

“Christ and the First Gospel” Genesis 3 9/26/21 Shane Hatfield

Alright, turn in your Bibles to Genesis 3. We will continue our study of Christ and the Covenants. The first week we looked at Luke 24 and we saw that Jesus is the point of the entire story. He’s the point of the entire Bible. Everything, Old Testament and New Testament, points to Jesus and because of that, no matter where we look in the Bible, we find that God can meet us in our discouragement and in our despair. He has promises to give us in those moments. Last week we began looking at Genesis 1 and 2 and we saw that God created us in His image to glorify Him to the world. He gave us a good job which was to work the garden and to keep it and to be fruitful and multiply. He gave us a good identity as His children. He gave us a good home in the garden, and He made a special bond with us called the covenant, that He would be our God and we would be His people, and we would get to live with Him. All we had to do was obey Him about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said, ‘You can have all this! All you have to do is trust me. Don’t eat from that one tree. You can have everything else.’ Well, as we talked about last week, we know that Adam disobeyed, he ate from that tree, and he fell. So, this week we’re going to look at Genesis 3 where we actually see that fall take place. So, please read along with me as I read the entire chapter of Genesis 3:1-24. Hear the word of the Lord:

“¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

All men are like grass and their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord stands forever. Let's give our attention to it.

When my wife and I bought our first home, we bought a small, bungalow-style house at 49th and Peoria and we thought it was a mansion. It was only about 800 square feet, but it was bigger than our 500 square foot apartment we had before that, and we were excited about moving into an older home. It had all these features all over it that showed you just how old it was. There was an old sidewalk that went beside the side of the house into the back yard, and in the backyard, there was a concrete square or rectangle footing where there must have been an old shed or an old room back in the yard. It was gone, but the footing was still there, and the sidewalk was still there. Well, that sidewalk was so old, and it had been there so long that there was a gigantic oak tree. At some point after the sidewalk had been laid and the fence had been put up, this gigantic oak tree had grown up underneath the sidewalk and through the fence to where the sidewalk was all busted, all broken up, and if you looked at the fence, the oak tree had grown up around the fence. Literally, the fence ran smack dab straight through the middle of this gigantic oak tree, but the oak tree had just kept growing and growing and growing over the fifty or so years it had been there, and this oak tree produced thousands of acorns and those thousands of acorns produced thousands more oak trees.

I remember seeing that for the first time and thinking that one little acorn just this big, had landed in the ground and had everything necessary to produce this unstoppable oak tree. Everything in that one little seed produced this unstoppable oak tree that couldn't be stopped by concrete or the fence or the weather or anything else. It had grown up into this powerful, beautiful tree that was capable of producing more and more life. The first time I told that story at RUF I accidentally said that this acorn had the power to produce thousands of more acorn trees and my students had a good laugh about that because acorns don't produce acorn trees, they produce oak trees. But I just love the idea that that acorn, that small little seed, had the power to do something that was unstoppable.

What we're going to see today as we look at this passage is that in Genesis 3:15, God makes an unstoppable promise to His people, and that promise is that this seed of the gospel that you see in Genesis 3:15 has the power to change everything in this world. It has the power to bring life, where everything else in this world brings death. The seed of the gospel is an unstoppable promise that brings life into this world where everything else brings death. That is something that is vital to us, because as we're going to see, we go through sin and temptation just like Adam and Eve. The same tricks that Satan uses on Adam and Eve in this passage, he still uses on us today. The thing that we need that is going to bring life to us against that sin and temptation is this promise of the gospel, this unstoppable promise that God gives us in Genesis 3:15. So, let's look at that this morning. We're going to look at three things, we're going to see the seed of temptation, the fruit of sin, and the seed of promise. Kids, I want you to try to answer two questions: who is the serpent, and who is the seed?

