

This is why those of us now look at work and see that it is just filled with toil. Work is hard. And we can trace it all the way back to here. Work still is not evil, by the way.

We established that last week. And yet it is hard. It was designed to be hard. The ground will now be cursed. Those relationships with God, with others, and with work completely fractured.

The curse goes everywhere. And you look at that and you think, whew. If I'm honest with you, as pastors, Christina and I, we have this thought regularly, which is, oh, life is hard.

[36:00] We look at the problems that you guys are going through. The troubles that you have in your relationships, the trouble you have with work, at work. The distance that you feel between you and God.

And we just sit there and go, oh, this is all so hard. I was talking to a group of brothers the other day, talking about how hard work is, how meaningless sometimes it is.

And then there's always this dream. And hear it from me as a secondary school teacher turned pastor, who most people will go, well, those are meaningful things. You're pouring into the next generation.

You're caring for them. You're raising them up. I would be lying to you if I said that every day it feels purposeful and meaningful. Gabs, you've been in ministry. You've been in both sides. You can see the vanity and the meaningless in both.

Or the despair, the lack of hope in both. Yeah, it was never meant to be like this. What we must do as Christians, not only when we make those mistakes, should we be able to, hey, say, it was me.

[37:04] Let me take on the blame and let me not pass it on. Also, look at this and go, okay, well, this is just how it is in this world right now. Work is supposed to be hard. But God, you put me in this garden.

What did you put me in this garden for? Well, how can I serve others and how can I glorify you even if it is hard? And what does it look like? It's down to us to be able to do that. And accept, really, of the consequences of our actions, the consequences of our mistrust.

But then we look at that and go, oh. And then what? What hope do we have? Those three relationships that were supposed to be so beautiful now completely broken, and we still see the brokenness right now, what hope do we have?

Well, I'm here to tell you, and this is where I'll finish the sermon on a slightly more hopeful, happy note, is because I'm here to tell you that in this chapter three, there is the glimmer. There is the Easter eggs of hope, of the good news.

Because it's in this bad news where we seem to have severed every tie that was supposed to be meaningful and purposeful for us. We see glimmers of hope. Let me show you where they are.

Okay, so he's given this curse out to these three.

[38:14] Verse 20, he says this. The man calls his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. That's interesting. He just received the curse. He's just heard about the three different problems that have now occurred, that will happen from now until they die.

And yet in this moment, his first response, Adam, is, I'm going to give my wife a name. And she's going to be called Eve. She's going to be the mother of all living. Wait, did you not get the memo? You guys ate from the tree, and now you will die.

And yet you're naming your wife the mother of all living. Why? Why is that the case here? You see, if we go back to the curse that the serpent had in verse 15 to 16, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

There will be war. That speaks to all the violence, the hostility that's happening between people. But he's talking in plural there. He's talking about groups of people.

The group that trusts God and the group that doesn't trust God. But then he goes from plural to the second half part of verse 15, and he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

[39:20] He was talking about groups of people that were at odds with each other, because one trusted God and one didn't. And yet then he turns and says, from this, from these groups of people, there will be someone.

There will be someone who will bruise the head of the serpent, who could that person be? Fast forward later. Adam and Eve try and make these fig leaves of themselves.

We try and cover ourselves with fig leaves like money, like ambition, like career, like relationships. And then God decides, okay, well, these fig leaves aren't going to work. So what does he do? In verse 21, Garments of skins.

Garments of skins. Where did those skins come from? Many people believe that this was the first example of sacrifice. Those skins would have had to come from animals.

This is God's first act of sacrifice that you see later played out in the form of all the laws, the Levitical laws and sacrifices that we have, where it comes to atonement, where in order to pay for sin, there must be a life that must pay.

[40 : 27] And so God covers them with skin. Covers them in a way that only he can. Not like the fig leaves, but this time God is the one who covers them completely.

Innocent blood is slain for man to be covered up. And then they are banished from the garden. Now banishing from the gardens feels quite drastic, feels quite sad, but really a lot of people believe this is also an act of mercy.

Because now they have chosen to mistrust him. Now they have chosen to go into rebellion with him. If they had stayed in the garden and continued to eat of the tree of life, that would mean that they would be trapped in a permanent state of rebellion forever.

And yet God in his mercy takes them out and says, actually, this will not be forever. Your rebellion, your separation from me will not be forever. The physical death is one thing, but the spiritual death, I will preserve and I will save.

And he sets in place what he will do in the future. And he moves them and he takes them out of the garden. And therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. Still has to work, by the way, but this time is going to be much, much harder.

[41 : 33] Verse 24, he drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life. They were never going to be allowed back into the garden again.

The garden where they would be so used to walking with God, they are now not allowed in. And there will be a big sword that stops them from entering in, from entering and eating from the tree of life, causing them to be in a permanent state of rebellion because God had a plan.

God had a rescue plan. Man and woman failed at their first attempt in obeying God in the garden.

