

Eden, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 December 2022

Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0 : 00] Well, friends, we will not be in Jonah today.

Oh, listen to that. That's actually good. That's encouraging to hear that little sigh. Anyway, so what I we're not since I'm not going to be able to pull three and four together back to back because of Christmas, I'm not going to preach a full message Christmas Day.

I decided to wait until after Christmas where I can do Jonah three and four back to back on Sundays, God willing, because they need to be done that way.

And in chapter three in Jonah, it's almost a restart of what you saw in chapter one. For those of you who've been here, because God is going to recommission Jonah again, just like he did in chapter one, verse one, where God said, I want you to go to Nineveh.

The whale's going to spit Jonah up onto the beach and God's going to say just what he said back in chapter one. All right. I want you to get up and go to Nineveh and preach.

[1 : 16] And this time Jonah makes a beeline. So we're going to pick it up there in a couple of Sundays. So today we'll be in a number of different places in Scripture. But I want to tie a theme together for you.

I've spoken about some of this before. I've pulled a couple of things together and tweaked it. I want to be able to help you put some theological dots together as God has put his plan together through Scripture in bringing Jesus Christ.

This is an opportunity for me to speak in direct terms about what we call the gospel. gospel. And the gospel, as many of you, most of you know, is the good news that God has in Scripture for us about his one and only son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And how Jesus came to the earth as a human being. God left heaven to become a human being born of a virgin and became just like us into the world.

He came in as a baby, an infant and was raised up in sinless perfection, unlike us. And then gave himself on the cross of Calvary for our sins to be forgiven, for us to be cleansed.

[2 : 33] And this is an opportunity to kind of see how the beginning of creation corresponds with God's plan through creation up into the time of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

So we're going to look at Eden, Bethlehem and Jerusalem and how each of those connect to the true meaning of Christmas. So we'll start this morning with the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Eden.

And here's what it means. It is a place of paradise or pleasure. We'll start in Genesis chapter three in just a few moments.

So you might want to go ahead and turn there. The Garden of Eden was perfection. And God placed two of his created beings in that garden, human beings, Adam and Eve.

They were in sinless perfection in a perfect paradise where the pleasure of that place was the pleasure of knowing God without any barriers.

[3 : 42] There was no sin barrier, no self, no pride, no greed, no selfishness. Can you imagine? We really can't. We're born in sin. We live in sin. We live around other sinners born into the same thing.

So we just can't really conceive of a place without sin. But this is that place, the Garden of Eden. It brought great pleasure to them to know God. And it brought great pleasure to them to know one another without sin.

So they were in a perfect relationship all the way around in a perfect setting, a setting that did not war against them. Can you imagine?

They still had to work and tend the garden. But that was a good thing. This is an amazing reality that God created. The Garden of Eden, as we all know, was also a place where Eve believed Satan's lie.

That she was the better judge than God as to what her true needs were. So according to Satan, her greatest need was not to trust, honor, and obey God, but to decide for herself what was true about her needs and act accordingly.

[5 : 05] Does that sound like anybody you might know? It certainly sounds like Jeff. In my sin, in my need for truth. She did all of this regardless of what God or her husband, Adam, had told her.

If you look over in chapter 2 and in verse 15, we'll pick it up.

Now, God has created the garden and created Adam. And in verse 15, then the Lord God took the man, Adam, that he had just created and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. So see, there was work and there was this cultivation from the very beginning. That's not the result of sin. Verse 16. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

For in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die. Now, we don't have recorded in Scripture a direct command of God speaking personally to Eve in the same way with the command that he just gave Adam.

[6 : 31] The assumption is one or maybe both of these things that God did at some point directly address Eve and repeat the command and or Adam, her husband, gave her that information.

Either way, however we go with that, Eve was deceived and she defied the authority both of God and her husband.

And that was God's design from the very beginning for Adam to watch over Eve in a perfect relationship where there was no feeling of lording it over.

Submission wasn't something she had to work at. Adam's protection wasn't something he necessarily had to work at because he kept getting in his way. There was none of that.

Isn't that amazing to think about that? One day you and I will know that. But it won't be until God takes us to heaven. And that's what we look forward to.

[7 : 35] We don't look forward to necessarily. I can't imagine having another lifetime here. Can you imagine back in the time when they lived 900, 700 years? 100 is more than enough for me, right?

