The Ruin and Rescue of Humanity | Review of Genesis 3

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[0:00] There are a number of reasons why it's so good to have so many folks packed in here when we gather like this, and one of those is I get to hear you sing praises to Jesus.

It's wonderful. You drown out my music, so sometimes I end up following you. And that's fine. That works just fine. Well, beloved, Suzanne and I are back from about a week away, up in one of our favorite places in the world, and it was beautiful, and we slept a lot.
So I guess it was needed. I told somebody it was the first time in eight years I've gone up to that area and not gone hiking, which is pretty much why we went up there. I just was lazy. I just slept.
I didn't want to do anything where it would make me sweat. That's okay. But now we're back, and after hiatus, I don't know, a few months, I think, from Genesis, we're back in Genesis again.
That's where we'll be this morning. So I'll invite you to turn to Genesis chapter 3, actually. I thought I'd be in 4, but I'm actually going to be in 3 today. And the title of the message for this morning, The Ruin and Rescue of Humanity, and we're going to do Genesis 3, the entire chapter, if you can believe it.
[1:25] For those of you who come here regularly, you're thinking I'm going to give you odds he doesn't make it. But I'll make it. We will make it through this morning. Genesis 3 is where we'll be.

And what I'd like to do, beloved, is I'd like to do kind of a flyover of Genesis 3 in preparation for getting back into what will be our weekly verse-by-verse exposition, or unpacking our treatment of these chapters as we move through the book of Genesis.
Now, I concluded, actually, a sermon series, a series of messages from Genesis 3, back in, if you can believe it, March. It's been that long.
So it seems wise to take the time this morning to kind of review what God tells us, and here it comes, be ready, about the origins of sin and evil.
Now, I know here you are, some of you visiting this church, perhaps for the first time, and you have loved ones who maybe are members here, attending here, in the process of becoming members.
[2:28] And so here you are, sitting in for the first time, and I'm going to talk about sin. Couldn't we have picked a more upbeat topic to deal with? Well, you'll have to buckle in and bear with me, all right?

You'll have to wait to the end of the message for all of the good stuff to happen. And you're going to have to endure for a little while the reality of what ruins us, and what's ruined mankind, and how that all came about.
Because God gives us those answers, thankfully. He helps us understand why we do the wrong that we do toward God and toward each other. I know that with friends and family here this morning, some of what we're going to be dealing with might be new to you.
And that's another reason why I wanted to do this review. As I sat down working my way through chapter 4, I kept coming back and coming back to a review kind of mentality until I realized, let's just go through chapter 3 together and see where we end up.
Now, you look at chapter 3 and you think, well, that's a lot of material and detail to take in. Yes, that's true. So remember, I spent five full sermons in chapter 3 alone.
[3:41] Now, to get you thinking with me about why God included this chapter in the Bible, I want to share this quote with you from a faithful, wise pastor. I read a lot of this guy, appreciate his ministry very much.

He lived in the early part of the 1900s. He was actually born right at the end of the 1800s. He served the Lord faithfully until his death in 1963.

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His name is A.W. Tozer. And Tozer said this, The widest thing in the universe is not space. It is the potential capacity of the human heart.
Being made in the image of God, it is capable of almost unlimited extension in all directions. And one of the world's worst tragedies is that we allow our hearts to shrink until there is room in them for little besides ourselves.
Wow. That captures the essence of sin. That captures the essence of what Genesis 3 communicates to us about sin and wrongdoing and evil and where it all comes from.
[5:09] Sin is the problem presented to us in this chapter. And the issue is how sin dominates the human heart so that each of us then, by nature and by God's definition, are sinners in need of a Savior.

If you're not a sinner, you're not in need of a Savior. We're all sinners. We'll see that as we go through this. And what I want us to understand here is that sin dominates the human heart.
It's an issue that we all deal with, all struggle with. It's what we have in common. When I talk about the heart, I need to define it very briefly and quickly by the way Scripture defines it.
When we talk about the heart, we're not talking about the organ pumping blood through your body. The heart is the way that the Hebrews came to understand and talk about the core of your personhood.
Your heart is who you really are at the core of who you are. It's your deepest self. And the Bible says that everything about our lives issues from our hearts are the core of who we are.
[6:19] The Hebrews used to refer to it with a word that meant kidney. The reason they did that was because they were trying to come up with a concept that would deal with the deepest part of us, deep organs, and that's what they thought of.

So we're talking about your heart and talking about who you are at the deepest level of your selfhood, your personhood. That's who you are. That's what we're talking about when we talk about where sin resides.
So let me ask you, rhetorically of course, don't answer, just follow along and think with me. Have you ever been the cause of another person's disappointment?
Have you ever been the cause of another person's grief or suffering? Have you ever been the cause of another person's pain, heartache, or sadness?
Have you ever at any time in your life said or did something to someone else that was wrong? something that you were later ashamed of and that you felt guilty about because it caused the other person a certain kind and amount of personal pain.
[7:38] And you felt bad about that. And you knew you were wrong. Maybe something you said, maybe something you did because in that moment in situation, you, you were being selfish.

