

I'm Not Ok; You're Not Ok: Part 3, The Corruption of sermonaudio.com Our Hearts

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Genesis 3. I'm continuing a series of messages that we began a couple of sermons ago. The title, the main title of the series is "I'm Not Ok; You're Not Ok," taken as a response to that very popular book, culturally popular book back in the 1960-70s, "I'm OK – You're OK." The biblical picture of man is, "I'm not okay, you're not okay." The subtitle this morning, though, "I'm Not Ok; You're Not Ok: The Corruption of Our Hearts." The corruption of our hearts. We're trying to apply and sharing with you some things that as I've been thinking about what the Bible really teaches about the human soul and sanctification, we're trying to share some of the things that come out of recent studies I've been doing preparing for a Doctor of Ministry class at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in biblical counseling and really the idea of biblical counseling is just applying the Bible to life. The Bible has the answers to the problems of the soul, the things we normally think of as psychological problems. There are some physical components, yes, and there are areas where there are limits to what we can do and then doctors are involved, but basically the root of every psychological problem is spiritual, the essence of it, even when it's largely physical components like some kind of, you know, even something like schizophrenia or things like that. There are still spiritual roots that are the real answer.

So anyway, we're talking about this issue. I'm not okay, you're not okay. What's the problem with man? You know, one of the frustrating things that doesn't happen as often as it used to but when you have a friend or someone's going to the doctor, they have a problem, Ted mentioned Jennifer had this procedure on Friday and glad she's healing. Sorry to hear that she's having more pain than we anticipated but it's wonderful when they can identify the problem and fix it and occasionally you go to the doctor and you talk about the symptoms, you share the symptoms, the doctor says, "Well, it could be this or it could be this or it could be this, and we'll find out by running some tests." So they run tests and they eliminate, "It's not this. So it could only be this or this." And they run some more tests and they realize, "It's not this, it can only be this." And they run some more tests and they find out it's not that and that, in one sense it's like good news that you don't have that and you don't have that or that or that, but the bad news is, "We don't know what you have," and that's almost, and sometimes more difficult than finding out that it was one of these three things because you can treat what you know, you can't treat what you don't know.

Well, that is a metaphor for what is wrong with the soul. The soul of man, Jesus is the great Physician. He's the one who fixes what's really wrong with the heart. He calls himself the great Physician. The body, things that are wrong with our bodies are secondary and not ever going to be fixed finally until he returns and establishes his new kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth, then we get a new body and our bodies will be fixed, but in the meantime he's fixing the soul. He's the Physician of the soul but we struggle with that same sense. We don't understand what's really wrong with us. We can in generalities know it's sin but what is it that's really precisely wrong with us?

Well, the Bible has the answer, in fact, one of the problems of man throughout history is why do we do what we do? I mean, you know, everybody once they live long enough, realizes there are things that you do that you know you ought not do. Unbelievers know this. Why do we do the things, why do we feel compelled to have this kind of feeling in this circumstance? Why can I not control my anxiety. Why can I not control my fear? Why can I not control my anger? Why do people do what they do? What is the problem with man? And sometimes they consider that corporately. You know, we look at the problems of society and say, "What is the problem with man? If we can figure it out, we can fix it." And there are various theories. You know, the problems with man are cultural or societal. If we can fix the problems of society, social justice, if we can bring more social justice, that will help man be what he's supposed to be. The reason people are having the problems they're having, the reason they're doing the things they're doing is because of the injustice that they're surrounded by; their environment is the problem; their family background is the problem. Or another theory today is that it's the biology that's the problem. It's the genetics. You are what you are because of the genetic make-up that you have. You are what you are because of the chemical problems that you have going on in your brain. Whether it's corporately or individually, we tend to, the two common theories are sometimes defined as nature and nurture. The reason that you struggle the way you struggle is because of your nature physically. It's because of your genetics. You know, the reason that you're disposed to alcoholism is because your dad was and your granddad was before him and so therefore you're an alcoholic and you just need to not drink so that you won't be, you won't live out that alcoholism. This is a theory, a common theory. It's genetic.

