

March 19, 2017
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Peace in Chaos
Community Baptist Church
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as we prepare to hear from Genesis 3,9,11.

1. Consider how gracious and bountiful God's supply was to Adam and Eve and compare it with God's provisions for you.
2. What was the root cause for all the chaos of sin Adam brought into the world?
3. Try to explain what a culture looks like when all the people think only evil continually.
4. When God said He was sorry that He made humanity, is that the admission of a mistake?
5. What did Noah do to find favor with God?
6. What can humanity accomplish if the whole world is organized and communicating?
7. Satan desires uniformity for all humanity. What does God desire?

TO KNOW EVIL
Genesis 3, 9, 11

That our world is characterized by chaos is obvious. Whole societies and nations in the Middle East have been devastated by war. The poor victims of the warmongers who are grasping for more and

more land and power scatter across the Middle East and Europe with no place to call home. We cannot even begin to imagine the trauma and pain these parents and their children experience. From one day to the next, they never know if they will have enough food to survive, or if the warring factions will overrun them and they will simply be added to the statistics.

All across Europe, neighborhoods that once appeared to be relatively calm and settled are now in upheaval because of uninvited guests. The citizens of the once powerful nations of Europe never know when a terrorist is going to commit suicide with a bomb and take hundreds of innocent victims to death with him.

There is corruption, rebellion, talk of war and secession in many nations. It appears the common citizens in many cultures are rising up against the globalists who have been trying to force their people into the mold of a one-world government. The one large centralized government Abraham Lincoln dreamed of for America is also the dream of many world leaders on a global scale.

We, ourselves, the citizens of America the bold and free, are learning that we might be too bold and not free at all. The major faction between the liberals and conservatives, the centralists and the state's rights people, has become more obvious and ominous than it has been in 150 years. Listening to the news of the day makes one wonder if this nation will survive another twenty years as "one nation under God." We definitely know that we have ceased being a nation under God. But will we also cease to be fifty independent states united as one nation?

Even in our homes, neighborhoods, and businesses, it seems like tensions are stretched to point of snapping. Many people try to go to sleep each night stressed out about apprehensions for the next day. Will you have a job? Will your teenager leave home? Will your spouse walk out? Will you be sued for something you said or did? Will your business be boycotted because of your stance on marriage or gender?

Living in circumstances like this day after day, it frankly becomes quite difficult for us to grasp Jesus' promise to the disciples. He promised, "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid*" (John 14:27). Do you think Jesus meant

that? Does the promise apply to us also? How does it work? Does it work? There is a radio talk show guy who in the past has regularly quoted part of this verse, after he has spent the previous hour pouring out news about the chaos of our culture that makes our hearts feel quite troubled indeed!

Over the next several weeks, as the Lord is willing, we will study several Bible texts that will help us understand our Creator and Savior's plan for His people to enjoy peace as we live in a world of chaos. I find it interesting that, about a year ago in the process of praying about what I should preach, the Lord would lay this burden on my heart. The topic is right for such a time as this.

We must begin the study by trying to figure out how we arrived in this chaotic situation. The chaos we experience didn't just happen overnight. It was planned. It was promised. It has been happening for a long time as it actually did begin overnight in the beginning. We must realize that the troubling circumstances of our world in this day are all rooted in the disobedience of Adam and Eve—which story the people who cause the chaos of our day reject as myth. The people who are causing the trouble have no earthly idea why they do what they do. We should know the reason for the problem so that we can trust the One who gives us the solution to the problem.

In The Beginning (Genesis 2:16-4:8).

God's plan called for innocence. God created our first parents to enjoy peace and security. Of those early moments in creation we read, *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden" (Genesis 2:16)*. Those words reveal that God generously provided for His created beings. God was like a loving Father who provides for His children. He provided for the humans in a special way, unlike the animals who God created to eat particular kinds of food. God created every tree of the garden except one to be enjoyed. Adam's and Eve's only choice was from which of the multitude of trees God permitted would they eat?

Was God unkind to put one tree off limits? God's boundaries demonstrated grace. God could have created us to be able to digest one kind of food, somewhat like a cat or dog. But because God created us in His image, He created us to choose, to express a will.

Therefore, Adam was free to decide to eat oranges today, bananas tomorrow, or maybe a few potatoes or peas or corn on the cob.

But also because God created us in His image, the matter of choice, the expression of the will, demanded moral boundaries. Holy, righteous God, our Creator, created us with the purpose of expressing our wills within boundaries of righteousness just like He does. Therefore, God had to offer a choice that included moral boundaries; a choice to obey our Creator or to disobey our Creator. Freedom of choice is meaningless without prohibition. If there is no prohibition, there is no freedom of choice—only bondage to selfish desires because everything I desire is acceptable.

