

When We Sin

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[0 : 00] Genesis chapter 3. The third most earth-shaking event that ever happened is in Genesis chapter 3.

First humans, the very first ones, did the one thing that humans were not to do on the earth and that was to disobey God.

They disobeyed God, they sinned. The evil one coerced them to disobey, caused Eve to question the word of God and messed us all up and we've been disobeying ever since.

It's in our bloodline, it's a spiritual mutation that personifies itself in many forms in our lives. We're all plagued by it and would be condemned by it if not for the two greater earth-shaking events that give us hope.

One of them is the cross of Christ where Christ took on the sins of the world and died in our place. The second is his subsequent resurrection three days later that loudly proclaimed that we could have life and life more abundantly.

[1 : 25] So because of Christ, we don't have to be slaves to sin anymore. Our problem is that sometimes freed people, people who have been freed, Christians, will still not leave their chains.

Sometimes we'll still not walk through the open door of freedom in Christ. Too often we continue to live as if we don't have the power of God in us.

We still make horrendous decisions. We still act the way that we used to. Don't show enough difference. We still fall in the same old patterns that have caught us before.

So let's learn what happens when we fall into sin by looking at the very first sin. And my prayer has been it'll help us not to fall for it anymore.

It's found in Genesis chapter 3 beginning in verse 6 and it says this. So 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.

[2 : 47] She took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.

They were so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths 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. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you?

And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. He said, who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, the woman who you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

[3 : 55] Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this that you've done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate.

Genesis chapter 2 verse 9 tell us that in the center of the garden there were two trees. There was one tree called the tree of life and the other tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There were lots of other splendid, wonderful trees. But these two are recognized prominently in the middle of the garden.

They were centrally and strategically located. Why? Because Adam and Eve had a choice.

Do you choose life? The tree fruit didn't give eternal life, but the maker of the tree gives eternal life.

[5 : 00] And that is found in obedience. The other tree of the knowledge of good and evil provides for us a choice.

Choosing not to take life, but instead to take in the knowledge of the evils of the world will lead us to condemnation.

Now, I want you to notice something here. It's the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

God never wanted us to know about evil.

I'll go beyond that. God never wanted us to know about good. God wanted us to know about him.

[6 : 04] He just wanted us to choose life in him. But by choosing to disobey, we made a choice.

God didn't intend for us to try out all the sinful delicacies of the world. He chose for us to choose life through Christ. And I will tell you that life in Christ is not a bland and boring diet.

He filled the garden with other trees. And every one of them were pleasant in sight. Scripture says they were good to eat. That is the abundant life that God promises to us.

Choosing Christ is not walking away from the excitement of the sinful life into some kind of bland existence by no means. What Christ has for us in this life is better than anything the world can offer.

What the world offers is a lot of false hope that leads to traps, to pits, and to dangers. You bite from the tree of life.

[7 : 14] Or in other words, you accept Christ. You obey the Lord and follow his leading and obey Christ. You will not be disappointed. But Eve chose wrong and Adam followed her.

And we do too much of the same. Why do we do that? What happens when we do that?

When we sin, we are enticed. The attraction was to do what they're not supposed to do.

Now hold up a minute. Whatever you do, don't look over there. Don't look over there.

Of all the things that they were not supposed to do, they did the very thing they weren't supposed to do. And if somebody tells you not to look, you just can't help it, can you?

[8 : 33] That's exactly what happens. The only thing they were not supposed to do, they could go there, they could touch it, they could sit under it, they could enjoy its shade.

But when they did, they just could not stop there. And you seldom can. Think for me for just a moment. How many times in life is it permissible, how many things in life is it permissible to go to, but not to overextend, not to take a bite of, just to be able to go to?

I often have people debate me on the matter. People tell me a drink every now and then does not hurt anybody. Well, I will tell you, there are no redeeming qualities in alcohol.

And if we were honest with each other, many could testify to that truth this morning because your family's been affected by it. You've got loved ones that's been affected by it.

In this church, in every church, yet folks just need a little. But somehow it becomes a compulsion and a consumption for way too many.