Well, the Bible says it's not genetic. The Bible acknowledges, listen, the Bible acknowledges that genetics have influence but the Bible directly contradicts the idea of genetic determinism, that is, that your genes make you the way you are; your genes determine your behavior. No, your genes do not determine your behavior. They influence your heart, yes, but the Bible makes clear that your heart is autonomous in the sense that you're responsible for what you do. You and I are responsible for every action. So this idea of nature. It's also another way that people think about that today, as I mentioned, the chemical imbalances or the reason that you do what you do is because the chemicals in your brain aren't right and if we could just fix that through pharmacology, through medicine, then you will be okay. You see, the problem is not you, it's your biological body that's the problem there.

So that's the nature argument. The nurture argument is, well, no, the reason you are what you are is because of society. It's because of your family. It's because of what other people have done to you. It's what you've been surrounded with. It's the values you've been taught. If we can change the culture, we change the person. You're not responsible. You can't be anything other than what you are.

This is what the world believes. Some variety of those two basic positions. The Bible acknowledges that both have influence. That, yes, you are influenced by your biology, you are influenced by nature, even the chemistry of your body, it works, yes, all of that is a reality, but it does not determine your behavior. You're influenced by the parents and people around you, yes. You're influenced by your context but it is not determinative. Jesus makes this clear in Mark 7. We're not going to camp out there. I just want to mention it and you can read it. It's the story where Jesus and his disciples are walking through the grain field and they're hungry and they began to eat grain and they haven't washed their hands and the Pharisees say, "Why do your disciples disregard the tradition of the elders? They're eating with unwashed hands." And he goes on to say, "Listen, it's not what goes into the man that defiles the man, it's what comes out of the heart. You're worrying about what goes into your mouth, that's not what you need to worry about, you need to worry about what comes out of your heart." The Bible's position is that what is determinative in our behavior is our hearts. It doesn't say that biology doesn't have influence. It doesn't say that the nurture around us doesn't have influence. It does, but it's not determinative and, therefore, we are responsible for every action that we do.

That's what Jesus is saying in Mark 7. What defiles you is not what comes into you. It's not your body that defiles your heart. It's not your body chemistry. It's not your genetics that defiles your heart. It's not the circumstances around you, the things that happen to you, the things that people do to you, the things that people say to you. That's not what defiles you. What defiles you is your heart.

Now, the heart is the inner man. In fact, the word "heart" occurs about 1,000 times in the Bible, Old and New Testament. We mentioned last time heart is basically synonymous, roughly synonymous for spirit and soul and inner man. It's the immaterial part of man that lives on after we die. It's who we really are. Our bodies, we're a union of the inner man and the outer man. Two parts: physical and spiritual. Both are important but the spiritual, the inner part, is what God is referring to as the heart.

It's interesting actually, while I'm there let me just say something about this. You know, the heart, the Bible understands that we have a physical heart but the emphasis in the Bible that 1,000 times there's only like three or four times where you really see the Bible talking about this, you know, the physical heart you have inside of you. That's the pump that makes blood go throughout your body, right? Heart surgery, real heart surgery like Gary P. had, that was on his physical heart, his pump. They took it out and they did some stuff to it and they fixed it. So it pumps the blood through your body. Well, why does God refer to the inner man as the heart? Well, I think it's because throughout history and it's really universal throughout culture. In English we do it, the heart has two meanings. The heart is your pump inside your chest and it's also that from which affections come

and love, you know? Follow your heart, people say. Bad idea in general, but that's what people say. But it's true in Greek and Hebrew as well. The heart was the physical organ, but even more than that, it's the inner man. Think about this, the wisdom of God and just the way that people looked at this, your heart, your physical heart pumping blood throughout your body is pumping life. When your heart stops beating, it stops pumping blood, you stop living. It's the heart that drives your body. In the same way, it's the spiritual part of man, the heart of man is the spiritual thing that really drives us.