Yeah. And it's not because I have to live with you. It's because I have to live with me. Amen. All right. Adam, Adam, Adam for his part, because we don't want to just throw Eve under the bus here. Adam abandoned his role to love Eve by protecting her from anything contrary to God. Now, we know the story, but I want to rehearse it from Scripture itself.

So if you'll join me, just read along with me as I read from Genesis chapter 3. Now, the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden? The woman said to the serpent, from the fruit of the trees of the garden, we may eat.

[8 : 42] But from the fruit of the tree, which is in the middle of the garden, God has said you shall not eat from it or touch it or you will die. So somehow Eve knew the command.

Now, again, I know that you realize she added a little bit there. Don't eat from it or touch it or you will die. That may have been Adam saying, hon, don't don't even touch it.

You know, I can see me doing something like that. God said, don't eat from it. But, hon, please don't even go near it. Don't touch it. Don't get in proximity to it. The serpent then said to the woman, you surely will not die.

For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. Well, 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 desirable to make one wise.

Now you see the proximity issue here. There she's right there at the tree. She took from its fruit and ate and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate.

[9 : 52] So see that abandonment there? Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

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.

Then the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? He said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked.

So I hid myself. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from 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 from the tree and I ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field.

[11:10] On your belly, you will go and dust. You will eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. To the woman, he said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth.

In pain, you will bring forth children. Yet your desire will be for your husband. He will rule over you.

Then to Adam, he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife.

Again, that's the abandonment. And have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat from it. Cursed is the ground because of you.

In toil, you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles, it shall grow for you. And you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread.

[12:13] Till you return to the ground. Because from it you were taken. For you are dust. And to dust you shall return.

So what was it that plunged these two people into the desperate realm of sin and death in the moment they took from the forbidden tree?

Appetite. And I don't mean hunger. It was the deceiving nature of Satan coming and bringing to them this lie that they could follow on knowing better than God what their needs were and how they were to move forward in their lives.

What was best for them in any given moment of their life. And so they acted on that. I want to show you another place before we move on.

In Philippians. If you'd go there with me. Just tie this in for you just a little bit. Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3. Beginning in verse 17.

[13:35] This is the Apostle Paul. Paul. This was Adam's mandate to his wife.

Follow me as I follow God. And she stepped out from that role that she had. And Adam stepped back from that role that he would fulfill with her.

So now Paul is telling us. Follow me as I follow Jesus. Then he says in verse 18. For many walk. Many live. Many go about their lives. Of whom I often told you.

So he's warned them about this. And now tell you even weeping. This is breaking the Apostle's heart. They are enemies of the cross of Christ.

So apparently there were people who were saying one thing. About their relationship to God. And yet living a very different thing. And Paul said do not follow those people.

[14:59] Do not subscribe to the example they're giving you. Why? Verse 19. Because their end is destruction. Whose God is their appetite.

And whose glory is in their shame. Who set their minds on earthly things. That's the result of what happened in Eden.

That's what we all live with. That's what we all need to be saved from. And the world hates this message. On the whole the world hates being told.

Stop blaming it on your parents. Stop blaming it on the government. Stop blaming it on your uncles. Or your aunts. Or your extended family.

Or what you don't have. Or what you did have. Or what happened to you. Everybody wants a scapegoat. Everybody wants to do what Adam and Eve did in the garden. When God confronted them.

[16:00] Oh it was the woman. That you gave me. That's bold. You ever done that with the Lord? Lord. Hey. This was your deal.

Not. Ooh. And then she did the same thing. Oh it's not my fault. It's the serpent. He deceived me. Of course that's hindsight. Right. Now she sees. This is what we do.

This blame shifting kind of thing. That we enter into. That is all the result. Of glorying in something. That we should be ashamed of. And setting our minds on earthly things.

That's what we need to be saved from. Again the world doesn't like to hear this. They want to blame. Paul goes on to say in verse 20. I just. I want to add this.

Our citizenship. As the people of God. As people born again in the Lord Jesus. Our citizenship. Is in heaven. From which also.

[16:57] We eagerly wait. For a savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. Who will. Transform. That's what we need. The body of our humble state.

Into conformity. With the body of his glory. By the exertion of the power. That he has. Even to subject. All things to himself.

And we're grateful for that. We're grateful that God has made a way. To correct Eden. The fall. We're thankful. That he sent his son.

To do what only his son could do for us. To bring us from. Death. To life. To save us from us. To save Jeff.

