

Adam The Fall

One Big Story

By Voddie Baucham

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Kabwata Baptist Church

Plot no. Ch 20422

Chilimbulu Road

Libala, Lusaka, Zambia

Website: www.kabwatabaptistchurch.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/kbcl

As you take your seat, let me make note of a change. Last week in the morning we started the series "The Way We Think," the series on biblical worldview. That series will be continued in the evenings, the evenings that I will be preaching. And in the evening we started the series "One Big Story" and that's the story that we will continue in the remainder of the mornings that I will be preaching. This is the last time that I will be up for a while but as we continue, we'll continue with the series switched. It was just determined that each of them fit the other service better. The good news is that that won't change much because we haven't gone that far and we did deal with Genesis 1.

The idea of "One Big Story" is this, that the Bible really is one big story. It is the story of God's redemption and what we're going to do over the course of these Sundays that I have been given is to look at each of, well, 10 of the main stories in the Old Testament and see how they connect to the overarching story of redemptive history. What are we to be looking for when we read the stories about Noah and about Abraham and about David and about Moses? What are we supposed to be seeing? Are we just supposed to be seeing how they responded to their circumstances and trying as best we can to respond in kind, or is there something more, is there something deeper?

Last week, we looked at creation, today we look at the Fall, and if you remember when we talked about biblical worldview, one of the ways that you consider a worldview is the meta-narrative or overarching story, and the overarching story for the Christian, for the biblical theist is creation, Fall, redemption, and consummation. We saw creation in Genesis 1, tonight we'll look further at it in chapter 2. Today we see Fall in Genesis 3 and that's important to note. Remember, the whole story is creation, Fall, redemption, and consummation. By the time we get to Genesis 3, we've already reached Fall and we're already beginning to look at redemption, and for the rest of the Bible, the remainder of the Bible story is about the coming and accomplishment of that redemption.

So what we're going to look at today is really the thesis statement of the entire Bible found here in Genesis 3 but there's something else that's very important here in Genesis 3. You know, oftentimes when we think about being saved or when we think about being right with God, the way we consider it is this, that man is basically good but he needs

God's help to be good enough. Man is basically good but he needs God's help to be good enough, and so because of that we view the Bible the way we do and that's why when we look at these stories of the Old Testament, what we do is we try to look for the moral of the story, try to find out what this person did good, what this person did right and do more of that in our own lives so that somehow we can become better and perhaps even good enough. Maybe if we come to church enough, maybe if we give enough, maybe if we do enough good for enough people, somehow that will please or appease God and all will be well. Genesis 3 says, no, that will not suffice. Man is not basically good and needing to be better. Man is not basically good and needing to be made good enough.

Anybody, I always say anybody who believes that man is basically good doesn't have children, and all the parents out there said, "Amen." We have to teach our children as somebody said, "You know, we have to teach our children everything," and I stopped them. I said, "That's not correct. We don't have to teach our children everything. We have to teach our children almost everything but there is something that they do without any instruction and that something is called sin." Have you noticed that you don't have to teach your children to lie? Amen, somebody. You don't have to teach a child to lie. In fact, not only do they know how to lie but they get better at it as they go along. We don't have to teach them how to steal. We don't have to teach them to be angry or violent. Isn't it amazing that a baby comes home from the hospital and when they're hungry they let you know and not in a gentle way. Little bitty baby. You let a little bitty baby get hungry enough and you will see anger and violence and they flail their little arms and their face turns colors and they scream at the top of their lungs. I think God made them small so that they wouldn't kill us. Amen? And he made them adorable so that we don't kill them.

But from day one, we enter into the world selfish, self-centered, and ready and willing to do any and everything necessary to get our own way. And in fact, anything that we do good in our lives prior to coming to faith in Jesus Christ, we do it because we have been taught by those around us that this is what you need to do in order to get your own way, and because you're not big enough and strong enough to get what you want any other way, you learn to comply. But that's not righteousness. It's not righteousness.