We said last time that when we look at the Scriptures and I'll refer you to last week's message, I'm not going to review any more than this just real quickly, that there are three components biblically to the heart, that is the immaterial part of man that drives man. I said there are 1,000 uses of the word "heart" and only like three refer to the physical pumping of the heart. You know, Joram was shot through his heart by Jehu with an arrow. He's talking about the physical heart. He got shot through his heart and he died. But most of the time when it talks about the heart, like Jesus says, "Out of the heart," he's not talking about the pump inside your chest, he's talking about the inner man. That really is what God is looking at which is made like God. Remember we talked about that last time, there are three functions, the heart is where we think, the heart is where we feel or want, the second function, and the heart is where we choose, we decide, we commit, and those three functions of the heart is how the Bible defines the heart. So when God says, "What's the problem with man?" He says it's the heart.

So we're going to look at this this morning, the corruption of the human heart. What's wrong with man? What's wrong with me? I'm not okay, you're not okay. What's wrong with me? What's wrong with you? Jesus is really clear what's wrong with me, what's wrong with you is our hearts. Our hearts have been corrupted. Our hearts are being corrupted if we're not vigilant. It's a constant battle.

With that said, I want us to read Genesis 3:1-8. This is what we're going to look at because we're going to look at the place where the heart began to be corrupted. Genesis 3:1,

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 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.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you are a God who though we are sinful and though we have rebelled against you, you are a God who has made salvation available through Jesus Christ. As we sung about this morning, the blood of Christ, the offering of Christ is sufficient. We pray that you would now help us to understand our hearts and to help us understand the greatness of our Savior. We pray in his name. Amen.

So the question is why do I do the things I do? What is wrong with me? And essentially the diagnosis of Scripture is it's our hearts, but what I want us to do today in this passage is really kind of study a pathology report, as it were. The spiritual disease, it's spiritual, not a physical disease. It's a spiritual disease. It's a disease of the soul, the heart that Jesus alone can fix, the great Physician, but to understand and to diagnose it properly, you know, you do tests and you discern what's wrong and a pathology report identifies what the disease is and understands how the disease operates, and then you're able to prescribe a treatment that will treat the disease properly. When you understand how it operates, it helps you understand how to treat it and what my goal today is to help us understand how sin operates in our hearts, how it deceives us, how it kills us, how it binds us, so that we, then, can respond to the treatment that God has for us.

So what I want us to see, there are basically five things I want us to observe in this passage that show us how sin operates, how the nature of sin operates in the human heart to destroy. Now, remember, I want to get this template in your minds that the heart is composed of three things: our thinking, our feeling, and our choosing, and you might want to put with thinking the word cognition, and with feeling the word affection, and with choosing the word volition. So those functions and we talked about last time, there's kind of a cluster of words you could put around cognition, you could put thinking, cognition is thinking, it's reasoning, it's interpreting and it's believing. Around affection you can put feeling, you can put wanting, desiring, valuing. That's the affection of the heart. Then around volition you can put choosing, deciding, committing. So these are three functions of the heart.

Now, what we're going to do is look at how sin works in all these aspects of the heart so that we can understand how we treat it. Now what I'm going to submit to you is that the essence of sin, if you distill it down, if you boil down every single sin that you commit to its barest essence, what you have is unbelief. That is the fundamental essence of every single sin and I want you to see that from the paradigmatic sin, the first sin that happened that is essentially the disease that we caught; that the distilled essence of sin is unbelief.

Now when we look at this, so there are five points to kind of gather our thinking around as we watch. Five observations from the text here that help us understand the pathology

of sin, that it is unbelief. Now belief biblically belief, this is helpful to clarify this too because the word "believe" in English is kind of messed up for us versus the Bible. Actually the Greek and the Hebrew, they had the word better organized. It's just a function of language. English is kind of an amalgamation of different languages, you know? Let me explain that to you. Like the word "believe" and the word "faith" and the word "trust," do you see how unrelated those are etymologically? What has an f-a-i-t-h got to do with a b-e-l-i-e-v-e or a t-r-u-s-t? Do you see what I'm saying? In Greek, it's pistis, pistuo. You see the same root. In Hebrew, the same word, aman, it's faithfulness, faith, etc. Do you see? So in Greek, we're kind of challenged because these different functions dissociate these things and so belief for us can tend to be more intellectual only. Believe means to understand the truth and to assent to it. In English it does. Biblically that's not belief. Biblically belief involves three components: knowledge, assent, and trust. You know something, you assent that it's true, and on the basis of your assenting that it's true, you don't just, from a distance assent to it, you commit and entrust yourself on the basis of that.