You were being prideful. Or perhaps you were being greedy or inconsiderate. You were being impatient, unkind, maybe even vindictive, malicious, or just plain mean in the moment.
I can think of times in my childhood particularly. I wasn't saved until I was in college. I didn't come to trust Jesus until I was in college. So I had a good amount of time both as a child and as a young adult to sin away.
And I remember many times like this in my life, God help me, where I was the issue in causing other people pain. Have you done anything like this and have you then shifted the blame for your behavior onto the other person and maybe assigned motives to them and tried to manipulate your way out of the wrong that you've done?
Have you ever done that? Some of us are really good at that. Now look, if we're honest, we all have to say yes to these questions at some level or another, don't we?
[9:04] So I'd like for you to ask yourself an additional question. Why did I, why do I do stuff like this? Where does this come from in me?

Perhaps we need to also ask, why do other people do these kinds of things to me? Where does that come from? Why does our world seem to operate on this kind of thing?
Have you ever taken a quick survey of the kind of movies that are popular on Netflix and Amazon Prime and all and just kind of surveyed the themes and I tell you by far the most popular theme in movies for some time has been vindictiveness.
You hurt me or do something to me and my family, I'm going to visit it a hundred times on you. And so we have so many vengeance movies. Be careful, friends.

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Be careful for what that will do to your heart watching that kind of stuff. Where we take on the idea that because some people were bad to us, we are justified to go back and be bad to them.
[10:16] When the Lord tells us very clearly, do not return evil for evil. I'm not saying don't protect yourself. I'm talking about people who make it their life's work to go out and harm people who harm them.

I'm going to get you. My wife and I laughed the other day and marveled. We saw yet another movie with Liam Neeson as the lead and it just seems like Liam Neeson is making a million dollar killing off of movies like this.
Some of you will know who he is. That's the world that we live in. The problem is this. The world doesn't understand one single thing about where sin comes from and why. Much less what to do about it.
They don't diagnose it correctly and they certainly don't deal with it correctly. And that's a problem. That's a problem. Now what you and I need to explore this morning is how Genesis chapter 3 explains sin, evil and the wrong that we do toward God first of all and then toward each other.
Only God has provided the truth about the diagnosis and the remedy for sin that each of us have to deal with this human being. Now here's the outline real quickly that we're going to work from and this is a very truncated kind of message.
[11:34] We're just hitting some of the high points. I want to remind you if I forget to do it later remember that I've done five full sermons on each one of the points that I'm going to put up here and I want to invite you to do one of two things perhaps both if you'd like.

By the end of this time you're going to have questions if you're not used to hearing this kind of stuff or if this is the first time you've ever been exposed to this. You're going to and that's fine. That's good. We're not intimidated by questions nor by the possibility or potentiality that we might have to say I don't know.
We'll help you find the answers. We'll work with you to dig them out of the scriptures. All right. Please remember that I've preached five sermons in five points on this. Each one of them got their full treatment. So if you have questions at the end you could go back and you can find those sermons online at our website and listen to them in full.
And or you could come to any of the members of our church and ask them questions about what you hear today including Greg and I as the pastors here. All right. There are many options open to you.
We would love to hear from you. That's all good. Here's the outline. Sin's constitution which deals with its nature. That was the first sermon that I preached in verses one through five. Then it's consummation how it comes to completion and fulfillment in our lives.
[12:47] What does that look like? The consequences we have to deal with when we deal with sin it has a ruinous impact on humanity on the whole and on our lives individually. Sin's curses that's how God judges criminality.

That's how God looks at sin in our life. We're criminals and we're creating criminal acts in our sin. And then sin's conqueror. Here's the good news but you're going to have to wait a little while for me to get there.
That's God's radical remedy for what is killing us. Sin is a disease and it is cancerous and it is terminal. And we're going to see that as we work through this together.
So we'll jump right in and we'll look at this first point sin's constitution in verses one through five and we're asking what is sin as God sees and defines it.
You're not interested in my definition of sin. I'm not interested in your definition of sin. We need to be put on the same page. What does God say sin is? What does God say? If you'll look with me at chapter three verses one through five we'll carry all of this through in turn and sequence.
[13:51] Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made. And he said to the woman indeed have God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden.

And the woman said to the serpent from the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat. But from the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God said you shall not eat from it and you shall not touch it lest you die.
And the serpent said to the woman you surely shall not die for God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be open and you will be like God knowing good and evil.

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what is sin as God defines it and sees it in our lives? Well the Bible fortunately answers that for us. The Bible says everyone who does sin also does lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. That's how God looks at it.
[15:02] That's why we refer to it as criminality. We are breaking God's law. law. That's 1 John 3 4. This refers to God's laws of right and wrong summed up in the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments sum up the law of God for living before Him and each other. So there's a certain morality a certain right and wrong to life and we feel that.
We come into the world and we grow up in it and we start to sense it that it's wrong for me to take the toy and bonk my sibling on the top of the head and my parents have something to say about that if I do that kind of thing.
And there's a certain sense that I have in the wrongness of what I do even though I may try to justify it or manipulate the truth or rationalize it. We know because God has written it on our conscience and on our heart.
All right now let's ask another question. Let's look at the everyone in that verse and ask this. Does everyone in that verse mean that all people are sinners in God's sight? Does everyone then do sin in God's estimation of things?
[16:12] Does everybody do that? Well fortunately once again folks you don't have to rely on my opinions about any of this. I'll show you what the Bible says. Here it is. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

That's in the book of Romans that Paul the apostle Paul wrote in chapter 3 and verse 23. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's not my opinion or my judgment.
That's the judgment of the God of the universe who made everything. God also additionally said this. We wouldn't be in any doubt at all about it.
There is none righteous not even one. Not even one. Again in the book of Romans same chapter but in verse 10.
Sin then is something that we need to come carefully in a definition of. We need to be very very thorough in understanding what God says about this. So let me offer this quote from Heath Lambert a theologian and pastor.
[17:15] He's pastoring currently in Florida. He says sin is a disposition of human beings that leads to a failure to conform to the moral law of God.

