



Sunday, June 8, 2025

Genesis 3:1-7, 21 Part 2

So last week was pretty intense as we talked about the origin of evil, and that simply by way of creation being connected to life, it is impossible to create something that is connected to death. Therefore, since creation means life, God could not have created evil. Therefore, evil is best viewed as a corruption of that which is good. So because we have been given free will, we now have a choice whether or not we love God. It needs to be understood though, that good and evil are not opposite in the sense of two choices. Our free will exists as a singular response. Either we choose to love God or not. If we choose not to love God, then we remove ourselves from the source of life, truth, and goodness. In doing so, we don't create a new reality - we simply corrupt the one that already exists.

With the truth that God did not create evil (as our foundation) it allows us to view God in the way that He has always intended - as a good and loving Creator who gave His creation the dignity and opportunity of free will - the freedom to choose whether or not to follow Him.

And make no mistake, that freedom to choose will always be tested. Nothing in that regard has changed since the Garden. And last week we saw the first test. It didn't go very well and we learned that this was the entry-point for the sin of humanity. We also learned that even though Eve was the first to take a bite, Adam was equally as responsible - if not more-so as he abdicated his role of spiritual steward over the garden. Scripture indicates that he was right there beside Eve and didn't speak out against the temptation but ended up joining in. Oh that we would be a generation that would live and speak out against sin and temptation instead of reasoning and joining in!

The concept of sin and temptation is such a prevalent theme in both the Old Testament and the New Testament and we could literally spend weeks upon weeks trying to cover every single layer. For the sake of today, however, I've taken some time to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what it is that He specifically wants to say to us here today about the nature of temptation and what the story of the fall in the Garden of Eden teaches us about how we are to respond when faced with the temptation to sin.

If you have your Bible's with you this morning I'd like to invite you to turn with me to Genesis 3:1-7 where you'll notice that we are reading the exact same passage as last week. If you are able, please stand for the reading of God's word:

Genesis 3:1-7

'Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave 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 coverings.

1.

The first thing we see is that Satan doesn't directly contradict the Word of God. He simply subtly calls it into question. Did God 'really' say? Look at the context here, Adam and Eve were created in a world that was filled with God's 'yes.' Do this, enjoy that, eat this, embrace that. Now, in a world filled with 'yes' there was only one 'no.' This clearly shows that God is a good, good God, and so by putting the emphasis on the 'no,' Satan was twisting the truth by calling into question the authority of God's Word. But not in a way that makes it sound like the word of God is necessarily incorrect but the intent behind it. You see, Satan couldn't directly question God's instruction to Adam and Eve because it was absolutely clear. Instead, he targeted the intent behind it. Did God really say that? Well yes He said that, we all know that, but did you interpret it correctly? Is that really what He meant?? And so you see, the first temptation wasn't outright rebellion, it was subtle reinterpretation. To take God's clear boundary and make it blurry. To make it seem restrictive instead of protective. To make God seem suspicious rather than generous.

Do you see the progression here?? It's absolutely wild! The serpent - possessed by Satan didn't attempt to get Eve to reject God. He knew that wouldn't work, so he cunningly got her to reframe

Him - not by starting with a bold, contradictory lie, but with a subtle, seemingly innocent question of intent. He introduces just enough doubt to make us second-guess what we know God has already said. 'Did God really say you're forgiven?' 'Did God really say you're loved?' 'Did God really say to trust Him with your finances, your relationships, your future?' The enemy doesn't need us to reject God - he just needs us to reframe Him. If he can get us to question God's heart, it won't be long before we walk away from His Word. It is so deceitful, cunning and undermining. And effective. This is why this kind of subtle confusion is still one of his greatest tactics of the enemy today.

2.

The second thing that we see in the example in the Garden is that Eve listened and engaged in conversation with the enemy. This was a massive mistake. You see the moment she gave him her attention, Satan gained the access he needed to plant the seed of doubt.

Her attention lead to his access. She gave just enough space for the lie to settle in. She started to entertain the possibility that maybe - just maybe - God was holding out on her. And that was all that the enemy needed - just a crack in the door. Just a pause. Just enough time to plant a seed of doubt or desire.

Friends, temptation gains power when we linger. When we entertain the thought. When we analyze the pros and cons of disobedience instead of anchoring ourselves in the truth. Eve could have shut it down right there. So could have Adam, but that was last week's sermon....lol. At any rate though, Eve could have said, 'God said no, and that's enough for me.' But she didn't, instead, she engaged. She allowed the desires of her flesh to be influenced by the lies of Satan and when we allow the enemy to shape our desires, it will never end well. When that happens, he doesn't have to force our hand - we'll easily reach for the fruit ourselves. That's the most terrifying part. He doesn't need to drag us into sin; he just needs to convince us that it's not really sin. That it's not really that bad. That it's not really that big of a deal, or that everyone is doing it, or that it's just too hard to say no in this generation....or...

'That God didn't really mean that did He??'

