



# After the Fall

**GENESIS 3:20-24**

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**\*\*COVID-19 SPLIT SERVICE\*\***

It is good to be with you this morning! As usual, I hope everybody has the elements for the Lord's Supper, either from home or from the table in the entryway. John will be leading us in the prayers for the Lord's Supper right after our study. We will then sing one song, at which point we will get out of the building to do our fellowshiping outside on the front lawn.

As our tradition has been for the past few months, we are putting God's plan of salvation on the screen. The good news is that Jesus died for our sins, he was buried, and he was raised up on the third day. We respond by believing the message, by turning away from sin, by confessing Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, and by allowing ourselves to be buried in water for the forgiveness of sins. At that moment, we are born into God's family, and the Christian life begins.

And once again, we have some examples! The first comes, once again, from the Honolulu (Hawaii) Church of Christ. Angel is the young woman being baptized here. Once again, I love how the children are all gathered around the baptistery!

The next one comes from Chase Turner, a friend who preaches in Spanish in Monroe, Louisiana. I'm not sure whether this is his pool or the pool of the person being baptized, but this is a great use of a swimming pool.

The third baptism this week comes from J.J. Hendrix, a friend who preaches at the Northwest Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. I don't have the woman's name. To me, it almost looks like the start of a wrestling match. But we are thankful for this new Christian sister in Texas.

The next is a picture of Alyssa being baptized by her grandfather at the Bybee Branch congregation in McMinnville, Tennessee. We are thankful for Alyssa and her decision to obey the gospel.

The next one is a picture of Annie being baptized at the Central congregation in Paducah, Kentucky. This is the congregation where Josh Yancy's parents are members. We are thankful for Annie's example.

The next baptism comes from the Northland Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio. This is a congregation made up primarily of immigrants from Ghana. The words spoken and the songs that were sung were in a language I did not understand, but we are thankful for this new Christian sister.

And again, we are using these men and women as examples. What they have done, you can do this morning! Salvation is in Jesus, and according to Paul in Romans 6, we are baptized into his death, we are buried with him in baptism. If you have any questions or if you would like to study, please get in touch.

This morning, we come to the end of our four-part series from Genesis 3. Several weeks ago, I realized that I had never preached from this chapter, so we have fixed that! Over the past few weeks, we've looked at Satan's role in the first sin, we've looked at the consequences of sin, and we've also looked at God's statements after the first sin. This morning, we come to the end. The picture on the wall, by the way, was taken a week or two ago at Blue Mound State Park, just west of Madison. We don't really go into restaurants anymore, so we have had to be a bit more creative with date night. On this one, we got some takeout at Hi-Point Steakhouse out in Ridgeway, and took it back to a clearing on top of Blue Mound, looking out to the north as a storm was coming in. It was beautiful, so we are using this as our background today.

As we look at the last few verses in Genesis 3, we now come to what happens AFTER THE FALL. We might expect that God kicks them out of the garden, and he does, but I've been reminded in my studies this week that it's not all bad. There are some blessings here. There are some positive things that happen. So, as we study, I'm hoping we can gain something from these last few verses, especially in terms of encouragement. When we sin, when we do what Adam and Eve did, there's something for us here. So, today, let's notice what happens next, in Genesis 3:20-24,

***<sup>20</sup> Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup> The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. <sup>22</sup> Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— <sup>23</sup> therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.***

**I. We start in verse 20 as Adam changes his wife's name to EVE.**

Remember, back in Genesis 2:23, when God brought the woman to Adam, Adam originally said, ***"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*** So, instead of being called ***"woman"*** (because she was taken out of man), Adam now changes his wife's name to ***"Eve,"*** because she is ***"the mother of all the living."*** We need to be asking: What changes here? Why do we have verse 20? It doesn't seem to fit here. So the question is: Why the new name? Usually in scripture, when a name is changed, something happens. And of all the possibilities, why refer to her as ***"the mother of all the living."*** We might understand if Adam had wanted to call her "temptress," or "bad influence," or "sinner," or "the reason we're in this mess," or something like that, but instead, he now refers to his wife as being ***"the mother of all the living."*** And this is especially strange, when we realize that Eve is not yet a mother!

