

GENESIS

The Pain is not Without a Promise
12.18.2022



THE JOURNEY
CHURCH

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 3:14-20

SERMON:

The last few weeks we have been talking about Satan, his origin, and purpose in the Garden, the temptation, and Adam and Eve's subsequent fall. Today we'll pick up with the Lord issuing His judgment upon the Serpent, Eve, and then Adam. Here in these next few verses, we are going to see why the world is the way it is. If you would, please stand with me in honor of the reading of God's word.

When our first parents sinned, they brought God's judgment upon all that had been entrusted to them. The serpent is sentenced first, and his judgment is full and final. But one will come from the woman to make everything right. The serpent will wound Him, but He in turn, will destroy the serpent. Adam and Eve's punishments are then issued and those punishments relate to the means by which they were supposed to fulfill God's calling for them. They will still retain their calling and purpose but it will be done in pain now. However, all of these judgments are issued in the shadow of His great mercy revealed in verse 15. We know Adam sees that mercy because of what he does in verse 20, calling Eve the mother of all living, even after receiving a death sentence.

The world is the way it is because it is under the judgment of God. The pain that we all experience in this life is a direct result of this first sin. We are no better than Adam and Eve, we all seek autonomy – to be our own god – just as they did. Nevertheless, this passage gives us the first glimpse of God's heart towards sinners. The first sin is immediately met with the first promise of redemption. God begins His story with mercy. What this tells us about ourselves is important but not nearly as important as what it tells us about Him.

We could break this passage down like this - what does it reveal about the world, about us, and about God?

The world: is filled with pain, brokenness, and death because of Adam and Eve's sin.

We: are just as guilty. Every one of us has a bent to be our own god.

God: is so full of mercy that He promised redemption as soon as man fell.

I want to show you from this text that God has hope for you in the pain. That there is light in the darkness and that even the pain is being worked for your good, in Christ. That God's mercy prevails. More than anything, I want you to see what is revealed about the character of God – that here in the 3rd chapter of the book, pain is introduced and it's not introduced without the promise of a remedy. We are still in the introduction to the story that God is telling. We understand the significance of sin showing up in the intro. We all get that. But I don't think we give enough attention to the fact that mercy is in the intro. Man's fall and God's mercy are two sides of the same coin in His story.

You've probably noticed that when people get baptized here, we give them t-shirts that say "But God..." on them. That's a reference to the many passages in scripture that communicate that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, but God... The idea is that when God interjects Himself and His promises into a hopeless situation everything changes.

This is the first "But God..." moment not only in the Bible, but in the history of creation.

I've titled my message today, "**The pain is not without a promise.**"

Some of you need to hear that today. Some of you are following Christ with all your heart and your life is full of pain. You're just surviving. Psalm 1 says that the Lord knows your way. He sees you. He knew that the pain that you're feeling would be wrapped up in the fall, in the text we're going to look at this morning. But He doesn't let that pain be the final word. The final word for you today, in your pain, is hope. Genesis 3:15 is the first Gospel we get, not just in the Bible, but in the history of creation. The very first promise of deliverance that God gives is not deliverance from pain, but deliverance through pain. With this idea as our backdrop, let's look at the rest of the passage and then we'll land back here.

EXEGESIS:

V14: *The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.*

- People often speculate about whether or not snakes had legs prior to the fall and as interesting as that speculation may be, I don't think that's what the Lord is

communicating here. These judgments are being placed upon Satan primarily. While there is a connection to the physical serpent's mode of locomotion in a literal sense, the main point is the connection to Satan in a figurative sense.