[9 : 56] Somebody may tell me, well, they can lie just a little. No, because when you lie, you've got to cover up that lie. And you begin to form a web of lies before long.

Same thing with sexual immorality. Whether it's porn or whether it's fornication or whether it's homosexuality or whether it's adultery, just a little of it's wrong, but I promise you, it'll just get bigger if you entertain it.

It's a trap. And whatever the fruit is that you just can't help yourself to and you just have to know more about it, it sits right in the middle of your garden and you've got to make a choice.

Life and all the promises of God are knowledge that condemns and destroys. Folks, the devil works overtime to get us to bite.

Do you think that she would have ever bit if he would have said, hey, Eve, I want you to bite that fruit. Now, it's going to be delicious and you're going to enjoy it. But when you do it, it's going to condemn you.

[11 : 16] It's going to ruin your family. It's going to bring enmity. It's going to bring hate. It's going to bring crime. It's going to bring heartache.

It's going to bring disease. It's going to bring struggle. It's going to bring pain. It's going to bring moans and groans. Do you think she would have eaten that fruit? No, by no means, not at all.

Instead, he said, did God really say? Did God really say? He tells us just a little bit and we get enticed.

Not only do we get enticed, but when we sin, we drag others down with us. We do. We drag others down. Eve took a bite.

She looked at Adam and said, try this. And the man knew better. He was there to hear God's instruction and instead of doing what God told him to do, he did what she told him to do.

[12 : 25] Don't ever disobey God to follow along with somebody else. Don't ever do that. Don't care who it is. The devil often uses such a tactic.

He makes the sinner become a seducer. And when the sinner becomes a seducer to somebody else, they follow them in the same sin.

That's a demonic strategy. Now the devil is forming a team. Not only does he have a sinner, but he's got a sinner that's influencing somebody else and leading them to sin.

And then that person will lead somebody else to sin. He's forming a team among us to take care of them. The devil and his demons can work a lot less if we are convincing each other to disobey God.

And like a rotten apple spoils the whole bunch, one sinner will lead to another sinner. Romans 14 verse 7 says this. For none of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself.

[13 : 27] The truth is, if you're truly a Christian, I want you to hear me when I say this. If you're truly a Christian, you're going to most likely take somebody with you to heaven.

And if you're going to hell, you're probably going to drag somebody else along with you. A Christian friend had a burden for a friend that he didn't feel like knew the Lord.

And he went to visit his lost friend and he had a conversation with him. In that conversation, he shared Christ with him. Sitting right there in his living room and the man muted the TV.

He listened to what he had to say. He listened to him share the gospel. The Christian told him that we've all sinned. We're all separated from God.

It's separated us from God. Our sin has. It's caused a death in us and God showed us his love by sending Christ to meet us where we are and to save us for all of eternity.

[14 : 38] He went through the whole process and the man listened to all of it. He thanked him for coming. He refused to accept Christ. He showed him the door. He sat back down, unmuted his TV, got a smug look on his face like how dare him come in my house and say that.

And his little boy walked in the room from the next room over and he came and sat in his daddy's lap and he said, we don't want to be an old Christian, do we daddy?

What an example because when we fail to follow Christ, we drag others down with us. when we sin, we try to manage it.

We try to cover it up. Shame came upon them immediately. A death took place immediately.

It was not physical death. I think they began to die at that point but the reality is the death that happened for them was spiritual death. And when scripture says in Romans 6, 23, the wages of sin is death, that's what it's talking about.

[15 : 53] It's talking about the spiritual separation that happens when we face, when we commit sin. The cost or the penalty of that sin is that we're separated from God and if we don't surrender our life to the Lord Jesus, we'll forever be separated from God.

But our sin separates us from God and because of that they both felt shame. That shame led them to cover themselves. Now does that mean they were not clothed?

Well, not with clothes. Not like that but it's interesting to me because if you look at Psalm 8, it says that the Lord crowned us with glory and honor.

And I'm wondering if when the two first humans were created and was on the earth in the garden, could they have been clothed with something like that as well?