From Jeff. The events. Of Eden. With the fall of man into sin. And rebellion. Against almighty God. Made the events of Bethlehem.

[17:55] And Jerusalem. Necessary. God took the initiative. And God took the initiative. To deal with that necessity. In our lives. God acted.

That's why we praise him. That's why we come to him. As God. And as king. Listen. We had no solution. For Eden. The fall.

None. God. Why? Because we're the problem. We're the problem. Trying to fix the problem. And it just makes the problem worse. If it can be that way. Yes. You can progress.

In levels of sin. And depravity. God the son. This is the amazing part for me. God the son. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Knew. That he would become a human being. As a newborn. Born. By his mother. Human mother. Mary. And that he would be born.

[18:51] In the city of Bethlehem. He knew all of that. Before he ever made the world. That we live in. Before he made the first human beings.

Before they ever were put in the garden. Before they ever fell into sin. Jesus knew. He would come. To Bethlehem. And he knew.

That he would end up. In Jerusalem. He knew. That he would become. The sacrifice. As our substitute.

By dying on the cross. Outside. Of the city of Jerusalem. So Jesus knew. All of this. As Adam and Eve. Walked. In the. Garden together.

In innocence. Before man. Fell into sin. He came. Anyway. And that brings us.

[19:48] To Bethlehem. Bethlehem. Bethlehem means. House of bread. I know many of you. Knew that. It means. House of bread. So we have the place of paradise.

And pleasure. Not anymore. And now we have this. House of bread. David. King David. Was raised.

Here. It's located. Just five miles. Southwest. Of Jerusalem. And today. It's the site. Of what is called. The church.

Of the nativity. Which boasts. Being the oldest. Christian church. In existence. It's where the bread. Of life. Was born.

That is how Jesus. Referred to himself. As the bread of life. So I'll invite you. To turn to John. Chapter six. I know we're going to be. In several different passages.

[20:42] But again. I'm just trying. To help us. Think biblically. About how God. Connects. These things. John six. And it'll be.

Starting in verse. Twenty six. So Jesus. Is answering.

The people. About his identity. Who he is. Why he came. How does he do these things. Jesus answered them.

And said. Truly. Truly. I say to you. You seek me. Not because you saw signs. But because you ate the loaves. And were filled. So these were the people.

That Jesus fed. Miraculously. Thousands. And thousands of them. Where he produced food. From nothing. Out of nothing. And it just multiplied. And multiplied. As they passed the baskets around.

[21:39] And so now the people. Have sought him out. And they want more food. And it's a. It's an issue of. Wow. This guy's going to give free lunches.

For a while. Why not follow him around? It's. It's like we're back in the garden again. And we're. We're trying to avoid the consequences. And that's where these people are.

Well Jesus perceives that. And he says. You're not here because of the miracle. The miracle didn't help you believe. You're here because you're greedy. And you're selfish.

Verse 27. Do not work. For the food which perishes. He sees that's their main concern. But for the food which endures to eternal life.

That's what they should be concerned about. Which the son of man will give to you. For on him.

The father. God has said his. Set his seal. So they have missed the whole point of the miracle.

[22 : 37] As it pointed to Jesus being the Messiah. Verse 28. Therefore they said to Jesus. What shall we do. So that we may work the works of God.

Jesus answered and said to them. This is the work of God. That you believe in him. Whom he has sent. Isn't that the point?

So they said to him. What then do you do for a sign? These are such stubborn people. So that we may see and believe you. Now remember what just happened.

What work do you perform? Do you see how Jesus had already discerned this about their heart?

Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness.

As it is written. He gave them bread out of heaven to eat. See now you know what they're doing.

They're throwing scripture at Jesus to make their case. They don't know who they're talking to. This is the guy who wrote that scripture.

[23 : 35] Jesus then said to them. Truly truly I say to you. In other words. This is a truth. That is very worthy of you to pay attention to. It is not Moses.

Who has given you. The bread. Out of heaven. But it is my father. Who gives you the true. Bread. Out of heaven. For the bread of God.

Is that which comes down out of heaven. And gives life. To the world. Well then they said to him.

Lord. Always give us this bread.

Jesus said to them. I am. The bread. Of life. He who comes to me. Will not hunger.

And he who believes in me. Will never thirst. But I said to you. That you have seen me. And yet do not believe. All that the father gives me.