But there will come one moment where one person who will bruise the head of the serpent, who himself finds himself in a garden, next to a tree, the same call, trust and obey.

And despite the fear, despite the pain, despite the sorrow, ends up choosing to obey God and says, yeah, not my will, but yours be done.

You see, mankind, creation was cursed from that moment in the tree and with the garden. But there will come a moment where that curse is completely reversed also because of a tree.

[42 : 45] But this time, the tree turns into a cross. This time, the last Adam, the second Adam, does what the first Adam could never do, which is to trust and obey God.

The first Adam hears from God saying, obey me and you will live. The second Adam in the garden of Gethsemane, God says, obey me and you will die. But you will die in order for others to live.

You will pay the wages of sin, which is death. You will pay and you will reverse. And how death came through one man is what Romans 5 says, now life will be breathed into all mankind through what you do with the tree.

Can you see the significance of the garden? Can you see the significance of the tree? And that sword that guards Adam and Eve from the garden, God's saying, you can't come in. Not in your current state because you'll be separated from me forever.

And you won't survive the sword. And yet Jesus himself gets pierced for our sins. Dying the death that we were supposed to die in order to get the life that we never deserved.

[44 : 02] it's funny. Adam knows this promise even though it's a curse. He knows that something's happening. So he calls his wife Eve because he knows that she will still be the mother of all living and it will be painful.

The pangs of childbirth, the love labor will be painful. Yet this one man that comes many years later says, I will turn sorrow into joy and there will be pain. But after the pain there will be life and there will be joy is what John 16 says.

And you look at Romans 8 where it says all creation is just groaning, longing for the revealing of the sons of God. And yet you see so even though there is pain in labor, even though there is pain in

childbirth, it gives birth to life.

All of that is pointing to Jesus. The sacrificial lamb that was slain for us. God covers Adam and Eve with animal skin.

And now we sit here being covered Jesus himself, the prince of heaven with the robe of heaven puts it over us and covers us so that we would be considered innocent.

[45:15] Can you see? Yes, every relationship that we have now has been fractured because of sin. Yet there is hope because one man came, entered the garden, trusted and obeyed God, sacrificed himself, covered us, subjected himself to the sword, so that we could live.

He broke down the dividing wall of hostility between people because of him that is now gone. That distance that we feel from God is now gone because we can access God through him.

Can you see he comes to restore every relationship? That blueprint that was given us is now restored through one man, the last Adam. And because of his death and because of his resurrection, we can have hope despite the fall.

We can sit and go, we are still a fallen people. Man, just what Sam said, remind me, just Romans 3, that we all fall short of the glory of God. Isn't it just liberating to be able to say that and go, man, I fall short of the glory of God today, yesterday, and I probably will tomorrow, but yet, we are justified freely by his grace as a gift because of Christ Jesus.

The one who paid the price. The one who desires to walk with us in the garden again. The one who will allow us to walk in the garden again.

[46:48] Can you see that even in the most depressing of chapters in the scripture, you see glimmers of hope. I encourage you as you look at the SEMP today and as you look at everything that's going on around and you see darkness and you see Genesis chapter 3 both outside and both inside, I encourage you not to stop there.

Look deeper. Look closer. And you will see hope. And you will see light. And you will see life. And you will see the Prince of Heaven. Doing the work of the Father.

Bringing his children back to him. And soon he will return in clouds of glory and we will hear him again before we see him likely. But he will make all things new.

That's what frees us. That's what allows us to admit our mistakes. That's what allows us to not pass blame on to other people. That's what allows us to get back to the garden. God, we're going to spend time now just to reflect.

Again, to ask that question. God, search my heart, test my thoughts. If there is anything offensive, anything anxious to you, anything that is me not trusting you, whether it's a relationship, whether it's work, whether it's anything that's going on in our lives, if there's anything that is me not trusting you, God, I repent of it right now.

[48:15] Why can I trust you because of what you did, that you gave your son to die for us? We're going to take communion right now. What I ask you to do is reflect on that. Reflect on the work that was already done.

Reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus that allows us to enter into God's presence again. But here's the thing. In order to experience the freedom and liberation, we must first repent.

Because there is any Eve in us, any doubts and deceptions that we've brought, where if we've just stayed silent and stupid like Adam, whatever it is, let us take it to the cross now and go, Jesus, thank you for dealing with this.

I fall short of your glory. I have missed the mark. But thank you. that you have paid the price.

I'll spend a moment in silence now. Amen. Lord, all our lives, you've been faithful.

[49:39] In fact, from the beginning of time, you have been faithful. And we thank you that when we had no hope, you gave us hope. You gave us hope through Jesus Christ on the cross.

And in response, as we just sang, Lord, we will sing of your goodness. Even when we are in the trenches, even when we are facing the different worldly pressures, the different things that people say over us, Lord, we will sing of your goodness.

Because we know that you have been faithful to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.