There's your criminality. Notice he says that sin is a disposition. Human beings have a nature that is oriented away from God.
Sin does not just describe then the bad things human beings do or fail to do. More fundamentally it describes who we are as wicked people.
Now I know you hear that and think my goodness that is just not good news. That's all in my faith. I know. I know. I can remember when it became very personal to me in college realizing my need to deal with what I knew was going on in me.
That I was a sinful man and I was running from the Lord. Now I want to draw your attention in chapter one to this reality. God created chapter one of Genesis just as a reminder.
[18:24] God created a perfect paradise to be inhabited by mankind. God didn't just create the world and then have an afterthought and say oh I know I'll create some people to be on it.

He started from day one, moment one, creating the world so that he could make mankind as his crowning achievement and put mankind in that paradise. He made the world for us.
It's our world. It's not Satan's world. It's our world. In chapter two, God explains how created, he created at the beginning two perfect people, two perfect people and he put them in that perfect paradise and these two perfect people had perfect freedom to live to the fullest enjoying everything that God had made for them.
Everything God made, every grain of sand, every particle of dust, every tree, everything that God made, all the creatures were made for mankind and in paradise, it was all enjoyable.
It truly was bliss. It was paradise on earth in every way. That's what the Bible describes and again, I spent many, many times, many sermons walking through chapter one explaining the different aspects of this wonderful, perfect creation and what God did in putting these people in the middle of this paradise.
[19:55] Now God put only one limitation on these two people and some of you will recognize and remember what that limitation is. They must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

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and this is what Satan's talking about here.

God's lying to you. I know he told you that if you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you'll die. You surely shall not die. What God's doing is he's holding out on you.
He doesn't want you to be just like him and have the same level of power and control over your life that he does. See, he's keeping this from you. But if you'll listen to me and follow what I say, it'll put you on a plane with God and oh boy.
This is the lie that he's perpetuating on these people. There were so many fruit bearing trees in the garden.
I mean there were all kinds of trees that were there for them to eat from, take from, all kinds of plants. Remember at this time people did not eat meat.
[21:02] That's not happening yet because there's no death. There has to be death for people to eat animals. So that's not happening at this point. Eating meat came after sin entered the world as part of the curse and consequence of that sin.

So right now that's not happening. Everything's bliss. Nothing has to die. There's no hunting. No need for it. God's made all of that fruit low hanging so they can get to it very, very easily.
It's wonderful. It's paradise. What would we expect from paradise? This is the one limitation. They must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now there were so many trees to choose from that it really shouldn't have been an issue.
So many that were open. Just this one is off limits. Now hear me carefully, friends. The scripture says that if they disobeyed God and ate from that tree and from that tree alone, they would die.
Why is that such a big deal? Well, none of us like to think about death. Death sounds terrible. Yeah, but listen, they would die in a world created without death.
[22:10] There was no death. They couldn't look around after they heard that and say, oh, death. Yes. I remember the other day I came across the carcass of a bear and it was full of all this massiness and it sunk.

And yeah, I don't want anything. They didn't have anything like that. In other words, they were being told this and they were being told to take God at his word, whether they fully understood it or not was not the issue.
Did God say it? Did God give it as instruction? Yes. Then feed on it. What did the psalmist tell us this morning? Your statute stands. Your words are life.
Life. Now Satan's telling them, no, they're not. And if you disobey them, you won't die. It's a it's a kind of a kidney of break.
Are you really falling for that? How naive kind of thing that Satan's doing to these people. But God is telling the truth, isn't he? And so now in terms of our text, enter the serpent.
[23:23] Enter the serpent. Now, friends, listen, I know that reading this and thinking about it, we want to ask, you know, is this an allegory?

Is this some kind of a Jewish myth that that Moses wrote? And what's important is not that we believe there was really a creature like this, but maybe that this creature represents something.
No, the Bible tells us this is a living being. This creature is real. I'm going to show you why it's so important for us to understand the reality of this created being.
This is a created, crafty, and camouflaged creature. But God knows full well who this creature is and he tells us.
He reveals it to us. There are several places in scripture where we come to understand who we're dealing with. Now, I've already given it away, calling him Satan, but I want to show you, don't take my word for it, if you'll turn to 2 Corinthians, the book of 2 Corinthians, another letter that Paul, the Apostle Paul, wrote to a church, a group of people like us, a local church in the city of Corinth.
[24:37] 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Let me get there. And I want to draw your attention, beloved, to this.

Chapter 11, verse 3. Paul comes to the place where he says in his letter, but I fear. Now, the Apostle is responding here and he's saying, look, I have this intense concern.
What about, Paul? That, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so he's going back to the garden to the very beginning where sin entered humanity in the world, and he's speaking to that circumstance as historical fact.
Just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, I'm concerned, intensely concerned, your mind, your heart will be corrupted from what?

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The simplicity or sincerity and purity of devotion to Christ. I am concerned that Satan or this serpent will draw you away from a sincere and pure devotion to Jesus, that you'll make your life about anything and everything but Jesus.
[26:00] That's what his design is. That's the target that you have painted on your back, especially as a Christian. That he'll draw you away from a focus in your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, on being devoted to him, loving him, being loved by him.