- The crawling on his belly and eating dust all the days of his life is a symbol of humiliation.
- Satan the once, exalted, angelic being is now not only cast down to the earth but God says that he will be an object of scorn and disgust. The physical serpent is simply something God is using to paint this picture.
- Satan's pride brought him down to the level of the dirt that creation walks upon.
- The text also says that the serpent is cursed above all the livestock and beasts of the field.
 - Everything in Adam's care suffers as a result of his rebellion.
 - We also need to notice what is being said here as it relates to the "fallen" state of the world. It's perfectly fine to use the word "fallen" but if we're not careful we'll use that word to sanitize what really happened. When thinking about the misery that we observe in creation, we like to say things like, "well, we live in a fallen world". As if to say, "that's just the way it is". But that doesn't quite capture it. It is fallen because of Adam's sin, but the curse is not passive. Look at the text again. Who is cursing the animals and the ground? God Himself.
 - Morgan referenced Romans 8 last week. Flip over to verse 19
 - *19 For the **creation waits** with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was **subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it**, in hope 21 **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. 22 For we know that the **whole creation has been groaning** together in the pains of childbirth until now.*
 - Here we see that creation itself is broken and awaiting its redemption. Look at verse 20. It says that it was subjected to futility. How was it subjected to futility? It says "because of Him who subjected it." Who is that? God Himself.
 - Romans 1:18 says, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

- The tense of the word “revealed” here indicates that God's wrath is **continually** being revealed. This verse is more accurately rendered “is **constantly being revealed.**”
 - In other words, this world is not just fallen in the sense that it just happens to be broken. It is fallen in the sense that we live in a world under the active judgment of God. This is part of what Jesus means in John 3:18 when He says that those who do not believe are condemned already and what Paul meant when he says that we were by nature children of wrath in Ephesians 2:3.
 - We live in a world under the curse of God.

But that’s not the last word.

V15: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

- Again we see that God is the actor here. He will put enmity (hostility, animosity, hatred) between the serpent and the woman, between her offspring and the offspring of Satan.
 - “Many Christian commentators since the second century have called this the Protevangelium (Latin.), the "first preaching of the gospel." It has also been described as *"the Bible in embryo, the sum of all history and prophecy in a germ."* WA Criswell
 - Between Satan and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring are somewhat parallel statements.
 - Eve representing all the children coming through her (the human race) will be under constant assault and oppression from Satan. (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2)
 - The more important idea here is that the offspring, or seed, of the woman is referring specifically to Christ.
 - “Seed of the woman” is also a foreshadowing of the virgin birth. We know this because Biblically man produces the seed.
 - In short, the human race will face hostility and oppression from Satan but One will come, a Promised One, who will suffer at the hand of Satan but will deliver the death blow to him in the process. This, of course, is an allusion to the crucifixion (the bruising of Christ) and the resurrection and final judgment (the crushing of Satan).
 - From “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.
Now display Thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore;
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.

- How does the resurrection defeat Satan?
- Hebrews 2:14 says, *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*
- The claim that Satan holds over mankind is their condemnation. He is their accuser and their master leading them into sin. The wages of sin is death. In this way, Satan holds the power of death over them. But Christ, being the perfect Adam and fulfilling all the Law of God was not subject to death. Therefore, when He died, He did not taste death for Himself but for us. And if He did that for us, then there is no longer any death for us to receive. Christ's death and resurrection removed Satan's claim on us.

We're going to come back to this but notice the order here. Satan is judged first and before God ever issues the judgment on mankind, He offers the hope of redemption. The promise comes before the curse.

On this, AW Pink said, *"Here again we behold the exceeding riches of God's grace. Before He acted in judgment, He displayed His mercy; before He banished the guilty ones from Eden He gave them a blessed promise and hope. By woman had come sin, and by woman should come the Savior. By woman had come the curse and by woman should come one who would bear and remove the curse. By woman, paradise was lost, yet by woman should be born the One who should regain it."*

But sin still has a cost. God now turns to Eve in our text.