So this is significant. It's significant in that it shows us what our real need is. It's significant in that it shows us what our children's real need is. Your child's real need is not to learn to behave better. That is a need, amen, but that's not their real need. Our children don't misbehave because they don't have enough information, our children don't misbehave because they're not governed enough, our children misbehave because at the root and at the core they are ruined sinners and they need something that you and I ultimately cannot provide. And that's true of all of them. It's true of all of us. But why? Well, if you join me in Genesis 3, we'll answer that question.

Genesis 3. First, let's look at verses 1 through 7 and we will see the Fall.

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.

One command. One simple prohibition. And that simple prohibition was there is one tree in the midst of the garden from which you must not eat. The day you eat of it, you shall surely die. You shall double die, if you will, the day you eat of it.

What's the source of the temptation? Let's be clear. The source of the temptation is the serpent, not God. James 1:13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one." This temptation came from the serpent. What was the strategy of the temptation? What's interesting is that the strategy of the temptation is the same in the garden as it is today. Step 1: did God say, questioning the word of God. Is that really what the Bible says? Is that really what God says? Step 2: you will not surely die, open contradiction of the word of God. So step 1 is, "I don't think the Bible says or I don't think God says what you think he says. I don't think it means what you think it means." Step 2 is not just sowing seeds of doubt but step 2 is outright contradiction. The serpent says, "You will not surely die." God says you will surely die, the serpent says you will not surely die. But there is a third step, the third step is: God knows that when you eat it you will be like God, he is withholding something from you. Step 3 is to impugn the very character of God himself.

And these are the exact steps of every temptation. First, question God's word. "Is that really what he says?" Second, contradict God's word, "Ah, that's not God. God would never say that. God would never do that." Step 3, impugn the very character of God. And we can take all of the areas where we are tempted and it's the same thing, whatever it is that we desire. What does sexual temptation look like? Well, sexual temptation looks the same way. It starts with, "Did God really say that you had to be married? Certainly if you feel strongly enough toward one another, huh?" Secondly, "God didn't say that. God is love, right, and if you love each other, then that means you are right lined up with who God is. How can that be wrong?" Thirdly, "The fact of the matter is God just wants to deprive you of pleasure. Who should serve such a God?" Does that sound familiar? This is the same tact and it's like that with every temptation.

What about the nature of the temptation? That's the strategy, what about the nature of it? John says this in 1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world." Isn't that interesting, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes and the pride of life. Notice

that the text says the woman saw that the fruit was good for food. That's the desire of the flesh. She saw that it was a delight to the eyes. That's the desire of the eyes. And finally, she saw that it was to be desired to make one wise like God. That's the pride of life. Not only is the strategy of temptation the same today, but the nature of the temptation is the same today, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and that's exactly what happened with Eve. Isn't it interesting that when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, that he's tempted in these exact three areas. The lust of the flesh, "Turn these stones into bread." The lust of the eyes, "Look at the kingdoms that I will give you." The pride of life, "Throw yourself down and the angels will catch you because, after all, you are that one, aren't you?"

The nature of temptation hasn't changed, the strategy of temptation hasn't changed, but there is the power of this temptation. She was tempted and she ate. She gave it to Adam and he ate. Listen to this in the Second London Baptist Confession, chapter 6, paragraph 1, "Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honor; Satan having the subtlety of the serpent seduced Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willingly transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory." God was not surprised by the Fall. God did not have to reassess his plan after the Fall. God is God.

Well, we see the Fall but what about the effects of the Fall? Look at the immediate effects first in verses 8 to 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.