Drop down, if you would, into verse 14 and look there with me. He goes on to say in chapter 11, verse 14, and no wonder, for even Satan, now it comes out, disguises himself as an angel of light. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. This is how he is able to deceive. He is a grand deceiver. Now if you'll go to the very last book of the Bible in Revelation, Revelation chapter 12, I want to show you the Bible's definition and explanation just in brief of where this creature came from and how he came to be on the earth.
Now these are historical facts, folks, not myths. Chapter 12, beginning in verse 7. And there was a war in heaven.
Michael, the archangel, and his angels were waging war with what he hears calling the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war and the dragon and his angels were not strong enough.
[27:38] And there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. What happened to the dragon and his angels? And the great dragon was thrown down. Now notice what he calls this great dragon the serpent of old.

That is a reference to the garden. The serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan who does what?
Deceives the world. That is his function. That's why he exists. He was thrown down where? To the earth. And his angels, those are demons, his angels, his angels were thrown down with him.
What we refer to in Christianity as demons are real. The demons are the fallen angels that joined Satan in an attempted coup and rebellion against God in heaven.
They were not successful and they were thrown down. And their realm now is a spiritual realm here in what we know as our earth.
[28:44] That's the realm they live in. It's an unseen spiritual realm but it's very, very real. And it's a war that is ongoing and being fought out of physical sight.

Our physical eyes can see some of the ramifications and consequences of that spiritual warfare but we don't see demons and angels going at it while we're living on the earth.
No. It makes for good movie making but not in reality. Here, folks, now back to Genesis chapter 3. Here is where we see collectively when we take those verses together the spiritual enemy of God and humanity.
This is Satan then in the garden in disguise. In disguise. Satan comes in the guise of a beautiful creature to tempt Eve into the same act of pride that got him thrown out of heaven.
And that is this. To want more. To go beyond what God provides and to go beyond what God says. It is then to desire to be her own God, Eve.
[30:00] To be her own God. As if God had deprived Eve of something good and needed. God's not enough. His words not enough.

His love is not enough. His provision all around me isn't enough. This paradise isn't enough. It's just not enough for me. I want to be my own God.
I want to call the shot. I want to decide. God's not enough to be well, the trap was carefully and skillfully baited and set. Now, it just needs to be sprung and to enslave the prey.
And that's exactly what happens next. We go to the second point very quickly since consummation. And that's in verse 6 of chapter 3 in Genesis.
And it simply says, Then the woman, Eve, saw that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was good for food. There you go. Oh boy, that looks good.
[31:02] That looks yummy. And that it was a delight to the eyes. Boy, look how beautiful it is. How can something that looks so yummy and looks so beautiful be that? And so, you find her drifting.

You see her moving away from God, moving away from what God said about the tree. You will surely die. And now she's beginning to embrace what will poison her and kill her.
It's starting to look really good to her. And that the tree was desirable to make one wise. That was the final thing before Satan set the hook and then reeled her in.

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It's going to make me wise. I'm going to be able to be wise like God and make my own decisions for my own life about what it should be and shouldn't be, that kind of thing.
So what did she do? She took from its fruit, that is, she picked it off the tree. We don't know what kind of fruit it was. And she ate. And she gave also to her husband with her.
[31:58] And then Adam ate. You're familiar with this story. What are we dealing with? We're dealing with the fact that, look, Satan lied. He lied. You surely will not die.

For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and notice, you will be like God. That was, that was the hook. Knowing good and evil.
But nothing could be further from the truth, friends. Nothing. The couple believed the lie. They sinned against the goodness of God as their creator and protector.
They ate from the tree and here's the thing, they did die. They died. You say, now Jeff, wait a minute, I've read the Bible and I know there's a lot that's going to happen after this with Adam and Eve.
So they didn't die. No, they did die. But we need to help each other understand what are we talking about? God promised they'd die. They died. Well, what are we talking about then?
[32:58] What happened? In that very moment of sinful rebellion, they began to die physically. They began to die. But also in that moment, something even more dreadful, more terrifying, more sinister, happened in them.

They died spiritually. They died spiritually. Well, what does that mean? What is spiritual death?
It is separation from God. Something they had never known. Something that God intended that they would never know. The sin of their heart acted to separate them from God forever.
So, paradise lost. No more paradise. All it took was for the couple to disbelieve God and then replace the truth of God with a lie.
That's Satan's ongoing counter to the truth of God and to the joy and peace that human beings can have in Jesus Christ. To counter it with the deceptive lie that we can be our own God, call our own shots, chart our own way.
[34:09] All the while, Satan has set the hook and he just reels us in. Separation from God is the death that they died. They will eventually die physically as a consequence of their sin.

But right now, they remain walking dead. That is, they're physically alive but spiritually dead to God, separated from Him. Something's going to have to be done about that.
Before we can deal with that, we have to talk about the consequences of sin. That takes us into verse 7 down through verse 13. And the eyes of both of them were opened.
Okay, Satan got that part right, didn't he? The eyes of both of them were opened. In other words, a new spiritual dimension was opened to these people that God wanted to protect them from.
They knew they were naked. That's the terrible part of it. There was such innocence and such peace that being naked wasn't an issue.
[35:12] There's nothing to be ashamed of. Nothing to feel self-conscious about. Nobody was manipulating each other. Nobody was lusting after each other. Nobody was thinking in terms of greed or pride or trying to get something from somebody.

