

# **The Year of the Bible**

## **Lost**

### **Genesis 3-4**

**Dr. Matt Cassidy --- January 26, 2020**

Good morning, Grace. How are you guys? Just before we get started with our learning time you can turn to Genesis chapter 3 if you want. This whole week has been Sanctity of Life week around the country --- actually, around the world. And we normally would have somewhere here and we would take a special offering for LifeCare, which is now The Source. We're going to do that next week because it was the first time that we could get the new director here. So, we'll have her on stage this next week. It's pretty exciting. Bring your checks if necessary. I think we'll have a way to donate online through our database with credit cards as well.

Ahead of time, sometimes I get dizzy --- I have a bad ear --- so if I get dizzy, I'm going to have to sit down. This chair is not a prop ... well, it might be a prop. We'll see how this goes. I just didn't want anyone to be startled if I get distracted or dizzy or something. It's just a thing.

So, a number of years ago *The London Times* sent out letters to the various authors that wrote for their newspaper and said --- this was the question: "What is wrong with the world?" And you might know the story. G. K. Chesterton wrote back and said, "I am." And there's a lot of truth to that. He was right.

We're looking at our survey of the Bible and last week we looked at creation and we saw that God is perfect and good and He made man in His image and man glorifies God by reflecting the image of God back to creation. All the angels and demons and all created things see the nature of God in us when we show ourselves to be obedient to Him.

So, with that in mind, what went wrong? Why all the corruption and the evil and the violence and the deceit? That's what we're going to look at today. But more importantly, in some respects, in our own souls, why can't I do the things I want to do and why do I not do the things that I'm supposed to? This inner conflict that we have --- our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak.

Well, last week we saw --- and I want to mention this and I'm going to show you this multiple times today --- but the nature of man is this; being human is this --- knowing our place in creation and being content to stay there. Knowing our place in creation and being content to stay there. Because man in the image of God is somewhere between angels and apes. We are spiritual, we are in between small "g" gods and mammals. And scholars and theologians throughout the years have said this: this is man's dilemma, that we are unique. Mankind is like no other part of creation. This is our glory and this is our impasse, that we are in the image of God. Man is in the image of God. And in that we are all alone. There's nothing like us. And it is our propensity to desire to become like God or to become less like ourselves and become a mere animal. But we can't go there because we weren't designed for that. We were meant to be in this place, this place in between.

Reinhold Niebuhr paints a beautiful picture for illustrative purposes. He says to consider yourself on a giant mast of a tall ship. At the abyss below where the sea rages beneath us is the animal in us. And it is less than we were meant to be and all we have to do is quit and we fall down and find ourselves there. And up on top is the crow's nest. And the crow's nest is above us, and if we desire to climb our way to the top there, we try to act like we're God. And the place of man --- being human --- is this: finding ourselves in between angel and ape and being content with that. Between our physical urges beneath and the spirit that calls us to something more; between our freedom and our physical necessities. Men make terrible dictators and they make even worse animals because we weren't made for that. We were made to be in the image of God.

We're going to look at a passage today. We're going to look at all of Genesis chapter 3. It's called the fall of man. And that's what went wrong. I want you to look at this chapter and see that in the context of it, it is, right now, paradise. There is absolute and complete harmony with God and our fellow man, and nature, and with ourselves, for that matter. And then this happens.

## **Genesis 3:1-9**

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”**

**<sup>4</sup> “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

**<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

**<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”**

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals that YHWH God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘Well, we may eat from the trees in the garden, but God said, “You must not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’ ‘You will surely not die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good from evil.’”

*You can climb to the top of the mast. You will be like God. See the temptation there?*

“And when the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye” --- there’s the lust of the flesh, that’s that animal --- it’s going to taste good --- “and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some of it and ate it. She also gave some of it to her

husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of YHWH God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid themselves from YHWH God among the trees of the garden. And YHWH God called to the man and said, ‘Where are you?’”