[24 : 32] Will come to me. And the one who comes to me. I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven. Not to do my own will. But the will of him who sent me.

This. Is the will of him who sent me. That of all that he has given me. I lose. Nothing. But raise it up. On the last day. For this is the will of my father. That everyone who beholds the son. And believes in him. Will have eternal life. And I myself will raise him up.

On the last day. Now go just a little bit further with me. Therefore the Jews. Were grumbling about him. Because he said.

I am the bread. That came down. Out of heaven. They were saying. Is not this Jesus. The son of Joseph. Whose father and mother we know.

I am the bread. That came down. Out of heaven. They were saying. Is not this Jesus. The son of Joseph. Whose father and mother we know.

[25 : 31] Now how does he now say. I have come down out of heaven. Jesus answered and said to them. Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me.

[25 : 31] Now how does he now say. I have come down out of heaven. Jesus answered and said to them. Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me.

Unless the father who sent me. Draws him. And I will raise him up. On the last day. See this is all the work of God. The father draws.

The son raises up. It is written in the prophets. And they shall all be taught. Of God. Everyone who has heard. And learned from the father.

Comes to me. Me. So see he's saying. You can't claim to be God's people. And reject me. It's not the way it works. And yet.

That's. The way it works. With a lot of people on our planet. Not that anyone. Has seen the father. Except the one. Who is from God. He has seen the father. So Jesus is expressing.

[26 : 27] His deity now. Truly truly. I say to you. He who believes. Has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate the manna. In the wilderness. And they died. This is the bread. Which comes down out of heaven. So that one may eat of it. And not die.

I am. The living bread. That came down. Out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread. He will live forever. And the bread also.

Which I will give. For the life of the world. Is my flesh. So now Jesus is giving them a hint. Of how he will make offering. Of himself.

Now listen to this. This is what really throws them. Then the Jews began to argue. With one another. Saying how can this man. Give us his flesh to eat. So Jesus said to them.

[27 : 27] Truly truly. I say to you. Unless you eat the flesh. Of the son of man. And drink his blood. You have no life. In yourselves. He who eats my flesh.

And drinks my blood. Has eternal life. And I will raise him up. On the last day. For my flesh. Is true food. And my blood.

Is true drink. He who eats my flesh. And drinks my blood. Abides in me. And I in him. As the living father sent me. And I live because of the father.

So he who eats me. He also will live because of me. This is the bread. Which came down out of heaven. Not as the fathers ate.

And died. He who eats this bread. Will live. Forever. The way that we understand. To interpret this. [28 : 24] In terms of Jesus telling us. To eat his flesh. And drink his blood. Is back in verse 48. I. Am. The bread. Of life.

It helps us. To understand. That Jesus. Is commanding these people. To believe in him. The eating. Is faith. He's just telling these people.

Believe in me. That's how you. Consume me. And so we understand. That as we come to believe. In Jesus Christ. He comes to. Live in us.

And so we have life. In him. So he is the bread. Of life. Of course. They missed it. Didn't they? They missed the entire point.

Because they missed. Jesus. Folks. That's what I want to appeal. To you about. As you think about. Eden. And Bethlehem. And Jerusalem.

[29 : 25] Don't. Miss. Jesus. I was talking to someone. This past week. In an effort to. Witness.

And counsel. And we got to the point. In the conversation. Where I was able to say. Don't. Miss. Jesus. You need to peel away.

All the distractions. That you've been talking about. And you need to focus. On the main thing. And the main thing. Is the person. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. And him crucified.

And raised again. For the forgiveness. Of your sins. If you miss Jesus. You miss the point. Of living. If you miss Jesus. You miss the point. Of being a Christian. It's a relationship.

And he makes that possible. By giving himself. So the question. That I'll ask you. Based on this. Have you eaten. The bread of life.

[30 : 24] Who was born to die. To save you. From your sins. If you haven't. You can. I want to share. Part of this. Verse with you. Just to encourage.

You. Christ Jesus. Came into the world. To save sinners. Paul would go on. To say. You know. And I'm the chief. Of those sinners. And he saved me. And he saved me.

For the reason. Of offering me. As an example. To all of you. If he can save. The worst one. Of them all. He can save you. That was the heart. Of the apostle.

We read. In John 6. 58. That Jesus said. Anyone. Who eats. The bread. That came down. Out of heaven. Shall. Live. Forever. Eternal life.