And it's likely at this moment that you've heard the teaching - maybe even memorized it - that we are not to engage temptation, but to flee from it. And that's absolutely biblical. It's solid counsel. And I've preached this hard: Flee temptation! Sometimes that literally means getting up from where you are and running - physically removing yourself from the situation. And yes, there are times where that kind of posture is absolutely necessary. When sin is knocking at your door, don't

open it. Run.

But the conversation about facing temptation is layered because fleeing temptation isn't the only biblical response to temptation. In fact, if you remember when Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days and nights being tempted by Satan, it's not how He responded. He didn't flee, He also didn't negotiate, and He also didn't engage. Jesus stood His ground. And how did He stand? He stood on the Word. He anchored Himself in truth. He responded to each temptation not with emotion, not with reasoning, but with Scripture.

And this is important - because if we only ever emphasize fleeing, we can unintentionally bypass the call to stand - to resist, to endure, and to fight the lies of the enemy with the truth of God. If you remember only a few short months ago, this is Ephesians 6 - Paul's call to put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Not just run from evil, but stand firm in the face of it and not get sucked into the middle of it. Armed with the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, boots of peace, shield of faith, and the Word of God - which is our sword.

Now, that's not to say there isn't a time and place for fleeing temptation - because clearly there is. Samson should have fled Delilah. David should have run as far as possible from that rooftop view of Bathsheba instead of moving toward it. And yes, Joseph was absolutely right to flee the grasping hands of Potiphar's wife as she tried to seduce him. In fact, he got out of there so quickly that he literally left his cloak behind in her hands!

So, yes, the notion of fleeing temptation is absolutely biblical - but it's also context-specific. There are two significant passages where it shows up:

2 Timothy 2:22

'Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.'

I want you to see that Paul's instruction to flee youthful lusts here isn't just about physical temptation - it's about growing up in how we respond. Paul specially wrote the book of Timothy as a letter to none other than Timothy - who was young and growing in his role as a minister. Paul is urging young Timothy here to rise above the impulsive desires that may have defined his younger years. A mature faith doesn't just resist sin - it proactively avoids the places and patterns that lead to it. The Greek word for flee here is 'pheugo' - which means to shun, escape, or deliberately avoid. In other words, a sign of spiritual maturity is recognizing the threat early and walking away before the battle

even begins.

Paul isn't saying that only young people struggle with lust - he's warning that if we don't learn to flee those temptations when they first appear (in our youth), they don't just go away with time. They actually grow with us. And if left unchecked, they become patterns, habits and strongholds that we carry into adulthood not as innocent struggles now, but as deeply rooted behaviours.

We may grow older in our faith, but still operate as immature disciples - carrying desires and temptations that were never truly surrendered to Jesus, only hidden, excused, or rebranded as 'normal.'

Example: it's no secret that one of the biggest struggles facing this generation is pornography - and it's not just men anymore. According to Barna Research, their research indicates that over 60% of Christian men and around 30% of Christian women regularly struggle with viewing pornography. And that number jumps significantly among teens and young adults, many of whom were first exposed to it before the age of 12.

Statistics also show that porn addiction almost always begins in youth - nearly 100% of the time - and often because there were no safeguards in place. Young people - your phones are like heroin. They're always within reach. Always offering a hit of dopamine. Always promising relief - but never delivering freedom.

And if you don't learn to flee now, you may find yourself years down the road still fighting a battle that could have been shut down before it ever took root.

And the scary part is that we can still be doing all the right things on the outside - serving, giving, leading, attending - but internally, we're feeding something that should have been starved years ago. And the longer it's fed, the harder it is to flee. Because it's no longer just a temptation - it's become a part of our rhythm.

So Paul's message to Timothy to flee is a call to deal with it now - while it's small, while it's still a whisper, while it hasn't yet grown roots - when it's easiest to flee.

And then again to the church in Corinth, Paul now adds another layer:

1 Corinthians 10:13

'No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of

escape, that you may be able to bear it.'

I want you to see how this verse supports what Paul is saying to Timothy and is actually a view of God's grace and mercy towards us in the middle of our temptation and struggles. It's almost as if Paul is saying, 'Look, even though there are those of you who are still struggling with your youthful lusts, years later, God's grace and mercy upon your lives is still so great that if you turn to Him, He will provide a way of escape from your temptation.'

This is huge!

Paul is essentially saying: Even if you've failed to flee, or lingered too long...even if you've repeated the same pattern again and again and again - God hasn't abandoned you in it.

He still provides a way out.

He still makes escape possible.

He still gives you what you need to bear it.

But be clear, this is not a license to keep on sinning - it's a lifeline to be used when we feel like we're drowning. Because ultimately, that is the end goal of sin and temptation.

John 10:10 says that:

'The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.'

The picture that is being painted here is one that teaches us that the nature of Satan (the thief) is one of complete and utter destruction. He doesn't just want to hurt you, he wants to destroy you. And his weapon of choice is sin. He does this by convincing the user that a little bit of sin doesn't really hurt anyone. The minute that person believes that lie, they are then placed on a trajectory towards destruction. Unless they allow the Holy Spirit to step in and bring freedom, that path only leads to one place - death - Because Satan doesn't want to just harm you, he wants to utterly destroy you. Look at the progression that John uses here:

Steal.....then kill....then destroy.