Therefore, in setting boundaries, God warned our first parents not to eat of the tree of knowledge. *"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" (Genesis 2:17)*. On one hand, God provided food in astonishing abundance. We can't imagine the variety and the abundance of the food. We can't imagine how good it tasted. On the other hand, there was one—and only one—tree in the entirety of paradise from which the man and woman must not eat.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was exactly what the name implies. The words "But . . . you shall not" leave no doubt about the seriousness of this prohibition. If the man or woman ate the forbidden fruit, they would experience evil. In obedience to God, they would only experience good. The ultimate knowledge and experience of evil is death. Spiritual death, being estranged from God, being thrown out of His garden of paradise. Physical death, beginning the process of death the moment they disobeyed. God's provision was astonishingly gracious; God's prohibition was abundantly clear.

Of course, from the moment of his rebellion against the Creator, Satan has been the author of sin—everything that opposes God. Because God's plan is peace and fellowship with Him, Satan's plan creates chaos. This story demonstrates how easily doubt of God's word leads to chaos. *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'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 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'” (Genesis 3:1-3).

Satan, using the serpent, approached the woman in particular, since she was made from the man to be the man’s suitable helper. He engaged the woman in conversation that began by casting doubt on God’s word. Obviously, we would say that the woman should have immediately chosen to extricate herself from a conversation that encouraged doubting God. Hindsight is always 20/20. What would you or I have done?

In her conversation with the Evil One, Eve revealed that she had complete understanding of God’s rules. But knowing God’s word and obeying God’s word are not the same. To obey God’s word results in blessing, but rejection of God’s word guarantees chaos. *But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely 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” (Genesis 3:4-5).* “You will not surely die” is a complete rejection and denial of God’s word. For Satan to promise Eve that their eyes would be opened and they would be like God (*Elohim*) was to accuse God of being unfair or unjust to them. It implied that God didn’t want the created beings to be like Him.

The accusation that God is not fair is the very same accusation Satan threw up to God regarding Job. Satan loves to preach that God is not really good and gracious. He accused God of being selfish and deceptive in the way He protected and blessed Job. According to Satan, Job did not serve God out of love or respect, but because God did favors for him. Therefore, according to Satan, God blessed Job for selfish reasons.

So also, to Eve, Satan accused God of being selfish, not wanting her to know what He knows. And so nearly every temptation that comes to us implies that God alone is not sufficient. The temptation thrown at us is that God does not satisfy. He desires for people to believe that God is withholding from you the pleasure of sexual expression, the pleasure of being popular, the pleasure of being high or drunk, the pleasure of wealth. Therefore, the temptation is to conclude that God really is not kind.

To Eve, Satan argued that God was withholding the knowledge of good and evil, which was unfair. Before they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve knew only good. Because God’s word is true, when

they ate of the forbidden tree, they suddenly knew evil. To know is the Hebrew word *yawdah* which means to have intimate experience, to know from experience, and, therefore, to be able to distinguish. It is to know as God knows (same word is used in verses four and five). Because God is eternal, He knew all about evil, which is why His desire was for His created beings to avoid it.

Good is always that which is beneficial, right, useful, helpful, righteous according to God in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve enjoyed that. Evil is always the antithesis of good. Evil is characterized by the various sin lists in the New Testament. It is harmful to the sinner who does evil and to others. It causes pain, sorrow, loss, and discomfort. Evil is not only the source of chaos in our world but is the chaos. It is offensive to our Creator. Why would anyone want to “know” (experience) that?

Thanks to Adam and Eve we got the chaos. When God’s created beings are afraid of Him, there is chaos. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and that caused them to fear. Immediately upon sinning, their eyes were opened (just like Satan promised), and they understood evil. They immediately began to die physically. And they immediately began to experience spiritual death which is separation from God, to be at odds with God.

The chaos began quickly as the man and woman who had enjoyed fellowship with their Creator were now afraid of Him. *But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:9-10).* To fear God is to acknowledge that something is wrong. To fear God is to admit that our sin has offended Him and that He is powerful enough to do something about it. Therefore, the first step in restoring fellowship with God is to realize that our sins offend Him. That wisdom points out the chaos we live in all the time.

Furthermore, the resulting fight for survival in life is chaos. Because of sin, God said to Adam, *“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; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 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” (Genesis 3:17-19). And now the universal experience from birth to death is a fight for survival. The expression of the cursed ground is only the tip of the iceberg. All of creation is at war with itself. Paul acknowledged, *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now (Romans 8:22)*. Raging diseases that eventually take our lives is a very real part of that curse. Fighting the curse of sin is quite the opposite of enjoying God’s fellowship in paradise.

The ultimate expressions of chaos brought on by Adam’s sin are anger and murder. *In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him (Genesis 4:3-8)*.

Satan is delighted that God’s creation is so tortured by the effects of sin. We cannot get away from it as we see reports of it on the news every day.

A World of Chaos (Genesis 6-9).

Sin and chaos proliferated from that first murder onward in time. God saw that the wickedness was great. It is true that when every thought is evil, there is chaos. *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5)*. In short order, nearly every human on earth expressed the chaos of a sinful heart.