## Temptations

There’s temptation. Temptation is a lie about God and a lie, particularly, about the goodness of God. *You will surely not die. As a matter of fact, you will live. You will live with your eyes wide open. You will fulfill the potential that you could have. As a matter of fact, if you obey God, you’ll miss certain things. God is withholding good things from you.* That’s the lie that’s being promoted here.

And with all joking aside, honestly, the power of the fear of missing out, that sinister lust that is driving social media and bringing people literally to the place of suicide --- the fear of missing out starts here. Maybe that’s why it’s so powerful. The devil is saying, *Look at all that you could miss out on if you were to obey God. If you truly surrender to God you won’t be completely happy, not to the potential that you could be. If you give God all those things you couldn’t enjoy the fullness of what life can bring. If you give your life completely, if you keep God in the center of your soul, you’ll miss out on opportunities of power and of passion. You’ll miss those. You will not thrive.* That lie is still alive today.

Here --- a little experiment --- close your eyes for just a second. Just imagine this. Today Jesus Christ literally rings your doorbell, ding-dong. And He says this: *Come with me. Leave everything. It’ll be great. Anywhere, anytime, to do anything.* Would you go with Him? Open your eyes. Would you go with Him? If there’s an unsettling spirit within you, if there’s a second guess about all that you’re losing, if there’s something that’s making you second guess this, that’s the devil saying, *The fear of missing out ... if you go with Him and give Him everything, it won’t work out the way you want. Because God is not loving. He holds things back.*

And it’s this desire to climb that mast in our pride and the spirit in us wants to be --- *I want to be sure that I go higher than I was meant to go.* Or, our flesh and our passions --- we give in and we slide down and just enjoy the lusts of the flesh. Because when you eat from that

tree, when you give into those temptations to be like God, it comes down to this. You write the rules. That's what he's appealing to. There it is right there. You write the rules. *Has God really said? Would you really die?* And it's in those rules and who gets to write the rules. It's about authority here that is at stake.

You know, sometimes when we follow rules that are written in the Bible and in our culture, even --- don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal --- many times we say, "And here's seven reasons why ..." And it makes sense to not lie and cheat and steal because in the long run it pays off. But listen, if your obedience is based on your understanding, it's not obedience. You're just being reasonable. This passage --- what's interesting about this particular temptation is that it's obscure. *Don't eat the fruit of this tree. Why? Because I said so. That's why. Just because I said no.* And anytime we're in a place of authority or under authority, rather --- anytime we're under authority and someone says no and we chafe, it's a cosmic battle that's taking place. When God says to do something and we don't understand why, do we still obey? Because that's when obedience gets started. And why don't we obey? Because He's withholding something from us. He's not good. If we have to understand why, then maybe it's not really obedience.

This is the problem with the world. We feel like there is no authority telling us how we ought to live, and so we write our own rules. And we ascend to this crow's nest and say, *I'm in charge here. I can be like God and I will fulfill my passions in that.*

And so, when the Bible says you shouldn't be sleeping with someone unless you're married to them, you think, *Well, you know what? There's this fear of missing out on some really great pleasure, and so, that rule doesn't apply to me. Not in this case, in this circumstance.* The Bible says you should be generous with your whole life in every aspect of it. But, you know, you could be missing out on some great vacation time or just some spare time on your own and not be giving it in service. So that doesn't apply to you. Right? The Bible says don't hold a grudge. But man, we love the feeling of the power of revenge. And if we can use our money or our power or our influence to hurt someone else it does give us a little tingle. So not this time.

What is the temptation? The temptation is this: that is you obey God you're going to miss out on some expression of power or passion. Because in that, you won't be who God made you to be. The temptation is to be more than you were designed to be, or less than you were meant to be. That's the temptation. And we want that, this higher or lower, this power versus passion.