He seeks to steal everything that is good away from you - especially relationship with God. But he doesn't stop there, his goal is then to ultimately take your life from you so that there is no hope for

restoration and then if given the opportunity would do this to as many people as possible in hopes of bringing ultimate destruction to the Kingdom of God.

This is who Satan is. And Genesis teaches us that this has always been his plan. From the very beginning of time he has purposed to destroy humanity and he didn't waste any time with Adam and Eve.

Notice though, that he did not destroy them with a lie as many would call it. It was more or less a half-truth wasn't it? Notice his words in verse 5: (paraphrase) 'You were told that you would die if you eat that fruit but you won't. Instead, God doesn't want you to eat it because in the moment you do, He knows that you will be like God and you will know Good and Evil.' There is one half-truth here, one truth and one lie:

Half-truth: You will not die (kinda true, but not really. Although they didn't die immediately, they eventually did die many, many years later. The immediate death however was spiritual separation from God).

Truth: You will know Good and Evil (Head vs. Heart knowledge - they touched the stove)

Lie: You will become like God. Nope. Satan knew that if he could get them to bite on this lie then instead of them becoming like God, there would be separation between them instead.

What makes Satan such a good liar is that he is a masterful manipulator and the lies may not always look like bald-faced lies, but will be mixed with truth. This is why it is so dangerous - because he uses lies laced with truth in order to deceive us.

Just look at the story of Sampson. If any story shows this, his does. If you remember, Samson was the strongest man in Israel, and his strength came from a Nazarite vow that he had taken when he was younger that he would never cut his hair. The incredible strength that he had been given was tied to his hair never being cut. We all tend to remember the moment he allowed Delilah to finally know the secret to his strength and as she cut his hair, he lost his strength which ultimately lead to his death.

But, Samson's downfall didn't start with Delilah. Long before that, he was already living carelessly with his calling. He broke his Nazirite vow on numerous occasions: once by touching a dead lion, another time by partying with the Philistines (their enemies), and ultimately by letting his pride blind him to the traps around him thinking that he was untouchable.

So, by the time Delilah pressed him about his strength, his spiritual guard was already down. And

when he finally gave in and told her his secret, the consequence was death.

Samson's mistake wasn't just trusting the wrong person though. It was thinking he was the exception to the rule.

Which, if we go back to Paul's message to the Corinthians, was the exact same message. We focused on verse 13, but if we back up to verse 12, look at what Paul says:

1 Corinthians 10:12

'Therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall.'

Paul isn't writing to weak people here - he's writing to people who think they're standing strong. And he's reminding them, 'Don't get cocky. Stay humble. Stay alert.'

3.

As we close this morning, there's one more point that I want to draw your attention to that I hope will help to tie everything together here.

There's an interesting correlation found at the end of chapter 2 and the end of our reading in chapter 3 today.

Genesis 2:25

'And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.'

Genesis 3:7

'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 coverings.'

What these verses show us is that before the fall, nakedness was beautiful and deeply symbolic. Nakedness represents vulnerability and vulnerability was safe. There was no fear. No shame. No hiding. Adam and Eve were fully known, fully exposed - and fully unafraid.

But after the fall? After sin entered the story their first response was to cover up. They felt new feelings now - shame and separation. They felt the need to hide...to shield themselves not just from one another - but from God.

You see, sin didn't just bring disobedience - it brought shame. Their eyes were opened, yes - but not in the way they hoped. Instead of gaining wisdom, they gained fear. Instead of becoming like God, they became separated from Him.

And yet - even here - God's mercy shows up.

Genesis 3:21 says:

'...for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.'

Do you see what just happened? They tried to cover themselves with fig leaves - temporary, fragile, self-made coverings. But God, in His mercy, said that's not enough. He provided a better covering. One that required the first sacrifice...the shedding of blood.

Even in judgment, God was already pointing forward to redemption.

He was saying: You do need to be covered. But you can't cover yourself. Blood must be shed. Life must be given. But I will do it for you.

It's the Gospel - a foreshadowing of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that would come hundreds of years later. A sacrifice so big that it would be the last and final covering.

From the very beginning, we see that sin brings shame. Shame drives us to hide. But God - rich in mercy and grace - covers us. And He does it not with the leaves of a fig tree, but with the blood of a sacrifice - the blood of His Son, Jesus.

The same God who walked into the garden and clothed the first sinners in mercy is the same God who stands ready to cover you - with grace, with forgiveness, and with the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is the Gospel.

This is the heart of the Father.

And this is the invitation today:

To stop trying to cover yourself. Let Him cover you.

So....as I learned over 40 years ago in Sunday School,

'Be careful little eye what you see...

for the Father up above

is looking down in love...
so be careful little eye what you see.'

Not in fear.

Not in shame.

But in the safety of His love - covered, redeemed, and called back to Him.

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