

If you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Genesis 3. I think that there are some really good things that we need to hear from Genesis 3 tonight. And so here's my hope in where we're going and here's why I want to camp out in Genesis 3. First of all, it's because I don't ever want to presume that all of us have heard the story of the Fall before. I think that's an easy thing to do. The grand narrative of the Bible is Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation. And if you've never heard that before, that's the overarching narrative of the Bible. The Bible really is a narrative about God and what He's doing in the world. And so the overarching story starts with God creating, then there's the Fall, after that is God sending His Son and redeeming and then one day there's going to be consummation when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back and makes all things new. So I don't want to presume that you guys know those parts of the story just because it's easy to do. I really want to talk about it with you and really make sure that we've all walked through it before. So if you're not a believer and you're in here tonight, what you're going to get to hear is essentially what we believe as Christians about why the world is like it is. You're going to hear what we believe went wrong with the world. And I don't think anybody in here would disagree with me that things have seriously gone wrong in the world. Things have gone wrong, and tonight you're going to see where it all started, what the root of things going wrong is for us in our belief.

That's the first reason. The second reason I wanted to talk about this is really because I'm hoping that after we read Genesis 3 together tonight, you would be able to sing the songs that we just sang and be overwhelmed tonight. Because after you read Genesis 3 and after you realize that this isn't what just happened but this is what continues to happen and as you see yourself in this story, which by God's grace we will tonight as we see ourselves struggling with the same things, rebelling in the same way, lusting after the same things that Adam and Eve did, it's overwhelming to think about the fact that God sent His Son for me and for you. Because really are wretched and pitiful and so unworthy. And so I'm hoping as we read through Genesis 3 that you would be overwhelmed as we go into the Lord's Supper just with the reality of Jesus Christ laying down His life as a substitute for our sins, that we might have life. And I'm hoping that we would sing, "Oh how He loves me" with just a whole new framework.

And the last reason and probably the most prominent on my heart is that I think there's this thing that happens to all of us because of the way the world is and because our faith is not yet sight that there's just this tendency for the days to pile into weeks and pile into months to begin to see our lives as just what's in front of us and to forget that we really are caught up in the grand narrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. And what happens when you forget about the big story and you become consumed with the little story, which is your life and my life, is you begin to see your life strictly in horizontal ways. You just see only what is horizontal and you forget that what's really going on first and foremost is vertical. You begin to see your problems and circumstances and everything that goes wrong in your life in horizontal terms. And if you do that, some really goofy things begin to happen. If you fail to remember that everything that's wrong horizontally is rooted in something that's gone terribly wrong vertically, the Christian life gets really goofy. And so I'm hoping that as we read through Genesis 3 tonight it would just remind you what's really at the root of what's going wrong in your life. And maybe you're in a really good place right now, but sooner or later things are going to go bad. And when they do, if you don't remember, if you don't have the perspective that your problems are not first and foremost horizontal but that they're vertical, it will be a long, hard road for you. So as your pastor, I just want to encourage you and remind you as much as I have the opportunity to do so to look to God, to point your life to God, to think about your life in terms of the big story, not just the small story that is your existence, which the Scriptures call just a vapor. It's just a vapor, and I know that's just so encouraging to hear tonight.

Anyway, let's get in to Genesis 3. It will be much more encouraging for us. Again, the narrative is Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation. I really wish we had the time tonight to cover Genesis 1 and 2 because it really paints the picture of creation. And I think we leave creation out a lot. We just assume creation, but unless you understand the doctrine of creation, unless you have the right picture of how creation was meant to be, how God created it to be when He spoke it into existence, how it was perfect in every way imaginable (sic). It's hard to think about that. Before the Fall, before Genesis 3, as God created everything, it was in perfect, complete, unity, harmony, beauty, what the Scriptures would call shalom or peace. And when we think of peace, we typically think things are peaceful if there's no war or conflict. That's not really the Hebrew idea for the word "peace." The Hebrew idea for "peace" is complete flourishing in every way imaginable. Genesis 1 and 2 paints this picture where things were just perfect. And it's so important that you get this, because unless you get this, I don't think you really can't understand as well as you could the weight and really how bad things have gone. If you don't know how good things were, you can look around and go, "Well things aren't that bad. I'm not that bad." If I'm ever in a conversation with someone and they go, "You know, things really aren't that bad. The world's really not that bad. I mean, sure there's some of these situations here and this is going on here and there's a war here. But it's really not that bad," that's a dead giveaway to me that you really don't understand the gospel and you don't understand the grand narrative of the Bible. Because if you understand Genesis 1 and 2, you are unable to look around and go, "Things aren't that bad." You are forced to look around and go, "Something has gone horribly wrong. And the reason I know that is because I can read Genesis 1 and 2 and see how things are supposed to be and see how I'm supposed to be. And when I lay my life up against that, it doesn't measure up at all. And when I lay this world up against it, it doesn't measure up at all."