## New Nature of Man

Look at what Reinhold Niebuhr said. He said, “Mankind is stuck between two extremes. We can ascend to the qualities of an angel or descend to the vileness lower than most despicable animals.”

**There are in faith two equally constant truths. One is that man is exalted above the whole of nature, created like unto God and sharing in His image. The other is that in the state of corruption he has fallen from that first state and has become like the beasts.**

**--- Blaise Pascal**

Pascal wrote this in *The Potential of Man*. He wrote it this way --- this is profound. “There are in faith two equally constant truths. One is that man is exalted above the whole of nature, created like unto God and sharing in His image. The other is that in the state of corruption he has fallen from that first state and has become like the beasts.”

Temptation is this. We can climb that mast and get to that crow’s nest and take control and write the rules. Or it is just slide down the pole and just want to feel good. I deserve to feel good.

**If God is dead, somebody is going to have to take his place. It will be megalomania or erotomania, the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, the clenched fist or the phallus, Hitler or Hugh Hefner.**

**--- Malcolm Muggeridge**

Here’s how Malcolm Muggeridge, a famous writer in England, said it. “If God is dead” -- - or if we’re not listening to Him --- “somebody is going to have to take His place. It will be megalomania or erotomania, the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, the clenched fist or the phallus, Hitler or Hugh Hefner.” That’s what we do. That’s what we’re drawn to.

And this abuse of power, for example --- let's look at that. It's easy to see this in politicians and people with wealth and power and they use that wealth and power or politics. And the politicians will literally write rules and laws they don't have to submit to. And even if they did have to submit to them, they don't. And do you know why? Because they can. And so, they do.

While that's easy to see from a distance, the eighth-grade girl that is using her social power and her God-given intuition to gossip about a rival and to hurt that other human being is doing it for the same reason --- because she can. She feels the power of her social status and the passion of hurting another human soul and finds that to be pleasurable. And whether she's in eighth grade or age twenty-eight --- at twenty-eight she's probably gotten a little better, subtler, but it's for the same reason. Because she can.

It's not uncommon for a young couple, a newlywed couple, for young husbands to be bullies to their wives because they have a place, maybe, of authority for the first time and they bully them with their words or with their volumes or sometimes their actions. And sometimes, in a church like this, with Bible verses. And they do it because they can. They don't want to stay in the place that God made them to be image bearers and use power to be co-regents to serve other people. They want to use it to serve their own needs and their own passions.

So, my appeal here is this. The next time you hear this call to power --- call to abusive power, rather --- you should hear this from heaven. *What is a human like you doing on God's throne? That's not your place.* When you hear the phrase "Well, that rule doesn't necessarily apply to you --- it means everyone else", that's the devil. He's saying that you'll be missing out if you obey.

And the slide down the mast into sensuality --- look, it always starts with fun and pleasure. You know, you start with some expression of pleasure and it serves you. Then you serve it, and then it devours you. Look again. This is easy to see in extremes. Watch an episode of *Cops* or go on a ride-along with one of our police officers here or our first responders and firefighters. And you'll see the darker parts of our city and you'll see men and women that have given themselves over to soul --- listen to me --- to soul-killing drugs. And when you see them, you'll see them and they look like stray animals. They've lost their humanity in that. That's what I'm speaking to here. Because they lowered themselves down here and thought they can handle this particular drug, oh, they're different, it won't apply to them --- they find themselves in

servitude to that. And while that's an extreme, the siren call is similar to us. It's on the same street, we're just not that far down the road yet. *I had a hard day at work. I deserve --- not a reward --- that's good, but I deserve gluttony. Someone shamed me in front of other people. I should get to experience some expression of decadence.*

And so, when we study the application of anthropology, the nature of man, now, in its fallen state, I want you to hear this from heaven. When you find yourself at the bottom of this mast, acting like an animal, I want you to hear God's voice speaking to you, saying, "What's an image bearer like you doing in a place like this? This is not what you were designed for. This is not what I made you for. You are so much more than animal. You are so much less than God. Find your place and enjoy that place."