And then there's. This verse. John 3. 36. He who believes. In the son. That's what Jesus. Was trying. To tell them. About.

[31 : 20] Eat my flesh. And drink my blood. Believe. On me. Have faith. In me. He who believes. In the son. Has eternal life. But he who does not. Obey.

The son. Shall not see life. But the wrath of God. Abides on him. And here. Jesus combines. Both. A confession. Of Jesus. As Lord. And Savior.

Along with. A living. Out. Of that confession. So you believe. And then your life. Give. Gives. Evidence. Of true belief. Through obedience.

Your. Your obedience. To God. Your willingness. To humble yourself. Submit yourself. To his will. And live. In that will. So it becomes. More than just. Lip service. That's why.

Throughout the new. Testament. You'll see. The writers. Talk about. Your salvation. And then quickly. Add. But. Or if. You continue. It's that.

[32 : 15] Continuing. And that. Persevering. In faith. Through trials. And hardships. That begin. To give. Evidence. That this is. Genuine. In you. The Holy Spirit. Really does. Live in you. Because the power.

Of the Holy Spirit. Is helping you. Move through. The trials. Of life. The difficulties. Of life. So that your life. Is showing. Showcasing. The glory.

Of God. That is the character. Of God. How do you bring. Glory to God. In your life. You showcase. The fruit. Of the Holy Spirit. In you. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness.

Gentleness. Self-control. As those things. Live out of you. You bear testimony. To the world. That God lives. In you. And he. Is making.

The difference. He's the difference. I'm not. Gutting it out. I'm not trying. To convince you. I've got it all together. I'm living. For God's character. To be seen.

[33 : 07] That's why we're told. In Matthew 5 16. Let your light. Shine before men. So that they will. See your. Good works.

And do what? Glorify your father. In heaven. You live a life. Where they see the good works. That God's producing in you. And they glorify God.

It becomes a testimony. The power of God. To change a human soul. Why is that so important? Because of Eden. Because of the fall. Because of what needs to be forgiven.

And corrected. Transformed. And only God can do that. Only God has. This is the gospel. This is the good news. That Jesus saves. Jesus saves.

And all who would come to him. Will find in him. What did he say? All who come to me. I will not cast out. If you come to me. In genuine confession.

[34 : 01] And repentance. I will receive you. Jesus says. I won't turn anyone away. Who comes to me. With that heart. Nobody. It doesn't matter. Where you come from.

Or what color your skin is. Or what color your skin isn't. Or whatever. Jesus says. I have that forgiveness. For all of you. And so. We have people in here.

From all different backgrounds. And characters. And families. And traditions. And cultures. The Lord knows. And yet. All of us who love the Lord. We're a family.

And we're blood related. Right? We say that all the time. Here at Grace. We are blood kin. Don't mess with my kin. Blood stickered in water. Don't mess with my kin.

These are my brothers and sisters. We are together. In the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is. Only God could pull that off. Only God.

[34 : 58] Can bring us together like that. So if you have tasted. The bread of life. My question would be to you at that point. Are you enjoying. The sweet savor.

Of his fellowship with you. What is hindering you. From enjoying. The fellowship. Of the God. Who saved you. And brought you from death.

To life. What's robbing you. Of the joy. Of that new life. Are you dealing with that. In the Lord. Are you tasting the Lord.

And finding that. He is good. The psalmist said that. Taste and see that the Lord is good. How blessed is. The man who takes refuge in him.

Whatever you're facing. Whatever trial. Or burden is happening in your life. God. Is your refuge. Just a quick illustration.

[35 : 54] Before I move to my final point. I got a phone call yesterday. And it was my 81 year old mother. And she was weeping. And I knew it was unusual for her to call me.

At the time she did. And. She said. Jeff. Please pray for me. I was in Walmart. And someone stole. My billful.

My wallet. Out of my purse. And. I just. It was two hours ago. The police have gotten involved. They have footage of the people who did it. But they had their faces covered.

They parked in an area of the parking lot. Where. They can't use the camera to. I mean. They knew what they were doing. It was a ring of three people. And she said. Jeff. They've gotten everything.

And she had already found out. That they had wiped out her bank account. And it was in like. Nine hundred dollars in the hole. I don't even know how that happens. Now this is a woman. Who's a widow.