So Genesis 1 and 2 is creation, and it ends in verse 25. Genesis 2:25 says this, "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." And this really is the epitome of how perfect things were. There was no shame, no fear, everything was in harmony. Everything in marriage, everything in life, everything in creation was in perfect harmony. And there's the next verse, Genesis 3:1. It's like Moses, the author of Genesis, wastes no time. And even some commentators have said that because it is such a fast transition from how everything was perfect right into the Fall, they say the Fall happened on the same day as creation. How do they know that? How do they know it was six hours and then man fell? But as soon as possible in the story, it transitions to chapter 3 that says, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made." And we find out later in this story that the serpent is really an instrument in Satan's hands. Satan takes over this serpent and through this serpent begins to tempt and try to dismantle the shalom that God has created the world in. So in this passage, the serpent, which is the craftiest beast of the field, Satan uses similar in the gospel where Jesus is talking to Peter. And remember when Satan grabs hold of Peter and somehow speaks through him to the point where Jesus turns to him and says, "You are Satan. Get behind Me." This is what you have going on here. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And again, we should read this like we watch a horror film. I think we tend to read it like a bedtime story. But this is the moment when the world is fractured. This is the moment where men and women rebelled against their Creator. So for the first time, you have another counselor entering the scene in the serpent. You have another voice beginning to speak. He comes in and he questions God's word. He questions what the Lord has said to Adam and Eve in chapter 2. "And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"" So she actually disagrees with the serpent and says, "No He didn't say that." And if you go back and read in chapter 2, that He said is, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." And so the serpent comes in and goes, "Did God really say that you can't eat of any of the trees?" And she says, "No, what He said was we can't eat of this tree." So far, I think her response is pretty good. The tempter comes in and whispers in her ear and she says, "No, that's not what God said." Which is honestly better than a lot of us do. Usually there's the first temptation and we're gone. But she doesn't. She says, "No, He didn't say that. He said we can eat of these trees except this one."

And so the serpent takes a more direct approach and just outright calls God a liar. He says, "You will not surely die." He's saying, "God's a liar, you're not going to die. I know He said you would if you eat of it, but you're not going to die." And then he says this. He calls God a liar and then he tries to tell the woman about His motives. He says, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So the serpent is saying, "Not only is God a liar, but He doesn't want you to eat of the tree is because He can't stand the thought of you being like Him. He doesn't want you to be like Him. So God doesn't want you to eat of the fruit not He has your good in mind, not because He has your joy in mind, not because He knows what's best for you. His motive is that He's trying to keep you from being like Him." It's unbelievable, these lies. And they're the same lies that happen today.

And she buys into it. At some point in the conversation, she buys in. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,..." Until this point, she did not think of the tree like that. But the serpent comes in, whispers some lies, twists God's word and all of a sudden her heart begins to decline in faith. Until this point, what she apparently believed, now she is acting in unbelief and the lust of her heart is going, "You know what? That tree really would be good to eat fruit from. And maybe this serpent is right. Maybe God doesn't have my good in mind, because the fruit really looks good." "So 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 to be desired to make one wise,..." In other words, it was to be desired because it would help her to be like God, it would cause her to know what God knows. And isn't this just the struggle that most of us have all the time? We want to be God. We want to be like God, we want to know what God knows. All you have to do is listen for how many times you and I ask the question to God, "Why?" And we don't just ask Him the question in humility, but we demand an answer from Him. "Why? Why are You governing my life this way? Why have You allowed this to happen to me? Why didn't You do this?" Oh man, we want to be God. We want to be little sovereigns, don't we? So he comes into this woman's life and tempts her, and she's saying, "It looks good, I want to take it. And you know what? I want to know these things. I want to know what God knows. I want to be God. "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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit..." And so her heart lust and then, as James 1 says, when that becomes full grown, it becomes sin. And so this conversation happened in her mind and she began to act in unbelief, and this led her heart and her eyes begin to lust and crave after that which she had no business lusting and craving after. And then when it was there, she walked by the tree and it says, "she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." And in this moment, the shalom of the world was marred, the world was fractured. Man essentially and fundamentally was changed in this moment. Man went from being good to being bad, not just in action but in nature.