No. But now it is. They sewed fig leaves together and they made themselves loin coverings out of their shame. Verse 8.
Then they heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the midst of the trees. That's one of the most sad and heart-rending verses in all of the Bible.
That here are the two people created perfect in God hiding themselves from God. Too ashamed to face it. Well, what does God do in His compassion?
What does God do in His patience, in His love? Does He leave them in that state? Verse 9. Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? Not because He didn't know where he was but because He wanted to make him accountable.
[36:17] Where are you? In other words, Adam, come here. I want to talk to you. And then He said, Well, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked.

I was afraid because I'm ashamed of what I've done. My eyes have been opened to a reality you wanted to protect me from and I wouldn't listen so I hit. Verse 11.
And He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? You see, Adam hasn't admitted it yet, has he? He's delaying the truth.

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So God goes right to the point. You've eaten from the tree, haven't you? God knew He had done that. And the man said, Yes, I did. And it's on me and I'm sorry and what can I tell you?
I shouldn't have done it. I want to, I'm going to fall down here before you and weep my eyes out and tell you, you know that girl?
[37:19] That girl that you gave me that's what He says, isn't it? And He said, The woman, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate.

So He threw Eve right under the bus, didn't He? But God knows He's not going to let him get away with that. Verse 13. Then Yahweh God said to the woman, now He turns to the woman, let's see what you have to say.
What is this you've done? And the woman said, the serpent. She doesn't throw Adam under the bus, she goes to the snake. Oh, it was the serpent. He deceived me and I ate.
Well, that's true. He did deceive her and she did eat. So she's telling the truth to that extent. So what's going on here? What are we dealing with? We're dealing with what I say up here, the ruinous impact on humanity, the consequences.
Verses 7 through 13 capture the essence of sin as a soul devastating force of evil. Thoroughly and completely corrupting what it invades so that there's no part of us that is untouched, unblemished, unpoisoned by sin.
[38:33] I don't have a little place in me, a little vestige of me that's a hold out from sin or safeguarded or protected that makes me want to reach toward God. No, everything about me is fully corrupted by what sin does to my soul.

The actions of God then, this is what this highlights for us. These two people are so steeped in their selfishness and in their self-protection, rationalization, greed, deception, that it contrasts so profoundly with this compassionate God coming to seek them out and confront them.
Why? To humiliate them? To further shame them? Is that what we're going to see through the text? You'll see. The actions of God in these verses reveal His compassionate, saving nature.
He is a God who seeks for sinners who hide. The actions of Adam and Eve reveal mankind's corrupt, selfish nature.
Adam and Eve hide from God from the shame and guilt and fear, so they blame each other. They do what humanity's done ever since when it comes to this guilt, shame, and fear. They locate the problem outside of themselves as individuals.
[39:50] Adam doesn't want to take responsibility that this is his issue, so he blame shifts it onto Eve. Eve doesn't want to take the responsibility of her actions, so she blame shifts it onto the serpent and so on and so on and so on.

We're very good at that. The world's very, very good at that. We've been practicing it for a very long time. And God sees right through it, thank the Lord. That's self-deception, folks.
That's selfish pride. That's what gives us so much trouble. Our own fight against personal sin and the evil of this world is grounded in what happened to and even more importantly what happened in Adam and Eve.
It's all connected according to the Bible. Adam and Eve reflect who we are. That's hard. I understand that part. They reflect who we are.
We hide from God. We blame shift. We manipulate. We're selfish. We're prideful. We're greedy.
Verses 7 through 13 then expresses the consequences we all personally experience due to the sin nature, that soul-defining problem that sin creates for us that we have in common with Adam and Eve.
[41:05] And each of us can trace our sin nature back to our original parents. So I'm talking about this spiritual, physical consequence of this relationship to our original parents, Adam and Eve.

And that event is how each of us were there in the garden with them in heart and soul. Why? Because we're human. Because they have a human nature that they passed on to their children and their children to their children and on and on and on it goes until you and I come about.
Human beings have been passing on this nature to each other since it came into humanity's existence in the fall, what we call the fall in the Garden of Eden. So when I see evil in my children, I know where they got it from.
I just look in the mirror and I say, yep, I was born with that from my parents and my kids were born.
Now you come to a place in your life where you can't blame your parents anymore for the choices you're making. So you don't hear me standing up here going, yeah, Dad. Right.

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[42:13] You ruined me. I get to a certain point in my life and I have to make my own choices and stand on my own feet and realize that I've got my own sin problem. Right?

We would have done the same thing if we had been in the Garden because our moral responsibility and culpability are being shown as human beings. That's what the point is. Because we're human, we would have done the same thing.
This is what humanity does when it turns away from the Word of God. This is what humanity is when it turns away and rebels from the Lord God.
It's who we are. So I could say it this way. I'll put this up here for us. Sin changed their nature because that's what the Bible says happens. It changed their nature from being spiritually alive to God to being spiritually dead to God.
And so rebels, rebels, we sang about being rebels to your will. Rebels defines who we are in relationship to God as God sees it. He calls us rebels and criminals because by nature we abandon the truth.
[43:19] Now that's the most devastating reality about the corruptive consequences of sin that we all live with. It's really bad when we sin against each other and do evil to each other.