Is this not the same condition of our culture today? How often do you find yourself thinking thoughts that are not helpful, godly, righteous? And we know that everyone at work and school has evil intentions, right? Even unintentional, apparently harmless evil is still

evil. If a thought or intent is not in complete conformity to the perfect, holy character of God, it is evil.

It should go without saying that our Creator does not like chaos. *And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them” (Genesis 6:5-7)*. In order to help us understand how evil affects our perfect Creator, the Scripture pictures God with human responses. His heart is wounded by humanity’s evil thoughts and sins. This text does not teach that God changes His mind like a whimsical, capricious sinful man. Nor does it mean that God came to the painful conclusion that He had made a mistake. Rather God was grieved because the chaos of sin wracked His perfect creation.

Because of sin, there is no hope for the creation and the human race. Because of God’s grace there is hope. There was no hope when God destroyed everyone. There was grace in that God excepted Noah and his family. God blessed Noah who lived in his own world of chaos. So we read, *These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:9)*. Standing in contrast to the rest of his world, was Noah, the righteous man who had fellowship with God. What a great guy! How did he arrive at this point?

Noah was a recipient of God’s grace. *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:8)*. It is not that Noah went looking for God and stumbled across His favor. No, Noah was found to be favored by God. God poured out His grace and favor on Noah and that made him distinct, unique. Therefore, God had special plans for the righteous man who lived in a chaotic world. *Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation” (Genesis 7:1)*.

God saved Noah and his family but destroyed all the people who caused chaos. *And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds*

of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark (Genesis 7:21-23).

The universal, cataclysmic flood was an expression of God's unchanging attitude toward the chaos of sin. One day again God will completely cleanse the creation from sin and its author Satan. The difference between that purging and the flood is that the flood did not destroy the sin principle or the author of sin. The sin principle remained even in Noah and his sons and family.

Therefore, even in the context of blessing, there was fear and danger. *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered" (Genesis 9:1-2).* Sin causes fear even between humans and animals. That is only a picture of the distrust and fear between sinful humans. Consider in contrast the picture when the chaos of sin is removed. *In that day, the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6-9).* We don't live there yet. Therefore, we must have God-imposed laws and boundaries enforced among fellow humans.

Because the principle of sin continued, God instituted law. *And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:5-6).*

The Whole World Continues to Know Evil (Genesis 11).

The desire of human sinfulness is to "make a name for ourselves." The Creator gave us creative abilities to do that. *Now the*

whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar (Genesis 11:1-3). The reestablished human race from Noah's family was gathered in one area. They still exhibited the sin nature. They exhibited the image of God without understanding why they were like they were.

The people desired to reach to God. Attempts to take over the Creator's position is always the goal for sinful humans. *Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).* We are sinners and want to make a name for ourselves. Our nature is to desire to reach God and attempt to dethrone Him. That is easy for us to do in our individual lives. We just push God off the throne.

In a world of chaos, it is difficult for us to realize that God initiated diversity. But God-ordained diversity is a great deterrent to sinful humanity accomplishing greater sin. *And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:5-6).*

God pointed out here that because humans possess so much God-given ability, we can accomplish much evil. It appears from much modern evidence that the ultimate goal of created beings is to become creators of life and make man in our image! A frightening trend today is the scientific experiments with human embryos. Experimenting with embryos is the taking of a human life which God has created for His glory. How is that different from the unconscionable experiments the Nazi's performed on living humans? At the Ravensbruck concentration camp, sections of bones, muscles, and nerves were removed from the subjects without use of anesthesia. As a result of these operations, many victims suffered intense agony, mutilation, and permanent disability and often death. Hitler's dream was to create one super race of people. He only thought he was God.

God's plan and sinful humanity's plans are in conflict. God said, *"Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth"* (Genesis 11:1-9)

Satan's plan for humanity is uniformity. One race. One gender as demonstrated by the LGBTQ organizations. Their mantra is "Liberate yourself." From what? Obviously, from what your Creator made you! One world. One ruler, the Antichrist. This plan demands forced conformity because of the chaos of sin.

God's plan for His created beings is unity in diversity. That is many races working in unity, two genders working in unity, a multifaceted world working unity. And one ruler: Jesus Christ. Considering the obvious contrast to God's plan working in the world today, we conclude that humanity vividly shows the results of sin. It is chaos. Chaos is so normal we do not even realize how far removed from God's plan our culture is. In God's plan, there is peace and tranquility as diverse people work together to do God's righteousness. This plan will work perfectly when only the righteous inhabit the Lord's Kingdom. In the Kingdom Christ rules, there will be multiple nations living in harmony as they serve and worship the King of kings.

We do not live there yet. We live in a world that is thoroughly infected with sin. And sin in every respect, in every detail of life, always works against God's plan. How do we live at peace with God in a world that is totally against Him and His character? The Bible tells us so! In short, I am at peace when, "Jesus loves me this I know. And Jesus knows me this I love."