In context, the change of name has to go back to God's promise. In verses 15-16, God explains that the seed of the woman would someday bruise the serpent on the head. Not only that, but the woman would experience pain in childbirth. So, even in the curse, Adam sees a blessing. Yes, death has entered the world. Yes, Adam is dust and to dust he will return, but children will be born!

So, as we look at Genesis 3:20, it seems that what Adam does here is a statement of faith! Yes, some terrible things are happening, but Adam believes the promise that children will be born. In a sense, Adam renaming his wife is his way of saying "Amen" to God's promise, "Yes, I believe what you have said!" No longer does Adam believe Satan, but now he believes what God has said. The change of name, then, is a statement of faith. The change of name represents a change of heart. Adam believes what God says here. So, first of all, even in a chapter of sin and death, we have a statement of faith, and this is encouraging to us! We also live in a world of sin and death, but we do have the promises of Jesus.

**II. There's a second lesson that comes after the fall, and that is: We see the concept of ATONEMENT, we see the GRACE OF GOD in the form of what is basically A SACRIFICE.**

Remember: What is the first thing Adam and Eve do when they sin (back in Genesis 3:7)? Their eyes are opened, they know that they are naked; and they sew fig leaves together and make themselves loin coverings. They try to cover up! We might imagine, though, that fig leaves aren't really adequate! You'd need to replace those every few days. You'd bend over to pick a squash and have a blowout, or whatever. The fig leaves aren't doing it.

And the same thing goes for all the ways we might try to cover our sins even today. Maybe we just try to be good people. Maybe we try to stay busy so we don't think about our sin. Maybe we distract ourselves with work or something else. And yet, if we are trying to cover sin, nothing we do on our own will ever work. Sometimes we sing about this,

*Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears for ever flow,  
All for sin could not atone, You must save and You alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring: simply to Your cross I cling;  
Naked, I come to You for dress; helpless, I look to You for grace;  
Vile, I to the fountain fly: Wash me, Savior, or I die.*

So, since the fig leaves aren't doing it, in Genesis 3:21, "**The Lord God made garments of SKIN for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.**" As an act of grace, then, God does for Adam and Eve what they had never even imagined doing for themselves – he makes for them "**garments of skin.**" Back when we had the scooter in our family, I remember doing a lot of reading on motorcycle safety, and in terms of clothing, most articles recommended "another layer of skin." And what they mean by that is LEATHER. It's hard to beat leather for protection. We might wear leather gloves to work in the garden. We might wear shoes that are made out of leather. Leather protects. Leather is durable.

God, then, makes garments of skin for Adam and Eve. We know what this means. An animal had to die. In a sense, a sacrifice is made. This animal dies as a substitute. This animal serves as "atonement." The word that we translate as "atonement," by the way, goes back to a word referring to something being "covered." Adam and Eve are "covered" by this animal. And as far as we know, this is the first time this happens. An innocent life is

taken to cover sin. Adam and Eve had sinned, but an innocent animal dies in their place. And how traumatic this must have been. Up to this point, Adam and Eve are living together with the animals, there's no animosity, there are no predators, but they all get along, almost like pets. But now, God apparently kills an animal, and guts it, and skins it, and gives those skins to Adam and Eve to replace the fig leaves.

All of this, of course, looks forward to future sacrifices. By the time we get to Genesis 4, Cain and Abel are offering sacrifices. Cain's sacrifice (from his crops) is rejected by God, but Abel's animal sacrifice is accepted. Later, we come to the Passover Lamb that was to be sacrificed as God's people were leaving Egypt. And ultimately, we get to Jesus, described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 as "**our Passover.**" Just as Adam and Eve were covered by that first death, so also we are covered by the sacrifice of Jesus. He died for us. He died in our place. He is our atonement. He is our covering. And today, we put on Christ in the act of baptism. As Paul explains in Galatians 3:27, "**For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**" In Revelation 7:14, the saved are pictured as those who have "**...washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**" Jesus is our righteousness, and we put him on in baptism.