I hate it when I act selfishly towards Suzanne. I can't stand it when I realize that some aspect of my life is being hypocritical.
Oh, that's horrible. But let me tell you the worst part of what the Bible says about our sin is that it's against God. It's against God.
You see, we're not leveling judgment against each other and saying, well, Brian, because you sinned against me, I am condemning you to hell. So have that. I can't do that.
I'm in the same boat he is. I sinned against other people and I deserve hell. The issue is we have sinned against an almighty God, the creator of the universe. He gets to act as judge and his judgment is the penalty for sin is death.
[44:19] That's what he said, whether we like it or not. The penalty for sin is death. That's the dilemma that we all find ourselves in because of sin.

We're rebels at heart. And as I say, it's the most devastating aspect of what sin is. But God. Now, please hear me, folks, what I just said. I just said two of the most powerful words in the Bible.
But God. Some of you will recognize and remember how we taught on that spirit grace. There are places in the Bible where we see this terrible reality of sin and death and what it does to us.
And then the verse transitions and says, but God. God. And then God moves into the picture and everything changes. That's where we're headed. Hang on.
But God is not willing to leave Adam and Eve in their sin, shame and fear. Thank the Lord. He's not willing to do that. He's not willing to leave them in their deception and disobedience.
[45:17] No. In their hiding from him. If they had had their way, they'd have stayed in the garden and stayed hidden and not had anything more to do with God and lived in that shame and fear. But that's not what God's going to let them do.

What does he do then? He confronts them in love in order to restore them in love in a right relationship with himself. God is acting to do what these human beings cannot do for themselves. They will not initiate toward the Lord. So God comes and gets them. And that's what God does. He rescues them. This is why you need a Savior. We need to be saved.
We need it. And God's provided it for us. Now I've got to deal with one other thing before we get to the really good news. So let me hasten to do that.
Look at this. Sin's curses. Sin's curses. This is God's just judgment. He's not showing any partiality. Not to worry about that with the Lord.
[46:17] This is a just judgment on criminality. And it begins in verse 14 with these curses that God's now going to pronounce because of what we've done. And Yahweh God said to the serpent, so he starts with the source of the problem.

Because you have done this, cursed are you more than any of the cattle and more than every beast of the field. On your belly you will go and dust you will eat all the days of your life.
I will put, now notice this, I will put enmity or war, conflict between you and the woman and between your seed, Satan, and her seed, Eve's seed.
He shall bruise you on the head. The seed from the woman will bruise you on the head. But you, your seed, shall bruise him on the heel.

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I'll explain that in a moment. To the woman, then, he turns and says, I will greatly multiply your pain and conception. In pain, you will bear children.
[47:19] Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. Remember, I did an entire sermon on that. So you can go back and listen to that. I'm just not going to have time to go through it all. Then to Adam, Adam's last, he says, because you have listened to the voice of your wife 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 pain, you will eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles that shall grow for you and you will eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread. Till you return to the ground because from it you were taken to you of dust and to dust you shall return. So guys, there you go.
We go out and we do the work of day world and we do our jobs and sweat's fine but the pain that comes with all of that, the toil, the wear and tear it takes on our bodies, that's all due to what happened in the garden.
Ladies, all the pain you go through in childbirth, etc., etc., all the conflict in marriage, I explained all that when I did that sermon, all of that is the result of this curse that is part of the consequence.
[48:30] You have to understand that God is leading out consequences for what these people did. So what are these curses? Let's ask real quickly, what are these curses? These curses are from a particular Hebrew word, arar, arar.

It means to invoke a degree of divine doom. So these are divine penalties imposed on criminals. That's how we need to see this based on the Hebrew words, grammar, and structure here.
Divine penalty. God sees unbelievers as wicked people. They're lawbreakers. And this helps us understand what these verses are.
God isn't being mean. He isn't being unjust. He isn't some terrible, grumpy grandpa up there just looking for opportunities to put us under his thumb.
These are consequences. We need to understand and be responsible for the choices we make in life. So these are penalties that are prescribed by a just God.
[49:36] They change life as God had made it on the world and for these people. The combined effects of sin and judgment are the reasons we all suffer in the ways we do.

this is why the world operates like it does. Why God tells us that the ways of this world are in a progressive state of entropy. That is, inevitable decline.
Social decline, cultural decline, and degeneration. The Bible teaches that the world is not moving toward a better world. We cannot science our way into a better world.
The Bible tells us that as we live on this planet, it is all marching toward destruction where God's going to take all of this out and He's going to create a new heaven and a new earth for us.
He's going to need to do that. We're going to get pretty soon to Genesis chapter 6. We're going to start talking about the flood. We're going to start talking about what happens in the flood and why it was necessary and the kinds of things that were going on on the earth.
[50:40] And folks, it is sickening. God had to destroy it one time. He's coming back to do it again except this time He'll destroy it and remake it brand new and His people will inhabit that brand new place.

So this reality of painful conflict is going to be reflected in the pain of childbirth. There's going to be war, war here now. That's the consequence. That war is going to be reflected in the pain of childbirth.
It's going to be reflected in the offspring that come into this world. It's going to be reflected in the conflict in marriage between a husband and a wife. A dad and a mom. And it's all going to spill over into relationships across cultures around the world.
It doesn't matter where you're born, who you are, what language you speak, what color your skin is. This is a human problem on a spiritual level and it will not go away according to the Scripture.
Now, here's the good news. Sin's conqueror. I'm going to come back to verse 15. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.
[51:47] He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Who is that all talking about? All right, I'll dissect that in a minute. Look at verse 20 if you would. Now, the man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

You see, we all descend from Adam and Eve, all of us. Then Yahweh God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and what did he do? He clothed them. What an act of love.