V16: To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

- Let's start with the last pronouncement here. This is the source of the fundamental fracture among the sexes and particularly in the unredeemed marriage relationship.
 - Why is it a judgment to Eve that her desire will be contrary to her husband's?
 - I preached a sermon on marriage from Genesis 2 last year. I won't lay all that groundwork again now but you can go back and find that on the TJC youtube page if you need to. Suffice it to say, I presented the Bible's structure for marriage and for male leadership in the family. This is why Eve's desires being contrary to her husband's is a judgment for her.
 - The very basis of this structure (as it is a picture of Christ and the Church) is that the woman can follow the man from a place of trust and honor, just as we follow Christ from a place of trust and honor. We've probably all had leaders in some capacity that we didn't trust, that we didn't think had our best interest at heart, that didn't honor us. Our desires were contrary to theirs and following them was a constant struggle. This is the fracture in the structure of the first and most foundational institution and building block of society – marriage. To fill the earth with godly offspring and subdue it, man and woman will face pain in their relationship to one another.
- Notice that another judgment on the woman is presented here as pain during childbearing.
 - Why is the pain in childbearing a judgment? Look down a little further at Adam's judgment. She bears children in pain and he brings forth the fruit of the ground in pain. Do you notice anything familiar here? What was their original mandate? What was the purpose and calling that God gave them?
- Genesis 1:28, *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**”*
- And, Genesis. 2:15, *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*
 - Be fruitful and multiply - childbearing will now be done in pain.
 - Fill the earth and subdue it - the marriage relationship necessary for this will now be done in pain.

- Work the garden and keep it - Ruling over the earth to bring forth provision will now be done in pain.
- Have dominion over the animals - the beasts of the field and all the livestock receive a curse. They too will be subject to pain, death and disease and all forms of disorder.
- Sin does not change man's purpose but it makes it painful and toilsome. The very things that humanity needed in order to fulfill God's purpose for them received a curse.
- Yet, the calling is not rescinded. God still has a purpose for them. He could have struck them down right then and there but instead He maintains their calling even though it will now be fulfilled in pain. This is yet more mercy.

V17: 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; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 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."

- We looked at Adam's judgment some already but lets finish working through his.
 - "Because you have listened to the woman." Is this such a bad thing? Is she not meant to be his helper? His counselor? Did Adam sin by listening to her? Was it wrong for him to take suggestions from her because he was the head of the marriage?
 - No, his sin was not simply listening to the woman. A good Biblical case can be made for the wisdom of listening to the counsel of our wives.
 - His sin is exposed in the next phrase. "...eaten of the tree of which I **commanded you**. He listened to his wife **instead** to the Lord.
- As we noticed, now the ground and his work is cursed. Work was a joyful task prior to the fall. Now the means by which we fulfill God's calling is a source of pain and exhaustion.
- Why does Adam's judgment finish with this dust comment?
 - This is more "humiliation" language. Adam sought to be like God and was brought low.
 - Adam was meant to be an object of God's glory and he was meant to live forever. Now he will be an object of shame and his time here will be fleeting.

This is the fall. This is the root of all of the pain and suffering in this world. Why did you get that diagnosis? Why did you lose that loved one? Why is that relationship broken? Why are there wars and atrocities scattered all through human history? Why do you suffer from depression, anxiety, addiction, and everything else?

Because we live in a world under a curse. We live in a world under the present, active judgment of God. And it does us no good to decry the justice or fairness of God because we are no better than Adam and Eve. Apart from Christ, every one of us would rather be our own god or worship a god of our own making. What you think should or shouldn't be is irrelevant. This is what is. We live in a world under judgment.

That's the bad news of Genesis 3.

But God... is good and He never tells a story with a bad ending.

Look at the heart, the character of God in this revelation that He has given us. We saw that in verse 15 He promises to make everything right again. Consider these questions?

- What does it tell us about God that He made this promise as soon as everything fell apart?
- That He made this promise and then allowed Adam and Eve to continue living for hundreds of years in spite of their half-hearted repentance – if you can even call it repentance?
- However that interaction between God and Adam sounded, whatever God's tone and posture in this world-altering judgment looked like, there was something about it that still gave Adam enough confidence in the mercy of God to finish by naming his wife the "mother of all living."