So that's faith, then unbelief is the opposite of that biblically. Unbelief is to fail to trust ultimately because you don't assent. But you see, it's not true faith just to believe and assent. That's not saving faith, that's not true faith, that's not overcoming faith. To have the knowledge and to assent that it's true is not to overcome through faith. To have the knowledge to assent that it's true and to trust it, to trust yourself, to cast yourself upon Christ, to cast yourself upon some proposition that he makes, that he says is true, that's faith. That's what the Bible is talking about by faith. Okay, so now I want you to see, understanding that, I'm going to submit to you that sin at its essence is a failure to do that, okay? And that's really at the root of every single sin.

Now, we see it as we look at now the five points now, observation here, five observations from the text. Before we get into those five observations, let me just make one preliminary observation, so a sixth. Bonus point. The serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field. It's interesting that that's the first line here; that God's first description is the serpent was more crafty and that's a warning light going off. Derek Kidner in his commentary says that the word "crafty" means "malevolent brilliance." Malevolent, he wants to do you harm and he is exceedingly brilliant. That's the serpent. That is the enemy of your souls. That is Satan. Malevolent brilliance. You are no match for him. That's essentially what should come out of this and if Eve was thinking properly, she would have known she was no match for this one that came against her.

Now to our first observation of the five. Note Satan's subtle question. The first thing he does is ask a question. This is the first question that appears in the Bible, Genesis 3:1, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" Satan's subtle question, it's really two questions in one. It's two cleverly constructed questions in one that are aimed at getting them to move from belief and trust in God to independence and self-reliance apart from God.

He's trying to drive a wedge and so he first says, "Has God said? The first thing I want to call into question," Satan says, "is I want you," he's planting a seed of doubt, "has God

really said?" That's really the force is, "Has God, indeed, has God said? Has God really said?" That's his strategy throughout history, to bring into question the word of God because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, and if faith is the way that you obey, if faith is the way that you honor God, if faith is the way that you worship God, Satan's goal is to destroy faith and so he's always seeking to undermine the word of God. So he calls into question, that first question like I said, has two subpoints as you look at it. The first is to call into question the word of God. The second part of it is to call into question the character of God. This is all in verse 1, this subtle question has these two components to plant doubt about the word of God and to plant doubt about the character of God.

He says, "Has God really said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" And we're going to find out Satan knows exactly what God said. Satan's not there on an information gathering mission at all. "Hey, I've heard a rumor and I just want to check it out." That's not what's happening. He knows exactly what God said. In fact, we're going to see he knows what God said better than Eve knew what God said. He's not on an information gathering thing, he's there to offer a completely different interpretation of reality than from what they've already received. In fact, I want to stop for a moment and show you something about the nature of humanity and the nature of faith on this point here as we're thinking about that first, Satan's subtle question.

It's interesting to note when you read the account of creation in Genesis that the first thing God did after he made man, you know, when he decides to make man in Genesis 1:26 and 27, there is a dialogue among the Trinity, "We're going to make man according to Our image, according to Our likeness. We're going to let them rule." Verse 27, "God created man," this is chapter 1, verse 27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." What's the first thing God does after he creates man? He talks to man. He speaks to man and he tells man what he's supposed to be doing. He says, "Listen, be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. I'm giving you your mission." Now from that what we know is that man even before sin came into the world, man was made to receive the word of God and to trust it.

Paul Tripp in his book, "Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands," points out that we were made to be revelation receivers. We were created to be people who would receive the revelation of God, we needed that. We weren't complete without the word of God to trust in, to believe in. We needed God's interpretation of reality.