Man went from being good to being bad in his spiritual DNA to the point where Romans 5 puts it this way, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." So again, this is not just what happened, but from this moment, this has infected every generation. Every person, every human being from this point forward has been completely and devastatingly given this same disease. If you keep reading to Genesis 4, the next generation already commits murder. Of the first two sons of Adam and Eve, one murders the other. Sin comes into the world through one man, and death through sin, and sin begins to spread. It spreads to the son, and the son kills his brother. And it continues to spread in Genesis 6 to the point where that God looked upon the earth and He saw that every man only had evil in his heart all the time. And so He wipes man out. And then it spreads until you get to Psalm 51 where David says, "Even in my mother's womb I was conceived in sin."

And it spreads and it spreads and it spreads until this week what we read in the headlines. Here's the headline, "Man worried by Facebook post." This is from the Denton Record Chronicle. "A comment on a Facebook page alerted a man that his former girlfriend planned violence against him Wednesday night, according to a police report. The man called for help from his apartment in the 2500 block of West Oak Street at about 10:25 p.m. He said that he had visited the woman's Facebook page and read her comment that she was going to go to jail that night because she was going to go

crazy, according to the report. He feared that she would damage his apartment and his vehicle. He parked in another area and walked home so she would not find the vehicle, he said. As he walked across the parking lot, he saw her coming. She drove up on the sidewalk in an attempt to run over him, he said. She jumped out of the vehicle and charged him, brandishing a green box cutter, he said. She swung it at him, cutting the T-shirt he was wearing but not injuring him. She threw a rock at his apartment window, breaking the outer pane. She then drove away." It's really easy to look at this and go, "That lady's crazy." But if we're reading Genesis 3, we recognize, "Broken, sinful. Sin entered the world through one man, and it's spreading and spreading."

Here's another one. "A wealthy and politically connected Egyptian businessman was sentenced to death on Thursday for hiring a hit man to kill a Lebanese pop singer in a case that has captivated the Middle East for nearly a year with its storyline of revenge, power and money." Sin, brokenness, the world is fractured, our hearts are fractured, we're evil. "Arrests at Chinese factory for slave-like conditions. A factory boss and nine foremen have been arrested in eastern China after the police raided a brick kiln late last month and found 32 mentally disabled people working in what were described as slave-like conditions." It's spread to the point where we will take the most vulnerable of our society and just dominate them for our enjoyment, for our pleasure, for our gain. And this is in China, but you've probably read about what's been happening at some of the state schools in Corpus Christi. And this probably doesn't reflect on all the employees of the state schools, but in Corpus Christi these people were taking men and women who were in this school, the most vulnerable in our society, and they were setting them up in a room to fight each other. Sin entered into the world through one man, and so did death, and it spread to all of us.

And it's really easy for you and I to look at these things and go, "Well that's crazy." Well, let's keep reading and see how crazy it is, because I think we're in this story more than we like to admit. They both ate and "then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." It's amazing, as soon as they eat of the tree, as soon as they rebel against God, as soon as they decide their way is better than God's way, and immediately self-centered existence enters the world. Immediately they're concerned with themselves, what they look like. And isn't this just the DNA of sin, selfishness? Do you know what sin does? Sin causes you to be dominated by you. It causes you to migrate to the one place you were never meant to be, which is the center of your world. And because of our nature, because of our essence, because of the Fall, you and I just become consumed with ourselves. We absolutely love ourselves and we think about ourselves all the time, so much so that we can hardly see anything else that goes beyond our little kingdom that we create for ourselves.

We just love ourselves and it reminds me of this story. A pastor was telling this story of when he was a kindergarten teacher. And apparently there was a birthday party for one of the students. So little Susie was having this party, and everybody brought presents. Little Johnny was there. It wasn't his birthday, but they they gave all the kids party favors. And apparently, as soon as Susie is opening her gifts, Johnny is sitting there the whole time huffing and puffing. And every time she opens a present, he's just frustrated with her until finally one of the teachers had to get in his face and say, "Johnny, this is not your party. This party is not about you."