First of all, we see fear and not only fear but irrational fear, fear that makes no sense whatsoever. God has been present and now God comes and they run and they hide but this is irrational for a couple of reasons. First of all, it's irrational because they're hiding from an all-seeing God behind a tree. Folks, where do you hide from an all-seeing God? The answer is nowhere. But when irrational fear overtakes you, you don't think about such things. You do things that make absolutely no sense whatsoever. That's what sin does. But not only is it irrational in this regard, hiding from an all-seeing God behind a tree, but here is the other way that it's irrational, it's irrational because they have eaten the fruit that God told them not to eat, they are under the condemnation of God and they are under the penalty of death. What can save them? There is nothing in their surroundings that can save them. There is no one in the world that can save them. The only one who can save them is God, and when God comes, they run. This is the irrational fear of all men everywhere. You stand under the penalty of death, condemned by an Almighty, all-seeing, all-righteous God in desperate need of his mercy, and instead of running to God for mercy, you flee from the only one who can help you.

My oldest son is deathly allergic to fish and we were on a trip together once, he and I, in a hotel room and we had some food sent up, and I had ordered this seafood bisque, it was wonderful. He had said that he wasn't hungry so he hadn't ordered anything. So I ate my food and I ate this seafood bisque and there was a little bit of it left, and suddenly he decided that he was hungry. So he went to the bowl and he began to eat and suddenly I heard [coughing]. I come and my son's mouth has a rash around it and he's beginning to scratch and he can't breathe. We carry an EpiPen, it's a little shot of epinephrine. You stick him in the thigh and save his life. I went to the room to get the EpiPen and he ran into the bathroom and locked the door. "Son, let me in." [coughing] "No, it's getting better." [coughing] "Son, you need to let me in. If you don't, I'll have to break the door. I'll still stick you with the EpiPen but we'll have to pay to fix the door." Completely irrational. "I don't want you to stick me with that." If I don't stick you with this, you will die. "Yeah, let's wait and see if something else happens. Perhaps there is an alternative." No, the alternative, there are two choices here. Choice number 1: I stick you with the EpiPen. Choice number 2: you die. There is no choice number 3 no matter how long we wait.

Completely irrational and there are some of you right here, right now under the sound of my voice, and that is you. God is your only hope and yet you run from God. Sure, you're here today but even being here, it's not even at your own behest, it's not even at your own will. You're here to satisfy somebody else or you're here to do as little religion as you possibly can and keep God at arm's length while at the same time satisfying your conscience that knows that you're in sin and in desperate need and yet you're running from God. You refuse to bow the knee. You refuse to give yourself. You refuse to trust wholly in him and his grace alone. And even your being here is another attempt, another attempt to find Option C. "Maybe if I just work hard enough. Maybe if I just do enough good. Maybe if I just show up frequently enough at church."

Not only do we see this fear but we also see shame and guilt. After the fear, notice what God says.

9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him [and some of us are way too serious when we read the Bible], "Where are you?"

You need to know God knows exactly where they are. God doesn't ask this question in order to inform himself. God knows everything. God asks this question so that we can see how God deals with the sinner. There is mercy and gentleness and kindness in this question. You need to know something: there need not be a question at this moment. The only thing required at this moment for God to be just is two dead corpses on the ground. That's all. But Adam and Eve are not dead, they are still alive and God has not come in wrath but he's come in mercy and grace and gentleness and kindness. And here's what you need to know: if you are here apart from Christ, I don't care what's going on in your life right now, the fact that you are not dead and in hell is the extension of God's mercy and grace to you because that's what you deserve. That's all you deserve and God would be completely just and completely right to give you that and nothing else. And the fact is you know this.

But he comes in kindness and he says, "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."

One of the funniest lines in the Bible, if you ask me. God responds to that and he says,

11 ... "Who told you that you were naked?"

In other words, "You've been naked your whole life, amen? When I made you, you were naked. When I made her, she was naked. When you named the animals, you were naked. Every day of your life you've been naked and yet unashamed, but now all of a sudden you're ashamed. Who told you you were naked because that's not even a word you should know." Do you realize this? The only way for "naked" to be a word in Adam's vocabulary is if somehow he becomes covered. Now you have a contrast to what he was before. But if naked just is, why do you have a word for it if there is no other alternative? "Who told you you were naked? Where did this word come from? Where did this shame come from?"