Jeremy Pierre, I've been mentioning him, my professor, "The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life," he makes this statement, "God designed people from the very beginning to base their entire experience of life on what he says about them and their world." Adam and Eve needed instruction as soon as they are off the assembly line, created. You need instruction. You must know, "To function properly you must have my word and commit yourself. Trust yourself. Put your faith in what I say about you and the world."

He speaks to them again in chapter 2, verse 16, and look what he says. This is what Satan knows even better than Eve did, "God commanded the man," chapter 2, verse 16,

"saying," this is before the woman is created, this is an instruction to the man, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." God said, "There's only one tree that you can't eat from. You can eat from everything else. I command you, eat from everything that you want except for that one. There's a fence around one little tree in the garden." The emphasis is the liberality of God, but God is saying, "This is how you live."

It's interesting, "you will surely die." That's emphatic. In the Hebrew, the force of the verb translated "surely die" is "dying you will die." It's like a double whammy of death. "In the day you eat of it, you will most certainly die." That's what God is saying.

Now when Eve's asked, "What did God say?" Remember, she had to rely on Adam. That was part of the problem maybe, I don't know. Sin hadn't entered the world. I won't go there. But anyway husband and wife communication continues to be a problem, doesn't it, until today? And most of it is our fault.

When Satan asked Eve, "Has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" She says, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" She doesn't say, "you will surely die." What's interesting is when Satan contradicts her, he uses God's words exactly. He says, "You surely will not die." It's actually not in the Hebrew, it's the first word in that sentence, "not. God said you will most certainly die. Not you will most certainly die." That's what he says. He quotes God better than Eve did. That's the enemy of our souls. He is subtle and deceptive and wicked.

But in that first question that has two parts, he's saying you can't trust the word of God and you can't trust the character of God. "Has God really told you that he put you in this garden with all these beautiful trees and has God really told you you can't eat from a single one of them?" That's what he's asking. "You mean, I've heard this rumor that God put you in this garden and it's a beautiful garden, look at all these beautiful trees, and you can't eat from a single one of them?" He's sowing doubt. "Can you trust him, his word? Can you really trust his character? Isn't he the kind of God that would do that?" Eve, "No, no, he didn't say that." She's doing okay so far. Her reply, her answer, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat." We can eat from all these trees, it's just the one, "the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" But Satan has sown the doubt. That's his subtle question.

The second observation is Satan's audacious claim. Point 2: Satan's audacious claim, verse 4, "You surely will not die!" Not you will most certainly die. You will most certainly not die. He's saying it as strongly as God said it. "I'm telling you, you will most certainly not die when you eat of that tree!" He's offering a completely contradictory different interpretation of life and reality than God. I mean, what he's essentially saying is, he went from sowing doubt about his word and doubt about his character, you know, "Has he really said his word? Can you trust his word? Has he really said you can't eat

from any tree? Can you trust his heart?" Now to saying, "You most certainly will not die! You cannot trust his word. His word is wrong." He's audaciously claiming God's word is absolutely wrong and he's audaciously claiming that God's character is absolutely evil; that God doesn't want to do good to you, he wants to harm you.

That's what he says in verse 5, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." God's holding out on you. His word can't be trusted because his character can't be trusted. You can't trust what he says because you can't trust his heart.

The decisive moment, that's the third point. We've considered Satan's subtle question, Satan's audacious claim, we're looking at the nature of sin and we're going to see that this is essentially what happens every time you and I sin. Satan's subtle question, Satan's audacious claim, and thirdly, the decisive moment. The turning point, the watershed is this phrase, "When the woman saw." That is the moment of defeat right there. What has happened? She did not go to God with her question. She did not run to the one who created her, who has been sustaining her, who has been caring for her, she sought to deal with this independently. "I'm going to examine these things for myself."