And it's such a pointed picture of us. Sin causes us to believe that this whole thing is really about our lives, our wants, our comforts, our needs. And we believe it. Sin causes us to believe that this whole thing is not about God's narrative, it's not about Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation; this whole thing is about Beau Hughes. And Beau Hughes loves him some Beau Hughes. I just do, and so do you. If you could think about the percentage of time you spent today thinking about you compared to the percentage of time you spent thinking about everybody else, we would be ashamed if we were to run those thoughts on the screen tonight. We just love ourselves. This is what sin does. We believe the lies and we eat of the fruit. It just causes us to be consumed with us. And this is why C.S. Lewis said that humility isn't just

thinking more lowly of yourself; humility is thinking of yourself less altogether. Just trying to think more lowly of yourself is a kind of false humility. True humility is where you think of yourself less.

So as soon as they eat of the tree, they're just consumed with themselves. And then the second part of verse 7 says they were ashamed. So "they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." So they know that they're naked, they're consumed with what they look like, they have fear of man, and so they try to cover it up. How many thousands of ways do we do this? We're not wearing loincloths, but we cover ourselves with so many other things. Whether it's our accomplishments, whether it's this relationship, we know something's fundamentally wrong with us vertically but we go and hide horizontally. We just try to cover ourselves. So we get this and we get that and we make this accomplishment and we do this and we get to this point. We run and we hide and we cover ourselves, and it just creates chaos and it doesn't really work. Or maybe it works for a season until we can't control our shame anymore. And do you know what comes out of that loss of control, when God is gracious to reveal that that control is just a facade? When our kingdom gets messed up out comes anger, depression and rage. So we hide.

But it doesn't work, just like it didn't work for them. They made themselves loincloths, they tried to fix it themselves "and 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." Every time I read this scripture I think about the time I lived with a couple in Portland, Oregon when I was a pastor there. They had two little kids, and we would play hide-and-seek sometimes. One time I was "it" and so I'm trying to not find the kids, I'm looking for the parents first. And so I open the closet and there is the mom, Bonnie, behind a vacuum cleaner in the dark, just sitting there as still as could be. So I open the door, but she doesn't go, "Oh, you caught me." She just stays there. And I was finally like, "I see you, Bonnie." Every time I read this, I think of that. It's like, "Really? You're going to go behind a tree to hide from God Almighty?" But this is what we do, we keep on running. We try to fix it and it doesn't cover our shame. And so the Lord comes after us, and instead of running to Him and clean and asking Him to forgive us and redeem us, we just keep running and running. And we've gotten a lot more sophisticated. We're not hiding behind trees anymore. We'll just go hide in a home group. We'll just hide in a Bible study. We'll hide behind Christian lingo. We'll just hide behind raising our hands and singing songs. We're still hiding, we just may be a little better at it because we've had a few thousand years to practice. But we just run from the Lord.

"But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And He's not asking because He doesn't know. He's saying, "Come to Me and confess what you've done. Come to Me and repent." "And [the man] said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." [The Lord] said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And again, He's not asking because He doesn't know. He's giving the man a chance to come clean. "The man said, "The woman"" And probably the most profound part of me studying the text this week is this. In those two words uttered by the man, he did the exact opposite of what Jesus Christ would do for His bride. Adam substitutes his bride and says, "Put the guilt on her." Jesus would substitute Himself for His bride and say, "Put the guilt on Me, even though I am guiltless." And Adam says, "The woman." And this is what you and I do. So we run, we cover ourselves, we hide and then when we get busted we just blame other people. We look horizontally and say, "It's his fault...it's her fault...it's my teacher's fault...it's my boss' fault...it's my husband's fault..." And we just go horizontal with it.

Now Adam is telling the truth really. What he's saying is true. He says, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." That really is what happens, so he is confessing truth. But my problem with this is he never takes any ownership. I feel like there's so much of this that goes on here at the Village. There's so much right confession. This generation, we love to confess, but we really don't show any movement or grief after we've confessed. We just confess because it makes us feel better. And so we go from this group to this group to this group confessing the

same things. And most of the other people in the group struggle with the same thing that you're confessing, so there's not really any accountability. It's just, "Oh, you struggle with that too? Great, I'm glad I'm not the only one. Let's make ourselves feel better about struggling with the same thing." And we just become serial confessors, but we never have any repentance. We never move forward. We just confess and confess and confess, we never show any growth towards holiness, never any growth in grace. We sure don't get into Recovery and actually get some help. And this is not okay. I love you enough to tell you this. If you're in a group where this is what happens or if this is your routine, get in a new group, get around people who it's really awkward to confess these things to. That was how I always judged whether or not I was confessing to the right person. If it's not awkward, you're probably not confessing to the right person. Because it's just this familiar sin that somehow makes us justify to ourselves that it's okay. It's not okay. Sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin. It's not okay, because it doesn't just affect you. And it's not just horizontal problems.

