

The Damage of Disobedience

Genesis 3:1-24

Introduction

Sin Messed Everything Up: “This is why we can’t have nice things” (parenting is so much bending over, clean the house all day and the kids destroy it in .25 seconds). Genesis 1-2 show God’s powerful and generous creation. He fashions all that is into a beautiful paradise and places human beings in its midst to care for it, to worship and serve him by stewarding creation. **But the world isn’t in this pristine condition anymore.** When we look around we see remnants of God’s creative beauty but we know things are not the way they are supposed to be. It’s all messed up.

Let’s Talk About Sin!: What a fun topic. 😊 But it’s an important topic! Without a deep and clear understanding of sin we’ll never understand God’s call for justice. Our world is beautiful *and* broken, like a guitar out of tune (i.e., dissonance). When something is broken, you fix it (e.g., break your arm, set, cast and heal it). If sin isn’t real, if the world is just the product of time and chance then there is no injustice, there is nothing wrong. This is true on the macro scale (i.e., society, institutions, etc.) and on the micro level (e.g., in your own personal life). We have access to more information in our pockets than any other human had in all the libraries of history, yet we are just as deluded, violent, etc. as ever.

- Why does power corrupt rather than protect?
- Why does money poison rather than heal?
- Why am I drawn toward selfishness, apathy, etc.?

Real hope can only exist once you admit your sin and ask for a savior. This is not pessimism but the only real hope for change. I am not inherently good. I am not “good at heart.” I might not be as bad as I can be, but left to my own devices my will bends toward pride, selfishness, etc.

We are sinners by nature and sinners by choice. We have inherited sin and we participate in it every day.

- This passage today shows how the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, has spread like a disease to all people. And the path of sin that they pioneered is like a river carving a path through a canyon, we walk that same path every day. Sin is a power and sin is a choice.
- Sin has come because of the disobedience of God’s creation. God didn’t originate sin, it is not part of his design, yet he offers salvation.
- Sin messed everything up, we are all infected by it, we submit to its power daily but the gospel frees us from the enslaving power of sin giving us the freedom to choose righteousness and the hope that, one day, God will fix all that is broken.

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’?” 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.

1. The Anatomy of Temptation (vv. 1-7)

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?’”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.

The Snake Gets in the Garden: The serpent immediately is out of place, described as more crafty than any other beast of the field. Adam was called to “guard” and protect the garden (e.g.,

2:15), you wonder how the snake got in. There are two helpful points of view to look at the role of the serpent.

- **(1)** For Moses' first readers, snakes were a particularly vibrant personification of danger and evil¹ (e.g. the same is true of us today... want to see me scream and run, let seaweed touch my foot in the ocean or let me see a snake on a walking trail... if you're a snake person, how dare you!).
 - Heard a story of a man who had a pet snake that one day constricted on his arm. He had to kill the snake and now has permanent nerve damage in his arm. He was like, I don't know what happened? For 10 years everything was fine. He didn't love you for 10 years. He is cold-blooded, your natural enemy, and was just getting bigger for 10 years and finally was tired of living in the fish tank!
- **(2)** We see as Scripture unfolds the identity of this serpent. "That ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). Satan is using the conduit of a snake to enter the garden and tempt the first couple.

But the snake was still made by the LORD God. The serpent is a creature which means he is submissive to God. So the serpent is **sneaky** and **subordinate**. Satan isn't in charge but he is smart. Just like the serpent comes out of nowhere to sneak up on Eve, Satan will tempt us in sneaky and seductive ways. Satan is sneaky and subtle. **He doesn't want to shock you. He wants to lure you into sin.** He takes something good and pleasing and twists and turns it (e.g., sex to pornography, leadership to abuse, food to gluttony, building to hoarding, worship to legalism, etc). He comes at Jesus in the wilderness with Scripture!