Look at the next line,

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

That's where shame comes from. That's where guilt comes from. Shame has to do with our expectation of judgment from other people. Guilt has to do with our expectation of judgment from God. Guilt has to do with our sin, shame has to do with what we think other people think about us and they both come from the same place. They both come from sin.

That's where guilt and shame come from, from sin. It's not because you have low self-esteem. That's our answer for everything, by the way, is it not, because we don't speak in these categories anymore. Low self-esteem. You have someone who is aggressive and violent, well, that's because they have low self-esteem. You have someone who is promiscuous, that's because they have low self-esteem. You have someone who underperforms in school, well, that's just because they have low self-esteem. It's the answer to everything. In other words, what we believe is if you thought more of yourself, everything would be fine. Not only is that untrue, it's the opposite of the truth. No one has low self-esteem. "Yeah, but you just don't know. I know somebody and she thinks that she's just not pretty and she's unattractive." Oh, you mean when she looks in the mirror she thinks she ought to see something more beautiful than what she sees? That's not low self-esteem, that's pride. That's being dissatisfied with what God gave you. If you can't say amen, you ought to say ouch.

Guilt and shame come from the Fall and also blame-shifting.

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

All he needed to say was, "I ate." Did you eat from the tree? "Yes, I ate." That wasn't the answer. Did you eat from the tree? "Okay, you see, um, well, no, see, okay, what happened... Okay, you remember that time when I went to sleep and then, and then I woke up and then you, and then you, and then you had made her and I didn't have nothing to do with it because I was, I was... I'm not blaming you, I'm just saying I was asleep and then, and then she... Her, she gave it to me and then I, then I ate." This is your children. This is my children. Did you just hit your brother? "It, it, I'm going to answer you but it's really important that you have this piece of information first because then you will understand completely. I had that toy and he took that toy. That's the part you didn't see before you saw that I hit him. But, yes, I did, but you can see it was completely justified." If you go to the courthouse, you hear the same thing. Did you steal that person's money? "Yes, but you see, you don't understand, I was hungry." Did you steal that person's money? "You don't understand, I have a drug problem." Did you steal that person's money? "You don't know how hard my life has been." The answer to the question is much simpler than we make it: you do what you do not because of what others do to you but because you are a sinner. Enough already with, "He made me angry." No one can make you angry. Enough with, "She made me do that." No one can make you do anything. You do what you do because of who you are and who you are is a rank sinner. Blame-shifting, not taking ownership. We've created an entire science designed to help us not take ownership of our sin. We call it psychology. The answers are far simpler.

Thirdly, we see the extended effects and this is what's important. You need to understand that Adam was our federal head. It's an important theological distinction. Federal headship is the essence of the gospel. What is federal headship? Well, imagine, if you will, that you live in one kingdom and across from your kingdom there is another kingdom, and you have a king and they have a king. Your king is your federal head. Now you have nothing against these people but your king declares war against that kingdom. Because he's your federal head, that means you are also now at war with that other kingdom. Your federal head doesn't have to ask your permission. Adam is your federal head, my federal head, and as our federal head, he stood in our place and in our stead, and when he fell, we all fell in him.

Listen to the way Paul says it in Romans 5:12-14.

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

That's important and we'll talk about it later. Verse 18,

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men,

You are guilty before God because of Original Sin. Now before you start screaming that's not fair, here's what you need to understand: if God had placed you there instead of Adam, the only difference would have been you would have sinned quicker. He was our best hope. He was perfect. By the way, if we understand this, it ought to change the way we think about a number of things. Sin happens and we think if we just changed the environment, then we can... No. Adam lived in a perfect environment and he sinned. Well, sin happens and we just, "Well, well, yes, yes, I did that but I did that because I was running around with the wrong crowd." I've noticed that one here in Zambia just like back in the States, right? What happened? He got hooked up with the wrong crowd. I'm waiting to meet that one honest parent, that one honest parent who says, "My kid is the wrong crowd that everyone else runs around." Have you noticed everybody says, "Your kid was running around with the wrong crowd," nobody says, "My kid is the wrong crowd." In order for there to be a wrong crowd, there's got to be some mama, some daddy somewhere who can say, "Yes, I'm the guilty one. Everyone else's child is in trouble because I am the parent of the wrong crowd." But you and I both know that's not the case. You run with the wrong crowd because you are a sinner who desires what they offer.

