

Hope

Scripture: Genesis 3

3 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.

Illustration: You probably know the couple. With 5 seasons of an incredibly successful show on HGTV, the couple themselves are reportedly worth 10 million dollars. But Chip and Joanna Gaines, many years ago before Fixer Upper premiered on HGTV, were not putting their hope in any success that they have had; they were putting their faith in Jesus Christ.

Chip had a relationship with some of Billy Graham’s grandchildren, and in spending time with them, was discipled by their dad, Danny Lotz. He learned much of walking the walk, as he put it. So much so that when Chip and Joanna were expecting their second child, they sensed God calling them away from their furnishing store, called Magnolia Market. They felt that God was calling them to focus on raising their family and to trust Him. Joanna especially felt that her dreams were closing with the closing of the store.

For that couple, small business owners like many of you, they were just trying to honor the Lord and follow Him. Little did they know what would happen. And even if they hadn’t become famous and wildly successful in the eyes of the world, they would have been successful in His eyes just by continuing to follow Him. They put their hope in the right place.

Our hope is not in following Jesus and getting stuff, making money, or any of those things. Our hope is in Jesus alone. And rightly so, for He is the only one Whom we can put our hope in.

What are you putting your hope in today? Where are you looking for hope? Let's look to Genesis 3, the first prophecy of the coming of Jesus, and see the hope we have in Jesus Christ. This chapter is often referred to as "the fall", or "the curse", but I want to challenge you this morning to see God's love anew in this chapter and to encourage you to put your hope in Jesus, Who is God with us.

Jesus, God with us, is our source of hope

- **Jesus, God with us, gives us hope in temptation.**
 - God had just put Adam in the Garden of Eden, given him good commands, and created Eve out of Adam. And it was very good.
 - Right after, we are introduced to the serpent, whom the account and the New Testament reveal to be Satan, or the devil. Satan came in the form of a serpent to steal and kill and destroy, seeing that God had created a perfect world for Adam and Eve to be in.
 - He came with deceit, beginning by asking Eve, though he was with both Adam and Eve, if God really said that they could not eat of any tree in the garden. Obviously that was not the case and Satan knew that, but his goal was to make God's good commands seem restrictive.
 - Eve repeated what she had most likely learned from what God told Adam in chapter two, Satan contradicted her, "You will not die. God knows that if you eat it you will be like Him, knowing good and evil." Satan included part of the truth, that they would know good and evil, and shrouded it in the lie that God's word would not come to pass, that God was restricting them.
 - Eve saw that the tree was good for food, that it looked good to the eye, and was desired to make her wise. She took, ate, and she gave some to Adam and he ate.
 - Later in Scripture we learn that Adam was the one who sinned first. Adam was given the good command of God's law directly and communicated it to Eve, but stood idly by when that law was contradicted. So he bore the primary responsibility by the assigning of his sin as being before Eve's.
 - And thus the perfect world God created was turned upside down. Adam and Eve turned from God, from relationship with God, and intentionally went another way. They did not see the love of God that was in His good commands.
 - **Illustration:** A couple of weeks ago we moved our chicken coop. They are more pets than anything else. They are named and they are loved. And part of our love was to make the coop to protect them from predators. We want them to be safe because we care about the chickens.
 - I'm not sure how they feel about it, but I could imagine they feel cooped up and fenced in. Their area is a little bigger than 8 x 8. They like to get out when we let them. They may not recognize that the walls we put up keep out the bad.
 - We are often like the chickens. God has put up walls for us, His good commands. He has done it to protect our bodies and minds and hearts. He has done it for our good because He loves us. But sometimes we might feel like the chickens, cooped up and

locked in. Like Adam and Eve, we look beyond God's good commands at the sin that is attractive, that promises us things it cannot deliver.