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Then Yahweh God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us to know good and evil. And now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever.
That means live forever in this condition of ruination and sin. This is a protection. Therefore, Yahweh God, in verse 23, sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.
So God drove the man out and at the east of the Garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.
[52:54] God didn't remove it or destroy it. He left it there and put a guard over it as a reminder that this is all a grace of God so that these people won't eat from the other tree, the tree of life, and live forever in that ruined condition with no hope.

No hope. That's what's happening in this particular verse. Now what we want to zero in on is verse 15 as I bring all of this to a conclusion. Alright? Verse 15. It's somewhat enigmatic.
That is, somewhat puzzling. I understand that. When I preached this back whenever, March, whatever, I took time to show how this verse tells us what God will do to rescue humanity from this spiritual war within and among us.
Eve is going to give birth to two lines of offspring. That's what's going to end up happening. A line who are ungodly, God-hating people, who have Satan as their spiritual father because the verse tells us that these people are his offspring.
Well, Satan's not going to come down and have babies. We don't believe that. These people are going to be human beings. They're going to be born and raised up and they're going to be God-haters.
[54:19] We all start life in that condition. But these people are going to continue in that and they're going to have Satan as their father. He said, that's going to be real. They're going to be all over the place and among us.

Two lines. This is going to be represented if you come back next week. You're going to start seeing how God developed this thing. And the line that's going to be first represented by these kind of people will be the line of Cain.
Cain. Cain is going to be the representative force showing us the start of this line. And you're going to see what Cain does out of the gate. As soon as sin hits humanity right out of the gate, Adam and Eve have two sons and then you're going to see what happens in their relationship because of sin. Then you're going to see them have another son and the Bible's going to make clear the lineage of that son and that's going to be very important because that lineage is going to show us the line of promise from whence this conqueror, this sin deliverer is going to come from.
So we have one line that's going to fight against the conqueror coming and there's another line that God's going to use to bring the conqueror into existence. That is, to birth this person in a city called Bethlehem about 2,000 years ago.
[55:38] This is what's going to be traced for us in Genesis all the way back to the beginning of its second year. It's so wise no man could have ever come up with this. The cross of Jesus Christ is so mind-boggling, it is so terrifying, it is so disgusting and yet so beautiful no man could have ever come up with it.

I want to talk about that just for a moment. God will raise up from Eve then a very different line. A godly line of offspring who are going to come to love and obey God is their spiritual father and this sets the stage for spiritual conflict on a grand worldwide scale.
And that's exactly what we see. Do you really think that Israel is fighting the Arabs because there are Israelis and Arabs? No. That's the surface.
That's the symptomology of the deeper issue. Alright, look at this. God is creating a state of war and I went through the sermon and I showed you where God is actually creating this and why.
I just don't have time to develop that now. The first, he says, is between you and the woman. Look at the text. Between you and the woman. So the curse of warfare begins with two individuals.
[56:53] Satan and Eve. Because God is pronouncing judgment on Satan. And so he says, you, Satan, and the woman are going to be at war. It's a lifelong thing.

But then, notice, the conflict in the text spreads. I will put enmity or war, conflict between you and the woman and, he goes on to say, between your seed and her seed.
Very interesting. So the bitter hostility will also be perpetuated through and between Satan's offspring and Eve's offspring. And then it goes on to say something very enigmatic.

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Look at this. He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. What we have then is this warfare, this spiritual warfare that will manifest itself in physical conflicts between individuals, marriages, cultures, societies, countries.
That's all spiritually driven. And this warfare shifts back to refer to two individuals here at the end. He, Christ. He shall bruise you, Satan, on the head.
[58:10] And you, Satan, shall bruise him, that is, Jesus, on the heel. Again, remember, I explained all that as we went through it. So while this enmity or this war or conflict begins with Satan and Eve, it quickly progresses to include their offspring and ultimately climaxes in a life and death spiritual battle between Satan and Jesus.

That's where it's all headed. So this is a prophecy. This is the first promise that we have in the Bible that God is going to send a deliverer for us to help us with this sin problem that ruins our lives and poisons us against the Lord.
Now that brings us, friends, to the good news. That brings us to the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross of Jesus. Notice this. Since the punishment for sin is death and since everyone has sinned against God, we all need God's forgiveness.
Because our sin is ultimately and primarily against God and what He has called on us to be as human beings and how to live because we've sinned against that, our sin is ultimately the wrong we've done against God.
So we need His forgiveness. I don't need your forgiveness and you don't need mine as much as we need God. We start there and then we move out from there in our relationships.
[59:40] Notice this. The Bible tells us Jesus is God's provision for our forgiveness. Jesus is God's only provision. Not one, not the primary, the only provision for our forgiveness.

So I can say it this way to us. Jesus Christ is God's ultimate weapon against sin and death. God wielded this weapon in the most unlikely of ways.
You say, how Jeff? Well, this way. God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a Roman cross in our place. Now please try to track with me on this.
Jesus went to the cross willingly. He laid down His sinless life as our substitute.
He stood in our place. He took our place. God then laid our sins on Jesus as if Jesus had committed those sins Himself.
[60:50] Then, having laid my sins on Jesus, having laid your sins on Jesus, looking at Jesus as if He had committed those sins, God then poured out His holy anger on His own Son and He punished His own innocent Son to death on our behalf.

