

Judgment and Mercy ▪ Genesis 3:14-24

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One of the keys to discipleship and growth in our spiritual life is recognizing that we get stuff wrong at times.

—That can be sin. Admitting and confessing known sin. Willingness to accept correction and rebuke.

—Also, admitting that the way we read or understand the Bible at certain times was wrong.

Even the most respected scholars or pastors, don't bat 1000.

For me, one of those places was how I used to understand Gen. 3, at one time early in my discipleship. (3:8a)

- I initially thought this was a cool, peaceful evening stroll that Adam and Eve had with God in sweet fellowship. (It probably was a product of the church I was in that tended to ignore God's wrath.)

› *What I missed was the weight of the wrath and judgment of God.*

In the Bible, we need to be sure we hear the tone to understand the text.

****This is the first major act of Judgment in the Bible.**

There is nothing cool about the cool breeze or any of what follows.

We need the full picture of God to know, worship, and enjoy him.

—We need to know God as Creator to worship him.

—We need to know God as loving provider, to depend on him.

—We need to know God as Love, to enjoy him, and commune with him

—But we need to know God as Judge to have a reverent fear of him.

Main Point:

To know the weight and heaviness that comes from sin, but also the freedom and joy that come through mercy and grace.

Unless we see the terrifying nature of God's judgment, we will never understand and appreciate and love the tender mercy of God.

God shows his mighty justice through destructive consequences.

- There are 4 main consequences and they are laid out in pairs.

1. Curse (v14 & 17)

- Serpent and soil

—The serpent (v14). The creature's physique was transformed.

Eating the dust = not referring to the diet, but a humbled state (e.g we say "eat crow, or eat humble pie)

Psalm 72:9 ESV

May desert tribes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust!

—The land (v17). The land would not cooperate.

Sharp things will cut. Drought. Storms would destroy.

2. Pain (v16 & 17)

- Again, God pronounces it twice.

—The woman (v16). The reality of *fruitful* and *multiply* will not be a joyful experience.

—Adam (v17). "In pain you shall eat of it....." all the days of your life.

- Multiple times the word eat is used as part of the curse (17-19); the first sin was *eating* something forbidden...now just to eat will be a *painful* experience.

3. Conflict (v15 & 16)

- First, between the Serpent and the Woman.

This is not physical conflict (Eve chasing the snake with a shovel). This is spiritual, across time.

In other words, there will be a Holy War that runs throughout history.

- The Offspring of the Serpent: All reject God and his Kingdom rule. All the rebellious become the seed of the Serpent.

One example: Cain (Ch. 4)

(1 John 3:12) - “who belonged to the evil one”

- Offspring of the Woman: The people of the Kingdom and King

1 John 3:8 ESV

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:10 ESV

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

- The second conflict as a result of the fall is between husband and wife. (16b)

Desire is used again in 4:7 which speaks of a controlling desire; desire to be the master.

Conflict: She will not want to submit to Adam’s headship. She will want to act on her own authority and dominate her man—

—And Adam will not be a gentle leader, but have the tendency to react harshly, yell, throw and break stuff...break her spirit.

One thing for believers, Christ has removed the sting of the curse, so we don’t say “this is just the way of it is.”

In other words, no one who confesses to be a disciple should proof-text Gen. 3 to excuse a marriage for being a battle zone.

4) Death (v19 & 24)

- The final and ultimate consequence is death. (v19)
- You work and die. (Ecclesiastes)

- Death is also seen in the final verses - a description of being exiled from Eden and from the Tree of Life. (v24)
- Going East or coming from the East is a symbol of being away from God's presence.

The ultimate curse is being outside the Land of God's Presence—cut off from the tree of life.

Curse. Pain. Conflict. Death. These are all destructive consequences of the first sin, ingredients of life—our lives.

These are the destructive consequences...

They are daily reminders that God is a God of mighty justice.

On New Years Day in 1982 a young woman named Susan Herzog was killed by a 17 year old drunk driver. Because the 17 year old was too young to charge, the judge ordered the teen to send a check of \$1 each Friday, the day of Susan's death for the next 18 years.

\$936 total

By the time the man was 26 years old, he could not do it. It was not because he could not afford it, but because he was haunted each week. Emotionally it tore him up. He tried multiple times to go to court and get out of it.

Washington Post Article: *VA COUPLE WONT LET DRIVER FORGT KILLING THEIR DAUGHTER*

The point: One single act put this man so far from enjoying a happy life.

Sound familiar?

Curse. Pain. Conflict. Death.

It was one single act from our first father; we are so far from a Happy Life.

Do you feel the weight of this? The heaviness of God's wrath on disobedience.

The picture at the end of Ch. 3—The first exile and excommunication.

And the only way back into the garden and Paradise.... One would have to pass through the weight judgment and wrath.

Not one defiled like Adam...but a Second Adam...pure, spotless, innocent.

God shows his mercy through amazing grace

- The feel of this crucial chapter in the Bible is very dark; yet there are flickers of light already.

Grace through Promise (v15)

- If Gen. 3 is one of the most crucial chapters of the Bible, this is the most vital verse. This has been called the “First Gospel” announcement.

The seeds of the Gospel are sown here.

This becomes the mother of all promises!

- The Lord Jesus will be the one who has final victory over the Serpent.

Colossians 2:15 ESV

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

D.A. Carson. “By going to the cross, Jesus will ultimately destroy the serpent...who holds people captive under sin, shame, and guilt.

He will crush the serpent’s head by taking their guilt and shame on himself.”

Anyone who wants to be free of the serpent’s control, will need to come to Jesus Christ.

Good news: You can be free and forgiven by placing your faith in him.

So the Lord Jesus is the ultimate serpent defeater.

Yet...

Romans 16:20 ESV

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This reminds us: *A gospel-centered church also plays a role in bringing this promise to full fruition.*

In days where people are cynical and skeptical about the church: The church still plays a vital role in the Serpent-Striking work of Christ.

Grace by covering (v21)

The action of God in making clothes reverses the shame that Adam and Eve were covered with.

We can rightly call these “grace garments”.

- The clothing for our First Parents would remind them of the cure of their sinfulness and rebellion, this is not something they can fix or undue on their own.

They needed a covering that would come from God.

They need God.

They need God to deal with their sin.

Only God could repair and restore their innocence, and cover their shame.

—The gracious covering of God is emphasized elsewhere.

Zechariah 3:3–4 ESV

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”

Grace toward the prodigal in the parable:

Luke 15:22 ESV

But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.

Christians....

(Gal. 3:27)—clothed with Christ.

To be a Christian means you know one thing well: You have God’s covering over you—clothing you in Christ and his righteousness.

Clearly, God and God alone is the only one fit to provide and clothe his fallen creation.

- I heard someone once say that we are not saved by our thoughts about God....*we are saved by God himself.*

So true. It's what we see here.

It's the mercy and grace that brings true freedom.

Conclusion:

*We should feel the weight and heaviness of sin, but also know and enjoy the freedom the grace of Christ brings!

I don't know what Adam and Eve did immediately after v 24.

But I know what we should do.

—Believe in God's Tender Mercy and Saving Grace, and Bless Him.

--Will you Bless God this morning for not ending everything on that dreadful day?

Will you bless God that he forgives and brings freedom?

And that he clothes with the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Psalm 103:2–4 ESV

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

As the old hymn states:

Ruined sinners to reclaim,

Hallelujah, what a Savior!