[36 : 53] On a fixed income. She just moved. She's trying to get herself established. In a new place to live. And she's got all this extra money. And it. It's just been so stressful for her.

And then she found out. They ran up her credit cards. Thousands of dollars. They went to Sam's. And spent like a thousand dollars. On a card. And. We tried to reassure her.

And tell her. Look. They. They understand this stuff. They'll work with you. But she is just distraught. And she said. Jeff. It's. You know. It's Christmas. Yeah.

Tis the season. Welcome to the human race. Mom. I didn't say that. But I thought it. So this morning. On the way. We texted her. Because she's on her way to church.

And. Told her we loved her. And that God loved her. And just encouraged her. To go to church. Join with her brothers and sisters. She loves those people to death. Her Sunday school class.

[37 : 52] Is like her extended family. They're all her age. And they all get it. And she's going to go and tell them. And they're going to fall all over her. And pray for her. Or. I said. Let those people

love you. And worship the Lord.

Worship the Lord. He is still God. But the reality is. When we're going through a hard time. It's really tough. Isn't it? Well. This is why we need to reflect on the truth.

That's the time in our life. More maybe than any other. That we need to go and taste. The Lord Jesus. And realize. That we are blessed. Because we can take refuge in him.

That we have that. Think about what your unsaved family and friends. Don't have. They can't run to them. That's just them. Well finally friends.

Let me take you to Jerusalem. It means the city of peace. I think these names are so. Rich and incredible. How God did this. We've got this.

[38 : 49] The place of paradise. And pleasure. We've got the house of bread. Where Jesus was born. And now we've got the city of peace. Are you kidding? Where Jesus was crucified?

Yeah. The city of peace. Several Psalms. Refer to Jerusalem. As the city of God. That's the only place on the earth.

That you can say that about. The city of God. God himself. Refers to Jerusalem. As. My city. That's in Isaiah 45.

13. I think I have that here. Yeah. My city. So this is where Bethlehem's. Bread of life. Was crucified. Buried.

And then resurrected. For this reason. To bring us. Peace. With God. The bread of life. To bring us peace.

[39 : 49] With almighty God. I'd like to take you to three separate passages of scripture. Just to let you see this. Across a spectrum. Would you turn to Romans chapter 5 with me?

I'll put these up on the screen here for you in just a second. These references. Romans chapter 5. And we'll look at verse 10. For if.

While we were enemies. We were reconciled to God through the death of his son. Much more. Having been reconciled.

Through the Lord Jesus. We shall be saved. By his life. Reconciled. Reconciled means to bring together.

God. Used to be our enemy. In sin. We were alienated from him. Separated from him. From him. By our sin. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[40 : 56] Dying in our place. As our substitute. To pay the penalty of our guilt. In sin. That was all forgiven. And then the righteousness of Jesus. Was credited to us.

Through our faith in him. And we were justified. Declared righteous. No more guilt. No more condemnation. And in that state. Now we're no longer enemies of God.

We've been brought near. To God. Reconciled with him. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it's by his life. That we receive this reconciliation.

From the Lord. If you look over at chapter 5. Verse 19. For as through the one man's disobedience. That's Adam. Now we're connecting all of this to Jerusalem.

For as through one man's disobedience. The many were made sinners. That's us. Even so. Through the obedience of the one.

[41 : 55] Capital O. The many. Will be made righteous. That's us. That's believers. So through Adam. We were born in sin. Bearing the mark of the human race.

Sinners. Separated from the Lord. And through the one. Capital O. We have in Jesus Christ. This wonderful reconciliation. And life in his name.

Because we have been made righteous. What does all of that mean? If you'll go over to verse 1. Of chapter 5. Therefore.

Having been justified by faith. Declared righteous. We have peace with God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then in Colossians. Chapter 1. Colossians 1.

[42 : 54] And I'll actually begin. Reading in verse 19. For it was the Father's good pleasure.

For all the fullness. To dwell in him. Being Jesus. And through Jesus. To reconcile. All things to himself. Having made peace.

Through the blood. Of his cross. There at Jerusalem. Outside the city. God made peace. Through him. I say. Whether things on earth.

Or. Things in heaven. And although you. Were formerly. Alienated. And hostile in mind. Engaged in evil deeds.

That is living in your sin. Yet he. Has now reconciled you. In his fleshly body. Through death. This is why Jesus said. All that he said.

[43 : 52] About eating his flesh. And drinking his blood. In order to present you. Before him. Holy. And blameless. And beyond reproach.