### **The Breadth of Sin**

Let's talk about the breadth of sin, the absolute contamination of the entire human race. Every single human soul after Adam and Eve, this bent, we are hard-wired for selfishness and cruelty. We want power, we want lust. And listen, don't --- this is a common thing, it ebbs and flows in human history --- wealth and education are no match for the sin of man, for original sin --- wealth and education --- not a chance. Listen, you know this. You read the book probably in eighth grade, *The Lord of the Flies*. Who were those boys? They were junior high boys from a very privileged and noble families. They were at an exclusive prep school, remember? They were in their uniforms when they arrived on the island. And within a few weeks they're trying to kill Piggy. That's the point of it. These weren't street kids. These were the best that we could breed. It didn't last.

Here's another example. Jeffrey Epstein, who did not kill himself --- look at his client list. Right? Privileged men and women with advanced degrees. I think one of them is a Rhodes scholar. Look at that list. How does that happen? It's not poverty, it's not ignorance. What happens is Genesis chapter 3. It's the fall of man. We are bent and we can't fix it. It is way past our ability to recover from this.



## **The Depth of Sin**

### **Genesis 3:9-19**

**But the LORD God called to man, “Where are you?”**

**<sup>10</sup> He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.**

**<sup>11</sup> And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”**

**<sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”**

**<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”**

**The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”**

**<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.**

**<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”**

**<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”**

**<sup>17</sup> To Adam He said ... “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”**

Here’s the depth of sin in the rest of the passage here. It says, “And then YHWH God called to the man and said, ‘Where are you?’

“‘I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And so I hid.’

“And the Lord said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’

“And the man said, ‘The woman you put here with me --- she gave me some of the fruit of the tree and I ate it.’

“And then YHWH said to the woman, ‘What have you done?’

“And the woman said, ‘It was the serpent that deceived me, and so I ate.’

“And YHWH said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; and he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’

“And to the woman he said this: ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’

“Now to Adam he said this: ‘Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’”

Every single relationship has been destroyed in this fall. Everyone --- the relationship with God, with yourself, with others, and with nature itself. Our relationship with God --- look what the story says. God is coming to speak with them, walking in the cool of the evening, and that “walking” is an idiom for relationship. *I am here to know, I am here to enjoy, we do this every evening. Let's talk.* And what's happened? Adam and Eve are hiding because they are ashamed. They felt shame. And so, now we're broken from that relationship.

The next one --- we're even broken in our relationship with ourselves. He's ashamed. He says, “I'm ashamed because I was naked.” And God said, “Well, who said that? What brought that to your mind?” In your fallen state you see that. And so, what does man do? He covers himself. Note this --- please note this --- that Adam brings shame to himself. God does not bring shame to this story. Adam brings guilt to himself. God does not bring guilt to this. God brings cures for those things. We bring this on ourselves. We understand, in this context of shame, that there is something wrong with me, deeply, and I want to cover that up. And so, now our relationships are fear-based, even our relationship with ourselves. We don't even want to know how dark and ugly it is down there.

Our relationship with others is strained. Look what happens. We hurt and we blame those people that we love the most. Adam turns on his beloved wife and God. “It was the woman that *You* gave me.” That’s who fault this is. And it’s been that way ever since, this strife. And now this husband and wife that previously were naked and unashamed now cover themselves. That’s the place of marriage, to be naked and unashamed. And now they hide those special places from each other. Because now they have to be safe because they’re no longer free.

What’s broken between God and ourselves and our fellow man, and now, even nature. We’re at war with the soil. Every fruit is going to have to be fought for. Now there are going to be natural disasters and the lion will never lie down with the lamb in this life. It can’t happen.