- We can hope in Jesus in temptation, because He is good, because He loves us, and because He wants to protect us. He knew that Adam and Eve would know good and evil if they ate from the tree, and He wanted them to know Him and Him alone, to never know evil. But they ate, leaving the protection of His commands, exposing themselves to harm.
 - **Application:** See the commands of God as the good that they are. See them as the expression of His love which they so clearly convey. Identify where you are tempted in life (contentment, sexual purity, grumbling or complaining, lack of faith, pride, etc) and see that His commands are not for cooping you up, but for your protection and your good. Know that Jesus, God with us, gives hope in His good commands.
- **Jesus, God with us, gives us hope in His pursuit of us.**
 - Adam and Eve sinned against God by breaking His good law. Don't miss the awesome wonder of what comes next!
 - The Lord, perhaps even a pre-incarnate Christ, is walking through the garden in the cool of the day. He knew what had happened! He was not surprised. He did not go strolling in the garden for the thrill of it. He went to pursue the relationship that Adam and Eve had abandoned. Jesus came and pursued them. He longed to be with them.
 - They hid themselves, but the Lord knew and called them out. The Lord pursued Adam, but he passed off blame to Eve. The Lord pursued Eve, but she passed off blame to the serpent. Neither Adam or Eve stayed with the Lord, both deflected His gaze upon them when they were found to be sinners.
 - God followed them with their deflections and addressed the serpent first.
 - He would be cursed above all the beasts of the field.
 - God would put enmity between him and the woman, his seed and her Seed.
 - The woman's Seed would bruise his head, and the serpent's seed would bruise the heel of her Seed.
 - This is the first Good News in all Scripture, the first mention of salvation. The Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would crush Satan under His feet, but Himself would be bruised on the heel. This is plainly seen in that Jesus, God with us, suffered death on a cross, but that through His death and resurrection He aims to destroy the work of the devil, as seen in 1 John 3:8.
 - See the initiative that God took in the person of Jesus Christ to be with you.
 - **Illustration:** First responders are amazing. Thank you to all who work in this critical field. When there is an emergency, you are there. When there is danger, you go running into it, not away from it. Firefighters and others know what they are in for and they continue to go into harm's way for the good of the people who are in trouble.
 - **Application:** Jesus is the ultimate first responder. He saw human beings straying from Him and pursued them. He ran into the situation. He knew the ravages and effects of sin and came to earth anyway, and He knew the agony of the cross and yet came for you and me.

- Each of us needs hope. How easy it is to think, “You don’t know what I’ve done”, “ You don’t know what I think”, “I have no hope”. But those are lies from the devil! You are precious in the eyes of God, created in His image, and He has come to give you hope, forgiveness, and life. He has come to pursue you.
 - Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, and pursues us. No matter what. We are ashamed and want to deflect the attention from ourselves like Adam and Eve, but He wants us to be found by Him. He wants to pour out His love on us. Be found by Him as He pursues you even in the sin and the shame that you carry that others don’t know about. He knows and He pursues.
- **Jesus, God with us, gives us hope in His faithfulness to us.**
 - Next the Lord addresses Eve, then Adam. Notice that Adam and Eve are not cursed. The serpent is cursed. The ground is cursed. But Adam and Eve are not cursed.
 - The consequences of their sin were and continue to be significant.
 - Eve would experience pain in giving birth
 - Her desire would be contrary to her husband, or otherwise stated as her desire would be for her husband, or his position, but he would rule over her. Michael Wechsler points out in the Moody Commentary that this started right in verse 20 where Adam names his wife.
 - There is much that could be said here, but suffice to say this morning that if you are a wife you are called to submit to your husband as found in Titus 2 and Ephesians 5, and if you are a husband, you are called to submit to the Lord in loving your wife and giving yourself up for her, living in an understanding way - not a demanding, condescending, and never an abusive way.
 - For Adam, the ground would be cursed, he would toil in pain, and by the sweat of his brow would eat bread.
 - God then cast Adam and Eve from Eden, lest they take from the tree of life and live forever.
 - We might naturally think of this as being the consequences of sin, which it is. But there is love and hope behind these verses.
 - God’s love: Imagine what it would have been for God to do nothing. They may have eaten from the tree and lived forever. They would have lived with their sin in the body forever. They would have experienced the effect of their sin forever. They would have known the broken relationship with God forever.
 - God’s hope: He is gracious that we have hope beyond this world, that this world is not our home, that He has promised a new body to every follower of Jesus in our eternal home of heaven.
 - If God did nothing, they would have been comfortable with sin. They would have given birth with ease, tilled the ground with ease, and would not have mourned the loss of relationship with God as easily because everything else in life would have been easy.
 - See that the effects of sin and the difficulties in life as being a good gift of God to remind us of our brokenness and our need of Him. To be reminded that we are in desperate need of Jesus. And that He is faithful.

- **Illustration:** This summer, our check engine light came on in our van. I checked into it and learned that we had a couple of issues that could affect the traction system in the snow.
- We'd all probably rather not have service engine lights, but they are needed to tell us when there is a problem. Without those lights, we'd miss the early warnings, and be faced with much bigger issues later.
- **Application:** So it is with sin. God has graciously given us consequences for sin out of His great love for us. He uses these to remind us that He is faithful, that we are in need of Him, that we live in a fallen world.
- **Conclusion:** We have hope in this world. We have hope even in dark times. We have hope because Jesus, God with us, has come, has pursued us, and is faithful to give us all that we need.

Jesus, God with us, is our source of hope

I want to leave us with a specific call to action for this season of Advent. Please consider something that we might give up during this season. Maybe chocolate, a TV show, social media, or a meal once a week.

Giving up something in and of itself is not the goal. The goal is to be able to increase our capacity to mourn our sin, the effects of sin, and the pain that is experienced in this world. And by increasing our capacity to mourn, we'll be increasing our capacity for joy as well, to celebrate wholeheartedly His birth when Christmas comes, and to celebrate together when He returns to earth again.

What can you give up? What can help you mourn for your sin? What can you repent of? How can you make room for Jesus?

He is our Hope. Hold on to Him!

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