And what I mean by that is this. Psalm 104, verse 1 and 2 says, the Lord is clothed with splendor and majesty, covering yourself with light as with a garment stretching out the heavens like a tent.

[17 : 03] And since we're made in the image of God, could it have been the case for them? In other words, they weren't quite as stark as we may first appear but more of a glow about them, if you will.

And then in Genesis 2, verse 25, it says, Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. But now, they're looking for coverings. First miniskirt was created out of fig leaves right there.

the first set of draws. And my wife always gets upset with me when I say draws. But I think you know what I'm talking about when I say that. Why was that?

Because of shame. We ought to be ashamed of our sin. Our feelings when we sin should be like Ezra.

Ezra, chapter 9, verse 6, said, Oh my God, I am ashamed and I blush to lift my face to you, my God. For our iniquities have risen higher than our heads.

[18 : 04] And our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. Acknowledging our sin for what it is is the first step to get it right.

But our tendency, however, is to try to cover it up. When I was a kid and I did something I wasn't supposed to do, I didn't want to see my parents.

I didn't want to make eye contact with my parents. I was afraid they'd look straight through me and know exactly what I'd done. I just didn't want to do it at all. And when my kids got in trouble or when they get in trouble, they don't want to look me in the eye.

One of them was bad about always sticking her tongue literally in her cheek when she'd done something wrong. It was a giveaway. I mean, you knew it beyond a shadow of a doubt.

They done messed up because that tongue would go literally in the cheek. Or there'd be a sly grin as they left the room thinking they got away with it.

[19 : 05] But they hadn't got out of eye shot. You could see the sly grin come on their face. And so you could tell. And by the way, they always advise preachers to never use your family as an illustration without getting their permission first.

And I will tell you, I have never asked my family for permission. So you can imagine how cold and stark it is on Sunday afternoon. We're all the same way.

We try to cover it up. However, too many times we simply don't acknowledge it. We don't agree with God on our sin. Jeremiah 6, verse 15 speaks of such a people when he said they were not at all ashamed.

They didn't know how to blush. If we are stuck in a cycle of sin, we will degrade over time.

First, there's a sense of shame and then there's an attempt to cover it up and then we try to hide from God. and scripture says that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and they hid from him.

[20 : 19] And he asked, where are you? Now, notice a couple of things. One is that God came to Adam and Eve to seek their fellowship.

God is always, always the one that initiates contact with us.

We don't come to God on our own. God seeks us. And we love him because he first loved us.

Revelation 3, verse 20 said, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in with him and eat with him and he with me.

He is the one that is knocking. He is the one that is pursuing. He is the one that is initiating fellowship. And by the way, that passage is often used evangelistically as if it's speaking to one who he does not know, who has never surrendered their life to Christ.

[21 : 27] But the reality is, if you look at the context of the scripture, it's actually speaking more relational about it, our relationship with him, that he is the one that pursues us. Now, when you look at Luke 19, verse 10, what Jesus said, and he says, for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost, that's evangelistically.

Christ is the one that seeks us out. Yet due to our shame and our sin and even our fear, we try to hide in the foliage of our lives.

notice also that God asks a question. Why does God ask a question?

I mean, he knows all. I love the questions of God. God never asks a question because he needs the knowledge from it. God always asks a question for introspection.

God always asks a question so we can consider the answer. He never asks a question to get an answer.

[22 : 36] He asks so that we can deal with the answer. Last week ago, Thursday night, we were supposed to fly to Peru during the day and get there at 830.

It's not a time change, as weird as it is. The west coast of South Africa is in the same line as the east coast of the United States and I never, I was too geographically challenged to realize that, but we never changed time zones.

I'd never traveled internationally and not changed time zones. It was the shortest international flight I'd ever had. We were leaving at 10 o'clock in the morning and was going to get there at 830. I mean, man, I can work on the plane.

This is going to be great. Well, the plane didn't get there in time. We missed our flight to Lima and so we flew all night. And so we get there Friday morning. Somebody picks us up at 430 in the morning at the airport.

God bless him. And we go back and get some rest, but, you know, the day is about shot, really. I mean, we meet some folks and make some arrangements and plans for the coming days and that kind of stuff.

