

TSOG - Week 2 - Fall
Genesis 3
April 10, 2022

Introduction - "Why is it so messed up?"

Tim. Pastor. **EASTER WEEKEND.** **Genesis 2 + 3.** **Pray.**

We are spending these couple of weeks leading up to Easter looking at 'The Story of God'. And we started last week by looking at **ACT I - Creation: The Kingdom of God Begins.** And as we walked through Genesis 1 we saw that this entire story - the true and better story of the world, does not start with us, but rather starts with and is centered on God.

And we finished off last week, at the end of Gen 1, beginning of Gen 2, God steps back from his creating work, he rests (as a sign for you and I and the rhythms of our lives) and he declares over what he has made - **"This is very good."** The Hebrew reads - **Abundantly pleasant. Exactly right. Complete. As it should be.**

But if you've lived any amount of time on this earth you know that things don't feel "very good". Chances are the way you would describe the state of the world would probably not be "exactly right" or "as it should be." If you watch the news or scroll through twitter or instagram I don't know that you're walking away thinking - "mmm...the world is abundantly pleasant." At least that's not the sense I'm getting.

Which means you have to ask the question → **If God created everything and it was very good...why is it so messed up?**

For all of our technology, development, innovation, cultural advancement - why is the world so messed up? How did we get from Genesis 1 to now?

Or maybe you won't branch it out this far, it's more in your personal life. Not, why is the world so messed up but - Why is my spouse so messed up? Why are my friends, my coworkers, my family, my church, my pastor - so messed up?

But then, not just why is it messed up out there, but I think if we're able to be honest with ourselves we might find ourselves asking → why is it messed up in here? **Why am I so messed up?**

- Why can I not even control my own actions?
- Why do I get so angry so quickly at my kids?
- Why do I gossip about my friends?
- Why do I choose something that harms me or others even when or if I don't want to?

That's where we need the next part of the story. We move from Creation to what theologians call "The Fall". The part of the story where it goes from "very good" to "very bad" in a matter of moments.

Act II - The Fall - The Kingdom Rebels Against the King

What is broken? What is wrong? Why am I and why is the world so messed up?

Problem of Evil Handout

Before we dive in real quick - one of the biggest questions that comes up when you take an honest assessment of Genesis 1-3 is the problem of evil. Specifically, if God created everything very good, how do you explain satan, evil, and sin? Why is there evil in the world? Why did he let Adam and Eve sin in the first place?

Those are some very fair questions to be asking, we didn't have time to get into the nuance of it all so here's what I'll say:

1. Handout
2. Apologetics Seminar - www.citizenscharlotte.com/classes (Session 3)

Alright let's get into it.

The Command - Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

Genesis 2. God has created all things, He's formed Adam from the dust of the ground. Has yet to form Eve according to the creation narrative but this is what we read:

Genesis 2:8-9

8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God's creation is beautiful. Adam is in the garden. There's all of this wonderful vegetation and plants to enjoy. Then the text points out two specific trees - the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Skip down to verse 15...

Genesis 2:15-17

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Define Sin

Alright pause here real quick. Before we keep moving through the story let's make sure we're on the same page about the Biblical concept of **sin**.

The most direct definition for **sin**, coming out of the new testament word for it (**hamartia**) is that of **"missing the mark"**.

There is a standard, set by God the Creator, of what *to do* and what *not to do*, and when we don't hit it - that's sin. And when that happens, it leads to destruction and brokenness.

In the words of the New City Catechism - **Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation.**

God has designed everything right and good to lead to flourishing - and sin is when we break that or go against that design either through not doing what he commands to do or doing what he commands not to do. Living apart from Him.

Now there's certainly more to it than that, we'll get there as we go along, but that's a good base to start.

So here → So God says to Adam, and the implicit charge there is that Adam would tell Eve - every tree is fair game. You can eat from every single tree in the garden, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said not to eat from it, so if you do that is sin, and there will be consequences.

Hop over to Genesis 3:1...