That is the moment because look how fast things fall after that moment. That's the watershed, just like watershed is where you have a high point on a continent or whatever or subcontinent, the watershed on the Eastern coast, I always like to tell this, is downtown Duluth just a few miles from here. If you drive up to Duluth, there's this little obelisk or whatever, a little miniature obelisk that marks the Eastern watershed. The water that falls off one side of that obelisk goes into the Atlantic, the water that falls off the other side, it's probably not that precise but close to it, that other side of that obelisk goes into the Gulf of Mexico. The rivers, you know, think about that, just that far, that little difference, bam. This is the kind of moment that this is. When you don't submit your thinking to God, when you stop trusting his heart and you stop trusting his word, you are dead meat. You are a dead man walking. It is over. That is the essence of sin, when you do not trust the word of God because you don't trust the heart of God, you are going to be sold any bill of goods.

This is what happens. Look at the way, just watch it kind of cascade down from here. "When the woman saw," and there are three things she sees: the tree was good for food. Now remember what we're saying is that the way the heart works you have the cognition, you have the thinking, the evaluating, the reasoning, the believing. Then you have the wanting and desiring and feeling. Then you have the doing and choosing. That's exactly what happens right here. She does not submit her thinking to God. "God has already told us real clearly what the situation is. God has told us the day we eat of that we die." She should reject. She should resist the devil and draw near to God just like James says in chapter 4. That's what she should have done but she didn't.

She sort of halfway considered, "Wait a minute. Let me look at this myself." And she starts looking at the tree. For the first time she looks at the tree in a different way. I mean, she saw that tree who knows how long they had been in the garden. We don't know. It

might have been years and years before this happened. Walking through the garden, I mean, can you imagine what that garden must have been like? Have you been to these beautiful gardens in different places and you're like, "How did they do that?" You know, I'm out in my yard just trying to make grass grow and weeds, just trying to get them under control and people have these immaculate gardens, beautiful grass, beautiful plants. What was the garden of Eden like? And fruit trees. Man, I've had some good peaches lately. Isn't it a wonderful time of year in Georgia when peaches are ripe? Well, this was peaches and mangoes and name it, on a different order than what we experience. What we have is sin-tainted peaches. They've been decaying for thousands of years. Man, they were really good in the garden.

So everything's awesome but the tree in the center of the garden, Eve, I'm sure that her optic nerve had reported to her what that tree looked like as she's walking along because, you know, your body takes in everything and so you see that tree, she'd seen that tree many times before and she never once wanted the fruit on the tree. It never once appealed to her before now. She has accepted the possibility that she needs to evaluate two different standards of reality. "God says this, Satan, the serpent, says this. I'm going to decide for myself." At that moment, now she looks at it and it shows just the power of the human heart. In fact, that's the fourth point: the devastating power of the heart. The decisive moment is when she began to evaluate for herself but the devastating power of the human heart. As she looks at it, now suddenly it has the appeal of being good for food. I mean, there are all these trees around it stocked with wonderful food but it's that tree now that is good for food. It's that tree that is a delight to the eyes. Do you see the affections being just drawn in? It's that tree that is desirable to make one wise.

So because her mind is not submitted to God, her thoughts are not submitted to God, her heart is captured and once her heart is captured, it's over. It's not like she deliberated and it's interesting, Satan nowhere suggested, "Hey, take some of that fruit and eat." He didn't have to. It was already over. He didn't have to say, "You know, you really ought to try that fruit." He just had to get her thinking about it and it was over.

That's the devastating power of an independent heart. God's made our hearts to be such wonderfully complex glorious things that reflect him. Remember we talked about last time that our thinking, our feeling, our choosing is like God's thinking and feeling and choosing and we're made to be connected to him, loving him, submitted to him, worshiping him, trusting him, and then everything that we are, the glory of it, shines out. We're made to be wondrous creatures. We're made to be beautiful, noble beyond our imaginations and yet when we divorce ourselves, when we separate ourselves from God, it's like unplugging something. It no longer works the way it's supposed to. It's even worse than that, it's not unplugging, it's like you unplug it, now it becomes something totally different, something whacked out. The glorious power of the human heart is corrupted like that and it goes completely awry.