In an act of grace, then, God provides atonement through sacrifice. This is the theme of the entire Bible. These leather garments, by the way, prepare Adam and Eve for what happens next – life in a less than perfect world of thorns and thistles. So, let's continue...

**III. ...and we notice in the last few verses that God forcibly removes Adam and Eve from the garden in what is actually an act of MERCY, because by removing their access to the tree of life, GOD PUTS A LIMIT ON SIN.**

Starting in verse 22, in order to limit access to the Tree of Life, God "**sends them out**" (in verse 23), and in verse 24 he "**drives them out.**" This is a forcible eviction. They don't want to go, but God makes them go. Years ago, we had a member here who had been a bouncer at a bar in Milwaukee in a previous life. That's the picture I have in my mind in verse 24. Adam and Eve are almost literally thrown out. Obviously, this is an act of judgment. But it is also an act of mercy on God's part. If Adam and Eve had had ongoing access to the Tree of Life, they could have lived forever in a state of continual sin and rebellion.

He gives them some time to think about what they've done, there's some punishment here, but there is a limit to it. To put it in terms we can understand, instead of taking away your kid's cell phone as punishment, this is like taking away the charger. They have time to think about their life choices as the battery slowly runs out over the next several days. There's time for regret, reflection, and repentance. This is for their own good. We might compare it to a 16-year old who wrecks the family car. We might take away the keys as punishment, but we are also protecting. And that seems to be what God is doing here. Sin is limited. We can hardly imagine the most evil people on this earth living forever. Thankfully, sin is limited. Without access to the Tree of Life, all of us will die. I know we keep seeing statistics on the pandemic, but one thing we might forget sometimes is that the death rate for all of us is 100%. All of us will die of something at some point. Adam lives for a long time. He suffers, he works hard, he raises many children, he feels the weight of sin, but there is a limit to it.

And to prevent Adam and Eve from going back to the garden, God stations cherubim at the gate, angels with a flaming sword, to guard the way to the Tree of Life. The cherubim seem to be the beings who limit access to God's presence. They show up again as carvings over the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and then in the temple. We find them around the throne of God in Ezekiel and again in Revelation. Images of cherubim are woven into the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

This is the curtain that is torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus dies on the cross. But Adam and Eve's removal from the garden is an act of mercy in that the Tree of Life is guarded, but not destroyed. It shows up again in heaven in Revelation 22, where John says,

***1 Then [the angel] showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;***

He is a God of justice, but he is also a God of mercy. In mercy, he limits our time on this earth. In mercy, he gives us time to prepare for the life to come. In mercy, he explains how to find our way back to the Tree of Life.

### **Conclusion:**

This morning, we've looked at what happens after the fall, and we've seen some encouragement. Yes, it's bad, but, Adam believes God's promises, in an act of grace God provides a more permanent covering, and in his mercy, God does not destroy the Tree of Life, but he takes it away temporarily and ultimately gives us a way to get back to it.

As we close, let's go to God in prayer,

Our Father in Heaven,

You are the great and only awesome God of heaven and earth, creator of Adam and Eve. Thank you for providing a way for sin to be covered, not by our own feeble efforts, but by the perfect life and sacrifice of your Son, Jesus. Thank you for providing a way back to the Tree of Life.

We are living in a world suffering under the curse of sin. We look around us and we are reminded every day that this world is not our permanent home. In this world of sin, and violence, and hatred, and death, we ask that you would allow us to be salt and light. We ask that you would allow us to do good and to share, because we know that with these sacrifices you are pleased.

Thank you for Jesus. We come to you this morning in his name. Lord, come quickly. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)