

Sin

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[0 : 00] I'd like you to imagine for a second that you walk into a cinema. So you get your popcorn and you get your drink and it's completely empty so you take the best seat in the house.

You know, the one in the back, which is debatable, but anyway. And then everyone starts to pile in and you see your friends, you see some of your family members, and you buckle up for a movie. But then as the movie begins, you realize that this isn't your normal movie. This is a screening of your life. Everything you have ever done in public, but also in private.

Every word you've ever said to someone's face or behind their back. And if that wasn't enough, every single thing you've ever thought, displayed on the big screen for every single person you know.

To see. So as you see that movie, as you recall your past, as you see the people that have been affected and touched by it, for the good and the bad.

[1 : 10] You'd feel ashamed. You'd start to shrink back in your chair. You'd feel the weight of it. And you'd feel physically sick.

You'd want to get up and tear that screen down, wouldn't you? You'd want to start to justify the stuff that you can. You'd want, you'd wish this movie never existed. And you'd want to draw people's attention to the good things you've done.

You feel shame flooding through your body and you just want the movie to stop. Wishing that there was an end. We would be ashamed. Because we know that we're not perfect.

We know that we hurt people and we do things wrong every single day. We'd be ashamed because people would see what is really going on in our lives. And so we can tell that there's a disconnect. Something has changed from where we left off last week. Can't we? In Genesis 2, verse 25, read with me. It says, Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.

[2 : 21] There's a big difference between then and now. So what has changed? Imagine seeing the movie of your life being shown to the whole world. And yet this time, you're more than happy for everyone to look.

Because you've done no wrong. You feel no discomfort. And you feel no shame. That is what Genesis 2 was like for Adam and Eve.

But we don't live in that world anymore, do we? Something went drastically wrong somewhere. And that is the bit of the Bible we come to this morning. The thing that went wrong is sin.

And in Genesis 3, we see the origin of sin. The consequences of sin. But we also see God's solution to sin. So this passage is here to show us the seriousness of sin.

That weight that we should feel. But, and it's a big but. It also shows us the immense and abundant grace of a good God.

[3 : 22] It is not here to make us wallow in self-pity and hatred. But it is here so that we can marvel. That despite our sinfulness and shame, God loves us.

God cares for us. And he goes out of his way to make us right with him. In this passage, we'll see God's solution to our sin and shame.

And that solution is that he takes that sin and shame upon himself. And gives us his righteousness so that we can be free. So please follow along in your Bible as we go through this chapter.

Because this is not Bruntsfield Evangelical Church's opinion of sin. This is not Alistair Chalmers' opinion of sin. But this is what God, the creator and sustainer of the world, says about sin.

We're going to think about some tough stuff. But we're also going to marvel at the news that despite it all, God still offers us redemption.

[4 : 28] So let's dive into Genesis chapter 3 together. The first thing that we see is the origin of sin. In verses 1 to 6, the origin of sin. So chapter 2 ends on a really good note.

Adam and Eve were naked and they felt no shame. Everything was good as God said numerous times in Genesis chapter 1. But here the first sin takes place.

So what is sin? We sometimes think that sin is only words and actions. It's a word we may be reserved for horrendous crimes that happen in this world.

But the Bible's definition of sin is far greater than that. The Bible says that sin is the rejection of God saying, No God, I don't want you. I don't want your way.

I don't want you to be Lord of my life. I don't want to listen to you. I want to do life my way. The Bible's definition of sin is all encompassing.

[5 : 32] Every word. Every cruel word. Every lie. Every wrong and selfish thought.

Every unwholesome desire. And if we're honest, we look at that and none of us can say that we're perfect. None of us can say that we are blameless.

So how exactly did sin come about? Well, we get a hint of it there in verse 1 where it says, The serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals.

The snake is Satan or the devil. And do you see what his first words are ever recorded in the Bible in verse 1? Did God really say? Did God really say?

From the very beginning, Satan, this created being, is trying to get Eve to doubt God's goodness. He's trying to make Eve lose her trust in God.

[6 : 32] So Eve is standing in this wonderfully bountiful, beautiful garden. And the snake asked, Did God really say that you can't eat from any of these trees?

That you can't enjoy any of this? Is God really that restrictive and mean? Is he really such a killjoy?

The snake is focusing on God's prohibition, as opposed to God's abundant provision.

The garden is about fruitfulness, fellowship and freedom. Only one boundary exists. And that is there so that Adam and Eve can have the opportunity to express their trust or distrust in God.