If you look back at verse 1, we meet a new character in this scene. It says that the serpent was more crafty than any beast that God had created. Now, this word crafty can be used in a positive or a negative way, and in this connotation, it is a negative. This crafty serpent is a serpent who rebels against God's word. It is something that God had created, it is a created being, but it is a created being that lives in rebellion. Now, if you look throughout the whole Bible, especially in Revelation 12, and John 8, it teaches that this serpent is Satan. Satan was a created being that rebelled against God and against His word. Now, Satan is coming to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, and notice what the serpent says, in ESV it reads as a question, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of garden?'" His statement is kind of hard to translate from Hebrew to English, but it's not actually a question in Hebrew. We have to put it in the form of a question to make sense of it but it's actually more of just an assertion. It's an assertion with a mocking, sneering, joking tone. One commentator said, it's like the serpent is saying, 'God actually said that? He *actually* said that? You may not eat of any tree of the garden? He said that, *really*?'

And notice what the serpent does! He exaggerates what God said! God said you could eat of every tree of the garden, and the serpent said God said you can't eat of *any* tree of the garden. That's not what God said. We know that God let them eat of every tree of the garden, that He was good to them. So, what is the serpent doing? The serpent is undermining God's goodness. The serpent is casting doubt on God's goodness. He's planting this seed in Eve's heart, that God is not good, and He is withholding something good from them. You see in Eve's response that she begins to crack under pressure. She said, 'No, God said we can eat of any tree of the garden, we just can't eat of the tree in the midst of the garden.' And then what does she do? She adds to God's word. She says, 'And neither shall we touch it.' She is the first legalist, adding things to God's word that aren't actually in God's word, making God stricter than He actually is. It shows that the lie has already sown seeds of doubt in her heart.

So, with her heart sort of already fractured, then the serpent tells a lie to her mind. He says, "You will not surely die! For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Now, this is a blatant lie. Because God has already told them, "The day that you eat of it you shall surely die"! And the serpent says 'No, no, no, you're not going to die! You're going to be more like God!' Well, God had already made them like Him. He had already made them in His image. They were already God-like. But Eve's

heart and her mind were mistrusting, she believed the lie. She saw that the fruit was good for food, it was a delight to the eyes, and it would make her wise. She took, and she ate of it. Her will followed her heart and her mind, and then she gave to Adam and Adam took and ate as well. That great doubt, the seeds of doubt, and the seed of the lie, were planted in their hearts, and it gave birth to sin.

Now, Satan still uses the same tricks on us today that he used in the garden. He is unoriginal. He is using the same tricks over and over again. He is constantly casting doubt on God's goodness to us. He is constantly saying stuff like, 'Did God really give you a shot? Really? This is the best shot He could give you? Is that really the stocks that God gave you? Really? Huh. Do you think God really wants you to be single? Really? Wow.' Kids, he might even say, 'God really wants you to obey your parents? Those fools? Why would you obey them?' He plants those seeds of doubt in our hearts and then sometimes he goes for the straight lies. He says stuff like, 'Nobody would ever want you! You've sinned too much. You know what, if you really just had a better car or a better house, you would be happy. You know, if you just had a different style, that would make all your problems go away. You know, if you just took a little money and put it away for yourself and didn't tell anyone else about it, and didn't pay your taxes on it, didn't tell your spouse about it, you'll be fine. You wouldn't surely die.' All lies. All lies. He sows those seeds of doubt and lies that undermine belief in God and destroy our faith.