### Application

Here’s what I want us to walk away with today. This understanding, this concept, has helped me tremendously in temptation. I want you to know why you are tempted, or maybe, how you are tempted. In the context of pride, it’s “Who do you think you are?” In the use of power or privilege, when you use it for your own gain instead of serving others, what happens is you become the self-righteous older brother in the prodigal son story, where his younger brother squandered his wealth, he comes back, and the father generously throws this extravagant party and the self-righteous, law-abiding, good son says, “This is no place to celebrate. This is a time for discipline.” And the father says, “No.” He just says, “No, that’s not the time for this.” And he doesn’t have to explain. He does, but he doesn’t have to explain that. Because when an authority says no, you submit, even if you don’t understand. And the problem with the older son is *I ascend to the top. I’m in that mast. I say what’s just. I’m the one who decides who’s right and wrong and who has to pay.* He has no grace in his life because he’s in a place he wasn’t designed for. He can’t play the place of God.

Ask yourself that question --- What are you doing on God’s throne?

And when it comes to passions, you know, when you find yourself sliding down that pole and just enjoying whatever, the lusts that you might enjoy, you find yourself like the younger brother. He goes to his father and he says, “I want to spend my money, or your money, on anything I want, anything I desire.” And the father says, “No.” And he fears that he might be missing out. And so, he takes that money and he leaves and he squanders it. But remember the

story --- where does he end up? Where does the younger brother find himself? With the pigs. He's in the pig sty with the pig slop, looking at their food wishing he could have it. Note this --- let this be clear and vivid. Those pigs in that slop were glorifying God because they were acting like they were made. They were acting like pigs. That boy --- that's not his place. Those pigs were looking at him thinking, *What is an image bearer like you doing in a place like this?* And that's when he came to his senses. He looked around and he saw, *I wasn't missing out on anything.*

Our place --- know this --- our place as humans is to reflect God's image between angels and apes. And we get to be co-regents, so we get to have authority, but not abuse that authority. We get to enjoy the pleasures of life, but they don't become addictive to us. That's how we glorify God. That's how we show the angels and demons and all of creation that we are in the image of God. We can stay in that place of balance. And we can show what we were meant to be, what we were designed to be.

### **God's Response**

Now before we kind of finish, I want to end with how God responds to this. This is the glorious part of this whole thing. I just want to remind you that God was the one who sought out man. God goes to the garden and says, "Where are you and what have you done?" Why is He asking these questions, all-knowing God? --- He knows the answers. Why would He do this? "Where are you, Adam? Eve? And what have you done?" He's treating them like adults. He's treating like they're in the image of God. And He's just like --- some of you that are in recovery, you know what He's doing. You're onto this already. God is saying, "Come on, Adam. Say it. Say it out loud, Adam. There's no shame. Just say the words." *Hi, I'm Adam, and I'm a sinner.* There you go. He wants Adam to own it, He wants Adam to admit it, He wants Adam to take responsibility for it, because it says in the Bible that the truth will set you free. This is the truth. Say it out loud.

### **Genesis 3:21-24**

**The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup> After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth the guard the way to the tree of life.**

God is loving Adam and Eve by counseling them and pulling the truth out of them. And here's what happens next. “Then YHWH God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And YHWH God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good from evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and to take from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So, YHWH banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. And after he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim” --- those are angels --- “and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard them and keep them away from the tree of life.”

The next God does is to clothe them. He looks at Adam and Eve and they have these fig leaves and He says, *That's not adequate. Something is going to have to die so that your shame can be covered.* He covers their shame for them. And then after that, He gives them this gift. He gives them the gift of death. This is an act of mercy. There's a tree of life, of eternal life, and if they take from that tree, they will be in a state of damnation forever. And God says, “I'm going to have to move you out of Eden and put a guard on that gate so that you never come back and live with this forever. Your eternity will be with me. So leave here.”

