

## Women of the Word, 3

2017 Women's Seminar

By Judy Seligman

sermonaudio.com

**Preached on:** Thursday, September 21, 2017

**Grace and Truth Church of Washington PA**

12 East Pike Street  
Houston, PA 15342

**Website:** [www.gandtchurch.com](http://www.gandtchurch.com)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/swarne](http://www.sermonaudio.com/swarne)

Okay, let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, I just thank you for this evening and I thank you for the ladies that could make it tonight and I thank you for the ladies that couldn't, and I ask you to bless them wherever they are and whatever they're doing and let the Holy Spirit speak a special message to each one of them as he speaks to us this evening. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Okay, I hope that you all have realized that these messages build upon each other and we're going to talk today, the first two messages were on the gifts of creation and today we're going to talk about the fall of man and how Satan steals the gifts of creation designated to Adam and Eve for his own advantage. Satan wanted a kingdom. He wanted to be a king. He wanted a throne. He wanted dominion. Now because Satan can't create, he couldn't create his own world and have his own kingdom. He can't create anything so he had to steal it and that's what he does, he comes to steal it off of Adam and Eve. Then we're going to see tonight too how he uses the gift of free will and marriage to accomplish his goal.

So we're going to go to our first Scripture which is Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." We're going to stop there a minute. A lot of translations say that he was more subtle, some say more cunning. This is someone that can use smooth words to get what they want. That's a good description of Satan because he uses smooth words and I was thinking of sweet-talk. Were you ever sweet-talked by a guy and you know what he wanted? That's the kind of deception that Satan uses and it's a battle of words, the word of God against the lying words of the devil, and this is what we live in, a world that has the word of God and the words of a liar and that liar is the devil. 2 Corinthians 2:11 says that we are not ignorant of his devices but I think, unfortunately, we are in a lot of ways and this study with the fall of man, we're going to see some of Satan's devices and I hope by looking at them and seeing how they worked in the garden on Adam and Eve, that we'll become more aware so that they won't find a foothold in our lives.

Now, we have the testimony of the character of Satan given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ himself and he knew him. We can't see him. It's a good thing we can't, we'd

probably be frightened. I like the idea that we... You know, sometimes you're in a spiritual battle and you don't even realize you're in the battle. We think it's against flesh and blood that we're arguing with people, but behind the people there is an evil spirit and we have to be aware of that. But if we could see that spirit, I think his magnificence would probably take us to our knees, so it's a good thing by faith we have to fight our spiritual battles, not by sight.

Anyways, John 8:44 describes, Jesus describes our enemy and he said, "He was a murderer from the beginning and abides not in the truth because there is no truth in him. He is a liar and the father of lies." He's a murderer, first of all. Because of him, death was brought into the world. He may have not murdered directly but he was responsible for every actual murder that was ever committed from Cain until the present time, but he just uses somebody else to do his dirty work and he tempts people and he's a murderer, which is opposite, the opposite of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the life-giver. We have a murderer and a life-giver and they're complete opposites. Satan lives in the sphere of lies, Jesus said, and he's the father of all lies, where Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. He cannot lie. God cannot lie and his opposite is someone that lies all the time. Behind everything he says there is a lie. He's the opposite of Jesus Christ.

The other opposite I saw was in John's description of him in John 10:10 where Jesus says about Satan, "The thief comes only for this purpose, to steal, to kill and destroy." And Jesus says, "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." Have abundant life. So Satan tries to rob us of our lives and Jesus comes to give us life and give it to us abundantly. When I read that, I remember the first time in my reading through the Bible decades and decades ago, when I read that we were to have life and have it more abundantly, during that time it was the prosperity Gospel was big, you know, believe it, claim it, name it, and if you believe God, he'll make you healthy, wealthy and wise, and at that time, I could barely make ends meet and I looked at this and I said, "God, where is this abundant life?" Because I thought, I didn't know Luke 12:15 where Jesus said that your life doesn't consist in the abundance that you have, so I didn't know what it was. But it wasn't long after that that I realized that abundant life was the life that flows through your veins. It's your life. It's your inner being. It's what motivates you. It's what energizes you. And this life as a Christian is Christ in you. When you receive Christ, he comes and lives within you and eternal life isn't for after you die, it's for as soon as you receive Christ. He gives you eternal life and this life, Jesus said, will fill us and overflow in us so abundantly that it will flow upon others. The Christian life isn't someone trying to be good or trying to be godly, the characteristic of this life is that love of God is in us and this life in us is actually love because in 1 John 4:7, God is love. So God lives in us and that love of God flows from us and touches everyone we know, at least it's supposed to. That's our life.

