

God Speaks

GENESIS 3:14-19

**Baxter T. Exum (#1553)
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****COVID-19 SPLIT SERVICE****

It is good to be with you this morning! Hopefully everybody has the elements for the Lord's Supper from the entryway. We plan on partaking immediately after today's lesson. As we have done over the past few months, we are starting this morning with the good news: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We respond in faith, turning away from sin, confessing Jesus as the Christ, allowing ourselves to be buried with Christ in baptism. Our sins are forgiven, and the Christian life begins.

And once again, we are starting today with some examples, and we have several today, starting with hundreds of baptisms in India. If you do not follow Don Iverson on social media, you should! Don is an artist in North Carolina who spends half the year making a living as an artist and half the year preaching the gospel in India. They've been doing some relief work with the pandemic this past week, and we started getting updates on Thursday. 420 baptized, then 403 the next day, and yesterday he sent out an update: 1201 baptized over the past few days. So, good things are happening in India right now.

We saw online that Brady was baptized at the Goodlettsville congregation a few days ago. Some of you might recognize Cliff Hand, who has been to Madison for the past two years to help with the give-away.

These last two were actually baptized back in 2018, but I just found out about it a few days ago, because these two are now getting ready to start their studies at the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver. Dillon will now be training to be a gospel preacher. In 2018, though, Dillon and Marissa were living together without being married, they came to understand that this is sin; so, they got a marriage license from the county clerk, they went to the North MacArthur church of Christ in Oklahoma City where they were married by the preacher in his office, and then they were baptized immediately. This is what repentance looked like for them – they heard the gospel, they believed it, they turned away from sin, and then they were buried with Christ in baptism. Dillon was baptized first, and then he immediately baptized his new wife. These two are now training to serve the Lord on a full-time basis.

And once again, we are using these people as examples: What they have done, you can do this morning! We have a baptistery downstairs, we can go to a pool, we can go to one of our local lakes or rivers. But if you are

ready to obey the good news in your life today, or if you have any questions or concerns, please talk to either me or John/Aaron after today's service, and we would be more than happy to open the word of God with you.

This morning I'd like for us to return to our brief series of lessons from Genesis 3. Two weeks ago, we looked primarily at the role Satan played in the first sin. He encourages Eve to doubt the word of God, he lies about the consequences of sin, and then we looked at the temptation and the sin itself.

Last week, we looked at the immediate aftermath of the first sin, the results of sin. As soon as they eat the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve are overwhelmed with SHAME, and FEAR, and then they do everything in their power to shift the BLAME for what they have done. Adam blames God for giving him the woman, and the woman blames the serpent.

Today I want us to continue with the third in this series of four lessons on Genesis 3 by looking at God's judgment on what has happened here. As you can see, we are moving on from the pineapple (the accursed fruit as it is sometimes known in our family), and we are now looking at a picture I took last Sunday afternoon on a hike in the Castle Mound area of the Black River State Forest up north of here. It was a beautiful hike, but at one point I felt myself floating, and I looked down only to realize that the mosquitoes were actually carrying me a little bit! I used my hiking stick to beat them, though, and they finally put me down. It was a good hike!

As we move into Genesis 3:14-19, we now come to God's pronouncement of judgment. I've titled the lesson "GOD SPEAKS," though, because it's not all judgment. Adam and Eve deserve to die for what they have done, God has promised death, and yet his response (as we will see in just a moment) is the perfect combination of judgment and mercy. So, I want us to move through this passage today one chunk at a time, by noticing what God says: to Satan, to Eve, and then to Adam.

I. But we start today with God's statement to SATAN in Genesis 3:14-15.

Right after the back and forth between God and Adam and Eve, right after the shifting of blame, God speaks, and we come to God's judgment, starting with Satan in verses 14-15,

***¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;
¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."***

We find, then, that God curses the serpent. A few years ago, we were on a long hike with a bunch of kids at our youth camp up north, and I overheard some kids talking about all of the dangerous creatures out there in the woods, and one kid said, "I know that not all snakes are bad, but when it comes to a creature God has cursed,

I'm not taking any chances!" His plan was just to stay away from all snakes. And many of us understand that and might think the same way, but I want us to understand that the main point is not that we need to be afraid of snakes, because as we transition into verse 15, we have **"enmity"** (that is, war, conflict, hatred, fighting, or tension) between the **"seed"** (or offspring) of the woman and the **"seed"** (or offspring) of the serpent. We start to understand, then, that this isn't really between snakes and people, but this is Satan here who seems to have taken on the form of a serpent in the garden.

And this is where we have the first clue that the death Adam and Eve will experience is not immediate, but instead, descendants will be born. And then there will be an ongoing, long-term conflict between Satan and the seed of the woman. And we see this in the very next chapter as Cain murders his brother Abel. And in 1 John 3:12 (many years later), John will look back and this and will say, **"We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother."** This conflict between Satan and the descendants of Eve continues as Pharaoh kills the baby boys in Egypt (in an attempt to destroy the Israelites, the descendants of the seed of promise to Abraham). He works through King Herod to kill the baby boys in Bethlehem (in an attempt to destroy the infant Jesus), and so on. He is against anyone who has any allegiance to God. The rest of the story of the Bible, then, is a record of the conflict between Satan and the seed of the woman, a conflict between good and evil, and it starts here, in Genesis 3. The Bible is basically a genealogy tracing the seed of the woman and God's promise here in verse 15. So, it's not a snake we need to be worried about here, it's Satan.