Look at fiction and fantasy. Who are the people who want to live forever? Who are the people that think they should be immortal? They're always megalomaniacs. They think that they should be like a god and live forever. Death is a gift. It is a gateway to life. And He gives that to these so that --- you know, personally, I cannot wait to get out of this sin suit. Mortals can't inherit immortality. And so, death is a gift. It's an enemy and it's a friend. It's a birth mother. It

gets us to a greater place. So, I just want to remind you of that. Sometimes when you're looking at death it doesn't seem like it's a present, but it is.

And then finally, there's a clue. There's a clue given and it's this: that only God can fix this. We are so broken that only God's grace and His intervention can make us well. He says this in a previous passage right before: "Then YHWH God said to the serpent ... 'And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'" And that is the battle of all ages. That is the spiritual war that is the story of the Bible. It starts here. That passage, this passage that we're reading, is called the covenant to Adam, the Adamic covenant; that God says, "I promise by my name I will make this right."

And if you continue reading the Bible you're going to see that there are more gardens and there are more failures. We never fail to fail. It is the easiest thing to do. There will be more promises. The promises of God will be made clearer when He makes these covenants to Abraham and David. And then a second Adam comes and a second temptation and a second garden. And the garden is Gethsemane. And Jesus asks the Father, "Would you take this cup of suffering from me?" And the Father said, "No." Just no. And the Son said, "Thy will be done." And that's the beginning of the end of the curse because that is the initiation of Good Friday, the day that Jesus died. And then three days later He is raised on Easter Sunday. And the point of that whole story is that only God can fix that. Only a gift, only faith in the power of that gift can change your status with God. We broke this so bad, only God could fix it. If you have faith in anything but the work of Jesus Christ on that cross, proved in His resurrection, you are not a follower of Jesus Christ. You're not a Christian. That's just the definition of what Christianity is. It's understanding the depth of the fall and the break that only God could fix. And any attempt that we have to fix it is just ... I don't know ... and older brother or a younger brother.

Choose that if you haven't. If this is a new thing for you, faith alone in Jesus Christ, do that today.

### **We Long for Eden**

So, what do we do until later? Here's what. Until Jesus comes again our goal and quest in life is to get back to Eden. Eden is the way we were meant to be, like Adam and Eve. And that's why we say at Grace, "To become like Christ in all of life." Because in Jesus' last command and

throughout the epistles it says, “Help them, guide them to become like Christ in all of life, perfect, lacking in nothing, mature.” That’s what it means. And that’s our pilgrimage right now. The story now is this. Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God can live within us, and that Spirit can give us power, the power to overcome addiction and the power to overcome sin, the power to overcome the desires of the flesh and the desires of pride, to bully, to beat, to take advantage. And now we live with the hope that God would make beautiful things out of us. This is how we glorify God: when we show angels and demons that progressively we are becoming more like Christ in every aspect of our lives. And the angels smile, and the demons wince.

He makes beautiful things out of dust. He makes beautiful things out of us. If you’d let Him. *Let Him.* You won’t miss out on anything but suffering. That’s what we can learn from Genesis chapter 3. Let’s pray.

*Lord Jesus, God the Father, I would acknowledge that in sin I doubt Your goodness and Your love and Your care for me. I have contempt for Your generosity and Your will. I regularly will obey You if I understand. And that is not obedience. Lord God, I would ask that You help me (and maybe the people who are praying this with me) desire to obey You because You say so, and You say so because You are good, and because You have all the authority to say so. You’re God and we’re not. Lord, I’d ask that Your Spirit would make us tender and sensitive to times when we try to rise up and use the God-given power and authority that we have for ill gain, not to serve and care for, but rather, to bully and for selfish ambitions. Lord, I’d pray that You would help us see ourselves when we slip down and become like animals. We were meant for so much more. I’d ask that Your Spirit would speak to us in these times of temptation of what the real temptation is, so that we might live holy lives, lives that glorify You, lives that reflect Your image in our souls. We have this very special place of glory, to be in the image of God, man with spirit, flesh and blood with the Spirit of God living within us. Let us be a church that does that well. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.*