

Creation: *Broken Part 4 - Paradise Lost* Genesis 3:17-24

Introduction: Hopes and dreams. We all have them. Whether its aspirations in our life, future, for our kids, country, church, or business, we have a vision of what would bring happiness. We get glimpses of these being fulfilled on wedding days, when you make the big sale, when your child accomplishes something after months of hard work, when the day breaks just right. We experience moments where life is good and we wish we could freeze it, capturing that moment forever. But the reality is that even our best days, under the best circumstances, with everything working out does not leave us with lasting happiness. There is a longing still left in our hearts and minds, one that in the depths of our soul we are still not satisfied and things are still not right.

We've talked much over the last few weeks about sin entering the world for the first time, and how Adam, Eve, and by extension us have experienced its consequences individually (guilt, shame, fear, and lack of responsibility) and in relationships (lack of leadership and submission). This morning we will talk about two other consequences concerning the earth itself and our relationship with God Himself, but will end the morning in hope, re-affirming our minds and hearts that there is coming a day where we will be eternally satisfied.

Paradise Lost, But Not Forgotten (17-19)

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; 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.”

On the heels of the curses levied to the serpent and the woman, God listed out the curses to Adam. Remember, Satan had indwelt a serpent and systematically deceived Eve by causing her to question God and His Word. In eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, her rebellion became clear, that she not only did not trust God but wanted to be like Him. Adam stood idly by, and instead of leading through love and sacrifice, went along with his wife, abdicating leaderships and shifting blame to his wife and God Himself when he was "caught" red handed. This moved the couple from intimate union with God to fear-driven covering, moving away from Him instead of resting IN HIM. However, though Satan thought he had made followers in his war against God, it was clear that Adam and Eve were going to be in constant conflict with the serpent, as well as their offspring, culminating in ONE who would finally crush the head of the serpent, ending in his judgment. In the midst of **divine judgment, there was divine hope**. Far from being done with mankind, this was all part of God's marvelous, eternal, love driven plan (Eph. 2:3-5). In each of these curses, there was hope, and we see this with Adam and even with this couple being driven out of the Garden.

Paradise Replaced with PAIN (17-18)

Our lives are a product of God's sovereign plan but also the choices we've made. We live with consequences of good and bad choices. Adam's choice to follow instead of lead had lasting effects. Even though we are all given opportunities to **repent and be restored**, this does not wipe out consequences. Even though Adam could be made right with God did not nullify the sinful effects.

Cursed ground works against us

When the earth was created, the ground gave up its fruit easily. Adam ruled over, worked and kept the Garden (2:15), but work was worship, fruit was lovely and there was nothing hindering its production. However **sin brings pain**. This is consistent with Eve, since there will now be pain in childbearing, and for men who are tasked to provide and care for their families, the earth **now works against them**. The ground itself is cursed. That meant that Adam would face **pain** in bringing food to the table. Farmers would endure thorns and thistles that would fight to strangle produce. They would be dependent on weather conditions, from rain and drought to locusts and bacteria. Today even though we do not live an agrarian existence, the world's system is broken and works against us, meaning we have to deal with sinful humanity and broken conditions to make a living. We face *sun burns, tsunami's and slipped discs in our backs* while we live in a state of disrepair, meaning everything around us is breaking down, from our cars, houses, appliances, and bodies.

Cursed ground waits for redemption

What is fascinating about the curse of the ground is that it did not just affect mankind, but **creation itself knows its broken!**

*"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the **whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.**"*

Romans 8:19-22

We are reminded that this earth, though created as Paradise, is no longer a place where we can live eternally with God. It is subjected to **futility, it is bondage, been corrupted, and groans to be free!** One day it will be as it will be re-created as a NEW EARTH, ready and prepared for an eternity of glory (Rev. 21:1)

Paradise Replaced with PRESSURE (19a)

Sweaty, fruitless labor

Not only will pain be associated with our life on this earth, there will also be immense pressure, particularly for men who are called to lead. Since the earth itself is cursed, our amount of effort will not yield in equal measure. Now, **work is hard and a sweat filled venture**. Now there is a divide between work and worship as we see work as a means to an end (provision, gathering money, food to eat) rather than an opportunity to image forth our Creator in our jobs.