You've heard it said, I know you have, that love isn't an emotion, it's a decision. I have to disagree with that. Love isn't a decision, it's a person and that person is Jesus Christ and either he has control of your mortal body or you do. Either we live... Natural human love loves and expects to be loved back and that's where it gets its satisfaction in a reciprocal relationship, and if you don't get loved back the way you expected to, it goes sour. It

turns to resentment, anger, self-pity, all kinds of sins, sin complexes. But the love that God has in us is unconditional so when we're filled with his love, it overflows abundantly and it touches people around us that maybe will never love us back. Unconditional means exactly that, "I love you no matter what the condition of your soul is." It's Christ in me. That's how he loves us. Unconditionally. We don't have to be good. We don't have to earn his love.

He loves us unconditionally and to have that love in you flowing towards others is the most phenomenal experience a human being can have on this side of eternity. I mean, because I've been married a long time and I didn't walk in the Spirit the whole time I was married and I had to learn and grow in grace but when God showed me his unconditional love for my husband, if you know Dan, he's just as loveable as can be but there was a time that he wasn't and when God showed me this unbelievable love he had for him in his fallen state before he came to Christ, before he repented, when God loved him through me when he didn't deserve it and it was unconditional, it was the most wonderful thing and experience I ever had this side of eternity. I imagine heaven is going to be filled with that all the time. But there's a special privilege for a Christian in loving someone that doesn't deserve it because do you know why? You can't do it. As a natural person, you try to love somebody, you try to love somebody, you're going to fail every time. They're going to disappoint you and then you'll react. You'll expect certain behavior from them and you won't get it and I think that's even God's grace because I wanted my husband to love me, I even said every time I said, "I love you," to him, I said it with the hopes that he would say, "And I love you too." That wasn't even unconditional because I didn't say, "I love you," because I loved you, I wanted to hear it back. I was always looking for something from him, something he didn't have, but then I found out through my experience with the word of God and my surrender to God, that God lived in me and he could do the loving when I couldn't. This is the abundant life that Jesus promises us. He says, "I promise you I will give you life and give it to you abundantly." It will overflow on people that don't deserve it and it's just the most wonderful thing you can experience as a believer. And it's not a decision, it's real. It's beyond the material. It's supernatural.

Now God gives but Satan's a thief and he's the worst kind of thief on the planet because I've learned this by studying Genesis, he's a conman. A conman is different than a thief. Like we're all out tonight, a thief can break into our house and steal something. That's a thief. That's a common thief. Someone can get a gun, put it in your back and say, "Give me your purse," and you'll give it to them, I hope. That's a common thief but a conman is different. A conman robs somebody by gaining their confidence. He observes them if there's something they have that he wants, and he carefully watches them. He figures out what kind of person they are, where their weaknesses are, and how he can steal from them what they have, not just steal from them, get them to hand it over to him and they don't even know what happened until he's out of the picture. That's the perfect description of the evil one. He's a conman. He's the ultimate conman and his purpose with Adam and Eve was to take their dominion over creation and the creation itself and become the Lord of it. That's what he wanted and he conned them out of it.

Now there's a conman, a certain type that's called a grifter and the grifter doesn't stay in one place. He moves about and I was surprised to find in Job 2:2 when Jesus talked to Satan, he said, "Where do you come from?" And he said, "From roaming about on the earth, from walking around on it." He's walking around, he's observing, and he's looking for a victim. Hopefully, it won't be us. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be on the alert. Your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour."

Now God is the great giver, he's the gift-giver. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." What do we call what the Holy Spirit gives us? We call it the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts. They're free. It's by grace. We don't have to work to earn God's favor, he gives us eternal life, he gives us the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts. So we have the grifter, Satan, and the gifter, God.