So after the decisive moment, fourthly, the devastating power of the independent heart, then you have the disastrous results, number 5. Verse 7 and 8. After she takes from the fruit and eats and give to her husband and he eats, isn't it amazing how matter-of-fact that

is? "Here, Adam, eat this," and he did. Like it was just an inevitable consequence of what had happened. "Adam wake up! Stop!" No.

But look at that disastrous results in verses 7 and 8, "the eyes of both of them were opened." Immediately their eyes were opened. Satan told a good half-truth. He had told her, "If you eat it, your eyes will be opened," and sure enough their eyes were opened. But when he said, "You will be like God knowing good and evil," he was lying to them. "You won't be like God the way you think you'll be like God. You'll have a new knowledge of evil that will now destroy you."

They knew they were naked. They had been perfectly comfortable with one another naked as they were, not aware of any need to protect themselves from the other person. Now they sewed fig leaves together immediately and made loin coverings. "We've got to cover up our nakedness because we can no longer trust the other person." There is distance created between them.

Then they hide from God and we could go on down through the rest of the passage and see all the calamity. I just wanted you to focus on immediate death happens, the fact that they're hiding from God.

Now this is the nature of sin. You see the same thing in Romans 1:18-32. I invite you to read that this week. What you'll see is that Paul is basically talking about how sin just runs rampant among people who don't know God in our hearts, and what he says is, "Listen, what God has made known, God is speaking all the time, he's revealing himself all the time, he's revealing himself in creation, he's revealing himself in the human heart, but men suppress the truth in unrighteousness. They won't listen to God. They don't submit to God's definition of life and what life's about, and because they won't submit to God, their foolish heart is darkened, they become futile in their speculations." Do you see that mental imagery? The way they think, their reasonings become darkened. And what happens right after that? Their desires become perverted. They want things they shouldn't want. Women lusting after women. Men lusting after men. Their hearts becoming increasingly polluted in what they desire. Then they become wicked in their volition. They commit these indecent acts and they glory in their evil, as you read through the last part of that passage. Just the will becoming completely bound by evil.

Well, that's also what happens in every single time you and I sin. This is in a microcosmic way the same thing happens and this is how our sin patterns have developed in areas where the sin which so easily besets you that the author of Hebrews talks about, sin that you really struggle with. What's happened actually is at its root the problem is unbelief. Sometimes that gets so pronounced in our lives that doesn't it feel like sometimes we wish we could call it a disease? Don't you sometimes feel like sin comes so natural to you in a moment. Something happens, like say for instance, you lose your temper or something, the circumstances happen and the temper erupts and you didn't make a determination to get angry, you just got angry. Bam, it's like you couldn't control it. Well, biblically that didn't just happen to you, it's happened because you at some different levels are believing things about God and about yourself and about life that are

not lining up with what God says is true, and because you've been believing those things, your affections have become more and more disordered and confused. You're wanting things you shouldn't want and you've developed commitments that are happening in your life and so when the circumstance happens, bam, it happens. But the good news is you can repent of all those different things by the power of God, the power of the Gospel, and you can overcome.

I mentioned earlier one of the things, alcoholism, the world's understanding of things. The Bible calls that drunkenness. The world says alcoholism is a disease and for a person who is an alcoholic, it feels like that. The decision that they make to get a drink on a Friday night and so they've been off alcohol for a year and something happens and they make a decision to go and get drunk and it feels like they had no control over that decision but in reality, biblically they have become habituated by sinning again and again and again by what they think and what they want and what they decide to do and they're responsible and what's the answer? The good news is the word of God. The word of God and the character of God are the answer. The Gospel.

I'll give you another example of how these things affect us, too. You think about the way that sexual sin begins to affect young men. Suddenly a young man experiences things in his body, biological and chemical that are really real. Puberty happens and that is nothing to be laughed off, right? I mean, for girls and guys, that's a challenging deal to experience, right? And it's real. Suddenly you have feelings and things that you never had before. Suddenly those girls who used to be like gross, you know, I don't really remember it being quite that way, but you know, a lot of guys are like, "Girls have cooties," or whatever. Suddenly now, "Man, I really like girls." A boy feels that way and girls feel the same, at some point feel the same way, right? And there's something biological happening.