Ground and flesh against us

Not only is the world set against us, but our own flesh. Our default setting is NOT to work hard, not to take responsibility, and not to deal with failure. What is left with all of this is a huge weight of **pressure on the shoulders of men**. Following leadership is difficult, especially following a fellow sinner. Leading is difficult, since the weight of responsibility is constant and heavy. In our sinful condition, men do not know how to handle this pressure. Men are specifically prone to turning to idols or god-replacements to handle it: *drinking, affairs, pornography, video games, leaving when it gets hard or simply shutting down when the pressure is on* are hallmarks of dealing wrongly with the consequences of sin. This is what Christ frees us from, since we no longer have to feel the weight alone and have an answer in our failures, resting in Christ instead of bearing it all on our shoulders.

Paradise Lost PHYSICAL LIFE (19b)**Death is inevitable**

Not just pain and pressure, but our physical life is affected by sin. We face the breaking down of our bodies to the point that **death is inevitable**. We are all on a pathway that is heading us back to the dirt. Death hangs over our head, chasing us to the end. We can run from it, try not to think about it, or battle it through diet and exercise, but the reality is death comes for all of us. All of our bodies break down because we face the brokenness produced by sin.

Sin is now pervasive

Sin brings pain, pressure, and death. Adam's sin transferred to every other member of humanity as death spread to all mankind since all are born sinful. Because we are born sinful, we face death on all fronts: **physical, spiritual, and eternal death**. But we **have hope**. The first Adam was a **type** and the second Adam will succeed where the first failed. Adam's sin caused us to be born into a world that is set against us with bodies that will return to the dust. The **Better Adam** not only accomplished what the first Adam could not, He also brought us righteousness AND will give us bodies that are fit for a NEW HEAVEN and EARTH. In the midst of divine cursing we are overwhelmed with divine grace available.

*"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ---- for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is not law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a **type of the one who was to come**...Therefore as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**" Romans 5:12-14, 18-19*

*"For as by a man came death by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive...***

*Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being', and the last Adam became a life giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the **second man** is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."*

1 Corinthians 15;21-22, 45-49

Paradise Lost, but Hope is not (20-24)

²⁰The man called his wife's name **Eve**, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²²Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Faith Breaks Through (20)

Verse 20 is one of those verses that we can easily skip over, since it seems insignificant that the woman now is given a name. But there is much wrapped up in a name. Adam was given a promise to fill the

earth, to multiply and glorify God throughout. He also had just heard that the offspring of Eve will be a part of bruising the head of the serpent, and her offspring would be in conflict with the serpent. However, because he failed to act in faith, he now received the curse of **death**. Not only this, but at the present moment, Eve was **not pregnant nor had they had kids YET!** And yet, Adam names his wife "EVE", which means "life", or "mother of all living". In other words, this was Adam acting in **faith and believing the promises of God, even though he had not experienced the promise**. This is much like the promise later on in Genesis to Abraham as he was told he would be the Father of nations like the sand of the seashore, yet his wife was barren and old. Faith is the "**assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.**" Hebrews 11:1-2. Adam walked by faith, which means he was obedient to the revelation of truth that he was given, and even after the curse of death, trusted that God would fulfill what He had said. This is not only a beautiful picture of saving faith, but also of exercising faith after we have sinned. This **faith meant he turned away from the lies of the serpent to believe in and act on the truth that God promised**, which is exactly what is required of us (1 Thess. 1:9-10), but we respond to all that we have been given in the gospel, fixing our eyes on Jesus who is the Author and finisher of our faith.

Grace Covers Over (21)

Next we see God **lavish grace on the ones He loved**. When Adam and Eve first sinned, their knee jerk reaction to the guilt and shame they felt was to create coverings **for themselves**, to cover up from each other. Somehow sin caused them to look no longer in **purity and selflessness** toward each other but rather in **lust and selfishness**. But notice that these were not only **temporary, but they were man made**. They were a weak attempt to deal with guilt and shame that they could NOT conquer on their own. Every attempt mankind makes to try to appease their guilt or cover their shame on their own is a **works based attempt to pay for sin**, which can NEVER do it.