Have you ever been conned? I mean, it's embarrassing, huh? I've never physically been conned yet, not that I'm immune, but we've all been conned by Satan and before we were saved, I think that's when he pulled his biggest con on us and we had the veil taken from our eyes when we accepted Christ, because he cons people through religion. It says in Revelation 12:9 that he deceives the whole world, and even if someone's an atheist, he conned them into believing that that's all there is and then with every religion that exists, he's conned the world into thinking they have to be good to get to God. I mean, that's how I was raised. I was raised as a Catholic, but it's not just the Catholic church that's guilty. These mainline Protestant denominations that teach you you have to be good to get to God and then there are the Muslims and the Buddhists and the cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, and they all teach the same thing and Satan has the whole world conned about the nature of who God is; that he is not the gifter, you have to work and earn in order to get his favor. That's the con before you were saved.

Now the believer is conned too because if the believers weren't conned, then we'd have churches that were overflowing with abundant life and we don't see that. We still have believers trying to gain the favor of God through their works and it doesn't work. Can't do it.

So we're going to go back to the garden and we're going to see how the con worked between Satan and Adam and Eve. Now what did I say he wanted? He wanted their dominion and the throne. We're going to look at two Scriptures that express that. The first one is Isaiah 14:13 and 14, I can't read my own writing, but it says, "You, Satan, said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God and I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the furthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of God and I will be like the Most High.'" This is what he wants, he wants a throne, he wants to rule. Remember way in the beginning of this study even in the pictures? Whatever is over your head governs you and whatever is under your feet, you govern, and he wants to place his throne above so that he can govern and rule.

Then in Hebrews 2:6 and 8, it describes man and it says, "What is man that thou hast made him a little lower than angels and hast crowned him with glory and majesty? Thou shalt make him rule over the works of thy hand." Satan wanted a dominion and a throne

so why would God give this to Adam and Eve who were beneath him? They were made lower than the angels and they're given dominion that he thought he deserved. It says too in 1 Corinthians 6:3 that some day men will judge angels. That gets him. He doesn't think he should ever be judged by us. And in Hebrews 1:14, angels are called ministering spirits and that means that they serve us. Angels serve us. We don't serve angels. We don't bow down to angels. We don't pray to angels. They're here to help us in our battles.

So Satan wants a throne, he wants a kingdom, he doesn't want it to go to man so he comes up with a plan. He creates a con. He wants the dominion. He can't create so he has to steal it. So he schemed and he devised a plan in which he could take the government of the world that was given to Adam and Eve and he could legally steal it from them and that he would rule the world and that was his plan, and it was going to be legal so it wouldn't be challenged because of a divine principle. And if you look at Romans 6:16, it says, "Do you not know that who you present yourself to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one you obey?" So if you obey somebody and you present yourself as their slave, you become their slave. 2 Peter 2:19 says, "For whatever man is overcome by, this he is enslaved." So we become slaves to the things we obey.

Now we know, obviously, obviously, let me tell you two obvious things that people become enslaved to: alcohol and drugs. They don't plan on being alcoholics. They don't plan on being drug addicts. They're just having fun. A little escape. But they obey these masters and before you know it they're enslaved to it and they can't get free.

The less obvious things that we get enslaved to are worry. If you start worrying, you can worry about every little thing. I know some people in life that just say, "Worry." That describes their character, they are worriers. I mean, that was a direction I was heading for when God saved me. Or you can be fearful. Or you can fall into the pit of a pity party. That used to be one of my favorite sins before I got saved, self-pity, but I was enslaved to it. I had pity parties every day. I think one of the hardest sins I had to overcome after I got saved was the sin of resentment. Let me talk about that a little bit later.

Another even more dangerous slavery because it's so subtle is self-righteousness. I actually, I almost fell into this a little bit this week. I was praying for someone going through a really hard time of their own doing. Do you ever have people that get the ladder and climb down into the pit and say, "Take the ladder away"? They're in this pit by their own bad decisions. And I was praying for them and I realized for a moment and God caught me and I thank him for it, that I put myself up here and them down here, as if I was somehow better than them. That's self-righteousness and I went, "Whoa, Lord," because the only reason I'm not in the pit they're in is because God didn't allow me to go that way. I'm no better than anyone else no matter what the sin is, for we are wicked sinners. Our righteousness and our forgiveness comes with a free gift from God, not by anything we earned. We would be where they are except by the grace of God. You hear people say that but do you really believe that? And I'm going to tell you, I can't believe how subtle it was. Here I am working on a study about how subtle Satan is, I'm praying for someone I want to see set free, and just that little glimpse that God gave me of myself and you think you're here and they're beneath and they're not, we're equal. We're all