Tempter's Tactics:

1. **Dialogue with the Devil:** Eve's first mistake is her **willingness to entertain the conversation** with the serpent. She is lured into dialogue on his terms. There is a time and place to have conversation, this is not it (e.g., telemarketers, pornography, etc.).
2. **Doubting God's Words:** Did God actually say?. He doesn't outright contradict (at first) but places seeds of doubt in Eve. He uses suggestion rather than rebellion.
3. **Redefining God's Commands:** Eve over-corrects and ends up misrepresenting God's command 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.' Once they've quibbled over terms and refined God's commands, Satan outright rejects God's command. The counterclaim: you will not die. But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. He went from simple doubt to defiance.
4. **Blaming God:** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." He says that God lied! That God doesn't want you to have what he has (Satan promises only what they'll gain and *fails to mention* what they'll lose). They'll gain "wisdom" in exchange for death (e.g., weight loss drug Fen-phen will lose weight and cause heart valve failure).

¹ Cf. the bronze serpent pericope in Numbers 21:4-9. Job 26 describes Egypt (i.e., Rahab) as shattered by God, "his hand pierced the fleeing serpent" (Job 26:13).

Lack of Trust: Satan is causing Eve (we'll learn her name to be) to doubt God. gave us all the good things (like father giving snake or stone). Don't trust his word, don't trust his command, don't trust his **goodness**. Skepticism is sometimes appropriate in a *fallen* world toward *fallen* people but never toward a good and loving God.

- Listen to the shift in tone. In Genesis 2 God creates a beautiful paradise garden (e.g., think continent not cottage, e.g., rivers, precious stones, land, etc.). and tells Adam he can enjoy all of its fruit save one. His is a bountiful, good, and generous creation. The serpent flips the tone and describes God as restrictive. He focuses on the one thing he can't have rather than all that he can have (e.g., Joshua can't climb on the stool it's the only thing he wants to do). God's commands are generous not restrictive (e.g., we don't want Joshua to fall off the chair).

The accusation is that God is keeping something good from us. This is the foolish lie of the devil. God only gives us good things and protects us from bad things. When God says "no" it is not to hurt you but to protect you (e.g., tracks on the roller coaster).

- God doesn't keep good from you, *sin* keeps good from you. "Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you" (Jer. 5:25). Sin promises good it can't deliver.
- God will provide good for Adam and Eve they just need to trust and obey. The same is true for you.
- All the other gods of the ancient world require that you feed them but God feeds Adam. But they choose an alternative meal.
- I want what's best for my kids. God wants what's best for us.
- Adam and Eve have all the good they can ever have but they want the one thing they can't have, they want to be like God (e.g., Jafar in Aladdin, play to pride and jealousy).

Backfire: The serpent is crafty (craftiness is sometimes mistaken for wisdom). "Satan's temptations are all shortcuts" (Drew Dyck). Eve wants this false wisdom and doesn't realize that true wisdom offers no shortcuts. But this false path to wisdom leads to a curse. It is not the enlightenment she was hoping for. 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. The fruit was tasty looking and, more importantly, would give the woman what she wanted. She turned to the fruit to get what can only come from God.

- "Why do we lie, or fail to love, or break our promises, or live selfishly? Of course, the general answer is "Because we are weak and sinful," but the specific answer is that there is something besides Jesus Christ that we feel we must have to be happy, something that is more important to our heart than God, something that is enslaving our heart through inordinate desires" (Keller).

What the snake failed to explain was that they had all the good God created. They already knew "good." The only knowledge their disobedience would give them was "evil."

- "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay" (e.g., boy eating Hershey cocoa powder).

Nakedness and Shame: Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen 2:25). It’s amazing that God connects nakedness to the pre-sin and post-sin state of man and woman. We can’t imagine this. Naked is a problem for us (e.g., famous dream of showing up to work or school naked). Clothes are a result of the fall. *Even if you believe in every aspect of evolution, it surely doesn’t explain why we have clothes.* But once they sin, all the belonging, security, and value they get from God seems stripped away (not because it is but because they’re no longer connected to the source). The result is shame! Sin brings shame. Sin SHOULD bring shame.