The snake is trying to make God out to be some kind of mean rule master. But Eden is actually the most rule-free place that has ever existed.

So Eve puts the serpent right in verses 2 to 3. We can eat from all of these trees, just the one in the middle of the garden. And if we eat of it, we will die.

[7 : 40] And then in verse 4, the snake goes on another attack. You will not certainly 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.

Amen. The snake is enticing Eve by saying that if she eats this, she'll become like God. Eve wants to become like God. But by doing so, she is actually rejecting God himself.

And then in verse 6, it all unravels. The beginning of mess, the entry of evil into the world and into every single human heart. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. Eve took and ate the fruit directly disobeying God, rejecting his way.

Then she gives it to her husband who seems to have been standing idly by, watching this whole thing unravel. From this moment on, every single human heart born into this world has been corrupted by sin.

[8 : 56] Not one of us is untouched by this. I wonder if you remember those adverts that used to be on TV when you were growing up, or when I was growing up, encouraging people to wash their hands.

It showed someone sneezing into their hand in a bus. And then suddenly the screen went to UV light. And you could see the bacteria all over their hand. It was pretty disgusting. And then the camera followed that person around the whole day.

Every touch of a handle, every handshake, every handing over of money, the bacteria was spreading. You couldn't see it. You didn't know it was happening and there was no controlling it. It spread without anybody knowing. And that is like this first sin. You couldn't see it expanding. You still can't see it expanding.

And yet every person from this point on is born in that status of sinfulness and shame. Adam, as the head of humanity, disobeys God and invites sin into the human heart.

[10 : 05] Friends, this is the origin of sin. This is the moment humanity rejected God. And it is the cause of all of our struggles. All of the pain and horrors and atrocities in life.

This is the reason people lie. Cheat and steal. The reason people kill, hurt others and start wars. This is the reason people strive for power.

And are selfish. Because in Genesis 3, humanity said, no God, we don't want you. We want to be like you. That's what happened.

This is the moment humanity changed and went from feeling no shame like Genesis 2 to feeling shame like today. The origin of sin. The origin of sin.

And the second thing that we see in this passage is the consequences of sin. In 7 to 19, the consequences of sin. And there are three that are brought out in this passage.

[11:04] The first is the consequence of shame. You see that in verse 7. Adam and Eve realize their nakedness and they sew together fig leaves to cover themselves up.

In an attempt to hide their shame. Just like when we break something in the house, for example. Our first reaction is, how can I fix this so that nobody finds out?

We don't want people to know we've messed up and so we cover up. And that's what they do. They hear the sound of God walking in the garden in verse 8 and they hide.

In the cinema screening of our lives, we shrink away in shame. But Adam and Eve hide behind the trees, away from the presence of God. So before eating the fruit and disobeying God, they enjoyed an unimaginably close and intimate relationship with God.

The one we were all created for. And yet now they are purposefully dodging his presence. And in verse 9, God calls Adam and Eve and asks where they are.

[12:11] And Adam responds in verse 10 saying, We hid. We're afraid because we were naked. God then gives Adam the opportunity to confess his sin and come clean.

He could have confessed and said, Yeah, we ate from the tree. You told us not to. But what does he do instead? We see the second consequence of sin. We see blame. Adam blames Eve in verse 12.

And then in verse 13, Eve blames the snake. Right from the very beginning of humanity, we see that people have been trying to cast the blame on other people for their own wrongdoings.

We don't want to own up to our own faults. We want a scapegoat. I did this the other day. I went to my car and saw that I had a parking fine.

I was pretty annoyed. I knew that it was my fault, though, because I didn't check the sign properly.

And I knew that I wasn't, or I realized that I wasn't parked in a permit holders bay.

[13:16] But the temptation was to blame the football fans in the nearby game who'd parked in my area, meaning that I couldn't park in my normal spot or normal street.

Now, of course, the fault was mine. I was just looking for someone else to blame to make it easier to process and easier to part with my 30 pounds. That's what Adam and Eve do here.

They don't want to take responsibility for their sin, so they play the blame game. And then the last consequence of sin mentioned in these verses is the consequence of judgment.

The Lord judges the snake in verses 14 to 15, Eve in verse 16, and Adam in verses 17 to 19. Now, when people hear of judgment and curses, the temptation is to ask, well, what kind of God would curse and judge people for disobeying one little command?