"The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So Adam pointed toward the woman, and Eve points towards the serpent. Again, she's telling the truth. And so the Lord turns to the serpent, and He doesn't even interrogate the serpent. He doesn't give him a chance to explain, He doesn't ask him any questions. He just says, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go,..." Which is interesting to me. Was the serpent not on its belly before this text? Did snakes have legs? John Calvin says that what's actually going on here is the serpent tried to raise up against mankind and God says, "Get back to where you belong, on your stomach. That's what you do." "...and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." So we know that the Lord is talking to the serpent here, but He's also talking to Satan. He tells him, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;..." So the application here is none of us like snakes, and if you do, you're weird. I just want to throw that out there. But He's also talking about the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he [meaning Jesus] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." In this moment is the first example of the gospel in the Scriptures. It's what the theologians call "first gospel." And He's promising, "Yeah, you bit man in the heel here, but you're going to get crushed." In the end of Romans Paul says "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

"To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;" So the woman is going to have pain in childbirth, and the man is not going to have pain in working. Before this, working was more like play. And the word "pain" is the same word He used for the woman. "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." So God pronounces these judgments, He calls them out, He rebukes them and in His grace, when He knew that they tried to make these little loin cloths and cover themselves, when they tried to hide and it just wasn't working, "the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." Where did He get the skins? He sacrificed. So in this moment of the most horrific, life-altering, world-changing rebellion, you see the mercy and grace of God on Adam and Eve and on you and me. Even in this moment, He goes and gets an animal, slaughters it in the same way that He would slaughter His Son and He clothes them in His grace.

I want to read this to finish tonight. Paul David Tripp, who is a phenomenal author, writes this in his book Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, "Life was better than anything we can imagine from our sin-scarred vantage point. But

sadly, it didn't last long. In the most significant rebellious act ever committed, man and woman stepped outside of God's ordained plan. In a second it all came crashing down. All of the amazing beauty of that world was deeply and permanently scarred. In an instant, fear, guilt, and shame became standard human experiences. People who once lived in perfect harmony now accused, deceived, and fought for control. Weeds and disease became daily concerns. People began to desire what was evil and do what was wrong. Rather than submit to God's authority, they lived as their own gods. The world that once sang the song of perfection now groaned under the weight of the Fall. Sin altered every thought, desire, word, and deed. It created a world of double-mindedness and mixed motives, self-worship and self-absorption. People desired to be served, but they hated serving. They craved control and nurtured delusions of self-sufficiency. They forgot their Creator, but worshiped his creation. Rather than loving people and using things to express it, people loved things and used people to get them. Humanity's second generation even committed murder. They began to lie, cheat, hide, and deny. People suffered at the hands of others, from momentary thoughtlessness to unspeakable acts of physical and sexual abuse. For the first time, people wept from grief within and suffering without."

"God now saw his world ravaged by sin. He was unwilling for it to stay this way, so he devised a plan. It would take thousands of years. It would mean harnessing the forces of nature and controlling the course of human history, but he could do it. From the moment of the Fall, for generation after generation, he controlled everything so that someday he could fix what had been so horribly damaged. Into this world, at just the right moment, he sent his one and only Son" And into our lives, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for you and me. And the second Adam stepped onto the scene and He sacrificed and substituted Himself for you and me.

So every prideful, rebellious, self-centered day and thought and moment and hour could be made right between us and the Father. So as we come to the Lord's Supper tonight, we come grateful. And if you're not a believer, this is why we get so excited about a Savior, because we need one desperately. And the Father has sent Him in the Son who, unlike Adam, was obedient to the Father, "to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:8) And so we remember that tonight, we worship Jesus Christ because of that tonight and we celebrate tonight because of that. Because we have realized that by birth and by action we are sinners, and the penalty of sin is death, physical and spiritual. But the gift of God through Jesus Christ is life.