Questioning God's Goodness

The devil shows up on the scene as a talking serpent (I know, kinda weird) to Adam and Eve, and notice what he does, notice the way he works - he does not come with sickness or violence, trying to like bite them and infect them with venom. The devil shows up and his work is lies and deception.

Notice how he wants Adam and Eve to begin to question God...

Genesis 3:1-5

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

First, He wants them to question God's Words/God's commands.

"Did God actually say?" You sure? You sure God said that? Are you sure that's the right interpretation? Have you studied the Greek and the Hebrew, done the right parsing of the verb tense? Maybe God meant something else...

Then notice too - he twists the words. God had said they can't eat from one specific tree. Satan's like - Is God trying to withhold all the trees from you? Small lies of deception.

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.

Second, He wants them to question the nature of good and evil.

God said it will lead to death? No no no - it will lead to life!

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."

Third, He wants them to question God's love.

God knows when you eat it your eyes will be opened. You won't die, you'll be like God! And God doesn't want that for you. He's withholding from you. He's keeping from you because he's selfish. He doesn't have your best in mind.

This is the deception of the devil:

God says, "I am good. The tree is bad. Trust me."

Devil shows up and says, "Oh no. God is bad. The tree is good. Trust me instead."

The temptation pressing against Eve is not a matter of how delicious the fruit is going to be. The temptation for Eve is this - Is she going to trust God, or is she going to trust the snake? And even another layer to it is really - Is she going to trust God, or is she going to trust herself? Her feelings, her rationale, her decision-making.

Now what I find sad and ironic about this passage is that the devil shows up and says - "hey if you eat this fruit God said not to eat, you will be like God" - **when in reality Adam and Eve were already like God.** They were already made in His image. They were already created in His likeness. They were already called into a life of dominion and ruling with God. God as the authority, them underneath God's authority exercising authority as image-bearers over the rest of creation.

But the temptation is → Hey is that really good enough? Don't you want to be outside of that authority? Don't you want to be your own authority? Don't you want to call your own shots? Can you really trust God to be in charge? Don't you want to rule your own life and your own world?

We face that same temptation every single day, don't we?

That's the battle of sin in our souls - are we going to trust God (His commands, His teachings, His ways), or are we going to trust ourselves (our feelings, our rationale, our desires)?

Human Sexuality:

Let me give you one huge example of this right now and over the past few years - **the desire within the Church to recast the Biblical framework around human sexuality and marriage to line up with society at large.**

God has set forth his design where He says that sex and sexuality was created by God as a good thing. A powerful thing. That in fact it is so good and so powerful that when two people engage in sex that there's this mysterious soul-linking thing that happens where the Bible says the two become like one.

And that force is so powerful that the only thing that can hold it is marriage - a covenant relationship between one man and one woman for life. And that any expression outside of that design and that relationship - heterosexual or homosexual - none of that was what God had in mind from the very beginning.

And for thousands of years, even pre-Jesus - followers of God have taught and sought to live in line with this position. Often not well, but the Church's doctrine remained the same.

And yet, and you can trace this from 1960s sexual revolution, to 1970s free love/love > war movement, into the 90s and 2000s where the LGBTQ movement began to go after the court of public opinion through a whole variety of grassroots campaigns, then sped up into hyperdrive over the last 2 years.

To where now, if you stand with Jesus and the ancient sexual ethic of God - you now have the moral lowground in society. It used to be that you were just sort of weird, now it's that (even if you have the utmost love and respect and compassion for people) you are now bigotted, and oppressive and hateful.

And so the Church is at this crisis of - do we cave around this doctrinal conviction or not?

And Christian theologians are starting to take back their own positions and writings around sexuality, denominations are dividing down the middle. All around this original question in the garden - **"did God actually say"** - that puts forth a doctrine that has no grounding in 2,000 years of church history and first shows up in Christian theology max 20-25 years ago.

So the question of "did God actually say" when it comes to the new sexual ethic is rooted in - well I believe in a God of love and the God I know would never ask or make anyone deny themselves (which is the highest value of the secular west remember? - autonomy and authenticity) to which we would say - "have you ever read the teachings of Jesus? That's like step #1 in discipleship to Jesus - to deny yourself."