Not only will this enmity be ongoing, though, but it will lead to a very focused conflict at some point. And I say this because of how the pronouns change in verse 15. Notice, we go from descendants to a conflict between **"he"** and **"you."** So, this doesn't refer to the descendants of Satan, but this refers to Satan himself (something he will experience personally). And this is where we seem to have the first prophecy of Jesus in the Old Testament. God says to Satan that there is a time coming when, **"He [a descendant of the woman] shall bruise you on the head, and you [Satan] shall bruise him on the heel,"** in what appears to be a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the crucifixion, Satan bruises Jesus on the heel (it is painful and devastating, but not a permanent victory). On the other hand, in his resurrection, Jesus crushes Satan's head (in what is truly an overwhelming victory). So, first of all, God speaks to Satan and in doing so makes the first prophecy about the coming of Jesus.

II. We continue with God speaking to the WOMAN.

We see this in verse 16. Notice, please, Genesis 3:16,

***To the woman he said,
"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,
but he shall rule over you."***

Let's notice in all of this that God starts with the natural order, he starts with what he already told them to be doing from the beginning, but now there are some consequences of sin that make everything more difficult. Childbearing becomes more painful. And the rest of this is a consequence on the marriage itself. She will desire her husband, but he will rule over her. Some translations say, **"Your desire shall be contrary to your husband."** Some have suggested, then, that the **"desire"** here is a desire to control her husband. And they say this because the next time this word is used in scripture comes in Genesis 4:7, where God warns Cain and says that, **"...sin is**

crouching at the door; and its DESIRE is for you, but you must master it.” This wasn’t some kind of romantic desire, but sin was trying to control Cain. In the same way, it seems that one consequence of the first sin is that this power struggle between husbands and wives would be an ongoing challenge. God creates Adam first and gives him some responsibility to lead the family, but Eve would always be trying to take that away. And so we have conflict introduced into the marriage relationship. We love each other, but there will always be issues! Sin has corrupted the marriage relationship, having turned it into a power struggle.

And this is true pretty much everywhere, isn’t it? Around the world, in all cultures. It’s about as universal as pain in childbirth. You don’t have to believe the Bible to have the same struggles Adam and Eve had. You can live on a farm or in a city, you can be from Europe or Asia, you can be educated or uneducated – husbands and wives will always have the trouble described by God in Genesis 3:16. Wives will have this unfulfillable desire, and yet husbands will ***“rule”*** over them, God says. And there can be sin on both sides of this: The wife might want to overthrow her husband’s leadership (as Eve seems to have done here), or the husband might abuse his headship of the family in an unloving or abusive way. But the tension is always there, and it goes back to the curse.

III. As we come to the end, we come to God’s message to ADAM.

Notice, please, Genesis 3:17-19,

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Cursed is the ground because of you;

In toil you will eat of it

All the days of your life.

¹⁸ “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face

You will eat bread,

Till you return to the ground,

Because from it you were taken;

For you are dust,

And to dust you shall return.”

The opening line here is a bit concerning, ***“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife.”*** And yet, it’s not that husbands are not to listen; the problem is, Adam ***“listened”*** when his wife was tempting him to sin. He ***“listened”*** when he should have resisted. He ***“listened”*** instead of leading. And because of this, Adam also has some consequences here. And the punishment fits the crime. Like Eve, what God originally told him to do will now be more difficult. The sin of eating the forbidden fruit now results in growing food being much more difficult. I want us to notice that work is not the punishment! God has already commanded Adam to manage the garden. But now, this work will be more difficult due to thorns, and thistles, and weeds. And if you’ve ever had a garden, you understand what’s going on here. Growing food will make you tired. And sometimes it hurts. Plus, the whole cycle is a bit pointless: You spend your life growing food, and when this life is over, your body returns to the ground, which grows more food! ***“For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”***

And by the way, we might not work directly with the soil too much these days, but aren’t all of us pretty much working for food? I would suggest, then, that the curse still applies. You might work in an office, or a plant, or a

school, or a hospital, but work is still hard! We still deal with thorns and thistles, annoying coworkers, computers that crash, missed calls, long hours, doing more with less, and so on. Once a blessing, work is now a pain.

Conclusion:

So, this is God's judgment. God speaks. He is just and merciful. Yes, death is a consequence, but it is not immediate. And ultimately, he promises that a descendant of the woman will eventually crush Satan's head. And that is the story of the entire Bible, summarized here in Genesis 3. Even though we have sinned, God still loves us and has done some amazing things to bring us back.

This morning, if you have sinned, God has made a way to make things right, and he invites us to respond. If we can help in some way, we hope you will get in touch. If you are listening on the phone, give me a call at 608-224-0274. Before John/Aaron leads us in the prayers for the Lord's Supper, let's close this lesson with a prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

We praise you today for responding to the first sin in your great wisdom, with justice, yet with mercy and grace as well. We are thankful for the promised Messiah, and we are so thankful for your book, explaining who he is. Thank you for Jesus.

We come to you today in his name, by his authority.

Lord, come quickly. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: fourlakeschurch@gmail.com