equal. We're all made out of the same stuff. Remember the last study? Dirt. The only life we have is from Christ. The only righteousness we have is a free gift from Jesus Christ. So never think you're better than anyone because you'll become enslaved to self-righteousness and it will be so subtle. So whatever we obey, that's what we become enslaved to.

Now Satan knew that if he could get Adam and Eve to obey him, they would become his slaves and what they owned would be his legally. So this was his con. This was what he was planning and in our lives day by day either we're obeying Satan and we fall for the cons he puts in our life, or we're obeying God and we're a slave to God. There is no in between. It's either God or the devil. You're going to serve someone. You can't serve God and mammon. It's one or the other.

So Satan has a plan. He's going to get them to obey him so that he can win the planet and the rulership of the planet legally and if he does it legally, God just can't take it back because God is just. So if he wins it fair and square, God's going to have to enter the battle and win it back for us and that's what we know he does. But in the meantime, the plot thickens. Now Eve became his target as women are today. The conman observes his mark. You've got to find their weakness. What do they have that I can use to get what I want to deceive them, to control them?

Now not only does he look at their weaknesses but they look at their strengths and what he saw in Eve is that she had a great power of influence over the man. She could influence him. This power she had was energized by God so that she could help him to achieve his goals, but Satan knew that if he could get this power of influence that the woman had and energize it, she would become his cohort and help him do the dirty work of getting Adam.

Now Eve was created to dispel Adam's loneliness. Now what is loneliness? I mean, when you start digging in these things, you just don't look at the surface. You start to think about it and it gnaws on your brain and I get obsessed with some of these things, but I was thinking what is true loneliness and I realized that it was not good for the man to be alone and I thought, you know, real loneliness is not having someone to love because we were made in the image of God and God loves. So he was looking for someone, his equal, to love and for someone to respond to his love. That's what Adam wanted and he needed the woman to respond to his love, to be positive, to appreciate his love. That's what he needed and that's the number one need of men, is to be valued and appreciated and that you respond in a positive way. That's what a man needs.

Now Satan knew that Eve could be easily deceived more than the man. It says so in 1 Timothy 2:14, and if he could get Eve to respond to him because she was a responder, she was made to respond to Adam's love, if he could get Eve to respond to his love, not his love but his initiations, then he could use her to get to the man. It's the absolute opposite of the way it was meant to be. Satan controls the woman and then the woman controls the man and this is what we see everywhere today, whereas in 1 Corinthians 11:3, the Scriptures tell us the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is

the man. So we have this different order. Satan controlling the woman and the woman controlling the man, instead of God controlling the man and the man controlling the woman.

Now let's look back at 3:1 at the temptation. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord had made and he said to the woman, "Indeed has God said you shall not eat from every tree of the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, "I want to scream, "Stop! Eve, stop! Stop! Don't talk to him!" because this is where the first...it wasn't the eating of the fruit, this is the first part of the con. He got her to respond to him. She spoke to him. He spoke to her and she responded back. He knew he had her, at least he got the hook, almost ready to set it. She made the big mistake of engaging in conversation with the evil one. She should have said nothing and walked away. This is where everything went wrong and guess what? Satan's always whispering in our ears. He's always whispering to us but we're not supposed to respond but we do.

Has Satan ever whispered in your ear, "What are you going to do?" Do you think God would say, "What are you going to do?" He's not expecting you to do anything but trust him but Satan says, "What are you going to do?" Or has he ever said to you, "Tsk, how could they be that way? What's wrong with them?" And then you could make a list of what's wrong with them.

Do you ever say this one, "I wonder what they're thinking?" And then you imagine what they think. And my favorite is, "What if? What if this happens? Or what if that happens? Or what am I going to do?" But Satan's there to whisper in our ears but like Eve, walk away. Don't respond. As soon as you respond to him, he has you, okay?