Tried to Cover Up: And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. What a weak cover-up. I’m no tailor but I can’t imagine that leaves are good for sewing. And, who are they fooling. Do they think God’s gonna show up and not notice (hmmm, something’s different but I can’t place my finger on it)?

- When we fail to trust God, when disobey, the result is never for our good. Sin hurts us. And, too often, rather than admit our sin we try to minimize, cover-up, obfuscate, dilute, etc. (e.g., bad apologies). **Hiding sin only makes it worse, and that’s what the first couple did.**

2. Confrontation with God (vv. 8-13)

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.”

Hide and Seek: God shows up and now they have to face the music. 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. Rather than **confess**, they hid. Sin ruins the beautiful relationship with God that man was created to have. What should be a beautiful opportunity to “walk with God” in the garden is now a moment of shame and fear.

- Yet God loving pursues them asking questions he already knows the answer to: ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”... ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

Confession: There is a significant lesson relating to sin found here. Hiding is the opposite of confession (cf. Prov 28:13). They failed to realize that forgiveness would require that they truthfully and fully admit their sin to God. Hiding and self-covering are insufficient to deal with the guilt of sin.

- Fellowship with God was not hindered by proximity (for he is walking in the garden), but by shame and guilt: And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid,

because I was naked, and I hid myself.” When God sought them out, asking questions he already knew the answer to (e.g., kids in youth group breaking mirror), his desire was for Adam and Eve to consider their sin. He was giving Adam and Eve the chance to confess because “... there will be no possibility for reconciliation if the guilty are unwilling to confess their deeds.” When we are confronted by sin we have the option to hide in shame or confess it and freely enjoy the presence of God.

- Today would be a good day to confess and be free.

Blame Game: 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.” The man *didn’t* admit. When she dialogued with the serpent they were one flesh (i.e., “we”). Now they are divided (i.e., “I”). Sin produces division not only between God and man but between man and wife. This division is replicated throughout the OT as human beings experience division and disunity (e.g., sin divides us).

- This is a petty attempt to redirect blame on the woman or snake (e.g., it’s not my fault).
 - Too often this is what false conversion is (i.e., “getting caught”). “Scripture is clear that sin is the worst thing in the world – not exposure, not getting caught, not the loss of all things” (Diane Langberg).
- Worse than blaming the woman is the blaming of God (i.e., the “woman you gave me). He’s saying that God gave him a bad gift (e.g., God gives money and we waste it or get in debt and blame him... it’s not his fault).

Rebellion: The redirection shows their rebellion. They weren’t simply tricked. When you’re tricked and you realize it, you repent. When you willfully sin, you try to deflect.

- What’s the excuse? Someone else’s fault? Not enough information? They might not know everything but **they failed at what they did know.**
- You and I can admit that we have broken the commands of God we know about!

3. Consequence of Sin (vv. 14-24)

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.

Everyone is Cursed: The first sin of mankind has global implications, having broken the relationship between humanity and God. It also introduced sin to all of creation (Rom 5:12, 18; 8:20). The curses placed on Adam and Eve are personal and universal. We see this effect of sin described in the NT: “Every sin can have a personal dimension (the flesh), a demonic instigation (the devil), and a systemic manifestation (the world)... if we admit something is a problem at the fleshly level, it’s going to pop up at the larger level too.” We see the universal effects of the curse when we look at each participant.

1. **Snake (vv. 14-15):** 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.”
 - Snake goes from crafty to cursed (craftiness won’t save you).
 - And Satan gets his death sentence (crushed).
2. **Woman (v. 16):** 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.”
 - What once was a blessing (e.g., marriage, being fruitful and multiplying) is now a curse. Now husbands will be drawn toward domination rather than nurturing.
 - The blessings of life now reveal the painful consequences of sin (beautiful and broken).
 - The beautiful partnership of marriage will now be competition for control (i.e., Collins).
3. **Man (vv. 17-19):** 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.”
 - Human dominion will not work the way it should. *Adam* was supposed to be over *Adamah* (ground) and now the ground is ruling over Adam.