[23 : 45] And we spend time together on Saturday and celebrate these folks who've worked online to better themselves these pastors who worked online to better themselves that Jim and Jeff and others have been working so hard to train.

And we celebrated them and I gave them an encouraging word and told them from 2 Timothy chapter 4 to preach the word in season. I'd say, preach it when you don't feel like it.

Preach it when you feel. Preach it when they want to hear it. Preach it when they don't want to hear it. I just let them have it. We celebrated them, got back to the room about 10 o'clock and while I was in that conference, the pastor of that church who I was preaching for the following morning said, I'd like to take you to lunch.

He didn't say that, he said something else, but the translator said that he said, I'd like to take you to lunch. And so I asked Rose, I said, I don't know the arrangements, I told him, I said, I don't know the arrangements, I just go where they tell me to go, I don't know where the driver's taking us and all that stuff.

If we can all get it arranged, I'll be happy to, I just don't know. So I got back and I said, is anywhere I can go to lunch with this guy? I mean, is that going to work in the schedule or whatever the case is for me? So at 10 o'clock, I get confirmation, not about lunch, but I get confirmation, oh by the way, they want you to, after you preach there, they want you to teach Sunday school.

[25 : 11] I said, Sunday school, it's 10 o'clock Saturday night. We flew all night, you know, 36 hours ago and we've been there all day and it's 83 and there is no air, you get in the car to get the air, you know what I mean?

It's been a long day, we're wore out and at 10 o'clock I find out I'm teaching Sunday school and I brought two sermons with me. I brought a Saturday sermon and a Sunday sermon. I'll use a Sunday sermon again in other churches and that kind of stuff, but I was thinking, what in the world am I going to do?

And some of you may feel uncomfortable when I talk like this, but I'm just going to tell you, the Lord spoke to me. Now if you don't feel comfortable with that, then I'll say that the Holy Spirit gave me a strong impression. Does that make you feel better?

Whatever you want to say, but in my spirit, I heard a question.

Didn't you just tell those men to preach the word in season and out of season? When you feel like it and when you don't.

[26 : 14] When you got a sermon prepared and when you don't. And I said, well, God, I need some scripture. And he gave me two different passages and I went to bed.

God knew what I preached on Saturday. He asked me the question so that I would think about the answer.

That's why God asked questions. God asked questions for our sake. When he says to them, where are you?

What he's really saying is, look at yourself. What are you doing? What are you doing? Hiding from me? And in reality, hiding is futile.

God knows where we are. God sees our hearts. He summons us to stand before him. And he does not summon us to stand before him for condemnation.

[27 : 25] Because Jesus said himself in John 3, 17, for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Listen, if we don't deal with our sin, if we don't answer his pursuing and his initiating invitations, we will face condemnation for all of eternity.

But God pursues now to get things right in our life. He didn't stop with that question. He continues in Genesis 3, verse 11. He said, who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat? And Adam was found and he was caught, so now what? Well, he starts pointing.

He knew he was in the wrong and so what did he do? He blamed it on Eve. And then Eve pointed at the serpent and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on.

[28 : 23] Notice, Adam not only blames Eve, Adam even blames God. He says, the woman whom you gave to be with me.

All of that happened, get this now, all of that happened before God even accused him. All God did was ask the question, who told you you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat? That's all God had done. Everybody is always blaming somebody.

Have you noticed today that nobody is at fault for anything anymore? Either somebody did something to you a long time ago and it's his or her fault that you have whatever ailments that you have or either God made you that way and you can't help it.

Well, there's two things, two facts about sin. If you get this, we'll go home. Two facts about sin. One is this. God sets sin as sin.

[29 : 38] We don't set sin as sin. We don't get to make them laws. The laws of this land can change.

God's law is never going to change. Denominations can fight about it, can fold over it, but sin will be sin as long as God sees it as sin and his word never changes.

So don't fall for this new enlightenment. Somehow we learn something new and everybody needs to change their ways.

God sets sin as sin. He said it a long time ago that way and he's never changed and I got news for you. He's never going to change. And when we change our perspective on it, we sin against a holy God.