For that assumes that God's anger and wrath is like ours, but it is not. We get angry when things don't go our way.

[14:27] Children have tantrums. Teenagers storm off in a huff. Adults shout and cry. But God is not like that at all. His anger is not uncontrolled and impulsive.

But sin requires judgment. Why? Because of what we've been singing. God is a holy God. He does not enjoy inflicting judgment on a world, but the reality is that punishment must be given when sin is committed.

God cannot overlook sin. It must be dealt with. And I think if we think about it a little bit, we're thankful for that. Because we would cry out injustice if sin wasn't dealt with.

We hate stories where people have done wrong and gotten away with it. Look through history as people have committed horrible crimes and charges have been dropped because of diplomatic immunity or because of their position and influence in the world.

And we know that it is wrong. And so God, in his judgment, says that the snake is cursed to a life of enmity, of crawling in the dust and being hated by humanity.

[15:41] And then Eve is cursed with severe pains of childbearing and labor. And she will desire her husband and her husband will rule over her. So the harmony between a husband and wife, the

perfect relationship of complementarity and oneness that we saw in Genesis 2, is broken.

Now this relationship is marked by envy and a power play of who is head of the household. The first marriage, which should have been a perfect illustration of Jesus and his church, is corrupted and broken.

And Adam's curse affects the whole world. Look with me at verse 17. God says to Adam, Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree of which I commanded you, you must not eat from it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. So Adam chooses to listen to his wife and disobey God by eating the fruit. From that moment on, everything good that we saw in Genesis 1 and 2, all the beauty of creation, the beauty and goodness of the human body, the wonderful gift of marriage and sex, the enjoyment and pleasure of working as God intended, and that very relationship of closeness and intimacy with God, is tainted.

It is not the same. In Genesis 2, verse 17, God said to Adam, You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die.

[17:23] In chapter 3, verse 4, you will become like God. You will become like God. But death did come, as Genesis 3, verse 19 makes abundantly clear.

By the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return. This is the root cause that brings us so much pain and heartache today.

And we feel it every single time a loved one dies. We know that it is wrong. We are not created for death, and yet because of sin, it has become a part of our everyday life.

But this is much more than just physical death. This is spiritual death too. Because humanity was created into a perfect relationship with God, but now, since the fall and entrance of sin into the world, we have been cut off from Him, and are naturally born, spiritually dead, rejecting God, from the very beginning.

And there is nothing in and of ourselves that can change that. No fig leaves can cover up our sin and shame, and make it possible for that closeness to be restored. As Romans 5, verse 12 said, that was read to us earlier in the service, therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way, death came to all people.

[18:59] the entire human race, characterized by death, both physical and spiritual. Now we know deep down, don't we, that humanity is still living with these consequences of sin.

we see it in marriages, how it is being changed and distorted. We see our husbands and wives can be at each other's throats, instead of lovingly caring for each other and working together as one.

We see family breakups, and the hurt that they cause. And we feel it in our work too. It's difficult. We struggle with tiredness and distraction.

Bad colleagues, bad bosses, can make even the most enjoyable job, an absolute nightmare. And we see it played out in our world, as we read headlines of war, famine, disease, destruction, and death.

People caring less and less about human body and human life. And we see people who care about no one but themselves. We live in a broken world as the consequence of sin.

[20:15] And this is the reality in each and every single one of our lives. Now you're probably sitting there thinking, Alistair, we know this. We don't need you to remind us of how fallen and broken we are.

But I think once we see the seriousness of this, and we're reminded of the seriousness of this, we can see the abundant grace and phenomenal mercy of God.

Because this passage, which shows us the seriousness and just punishment of sin, it also shows us God's solution to sin. God's solution to sin.

Now this is absolutely breathtaking. Because here we realize just how wonderful, good, gracious, and loving God is, that even now, in judgment, he's abounding in grace, and offers the solution to our sin.

Part of God's solution is in verse 15, where he's speaking to the snake, God says, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers.

[21:24] He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. In this verse, God is promising the end to Satan's tricks, the end to the effects of sin, and the promise of one who would come and defeat sin, defeat death, and evil.

God promises that one of Eve's offspring will rise up, and defeat Satan. The snake will hurt this offspring, but this offspring will kill the snake.

Do you see? The God is abounding in unbelievable grace, and showing completely undeserved mercy, by promising restoration and rescue to Adam and Eve, shortly after they've just rejected him.