Or do you know what else he can do? He comes with a feeling. Now this, I don't know if you've ever been caught in this but I got caught in this so we're all made out of the same stuff. When I was young in my Christian faith, one of my biggest battles was with resentment. I resented the way people treated me and that I was in my situation because of no fault of my own, of course not. I was the innocent victim. Anyway, so Satan was watching me and he knew how I felt so he would pull back his arrow, his bow and arrow, he'd pull that arrow and the arrow would take off and the arrowhead was covered with resentment and it would pierce me and I would feel this resentment. I didn't want it but I could feel it and I owned it, and I didn't realize that feelings are just what they are, feelings. They are temptations to sin. They're not sin in themselves. It's how you react to them that makes them sin. But Satan, coy as he is, put his arrow into me, I felt resentment, and then he would condemn me for it. He gives me the resentment and then he condemns me for having it and when I realized the weapons of the evil one and I said, I'd feel it and I'd say, "I don't have to give into this. This isn't me. I'm a brand new creation in Christ." The feeling would go away. The tempter would leave me.

So I just think he's just so clever. He makes us think we're sinning when we're not, which is being tempted because feelings, we're so governed by stinking feelings. We're not to be governed by feelings but by our minds. Feelings are to appreciate things. I have very warm feelings towards you ladies and that's a good thing. I appreciate all of you but I'm

not governed by feelings because I might have a bad day and I won't appreciate you. No, I'm just joking.

But anyway, he's subtle, okay, and as soon as she answered him, he knew he had her hooked. So be careful who you converse with in your mind. We spend so much time talking in our minds in the car, doing dishes, we're sorting laundry, we're spacing out and we're having these conversations. Be careful who you talk to in your mind.

Now Eve's response to him was, he said, "Has God not indeed said you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, "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 said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it unless you die.'" And I just think he probably had to hide the smirk when he saw her adding something to the word of God because God said, "You're not to eat." He never said anything about touching it, not that it's a good idea to touch something that's evil, but he didn't say that but she said he said that. So he's thinking, "I've got her. I've got her. I can get her adding to God's word. I can take away from God's word. I've got her. I've got that hook in her lip."

He said to her, now they're conversing, the serpent, the conman said to the woman, "You shall surely not die." This is the liar. "For God knows that the day you eat from it, you will be like God knowing good and evil." They wouldn't have to have faith. And how do you please God? The only way to please God is with faith stated in the word in Hebrews, but if you had within yourself the ability to judge what was right and wrong, you wouldn't have to go to God and ask him what to do and trust God. You could just make those decisions yourself. You wouldn't need faith.

So he said, "You're going to be like God. You're going to be able to tell what's good and evil right within yourself. You can make our own judgments. You don't have to depend on God." He was setting his hook. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and the tree was desirable to make one wise, she was so happy. She saw this tree, maybe she never noticed it before but now she saw it and she felt so good about this tree. He lied to her and then he validated his lies with feelings which he does to us women.

I want to scream here again, "Stop! Eve, stop! Don't! Go and ask Adam what he thinks," because a woman should not make a major decision or act upon anything in her life without first asking her husband. Or if you're a single woman, go to the Lord and ask him instead of just jumping into things and then wondering why you drown, you are drowning. In today's world, the major decisions for the family are made by the woman and he has the women in this world, a lot of the believing women.

I ask Dan about everything, not because he's super-smart and wise but because I trust that God governs through him and I don't always agree with him. I'll be honest. But I don't voice my disagreements because when I do it starts an argument. So I go to God and I say, "God, I don't know if this is right but if it is, if he happens to be right in this case, in this very instance, let him stick to his guns." But if he's wrong, Proverbs 21:1 says he can



turn the heart, God can turn the heart of the king any way he wants; that God will govern through him and he'll change his mind. I don't have to.

But unfortunately in verse 6b, she took from the fruit and ate it and gave it also to her husband with her and he ate. Satan's observations were right. Instead of the power of God flowing through the woman to build up her husband, Satan used her power of influence over him to rob, to kill and destroy. And then they looked at themselves and realized they were naked. The light that he put over them was like a veil. Like the whole world has a veil over their face and when they look to the Lord, that veil is removed and once they fell into their sin, then it was too late. I mean, he was chuckling in the background.