Adam's companions, perfect, and yet he sinned. Ah, well, it's parents. If only parents did a better job. Adam's parent was God and he fell into sin. His environment, perfect. His companions, perfect. His parent, perfect. And he fell. No one's is saying that these other things don't matter, what I'm saying is they are not the root cause. We have a problem and it's sin.

Finally, there is a cure. All men are sinners, every last one of us. Romans makes it clear, chapter 3, verses 10 to 18,

10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. 13 Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. 14 Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."

That's all of us. That's every last one of us. That's our problem. Sin is our problem and there has to be a cure for our sin. And listen to me, your cure for your sin can't be doing better. You take every religion in the world other than Christianity and you can boil them down to this: you need to have a religious experience and then from that moment on, you need to do more good things than bad things and hope for the best when you die. That's every other religion in a nutshell and unfortunately that's what some people try to turn Christianity into. You need to have a religious experience and then after that, do more good things than bad things, hope for the best when you die. There are several problems with that. Problem number 1: what about the things you did before your religious

experience? Who takes care of that? There is no answer for that outside of Christianity. None outside of Christ. Here's the second problem: I can't be good. I've tried it. I can't do it. And in fact, when I think I've been good, then I'm proud of the fact that I've been good. My pride is not good, I'm back at square one. If it's not the right thing, done the right way, for the right reason, it's not good, and the only right reason is the glory of God and apart from Christ you will never desire or do anything for the glory of God. Everything you do is for you.

So we have a problem. Adam ate and he sinned and all of us are sinners because we were in him when he ate. He was our federal head. So now he has a problem and we all have a problem. All of mankind has a problem. The wheels have fallen off. And in the midst of this, God gives the answer. Verses 14 and 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 [or seed] and her offspring [or seed]; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

There's the answer. There is a Redeemer who is promised. That's the answer and that's the only answer. There is nothing within us that can redeem us. We are guilty before God. We are sinners in thought, word and deed. Everything that proceeds from us proceeds from our sin nature. So not only is our behavior an issue but our very nature is an issue. How are we going to make this better unless our nature can be changed? And how is our nature going to be changed if everyone around us has the same nature? Can you help me? Can you? Can you? The answer is, no, because you have to help yourself.

So there must be one who can help us. There must be one but it can't be just anyone and here's the problem, the problem is the way that this sin nature is communicated to us is through the very process through which we are born. The very union of our mother and our father that produces us is what gives us this sin nature so what has to happen? There has to be one who was born without this sin nature which means that he cannot be born, as theologians say, through ordinary generation because everyone born through ordinary generation has a sin nature. So there has to be one who is not born like everyone else is born, and there has been one and only one. Born of the seed of the woman and he has to be in order to crush the head of the snake, and yet not born of ordinary generation. The seed of the woman and the Spirit of God. There is one who is going to come. He is going to be born of a woman and he's going to crush the head of the snake and the rest of the Bible is the unfolding of this reality.

In the very next chapter, what do we see? We see the seed of the serpent, Cain, kill the seed of the woman, Abel. Interesting, isn't it, both the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman come from the woman. How do I know and why do I call Cain the seed of the woman? Because John does in 1 John 3:12, "Do not be like Cain, who was of the evil one." And now we have a huge problem, don't we, because there has to be one who