We serve a great God, who sees the problem of sin, and has already got the solution in place, by promising an offspring.

And as you look through the book of Genesis, there's an ongoing search for this offspring, for the man who would come, and put an end to sin and death. And it continues through the whole of the Old Testament.

[22 : 39] Could this be the one? Could this be the serpent crusher? But every time, they fall short and they fail, because they are themselves, by very nature, sinful, broken people.

But God doesn't just leave Adam and Eve with this promise, and the whole of humanity with this promise. In his abundant love and grace, he gives them a beautiful sign, of this promised provision of restoration.

He gives them a sign, which points to the ultimate solution to sin. He gives them a sacrifice, and he clothes them in verse 21. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Now this is the first sacrifice in the Bible. As God sheds the blood of an animal, to clothe Adam and Eve, to protect them, as they are out of his presence. They tried to cover up their shame with fig leaves, but that would not suffice.

Their shame and disobedience had to be covered by the death of another. And God provides for them, cares for them by clothing them, and covering their shame, despite their sin.

[24 : 00] God is gracious in judgment. Now why is this an important point? Well, because when we realize our sin, our temptation is to cover up our sin and shame with the fig leaves of good works.

But we are just putting good deeds on top of a rotten heart. We try to make ourselves right again, but that's impossible. We need what we see here.

We need the death of another to cover our sin and our shame. Anything we try to do to hide our shame is inadequate. It will not work. Only God can provide the adequate sacrifice to remove our shame altogether, to deal with it forever.

The perfect sacrifice is Jesus. He is the promised serpent crusher, born of God to a young virgin, born into a world that would reject him.

Sure, people would listen to his teaching. Yes, they would like his miracles and healings, but he is teaching and healing people who would stand before Pilate and shout, crucify him.

[25 : 17] Jesus is the promised offspring because his heel was bruised. As he hung on that cross and breathed his last, he bore the weight of your sin and my sin.

And as he bore the full punishment of God's wrath against the sin of his people, he breathed his last and died. But Jesus' final words on the cross were, it is finished.

And they were speaking, Jesus was speaking about the wrath of God against the sin of his people. It is finished. It is gone. It is dealt with. And then Jesus rose again victorious, defeating sin, defeating shame, conquering death, rendering Satan's lies void, death, empty of its sting, and making that once broken relationship with God whole again.

We see the promised end of sin again in that Romans passage in verse 17, where it says, by the trespass of one man, death reigned through that one man, meaning Adam.

So how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

[26 : 48] Jesus is the sacrificial lamb that took our place. He took on himself our sin and shame so that we could be clothed, but not in temporary fig leaves, not in something that will fade and fail, but he clothed us in his perfect, perfect righteousness.

So as we draw to a close, imagine you're sitting back in that cinema, your life being played out before your eyes, and you feel that shame creeping up again.

But as a Christian, you are sitting there and Jesus sits with you. And do you know what he says? Paid for. My blood was shed so that he could be set free.

My body broken and torn so that this guilty sinner could be made right with God.

I died so that he could have my righteousness. What amazing grace. What limitless, undeserving love.

[28 : 08] And yet it is the gift that Jesus holds out to you this morning. And that is why as Christians, when we sin, we run to God and we can be honest as we repent and say, we have messed up again.

And know for certain that we are forgiven. Because his sacrifice is final. Because we are clothed in Christ. No greater grace, no greater mercy, no greater love has ever been seen on the face of this earth than the love of Christ as he hangs on the cross and dies for sinners like you and me. That is why I am standing here this morning pleading with you. If you are still away from God. If you are still living in rejection of God and living in the consequences of sin from Genesis 3, take hold of God's solution to sin.

Come home and be made right with God because he made it possible. He made the way. He is the lamb. Jesus is the lamb that was slain so that you can be set free.

And he is the triumphant one who rose again, defeating death, defeating sin, and taking away all of our shame.

[29 : 30] Would you come to Jesus this morning and be clothed in his righteousness? Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, no amount of words in this world would suffice for us to give you the praise and thanks that you deserve.

Though whilst we were still sinners, you sent your holy and perfect son to die for us so that we could be forgiven of sin, so that we could be free of our shame and clothed in his righteousness. No greater love has ever been seen. Jesus, we thank you that you were willing to be the sacrificial lamb to cleanse us. And we thank you that you rose victorious, defeating our enemies of sin and death.

We give you thanks and praise for you are great and you are our perfect redeemer, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.