Proverbs 14:1, a familiar Scripture for us but worth repeating, "The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands." What's so sad about the foolish woman, she doesn't even know she's doing it. Satan has her conned. She thinks she knows what's best, she thinks the tree is good and wonderful, and she's tearing down her house with her own hands. It doesn't say that the wise man builds his house and foolish man tears it down, it's all on the woman and we're the ones who take care of the house.

You know, one of my favorite Scriptures is 1 Peter 3:1 and it's because, not because I like it and I read it and I studied it and I studied it in the Greek in the original language, which I've done, I like it because it's part of my life. It's real. I know it's real because it's alive and powerful. It's the word of God and it has been operative in my life and the reason why I've been married as long as I am and I'm happy with my marriage is because of 1 Peter 3:1 which says, "Wives, submit to your husbands who obey not the word," not the good and righteous man, but the one that isn't, "that they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives." This really if anything exemplifies the power of a woman, that she can win a man without saying a word and it says here in the original language that the man is stubborn, he's heard the word, he just refuses it, but she has the power to win him without saying anything by the behavior, actually the abundant life of Christ flowing through her. A life that Jesus gave us which is abundant.

You can win a man without a word. Even Dan sometimes needs winning. It says without a word. That means no arguing. No correcting. No teaching. No manipulating. No pleading. No tears. How about no cold shoulder because you can say not a word and that's the opposite of what God would do because I know some women that try to control their husbands by not talking to them. These are all fleshly carnal weapons of 2 Corinthians 10:4. But he says our weapons are not carnal but mighty in God and the woman's weapon is to win her husband without a word by the life of Christ in her being poured out on her, on him through her.

I think that's exciting that we have that much power and we can pour it out on our friends, we can pour it out on our children, we can pour it out on our families. We have this amazing power to build and encourage through the power of the Holy Spirit to help people through us, God flowing through us.

Are you building? Are you building your marriages? Are you tearing down? If he doesn't obey the word, are you winning him without a word by the power of Christ in you? Examine yourself. This is serious. We can't carelessly act and speak and think without being aware of the fact that there's a roaring lion out there that's seeking to devour us and if we're not acting and thinking with the word of God, if we're not available and present your bodies to God as a living sacrifice, he'll con you out of your life and you won't even know it's happening. Dan even said to me, "Please tell them about that because it's so real." He says, "I know I can be won. I know you can swing me for evil and for good." All he wants from me is to respond to his love.

Okay, Adam and Eve sinned, didn't they? They were conned out of their dominion and it didn't revert back to God. Satan legally won control of the earth. You know, Matthew 4:9 when Satan told Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness, he said, "If you bow down and worship me," he showed him the kingdoms of the world and he said, "If you bow down and worship me, I'll give you all of these." Jesus knew he came to win back the dominion but he knew he had to do it through a cross and Satan said, "I'll give it to you," because it was his to give. Jesus didn't refute him. But then what would have happened if he didn't, if Jesus would have submitted to Satan? We thank God that we have such a brave and wonderful Savior.

In 1 John 5:19 it says to us the whole world lies under the evil one. Now remember, what's over our head rules us, what's under our feet we rule, and what's under Satan, the whole world is under Satan, he rules the whole world. Revelation 2:2 tells us that Satan has a throne on the earth. At that time in history, it was in Pergamum. I don't know where it is now.

But happens next in our little story here? It's not a story, this is history. This happened. We see the blame shift. Adam and Eve were hiding and he said, "Why are you hiding?" He said, "Because we are naked." And God said, "Did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat?" And Adam responds in Genesis 3:12, "The woman you gave me, she gave me from the tree and I ate it." And Eve said, "The serpent deceived me and I did eat. So it's not my fault. It's not Adam's fault, it's just the devil's fault." You see? We're all innocent.

You know, there's something comforting in blaming people. If I am angry with you and I think you're wrong, that makes me right and I have a right to be angry. So if I blame you for my unhappiness, I'm comforted, but unfortunately if you submit to anger, it will govern you. And we live in a day where there are more angry women than I've ever seen in all my 70 years. Women are just angry and they're blaming everyone for their anger. I even know some women that they don't submit to their husbands, they're Christian women and they blame him because they say, "Well, he wants me to rule. He doesn't want to take over. So it's his fault that I'm not submissive." And you know, that's really good because when everything goes wrong, guess what he's going to say? "It's her fault. She made all these decisions." This is why we're all so unhappy. It's part of the blame game.