That's the correction of Eden. That's the correction of the fall. That's bringing us. Right through. Eden. Bethlehem. Jerusalem. To Jerusalem. The city of peace.

And then finally. In Ephesians. Back a couple of books. To Ephesians chapter 2. And I'll just. I want to start in verse 11. And just. I'll make the point. As we move down through. Because I want you to see. His argument here. Therefore remember. Here he says it again.

Now. Just like he did to the Colossians. You were formerly. Alienated. From God. Here he says. Therefore remember that. Formerly. You. The Gentiles.

[44 : 49] In the flesh. He's just. Gentiles in the flesh. Means unbelievers. When you were an unbeliever. Who are called. Uncircumcision. By the so-called circumcision.

The Jews. And. Gentile. Unbelievers. Hated each other. They despised each other. The Jews. Would pridefully. Look down. On the unbelieving. Gentiles.

We're the chosen people. Of God. And they use that. In a prideful way. To look down. On. The Gentiles. When God. Originated. All of this. Even the. The demarcation lines.

In the temple. So that the Jews. Could bear witness. And proselyte. So that they could. Testify. To God's glory. And bring Gentiles. Over into the faith.

Into the Jewish faith. Instead. The Jews. Used it. And weaponized it. Against the Gentiles. Well the Gentiles. Obviously resented that. They didn't want to have. Any part of that.

[45 : 42] So there was this. Big fight against them. Now Paul. Is speaking. Directly to this. Remember that you. You were unbelievers. At one time. Verse 11. And then those.

You were called. The uncircumcision. By the so-called circumcision. Which is performed. In the flesh. By human hands. Remember that you. Were at that time.

In your unbelieving life. Separate from Christ. Excluded. From the commonwealth. Of Israel. Strangers. To the covenants. This is so rich. This is all. Has such rich meaning.

Having no hope. And without God. In the world. That's terrible. But now. But now. In Christ Jesus. You who formerly. Were far off. Have been brought near. That's reconciliation. By the blood of Christ. For he.

[46 : 37] Himself. Is our. Peace. Who made both groups. Jews and Gentiles. Into one. And broke down the barrier.

Of the dividing wall. The barrier. Of the dividing wall. Was in the temple. Where God's presence was. There was the court. Of the Gentiles. And there was the court. Of the Israelites.

And never the two. Would mix. In fact. In the court. Of the Israelites. They had written. If an Israelite believer. Brings a Gentile. Into the court. Of the Israelites. It's on your head. And your death.

Will be on you. In other words. Will kill you. That was the sentence. For doing that. Gentiles. Do not come into this area. Again. God had done that. So that the Jews.

Could bear testimony. And witness. And bring Gentiles. Into that. And they totally missed it. And made it an exclusive thing. The pride of man. That's what's going on.

[47 : 32] In this particular verse. Now he said. That God. Through Jesus Christ. Broke down. Those barriers. By. Verse 15. Abolishing.

Here it is again. Folks. We can't get away from it. In his flesh. The enmity. The war. Which is the law. Of commandments. Contained in ordinances.

So that in himself. In himself. There it is again. He might make the two. Into one new man. Thus. Establishing. Peace.

And might reconcile them. Both. In one body. To God. Through the cross. By it.

Having put to death. The enmity. So we have here. In this passage. The clear understanding. That God. Is reconciling men.

[48 : 27] Sinful men and women. To himself. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. And as a result. Of that. Spiritual reconciliation. Happening. Between God and man.

It makes possible. Then. God's blessing. Of man. Reconciling. With his fellow man. This is why. I said to you. From scripture. The biblical truth.

Of scripture. There cannot be peace. In the world. Among men. Until men. Are at peace. With God. In their hearts. So we can try. To fabricate peace.

All over the planet. As much as we want to. And what we're going to find. Time and time again. Is it won't hold. Until the people. Get right with God. They cannot keep.

A rightness. Between themselves. That's just Bible. I'm not trying. To be pessimistic. I'm just trying. To be real. About what we can expect. And not be naive. God is the one.

[49 : 23] Who brings peace. To men. God is the one. Who reconciles us. With each other. And makes true. Peace possible. It's the kind of peace. That has the power.

To help me. Get over me. So that I can serve you. I can get over my racism. I can get over my prejudice. I can get over my bias. I can get over my culture.