comes who rescues us, this promised seed, and the one who is in this line is killed by the one who is not. But that's all right because in the end of chapter 4 into chapter 5, we have the birth of Seth, and in chapter 5 we have a genealogy, 10 generations from Seth to Noah, so that the promised seed is being preserved. Seth is a promised seed but not the promised seed. Noah is a promised seed but not the promised seed. The promise is going to come through him. Noah has three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The world is judged in a flood and Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth escape. Eventually we understand that it is Shem who is the promised seed out of his three sons. We're introduced in chapter 11 to a man named Terah. Why is he important? He's important because he has a son named Abraham. Abraham is the next link in the chain bringing us the promised seed. But there's a problem, the problem is that Abraham's wife is beyond childbearing years. How can the promised seed come if the woman can't bear a child? "Go into your servant and have a child." And Ishmael is born. But God says, "No, not a seed, the seed. Ishmael is not the promised seed." Eventually Sarah is able miraculously to have a child and he is the promised seed, Isaac. Isaac has twins. Where do we find the promised seed? Well, certainly it will be the older one, right? No. God says the older will serve the younger. It's Jacob who is the promised seed. Jacob has 12 sons. How do we now find the promised seed? The story centers around Joseph, maybe Joseph is the promised seed. Actually, he's not. He's just the one who preserves the promised seed, Judah. Judah is the promised seed. Eventually Judah has a great son by the name of David who is in his line. He's a promised seed but not the promised seed. God renews this covenant with David and says that he will have a son who will sit on the throne forever. Is Solomon that son? No, Solomon is not that son. He's a sinner just like the rest. But eventually through David and Solomon's line there is another one who is born, a King of kings and a Lord of lords. He is not born through ordinary generation. He is born of the seed of the woman and the power of God. He is born of a virgin so that he does not have sin of his own. He goes into the wilderness and this last Adam who is going to become our federal head like the first Adam, is tempted in every way the first Adam was and yet without sin. He is completely obedient to God. He is absolutely righteous which is important because we need him to impute that righteousness to us. He has to be righteous in order to give us his righteousness. But beyond his active obedience through which he imputes righteousness to us, there is his passive obedience in which he takes upon him our sin and on the cross pays the price that you and I owe so that God could be both just in that he pours out his wrath on the spotless sinless Lamb of God, and the justifier of the one who places faith in Jesus so that now through the promised Redeemer, the head of the serpent is crushed and all of those who are found in him have a new federal head. Through our old federal head we inherited sin and death, but by faith through our new federal head we inherit redemption and righteousness and eternal life. And for those who turn from sin and place faith in Christ, we have the answer to our sin problem. He imputes his righteousness to us so that we are actually righteous before God, and he lays down his life on our behalf so that the sin debt that we owe is actually paid and there is no one and nothing else in this world or any other that can do for you what the death of Christ has done.

Oh, sinner, why, why do you run from the only one who can heal you? Why? Why do you try to be what Christ has already been? Why? Why do you try to pay what Christ has already paid? Why? Why do you come before God filthy and unclean, with unwashed

hands, with a stained soul, and believe that you can do anything about your sin problem when he has said no one who comes to him will be cast out? None. None. It is Christ and Christ alone. He is your only hope. Oh, parent, would you scream this from the mountaintops for your children, "It is Christ and Christ alone! He is your only hope!"

That is the good news and it's the best news that mankind has ever had. It's the best news you will ever hear, and my encouragement and admonition to you is that you cling to this news as though it were your only hope because it is. My prayer for you is that God would grant you the grace of repentance and saving faith, and that you would turn from your sin and your self-reliance and turn trusting wholly in Christ. "On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand." Amen?

Let's pray.

Father, we confess to you our sin and declare to you our need, and as we confess our sin and declare our need, we rejoice in your provision. Grant by your grace that sinners might turn to Christ, that he might indeed have the fullness of the reward for which he died. Father, I plead on behalf of those under the sound of my voice who are outside of the realm of protecting grace and ask that in your kindness they might be saved, and we will all be so careful as to give your name all the praise for none but you deserve it for what you have done. We pray these things, believe these things, hope these things, and ask these things in no other name than the name of Christ our Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and soon coming King. Amen.