A student and I were at a coffee shop once and this student had just become a Christian and so, we were meeting, and I was talking to him about how he is made in God's image and glory and how we wanted to teach him how to live out that image in his everyday life. We had this great conversation about it, and we got up to walk out and leave the coffee shop and there was a professor that was sitting there by us and the professor stopped us and said, 'Do you really think that God exists and he's like some parent that has to teach us like we're a bunch of kids?' And I said, 'Yeah, yeah I do. I actually believe that we need a parent, that we can't care for ourselves.' What was he doing? He didn't make a logical argument! He didn't try to convince me that God didn't exist. He made a sneer. He made an assertion. He questioned in his heart, not that God exists, but whether or not He is good. And if that's you today, whether you're a Christian or a non-Christian, whether you're religious or irreligious, I'm so glad that you're here! We want Ethos to be a place where it's safe for people to come with their doubts, to come with their misunderstandings, to come with their confusion. If people come and say, 'I can't believe that you would think that there would be a God that would have to teach us how to live the way a parent teaches a child,' I would say, 'Yep. It's hard for me to believe too. I'm glad you're here.'

Because it says, 'Seek the temptation and give way to the fruit of sin,' and that's the second thing we see in the passage is the fruit of sin! Adam and Eve ate and then the passage tells us that all of these negative earth-shattering, cataclysmic effects come after they eat. In verse 7 it says that their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked. That's shame. They experienced shame. Then in 7-8 we see that they are hiding. They use creation, fig leaves, to cover themselves and they hide behind the trees, and who are they hiding from? They're hiding from God! The God who loves them and created them and walks in the cool of the day and wants to be with them! They're hiding from Him! In verse 10 we see that they're afraid. God questions them and He says, 'Why are you hiding?' And they're afraid! In verses 12-13 we see

blame. Adam blames God and blames Eve for his decision and Eve blames the serpent. In verses 14-18 we see all these curses. There's now judgement and defeat for the serpent, there's now relationship pain and suffering for Eve, there's toil in the garden in his work for Adam. In verse 19 we see that there's death. God says, 'From dust you came and to dust you shall go.' In verses 23-24 we see judgement. They are banished from the garden. Because of sin, Adam and Eve did not gain more life! They experienced death. Because of the fall, they weren't more like God, they were less like God. So, we have shame, guilt, hiding, blame, fear, death, judgement, curses, all this stuff is the fruit of sin. It's the fruit of their spiritual death. Their relationship with God, themselves, man and creation, has been severed. And it's the fruit of physical death! Now, they're in a decline. They're moving towards death.

We'll look at this a little more next week in what happens in just 4, 5 and 6 as we get into the covenant with Noah but in Genesis 4, we see that Cain murders Abel and Cain's offspring becomes more and more violent. In Genesis 5, the genealogy of Adam repeats this verse, 'And he died,' over and over and over again! It's like Moses is beating the drum saying, 'And he died, and he died, and he died.' The serpent was a liar! He didn't get more life; he got less life. And then in Genesis 6 we see that man is so corrupt that every thought of his heart was only evil, continually. We fell fast and far from God's glory.

Now, how does that apply to us? Because we all descended from Adam, we all experience the sin and misery of the fall that Adam experienced. We experience shame, fear, guilt, hiding, isolation, judgement, toil, pain, suffering. All of that we experience. It all comes from the fall. Evolutionary biologists just want to say, 'Oh, it's just a natural part of life. Death is just natural! Suffering, pain, survival of the fittest, it's all just a natural part of life.' Well, if so, why do we cry at funerals? Because it's *not* natural. Because we were created to live forever in relationship with the people who we lose. Sociologists and thinkers for years wanted to say that the problems of this world are all because of the wrong government and lack of education. But if you look throughout the history of the world, every type of government has seen systemic evil from fascism to democracy. You can point out different periods in history where there have been great evils have been committed. If you look at our unpolitical system you see that politicians, and personal interest groups promote policies and values that are absolutely contradictory to God's word and to human flourishing, to life!

What's happened is, when Adam and Eve fell, it brought this corruptive force of sin into our hearts and it destroyed us and because we break everything that we touch, everything around us is broken from our heart to our home to our community. The fruit of sin has expanded all over the place. The fruit of that sin is so confusing because we live in this world where there's beauty and there's brokenness. Right? We're all created in God's image. We also bear the law of God on our conscience. So, we humans are capable of amazing advancements in technology and medicine and amazing acts of kindness and love and grace, but we're also filled with brokenness and pain and suffering.