Or whatever. I can get over me. So that I can learn. To love you. And serve you. And I won't do that. Without Christ. Because it's only a matter of time.

Before you do something. That doesn't meet an expectation. Or that goes against my grain. Or that cuts against my culture. Or my preferences. How am I going to get over that?

And what if you never even know it. And don't even make an effort. To make it right. What do I do? What does God tell me to do? Forgive. Forgive. As you have been forgiven.

[50 : 23] It always circles back to Jesus. It's all about him. That we can't miss Jesus this season folks. We just can't do it. I won't let you do it.

Greg and I won't let you do it. Not that you want to. But man. You know. I'm out there with you. In the hustle and bustle. I'm out there watching 81 year old widow women. Get ripped off. That's just the world we live in.

So do you enjoy spiritual peace with God? Is he your God?

Do you enjoy the forgiveness of sins? No longer an enemy of the cross of Christ. But a friend. A life no longer warring with God.

But a life yielded in humble dependence. Submission to him. Say Jeff I want that. Well friend you can have it. How do I have it? You get on your knees before the Lord.

[51 : 23] And bow your heart to him. And you tell him what God's putting in your heart. There is no. There's no formula. It is a sinner. Falling down before his creator.

Recognizing that Jesus has died for you on the cross. And given his life blood. So that you can be forgiven. He died as your substitute. You should have been the one hanging on that cross.

Because you're the criminal. Having sinned against God. But Jesus took your place. And willingly hung himself on that cross. To bleed out.

Being tortured to death. To give himself. So that you could be forgiven. He paid your sin debt to the father. And then having done that.

You receive the sinless perfection of his life. Credited to you by God. So that when God looks at you. He sees the perfect life his son lived. In your stead.

[52 : 22] So not only do you get forgiven. But you get blessed with the sinless perfection of his son. That makes it possible for you to stand before a holy God. Blameless and above reproach.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is the message of the baby. Born in Bethlehem. To correct Eden. And that's why he went to Jerusalem.

And he knew all of that. While Adam and Eve were walking in the garden. In all the bliss. Before the storm. So this is a life that is calmed and comforted.

By the steady sure hand. Of God. Let me share two more scriptures with you. Before I conclude. It's back in John. John. Chapter 14. John 14.

27. Is where we'll start. Jesus said this. Jesus said this as he spoke about the power of the Holy Spirit being sent to minister to believers.

[53 : 28] Peace. I leave with you. My peace. That's the Hebrew word shalom. My shalom. My shalom. I give to you.

Not as the world gives. Do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled. Nor let it be fearful. And then chapter 16.

Verse 33. These things I have spoken to you. So that in me. You may have. Peace. In the world. You have tribulation. But take courage. I. Have overcome. The world. So this is how we can sum this up.

And take away these points together this morning. Mankind's rebellion. Against God. Was born. In the Garden of Eden. Mankind's forgiveness.

[54 : 29] In God. Was born in the city. Of Bethlehem. And mankind's peace with God. Was eternally secured. Secured. At Jerusalem.

Eternally. Secured. If you're in Christ Jesus. Heaven awaits. And that's fixed. In the mind. And in the heart. Of almighty God.

The creator. Of all the universe. And so that's why we say this. It's not Mary without that. All that. Makes it Mary.

It's truly Mary. And that's what we mean. When we say. Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas. Bethlehem. And Jerusalem. Because of Eden.

Let's pray together. Dear Father. We are. So richly. And deeply blessed. By your word. In this little. [55 : 26] Bitty. Brief survey. Of just. Just nuggets. And pockets. Of truth. That tie together. And relate together. In the greater.

Wonder. Of your plan. For. The salvation. Of men and women. So we look to Jesus. And we pray. That you will help us. To honor Jesus.

Because. He is worthy. Of our praise. And our worship. These are my friends. Lord. You have given. Greg and I. The. Great privilege.

Of. Shepherding. This group of people. And our prayer. For them. As their pastors. Is that you will help them. To be. Keenly.

Sharply. Discerningly. Mindful. Of you. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this season. So that in all that they say. And do. They will reflect.

[56 : 22] The goodness of your character. In good works. That you might be glorified. We pray that you would help us all. To do that. Through this week. As we.

Prepare our hearts. And our minds. For Christmas Eve. And the celebration. Of the birth of our Savior. On Christmas Day. May you be honored. In all those things. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.