Now our bodies are messed up because of sin but that's not wrong to be influenced by your biology and think about this, the culture around you, Satan is the ruler of this age and the world system is lying to you every day. So a young man who wants to live for God, who knows Jesus Christ, gets to be in his teens and he starts having these feelings that he never had before, now he's been born-again, he knows the Lord Jesus Christ, okay, but he's having these feelings that he's never felt before and he's surrounded by lies. He has the Bible's interpretation of his sexuality and life here, what God says, and he has a thousand different competing views and the question really comes down to, are you going to submit to what God says or are you going to submit to what something else says? Are you going to make yourself the arbiter? Are you going to decide for yourself or are you going to submit to God?

You know, the world says that a man should go with his feelings. Obey your thirst. If it feels good, do it. Friends are saying that. Movies are saying that. This is what a man is, a man does this, a man is like this. God says, "No, a man, a true man is someone who submits to me and understands that sexuality, though I've given it, I've given it for a perfect reason to be celebrated in a covenant of marriage and you are to fight those desires by my grace, through my word, and to resist them." And if you submit to that, it's

not going to be easy. You're going to have to depend upon the Lord day by day, moment by moment, because your body's a mess because of sin. I mean, originally these things wouldn't have been all messed up but they are now, but that the word of God is sufficient and, "If you rely upon me and you'll do what I say which is have other brothers that you're sharing with, I need you to pray for me. Pray for me that I'll be pure, that I'll be able to keep my thoughts where I need to."

But the key thing is faith. If the problem is unbelief, the problem is not trusting the character of God and the word of God, the answer is to trust the character of God and the word of God. God is good. And how do I begin? I trust Jesus Christ. I go to him. He's the perfect embodiment of what man is to be and he has done everything necessary to wash me from my sins. He lived a perfect life and he died an atoning death and he paid it all, as we sang about earlier. He paid for every single sin of everyone who would ever believe. He took the wrath of God for them in himself on the cross, took it out of the way. Now a God who would do that is a God who can be trusted with my life. A God who would send his Son to die in my place is a God I can trust what he says over what Satan says and the world says. He's always true. He's always faithful. He's good.

So it's then learning how to bring my thoughts into submission to his word. It's a day by day, moment by moment process. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." Meditating upon the truth. It's repenting over the thoughts and also over the desires. "Lord, here I am. Look at my heart desiring things I ought not desire. Forgive me. Make me like Jesus who always desired what was best."

When we sin, we've chosen that which is not right but Jesus covers us and so repent in all these areas and the Lord begins to change our thinking, to change our wanting, to change our choosing, to change our hearts. Basically, sanctification is a renovation process. You have to first of all experience regeneration. God gives you a new heart, the essence of your heart is changed, and then that essence that's now in the center of your being has to be worked out into all of your thinking, all of your feeling, and all of your choosing, but that the way that it happens is always faith. So if your struggle is anger, if your struggle is fear, if your struggle is anxiety, at its root the problem is unbelief. You're not believing what God has said. You're not believing that God is good. Repent of that. The answer is Jesus. We're going to talk more about what that looks like next time, but that is the answer. It's trusting Jesus and trusting the word.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we thank you for your goodness and we thank you for your word which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Father, we pray for those that are here today who don't know you in a saving way, that they're still living independent of you, disconnected from you, unsubmitted to you, and they're wondering if they can trust you and they're hearing thoughts from their own hearts, they're hearing things that they've heard that you can't be trusted. They're thinking about their circumstances and thinking about their lives and wondering why this has happened or that has happened. Give them grace now to see you as you truly are, a God abounding in lovingkindness and goodness who shows

mercy to thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, and who takes those who were sinful and though they're sins were as scarlet, you make us white as snow, you take us from being enemies who were hostile to you and you make us your dear beloved children. Grant them repentance and faith even now to surrender to you, to trust you. And Father, for those that belong to you already, that we may see how we're not believing you; that every time we sin we're somehow believing a lie and in doing that, we're lying about you. Help us, God, to repent from our hearts and to become more like Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.