And at the same time, remember last week we talked about the covenant of works, how because Adam was under the covenant of works, we're still under the covenant of works, and so, because of that, being in this beauty and this brokenness, we still have this desire to be justified, and this need to be justified. We're still under God's law. We're still under that principle of 'Do

this and live.' So, we feel this judgement in our hearts. We feel this shame and guilt over the things that are happening in this world, but at the same time, we still have the force of sin destroying us. There's the obligation to keep the covenant with Adam, but not the ability to do it. And so, that plays itself out in all different types of ways. For some people, they keep hopping from political party to ideology to belief system, just hoping that something will fix them, just hoping that something will save this world and save them, and it never happens. For some of us, we keep trying new religious technique after new religious technique, new church after new church, just hoping there's something better to rescue us from our shame and our guilt. For some of us, we've been adamantly devoted to following Christ as best we can all through our lives, and yet, we're still stuck in the same cycles of shame and guilt. We're still frustrated by our inability to change. We still repeat the same failures over and over again.

For parents, you know, we see all the suffering and the sin and the misery in this world and we just want our kids to stay away from it, to avoid it, to be protected from it, and so, what do you do? You ratchet down. You're strict. But then, they can't keep your law, so what do they do? They rebel, and then you get frustrated, you get angry, so you ratchet down on them more. And it just gets worse. And before you know it, you're screaming at your kids that you just prayed for because they won't go to bed. And kids, you know that you want to be a good friend, you know that you want to have friends and you want to love people and you want to play with them, but it's hard because that means you have to share, it means you have to sacrifice. The good that we want to do, we can't do because of this force of sin that lives in our hearts. There's beauty and there's brokenness all in this world because the world is broken and Satan is behind the scenes orchestrating and controlling and manipulating things, and then we have this power called the flesh in our sin nature that's warring against us.

What we need, the only thing that will heal and fix all of that is the unstoppable promise of God, and that's what we see in Genesis 3:15. There's this unstoppable promise. I just, guys, this was the hardest sermon to prepare for because there's so much good stuff in here, I can't possibly talk about it all and I've already gone longer than I wanted to go. Genesis 3 is hard. In some ways, every sermon has to connect back to Genesis 3, right? But there's so much good stuff in here. I just want to highlight all of the little promises of the gospel in this passage. I want to point them out to you. And then, I want you to go back and meditate on them. Go back and meditate and see which promises you need from this passage.

The first thing we see is that God promises to graciously pursue these sinners. After Adam and Eve sinned, what does He do? He walks back into the garden and He starts asking them questions. He doesn't come at them with a hammer, he comes at them with a question mark. He says, 'What are you doing? Where did you go? Why have you been hiding? This is what all good counselors do. They come and they ask you questions to try to draw out what's going on in your heart. This is a picture about pursuing sinners in their sin, trying to draw them out. God still pursues sinners like that today. He leaves the ninety-nine to rescue the one, and how does He do it? He asks them questions. What are you doing? Why are you doing that? Why are you experiencing this shame and this guilt? Why are you so angry? Why are you so frustrated? Why are you hiding from me? He is trying to draw you out so you can experience the life of the gospel in your life. He promises to pursue sinners, and then He promises to save sinners.