God sets sin as sin. Second thing is this. Our sin is our fault. My sin is my fault. Your sin is your fault.

[30 : 45] Our sin is no one else's fault. Now listen, hear me out. We have all been influenced by other people that led us into sin.

We have all influenced others to fall into sin. But nobody made us sin against God. God giving us a choice.

Don't put God at fault either. Why did God put a tree there to not eat from? Because God simply gave us freedom. And without it, we could enjoy the fulfillment of choosing him as Lord.

But if we never had a choice, we wouldn't have been able to choose him. So because he gave us a choice, we get to choose Jesus. Listen, folks, I want you to understand something.

We are in a war. We're in a war. The devil wants to steal from us. He wants to kill us. He wants to destroy us. And he will do whatever he needs to do to try his best to destroy our lives.

[31 : 49] And he will if we don't respond correctly. What happens when a child falls down? When a child falls down, if that child can get up, that child will immediately, if she's anywhere around, that child will run to his or her mother immediately.

And so must we to God. When we fall in our sins, we must run to God. Not from him.

We must run to him. The longer we wander in our sin, the more shame we'll feel. The more shame we feel, the more paranoid we'll become.

The more blame we'll toss. So I'm telling you today, if you're in sin today, you're playing around with it, you're biting forbidden fruit, you need to call upon God.

Just like the psalmist did. I want you to listen to Psalm 139, 23 and 24. It says this. Search me, O God. Let this be the prayer of our heart, O Lord. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

[32 : 55] Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there's any grievous ways in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. Can you honestly pray that today before the Lord?

Search me, O God. Know my heart. Lord, meet me where I am. Try me and know my thoughts. If we sincerely do that today, he'll lead us out of a miry pit of sin.

He'll clean us up. He'll set us free. It has been my prayer that by looking at their fall, looking at their sin, the sweet Holy Spirit of God would speak to us, work in our lives, and would open our eyes to see our sin.

May our hearts be open to the Lord today to hear what he has to send. Not hide from it. Not try to get away from him. There's no need in that.

I got news for you. God's pursuing you. God's pursuing you. He knows where you are.

[34 : 11] He knows your circumstances. And in the midst of that, Christ died for you to take away those sins when we surrender our lives to him.

When we sin, we can come to Christ and be forgiven and be made new. With every head bowed and every eye closed this morning, I got a question for you.

Is there a sinful pattern in your life today that is encumbering you? It's holding you back from being everything that God would have you to be.

Now, maybe you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life when you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. You've never asked him to forgive you of your sins. You've never asked him to come into your life and to save you.

You've never surrendered your life to Christ. Now, I got news for you today. I am so thankful that not only do we as a church give an invitation today, but the Lord invites you to come to him. He pursues you.

[35 : 18] He initiates any conviction that you have within your heart. He draws you to himself. And today can be the day of salvation for you. And so, if you've never done that, I encourage you when we stand in just a moment and sing to come.

Come. I'd love to guide you in that process. Maybe you're here today and there's a sinful habit in your life. Something just hangs over you. You need to let it go.

You need to let God empower you and strengthen you through the midst of your circumstances. Whether it's in the seat where you are, it's with the pastor that you'd like to pray, or at this altar.

Whatever it takes. You do business with God today. You do what God would have you to do. Maybe God's drawing you into this church. You know that this is where God would have you to serve.

I encourage you to come. We'd love to have you. We'd love to guide you in that process of what that means here at First Baptist. And maybe you're here this morning and you have made a decision for the Lord in the past, but you've never been baptized as a believer.

[36 : 24] You've never publicly acknowledged that biblically. And today you make a commitment to do that. I don't know how God's leading you, but I know you'll never be satisfied until you do exactly what he'd have you to do.

And this invitation is your opportunity to respond to him in obedience. Lord Jesus, I love you. I thank you that you know exactly where we are. Lord, we can't hide from you.

You know what we need. Help us, God, to just respond to you in obedience today. We love you. We thank you, Lord, for speaking to us, moving in us, working in our lives, God.

In Jesus' precious name, amen.