Because here's what the devil from the very beginning, Genesis 3 all the way until now.

All sin pushes us to question our trust of God and his vision for human flourishing.

To believe God is withholding from us.

Is God really a loving Father? Does he actually want your good? Surely he's keeping from you. Not just sexuality...

- **Forgiveness** - Why would God tell you to forgive that person who really hurt you? Doesn't he know how difficult that would be for you? Doesn't he know how much heartache that would bring? Does he really love you? Does he really want your good?
- **Generosity** - Why would God tell you to be generous with your finances? Doesn't he know how hard you work? Doesn't he know you deserve that thing you want to buy, or that trip you want to take? Does he just not want you to be happy and enjoy life? Does he really love you?

**And it's never overt like that is it? It's always subtle. Always the little lie underneath the surface. Maybe this sin will give me what I long for, maybe it will make me feel complete, at peace, at rest. Maybe this thing, that thing will bring me the relief I crave so desperately.

But God doesn't want them not to eat the fruit to simply withhold from them, He wants them not to eat because eating leads to death.

Eating leads to the knowledge of good and evil. Eating leads to destruction. Eating leads to pain and grief and misery.

Which is true of all of sin. All of sin leads to destruction, and God is not after our destruction, God is after our flourishing. God is after our joy. John 10:10 - Jesus comes to give life and life abundant. True freedom that comes not from total autonomy but from surrendering our lives to the freedom of Christ.

God tells them not to eat, not because he doesn't love them, but precisely because he loves them!

You have to get this → **Sin isn't bad because it's forbidden, sin is forbidden because it's bad.**

Harper toilet.

God's design is not just about the right way to live, it's about the best way to live. You need to get that or you'll never flourish as a follower of Jesus. You'll never experience any continual victory of temptation.

God's commands and designs are not just right, they are designed to lead to flourishing.

Which then makes the question underneath all of our sin this age old question → **Do you trust God or do you trust yourself?** Do you trust that God knows the way of life that is truly life, or that you know what is best for you?

Devil shows up - I know what God said, but don't believe it. This is good. This is life. He's withholding.

The Fall - Genesis 3:6-19 (Walkthrough)

Hop back in, verse 6...

Genesis 3:6-19 (walkthrough)

Here's what's often called "the curse of sin" but I want you to notice - the serpent is cursed first, then the ground. Adam and Eve are never cursed. Sometimes we get that wrong. They're never cursed, but there are consequences.

For Eve - Pain in childbearing. The original design is still there, the call of God - be fruitful and multiply. Still the charge, but now will come some pain. **Lindsay is due with our 2nd kid in 5 days. This one literally hits home right now.** But it's not just the physical pain of pregnancy and childbirth - there's also other pains as well - the pain of infertility,

miscarriage, parenting struggles. The cultural mandate of “be fruitful and multiply” is going to be extremely painful and difficult.

There's also the consequences of fallout in her relationship to Adam. Her constant desire will be to get from Him what He cannot give and to continue to want to push back against Him, be in conflict, fight.

For Adam - The pain is at work. The charge is still there - have dominion, cultivate the ground, build garden like cities - but now it will be painful. What was once pure joy - labor, work, vocation - still is good and will still have bright points, but will also be full of pain and sweat as well. Which means all work is broken. Even your dream job - will never fully satisfy.

They have rebelled against God's good design of flourishing, and a breakdown of themselves and all creation begins.

Guilt + Corruption

Summary - That is chapter 2 of the story → The Fall: The Kingdom Rebels Against the King. God calls Adam and Eve to dwell in the garden, to live in deep relationship with Him as His image bearers. To join Him in His work of ruling and reigning, exercising dominion under His authority. One thing they can't do - don't eat from this tree. They eat, they rebel. There's consequences. Sin, not just as a concept, but as a reality, enters the world.

But then that begs the question → What does that mean for us? What does a man and woman thousands of years ago eating a fruit have to do with me? Why does this matter? How do we jump from Genesis 3 - Adam and Eve sin - to 2022 Charlotte, NC?