If you look at Genesis 3:15 He says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." So, He's saying, right away He's protecting Eve from the serpent. He's saying, 'Serpent, you're going to have offspring, and your offspring is going to be at war with my offspring that's going to come through Eve, but my offspring is going to produce someone who is going to defeat you. You will bite His heel, but He will crush your head.'" And throughout the whole storyline of the Bible, you see two different seeds. You see one seed that is constantly warring against the people of God and you see this seed through the people of God that is constantly being protected. It's a faithful line of people that even though they're sinners, they're still following God and believing in the promises, and eventually, you get to the New Testament and that seed comes in the form of one man, and that's Jesus. This is the promise that God would eventually send Jesus to crush the head of the serpent. I love that imagery of the serpent biting his heel while He crushes its head because I grew up in the country and I know that the snakes are on the ground and if they bite you, you don't worry about them biting you in the head, you worry about them biting you, where? On the foot! In the heel! So, it's this picture of the serpent biting the heel of a man, and that venom going into that man, but at the same time, the man crushing its head. It's like if a snake went and got in the midst of my family and if I ran in and at the last moment, I put my foot on the snake's head and I crushed it, and at the same moment that I crushed it, it bit me in the heel and injected me with that poisonous venom that could kill me. But at the same time, I struck him dead.

That's what happened to Jesus on the cross. The serpent bit Him. It killed Him. But He crushed the head of the serpent, and what the serpent doesn't know is the very bite that he used to kill Jesus with was the bite that killed him, the bite that defeated him. What he didn't know is that God had the power to raise Jesus from the dead and give Him life. That's what He did! So, it's this gracious promise that God is going to save sinners through Jesus. If you're here today, and you haven't put your faith in Christ, but you're looking at everything in this life and you're saying, 'I'm stuck in my sin and my suffering. I need something to rescue me!' That something that you need is Jesus. Put your faith in Him. Trust in Him. He is the only one who can give victory in the midst of sin and suffering in this world.

We see God's power to save sinners. We see that God's unstoppable promise is also going to bring forgiveness. If you look in the passage, what does God do? He kills an animal, and He takes those skins, and He makes a covering for Adam and Eve, and this covering, this dead animal, is a foreshadowing of the sacrificial system. To be covered, to be cleansed from your sins, is going to require blood. It's going to require a sacrifice, and that sacrifice is Jesus. The shame and the guilt that you feel, God has already paid for it in Jesus Christ. If you are a believer and you are still continually stuck in sin, this is an unstoppable promise to you that you can keep coming back to God over and over and over and over again, no matter how many times you are stuck, no matter how many times you blow it again, because Jesus has already paid for those sins and His blood covers you. There's an unstoppable promise of salvation for sinners.

There's also an unstoppable promise for life. God kicks them out of the garden, but the tree is still there. He puts His flaming sword in front of the tree. What's that a picture of? It's a picture of judgement. One day, judgement will come. The tree of life that we've been cut off from, one of the things Satan does here is he casts doubt on God's judgement. He's saying,

‘There’s not going to be any judgement,’ and God’s saying, ‘Yeah, there’s going to be judgement.’ And there is judgement. If you’re apart from Him, you’re not going to experience life. But in the gospel, we see that Jesus took that sword. Jesus was judged for us so that we could go in and experience life in this life, and life in the future because in heaven, in Revelation we see that there is the tree of life that we get to eat from! Everyone who has faith in Jesus gets to eat from that tree of life. But the judgement is real! To experience that life, you have to put your faith in Jesus. To experience these promises, we have to have faith in Christ. Even here, we see a little seed of Adam’s faith. So, Adam names his wife Eve, and Eve means the mother of the living. If you look in the Hebrew, that word is very similar, the name Eve is very similar to the word for life. What theologians see in that is that Adam heard that promise and he believed God, that God was going to send someone to rescue him, and that was the very beginning of faith, it was the first act of faith. That’s how they experienced the goodness of His promises.

You can experience the promise of God in your life that comes through faith. The promise of salvation, the promise of life, the promise of being with God in heaven, the promise of having forgiveness of sins, all come through faith in Jesus. The gospel is the A to Z of the Christian life and we live by faith in the gospel from beginning to end. Those are the promises that are held out here for sinners and sufferers like us. God has an unstoppable promise to give us life and to reverse the effects of sin in this world. We have to receive it by faith. So, let’s go to Him now and ask Him to help us do that. Please pray with me.