When you consider the things you're going through, the things that are robbing your joy from you, the things that hurt you, that you are the innocent victim, who do you blame? Did somebody's face just pop into your head? It's their fault I'm so unhappy. It's their fault that I did this. It's their fault I'm in the hole I am. It's their fault that I don't have any money. It's their fault that everything is going wrong. We're playing the blame game and if there is somebody that actually comes into your mind in the middle of that thought, go to God and confess it, that you're angry and blaming somebody, not taking responsibility for your own happiness because Jesus Christ came to give us joy and give it to us abundantly. He gives us joy in trials. He gives us joy in heartache. Joy comes with Christ. It's a gift of his and if we don't have joy, something has come between us and the joy giver and usually it's a person that we blame for our unhappiness.

I like it, I think it's in Colossians 1:11. You'll have to check that for me. It might be 2 Corinthians 1:11. But anyways, Paul says a prayer for the church and he says, "I pray that you be filled with all the fullness of God for," and I think, "Oh, what do they have to do that they have to be filled with all the fullness of God?" And he says, "I pray that you be filled with his fullness for longsuffering with joy." To have a suffering situation but yet have joy. That's when you know you're filled with the Spirit of God. That's when you know that you're receiving from the life-giver abundant life because Jesus said, "I came to give you life and give it to you abundantly," and there's nothing between you and God. He can let his life like the vine and the branches, he can let his life flow through the vine to you, the branch, and produce much fruit. And those around us, the undeserving ones, the ones that should be blamed, they get to be blessed and that has power to win without a word no matter who they are.

I have some people in my life and I just say, "I thank God. You put these people in my life. You love them. You want them there. You want them to come into the kingdom. You want to use me to love them into the kingdom. They're here because you invited them." Who cares what they act like. They're sinners. Why do we expect unsaved sinners to be good? It just doesn't make sense, does it? We can't expect unsaved sinners to be good. We shouldn't even expect our Christian sisters and that to be good because we all fall. We're all going to disappoint each other and when you do, don't you want, when I disappoint somebody, I just love it when they love me still and say, "It's okay. Don't worry about it. Everything will be okay." Oh, thank you. You want to be loved unconditionally and the people around you want to have that same love and forgiveness.

And we forgive the person that causes us the most grief. Why? Because they deserve it? Because they say, "Please forgive me"? No, we forgive them because Jesus Christ on the cross died for not our sins only but 1 John 2:2, the sins of the whole world. He took that person's sin. That sin they committed against you, they committed against God first and he took that sin he paid for it so they could go free. It's our responsibility as we take the forgiveness that Christ died and paid such a precious price for, and give that forgiveness away freely and by forgiving, people are set free. You know, Jesus said, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven and the ones you don't, they won't be." So if we go around forgiving, these people are going to be forgiven. That's a promise.

So we'll conclude with verse 3:21, "And God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife." You know, they made fig leaves to try to cover their sins themselves but it didn't work so God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, "and clothed them and covered their nakedness." He covered their sins and what did he make these skins from? Revelation 13:8, "The Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world." It was complete what he did and he covered their sin and he covers our sins. There is no sin that we committed that wasn't already paid for by Jesus Christ. So be faithful to him and to his cross and accept forgiveness for your own sins and then offer that forgiveness to others.

Next week, we're going to pull all this together and we're going to see my knight riding his white horse, Jesus Christ, and he's going to come and save and win back the dominion that Satan won from Adam and Eve, and we know at the end that Jesus Christ is going to rule and reign on the earth, we'll be in Christ Jesus and we're going to rule and reign with him. And we know the end already so we can be really excited about that and we're going to look at it next week in our final lesson.

Okay, let's pray.

*Thank you, Lord, for your word. Lord, keep us aware of the tricks and the wiles of the devil so that we don't fall prey to them. Keep us focused on you and your Son, knowing that you're the life-giver and everything we need for life, Father, is freely given to us by you, by grace, nothing we have to grow to attain and nothing we have to work to attain. It's all free. Let us walk in those gifts. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*