Why am I and the world so messed up?

I told you at the beginning our definition of sin was incomplete. That it can't just be things we do or don't do. That is because when the Bible talks about sin, which it does a lot, it talks about it not just as something we do or don't do, or something done against us.

The Bible gives us a picture of sin that is not just **action** but **nature**.

Sin (in the Scriptures) is not just on us, but also in us and of us.

Because of the sin of Adam, sin enters the world, and according to the Bible we are now all both **guilty and corrupted**.

Look at Romans 5:

Romans 5:12 - 12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

What Paul is saying there is because Adam sinned and we're all born “of Adam”, that is into humanity - that the punishment God gave to Adam, the consequences for His sin, the guilt He had before the Lord, is now placed onto us as well. **All of us are born guilty before God and deserving of death.** Separated from Him. When you're born, you're not born in a neutral state. You're born as an enemy of God.

But we're not only born guilty, we're born corrupted. Turn over to Ephesians 2:

Ephesians 2:1-3 - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of

disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

By what? By nature. Our nature is corrupted by sin. Our every core, our very essence. That's why other places in Scripture can say things like - "There is no one righteous, no not one." Because we're all born with our souls bent towards evil.

Francis Spufford, he's a British Author, dogmatic atheist turned orthodox Christian, he wrote a book a few years ago called *Unapologetic: Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense*. I don't know if I recommend it or not, it's pretty crass. But he has this part in there about sin that I just think is absolute gold.

"What I and other believers understand by the word 'sin' has got very little to do with yummy transgression. For us, it refers to something much more like the human tendency, the human propensity to ** up. Or let's add one more word; the human propensity to **** things up, because what we're talking about here is not just our tendency to lurch and stumble and screw up by accident, our passive role as agents of entropy. It's our active inclination to break stuff, 'stuff' here including moods, promises, relationships we care about, and our own well-being and other people's, as well as material objects whose high gloss positively seems to invite a big fat scratch. Now I hope we are on common ground."**

SO WHAT'S WRONG AND BROKEN WITH THE WORLD?

Sin. Sin is what is wrong. But not just sin out there, sin in here. **Sin in us.**

What's wrong with the world, what's broken about us and the world around us is that because of the sin of Adam and Eve being placed on all of humanity our default is not good. Our default is not godly, righteous, love, pure, others-centered.

The problem is not that I just mess up occasionally and every so often do something I shouldn't. The problem is not these other things out here holding me back, hurting me, causing me pain and trauma and suffering.

Now is there sin out there? Yes. Absolutely. **But the greatest brokenness is in here.**

The key to wrapping your head around the Story of God - and everything we're going to address on Good Friday and Easter is this - **Because of the sin of Adam, something has gone fundamentally wrong with humanity. That we are now "crooked". That we are now warped out of shape and bent in the wrong direction away from what is good and toward what is evil.**

We are not blank slates that simply adapt to the good and bad that happened to us. We are not neutral but tainted products of our upbringing and environment. **We are at our core debased, sinful, and unrighteous.**

Or to use the language of Paul in **Romans 8:7 - 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.**

To human hearts that stubbornly think of themselves as basically good and self-sufficient, this idea that human beings are fundamentally sinful and rebellious is not merely scandalous. It is revolting. We want to believe we're generally pretty good people, or at least neutral - only shaped by the pain of our past and the corruption of society, making a few mistakes here and there.

Which is why we tend to have no category in our world for human brokenness. It's why we struggle to explain why people (or ourselves) keep doing evil things.

- Why for all of our best efforts, is there still so much violence in the world? Poor governmental structures? Lacking educational systems? Of course. And sin in the human heart.
- Why do we keep lashing out at our spouse or our friends in angry fits or emotional breakdowns? Because life is stressful, we don't sleep enough, we're under a lot of pressure? Sure. But also - sin in our heart!

Genesis 3 shows us → there is a deeper problem. The ultimate problem is not our past, the problem is not our systems, the problem is not out there, **the problem is in here**. The problem is our hearts. Our sin nature. We are corrupted through and through from the very beginning of our lives.