The reality was that **God had to step in**. He had to provide covering. He did not simply shear a sheep and make them clothes out of wool, but it came at the cost of the death of an animal to create skins of covering. There are **two major truths that this points to: 1)** Adam and Eve needed a substitute **2)** Sacrifices would have to be made. The blood of goats, bulls, and sheep would have to be spilled to cover the sin of man. Starting in Genesis 4 we see that individuals made blood offerings, eventually leading to a system of sacrifice by the nation and people of Israel. **Hebrews 9:22 states, "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin."** However, all of the sacrifices of in the Old Testament COULD NOT permanently take away the sin of the people, since it required continual sacrifices (Heb. 10:1), they were a **reminder of sin** (Heb. 10:2), since "**it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**" (Heb. 10:4).

This covering for Adam and Eve pointed to the future sacrifice that Christ would make on the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world:

*"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, waiting form that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet. For by a **single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified...Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean form an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**"*

Hebrews 10:12-14, 18-19, 22

God required blood for sin. Jesus' blood was sufficient to pay the price and satisfy the wrath of God, which allows our sins to be forgiven and access to God granted.

Judgment Given Out(22-24)

Though grace was given, judgment had to be given. But even in judgment we'll see God's gracious hand. God **drove them out of the Garden**, which meant it was no gentle escort but a swift move. Why were they driven out of the Garden? **3 reasons:**

1) To keep Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life - It is unclear whether this tree would have been eaten from before the Fall, but it is clear it would have had dire consequences if they ate it after. When they bit into the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were given experiential knowledge of evil because they had become EVIL. If they had reached out for the tree they would have lived forever in a state of evil, forever. They would have been stuck in their earthly bodies which are not fit for eternity, and they would have to experience death, returning to dust, in order to experience the resurrection from the dead in the future. The Tree of Life will once again be there for believers, those whose faith is placed in the promises of God, in the New Heaven and Earth (Rev. 22:2), where we will have new bodies ready to serve God forever.

2) Because sin separates us from God - The Garden was guarded **cherubim** with flaming swords. Cherubim were associated with the Ark of the Covenant and the presence of God (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 80:1) where God sits enthroned above them. Because sin now tainted mankind, they could not continue on in the presence of God the way they once did. This is why Christ is so magnificent, that at His death the veil was torn that separated mankind from the presence of God.

3) To expose and reveal their sin - Adam was to "work the ground from which he was taken". Adam would live a total of **930 years** (Gen. 5:5). He would leave the garden and work the ground for centuries by the sweat of his brow. He would face the heartache of one of his sons killing his other son as Cain murdered Abel in a violent and angry rage. He would watch as his grandkids would commit murder out of vengeance when Lamech killed a man in revenge and wrote a song about it (4:23-24). He would have been alive long enough to see the world degenerate, and though he would not be around for it, would have been in the midst of a world where "***the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually***" (6:5), prompting God to wipe out the earth with a flood. The text says that they were driven out of the **East** of the Garden. **It would be interesting to watch Adam every night as the sunset in the West, as he looked back in the direction of the Garden, longing to be back in that perfect place with intimate communion with God. What did he feel? Regret? Sadness?** He would live 930 years of pain and pressure before he succumbed to death, but I believe in faith he looked back at the Garden during those sunsets in HOPE.

Hope Built In (Galatians 3:13)

From where would Adam have drawn hope? The same place we do. Our world is broken as we face the consequences of our sinful choices as well as our sinful inheritance. Where is our hope from the curse? The curse of **pain, of contention with the devil, of the reversal of roles, of pressure, and of death?**
CHRIST!!!

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--- for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree--- so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit by faith." Galatians 3:13-14

He redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse! He bought us back through His life and redeemed us through His blood. That is where hope rises in a broken world. That is the summation of Genesis 1-3. We were created for Paradise, but through sin, Paradise was lost, yet God in His loving kindness and mercy, bought us back and redeemed us, preparing our new bodies at our resurrection to live with Him forever in a New Heaven and New Earth, where we will enjoy an intimate relationship with Him once again.