Jesus stood in our place taking on our sins and suffering the punishment of God's wrath and judgment poured out wholly and completely on His own Son because of what we had done.
Somebody had to do it. And the only person that could do it was a person who Himself was sinless. Somebody who was human because we're human and yet without sin.
somebody who wasn't suffering from the same dilemma, the same poison and the same cancer that is ruining us as human beings. Well, where are we going to find somebody like that?
Everybody born of other people have this same nature. So what did God do? By the power of the Holy Spirit, He sent Jesus Christ to be born of a woman so that Jesus' Father is God the Father.
[62:06] a miracle. I'm telling you, men could never think this up. They could never figure this out. This is all so mind-boggling. But that's exactly what God did. He sent His holy, innocent, perfect Son.

And His Son lived a sinless, perfect life. And He lived that life on our behalf. Why? Well, I want to tell you that. Jesus Christ went to the grave for three days after He died in our place suffering our penalty.
just as all the prophets said that He would. He Himself even said that He would. He went to the grave for three days. Then God raised Him from the dead. And God raised Him from the dead after three days as a sign to show the world that what Jesus did on your behalf, I accept.
The fact that I've brought Him back to life again and put Him at the right hand of the throne of God the Father means that I accept Jesus making substitute for you. Amen, yes!
And we have proof! The resurrection is that proof! Then He gives us the guarantee of the Holy Spirit coming to live in our lives to spiritually enliven us, animate us in the truth of God, in the reality of who God is as this seeking God.

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[63:25] No, I won't let you hide from me. I know you to me. Come here, you. You. And He loves you and He saves you but at the cost of His Son.

At the cost of His Son. Each of us who will come to trust in Jesus Christ alone then for the forgiveness of sin, God wipes us clean of guilt and shame and fear.
He gives us Jesus' perfect sinless life in place in place of sin. That's why Jesus Christ lived that life of sinlessness that He did.
He lived it on your behalf. Just as He took on our sins and paid the penalty for those sins on this side of the cross and the resurrection now, we are credited with the life Jesus lived as if we'd lived it.
Jesus gets death as if He lived our sin. We get life as if we lived His sinless life. It's an exchange. You say, Jeff, what in me?
[64:33] How does that happen? I know, right? And why me? If that's how you're feeling right now, you're tracking me really good. I have reeled you in in the love of the Lord.

How does that happen? It happens through faith. What's the conduit? What's the pipe of love that God sends so that we are able to receive that offer of Jesus Christ as our substitute and as our perfect righteousness?
How does that even happen? You said, I'm dead. Right. It happens through faith and faith is a gift from God. So God gives you the gift of believing.
You come to the place where you believe and your heart cries out in belief and so your mouth confesses and testifies to that reality. Oh my goodness. You've opened up my eyes and I see my need for your forgiveness.
I understand it. For the first time that happened to me for the first time in my life. I see. I see. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And we confess Jesus Christ. Please God save me in your son.
[65:41] Please give me life in your son. Please forgive me for the sins that I've committed against you. Help me to believe Jesus. Help me to follow Jesus. Help me to love Jesus. Don't let me live in self-deception or fear or shame or guilt.

That's not who I want to be. Thank you for rescuing me. Friends, this is how God clothes us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The text tells us at the end of Genesis chapter 3 that God killed an animal or animals and he used the death of those animals to clothe Adam and Eve so that they wouldn't have to deal with that nakedness issue anymore.
He covered their sin and shame at the cost of animal life. Now look, this foreshadowed what God did in clothing you and I in the perfect life of Jesus at the cost of his own son.
Jesus had to die to clothe us in righteousness. That is, in the right standing and perfection of his son so that we could stand before a holy God. That's the cross.
That's the cross. That's why we make such a big deal out of this. That's why we have to talk about sin before we can talk about this wonderful conqueror who has come to remedy our sin problems.
[66:58] Now, for those of us who are going to come to the baptisms this afternoon, you are going to hear, you are going to see the testimonies of nine people who have come to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.

You are going to hear how God opened their spiritual eyes to see their need for his forgiveness. And I want to close with this verse from the scripture that I will put up here on the screen. This is how the Bible captures this wonderful truth about the love of God for sinners like you and me in giving his only son to rescue us from sin and death.
It is one of my favorite verses in all the Bible. By this the love of God was manifested in us shown in us that God has sent his only begotten son into the world so that we might live through him.
In this is God's love. Not that we have loved God but that God loved us and sent us his son to be the satisfaction for our sins.
only Jesus could have satisfied that. Only his death could have accomplished it. And we're grateful for it. Amen. Will you pray with me? Well Father we've taken this jet tour through Genesis chapter 3 and the people here have been so wonderfully attentive and quiet and receptive and God I pray that you will bless the preaching and teaching of your word and that these truths will burn into our hearts so that we will come to you and we will cry out to you even those of us who are Christians that we will never forget that we need to continue to cry out to you for the wonderful favor of your heart to empower us for Christ-like living.

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[68:53] Help us to be more like our Savior and to take great delight in him. Thank you for what you're doing and thank you almighty God for the testimonies that we'll hear in just a little while of the people that you have brought to faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Thank you for these blessings of your heart because you are a God of great compassion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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