Things Get Worse and Worse

That is why if you keep reading the story after Genesis 3, things don't get better, they get worse and worse and worse.

- **Gen 4** - Cain kills Abel = Murder (the first after effect of sin is violence)
- **Gen 4** - Lamech - polygamy gets introduced (violence against women)
- **Gen 6** - Things get progressively more and more wicked. God has to send a flood to wipe everyone out and basically start over with Noah and his family.
- **Gen 9** - Noah is in a garden (great do-over, mulligan for humanity)...gets drunk and it's a weird interaction thing with his son it's quite strange.
- **Gen 11** - Build a tower, to heaven basically rejecting God and saying "we're ok, we'll take it from here thanks". It's the Adam and Eve story at a wide level.

And in the first few pages of Scripture we come face to face with this reality of our brokenness and sin nature and corruption as humans and it all leads you as the reader to ask the question:

How is humanity going to get out of this problem?

That's what we'll talk about at Good Friday and Easter. The long answer - read the rest of the Bible. The short answer - Jesus.

Weight of Sin = Weight of Gospel

I told you we'd come back to it, Genesis 3:15. God says to the serpent in the curse of sin:

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."

I think the ESV isn't as fun here. The NIV translation reads "he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Theologians call this the "proto-evangelion" - the "first-gospel". God, in the midst of spelling out the consequences for the very first sin, the rebellion of Adam and Eve makes a promise. That one day through the line of humanity, a child will be born, an offspring of woman. And that child will crush the head of the serpent. Will end the war once and for all between God and Satan.

That in the great mystery and profound beauty of the gospel - God will send His only Son, Jesus, to come take our sin, absorb the evil of our hearts, defeat evil, and take our sin away forever.

That's what we'll talk about all next weekend, both Friday and Sunday. Here's where I want to kind of end us tonight.

Conclusion - We Need Jesus

I know this is weighty. Welcome to Church - you're a sinner and your whole nature is corrupt apart from Jesus. I know that's the feel good stuff you come to church on Sunday nights for, believe me. But let me help you as we close.

You'll notice in the text of Genesis 3 after Adam and Eve eat the fruit - who does the hiding? Adam and Eve. And who does the seeking and looking and calling for them? God.

Often in our sin, we get it backwards. We often think in our sin that God is hiding. And when we screw up we have to go hard after Him to seek Him and prove to Him we care and we're sad and we're going to try harder and do better. That when we sin, God goes into hiding and we become the seekers.

That's not the story of Genesis 3 and that's not the story of the gospel. **God is always the seeker.** Despite our sin, despite our running, despite our corruption and our guilt inherited from Adam - God is seeking. In our sin we are hiding. We are the enemy. We are the rebellious and the unfaithful.

And God seeks us and searches for us and rescues us and pays the penalty for us and dies for us and rises again for us.

So here's what that means you are free to do. The invitation for you tonight - **Feel the weight of your sin.**

Because God seeks us when we're lost in our sin, we are free to feel the deep weight of our sin before Him.

Listen - if you have a low view of sin - it's no big deal, I just screw up occasionally, it's just some arbitrary rules that I've broken - you're going to have a low view of the gospel. The salvation Christ purchased for you on the cross won't be that big of a deal because what he's saving you from, to you, isn't that big of a deal.

But if you let yourself go deeper into the guilt, go deeper into the corruption of your nature, go deeper into the reality of your sin - stare it down in all its ugliness - how sweet the gospel becomes. That you are wretched through and through - that God knew what you know about your sin and then some - saw all the depths, and yet sent Christ to seek and to save the lost.

Martin Luther, the famous reformer, in a letter he wrote to a friend a few months after being put on trial for his doctrine of the true gospel wrote this, and this is where I'll close:

If you are a preacher of mercy, do not preach an imaginary but the true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners. Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world.

Church - you can let your sin be strong, your nature be corrupted, your guilt be inherited - because you have a God who is even stronger, a grace that is ever extending, a mercy that never runs out. And a Savior who comes to crush the enemy's head.

Communion.

Pray.