Created Purpose Corrupted: Sin frustrated our created purpose but that pull to our purpose still remains. Why do we pursue marriage when it is so hard? Because it is still a beautiful purpose. Why do we find value in work even when it is full of hardship? Because it is still a beautiful purpose.

- Everything is beautiful and broken. We were created to work and keep the garden but now we work the ground and are kept from the garden.
- We now live in between the perfection of the garden and the redemption of heaven.

- **We have eternity in our hearts but sin in our bones.** We need regeneration. We need new life. We need God to fix it.

Not What They Think: 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—” Sin didn’t get them to where they wanted. They reached the goal of knowledge (“like God”) but it was the wrong goal (#truth). “Man, who had been created ‘like God’ in the beginning (1:26), found himself after the Fall curiously ‘like God’—but no longer ‘with God’ in the garden (v. 22)... [Man’s] happiness (i.e., ‘good’) does not consist of his being ‘like God’ so much as it does his being ‘with God’ [and] enjoying the blessings of his presence (Ps 16:11)” (Sailhamer, 59).

Exile: 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. They are cast out of the garden. Their sin has separated them from life. Sin cannot exist in God’s presence. They now “really know” how disobedience leads to mortality (i.e., death). They could have lived in trust with God forever.

Conclusion

Hope in the Hopeless: This is a depressing moment in the story but it explains so much about the world and ourselves. However, God’s grace is still shown even in this passage. There are hints of hope.

1. **Serpent Crushing Seed:** 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.” If you patiently trace the conflict between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman you see the woman’s offspring will defeat the serpent. The promised seed of the woman will receive a blow from Satan but, in return, will crush him for good (e.g., heel vs. head). “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom 16:20). “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Rev 12:9).
 - Jesus is the special person, the seed of the woman, who fights on our behalf to defeat sin and Satan. **In our sin, there is hope because we have a Savior.**
2. **Shame Covering Provision:** ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. God provides a gracious covering for Adam and Eve through the sacrifice of an animal (way better than fig leaves). Their shame is covered by garments created by God. Moses’ first readers would immediately notice that the language of “garments” (כִּתְּוֵנוֹת) and “clothing” (לְבוֹשׁ) is mirrored in the later description of priestly garments. For the garments to be made of skin (עוֹר) foreshadows the sacrifice offered to atone for the sins of the people (Lev 7:8). Even here we see hints that God will

save his people through sacrifice. He offers to atone for sin. He ultimately atones for sin by sacrificing his son. We enter his presence by the covering of the blood of Jesus. Adam and Eve wanted to be like God, but God kindly came to earth to take on flesh to save us all.

- “The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone; God accepts penalties that belong to man alone” (Stott). This is where we find ourselves.

So What?: We see the dangers of sin, the dangers of not trusting God, and strategies to avoid temptation (these are good and helpful) but if all you see here is tips and tricks to be better then you’re missing the point. Sin is **real** and **devastating**. Each one of us is infected by sin and our world is broken by it. When we confront the wickedness in the world and the wickedness in our own heart, what are our options? We **can’t ignore** it. Too many people have pretended that with enough education, or charitable activity, or religious behavior that people can be fixed. If you think you’re good enough to save yourself, you’re in for disappointment. “Some folk are confusing Band-Aids and cough syrup for transplants and amputations” (Kevin Smith). The only perfect, permanent remedy is the death of Jesus on our behalf. We don’t need behavior modification we need a new heart that can only come from God.

- But we are the people who have the most clear-headed appraisal of sin (the problem). Because we can admit we are lost we can be found. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

Confess your sin, ask Jesus to forgive you, and walk by the Spirit. What is a sinner to do? Come to the Savior. Would you come to Jesus today?