V20: *The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

- Imagine this: They've just ruined everything. They've broken the world. They stood before the judgment seat of God and received the pronouncements of their penalties and Adam walks away from that and says, "Wife, just as God commanded me to name everything else that He put in my care, I'm naming you Eve because you will be the mother of all living."
- Seriously, what does this tell us about God's heart for them, about His mercy, that this is how this whole interaction ends? Death has just come into the world and Adam says, "but God..."

This is the Gospel guys. But God...

The prophet Habakkuk prayed, **in wrath, remember mercy** - Habakkuk 3:2.

What is Habakkuk referring to? Where does he even get this idea to ask God to remember mercy in His judgment?

It's in the very character of God. This is part of His character He reveals in the 3rd chapter of the history of creation. The first time we're introduced to sin in God's revelation, we're introduced to mercy, hope, and a promise of redemption.

That's what all these Christmas songs about waiting are all about. O Come. O Come Emmanuel...Crying out for the Promised One. And when was He promised? Right here in Genesis 3:15.

God: is so full of mercy that He promised redemption as soon as man fell.

*And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins** 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind. 4 **But God, being rich in mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 **even when we were dead** in our trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ—**by grace** you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the **immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness** toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:1-7*

- This is the promise of Genesis 3:15 right here. The Promised One, the seed of the woman, came and crushed the serpent's head. Mercy triumphed. And it was all to fulfill a promise that's been in the book from the beginning.

This is the mercy of God to all who trust in Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his **great mercy**, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 1 Peter 1:3

He does not deal with **us according to our sins**, nor repay us **according to our iniquities**.
Psalm 103:10

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? **But with you there is forgiveness**, that you may be feared. Psalm 130:3-4

You've heard this before but God doesn't love you because Christ died for you. Christ died for you because God loves you, you can find that in Romans 5:8. Because He is rich in mercy, He has determined to shower that mercy on all who trust in His Son. Because He loves us, He sent His Son to not only be the one to crush the serpent's head and deliver us from the enmity we have with him, but to become the curse for us. The very covenant that Adam failed to keep as our representative, Christ kept as our new representative. The very judgment that is pronounced on us in Adam as covenant breakers, He takes upon Himself even though He is the perfect covenant keeper. You can't make this up. This story that God has written is too deep, too intricate, too remarkable. This is not how men would manufacture a story about the plight and redemption of the world. And what do you do to become a recipient of this mercy? Turn over a new leaf? Decide from here on out that you're going to try harder to live a good life? No! You call out to, and place all your trust in, this Seed of the woman. You place all your hope in the Promised One.

God: is so full of mercy that He promised redemption as soon as man fell.

Unbeliever, turn from this sentence of death that you are under and call on the Promised One, Jesus. Wayward believer, stop neglecting so great a salvation. Stop taking His mercy for granted. Turn from your waywardness and come back to Jesus.

Believer who is walking with Christ, who is plagued by the collateral damage of Genesis 3 in your life. Brother, sister, who loves Jesus and is doing everything you can to just keep your head above water – listen to me. God has mercy for you this morning. Judgment is not for you. You are not forsaken. You are not forgotten. He may yet deliver you from this pain soon. I pray He does. But if He doesn't, know this:

God's blessing, redemption, healing and peace towards you is not found apart from the destruction of sin. Rather, He'll bring blessing, redemption, healing, and peace to you right in the middle of it.

The best promise in human history was given in the middle of the destruction of sin. Right in the middle of it. In judgment He remembered mercy. But it's even better for you. In the Garden, covenant breakers were shown tender mercy. You, believer, are not counted as a covenant breaker. In Christ you are a covenant keeper. He will deliver you in this life or the next but your deliverance is sure. Hold fast.

His grace is sufficient for you. His power is made perfect in your weakness. And this promise is yours. You can claim it. You can bank on it because the seed of the woman has come and He has reversed the curse for you.

REVIEW:

- Discuss the curse that God placed on the serpent in verses 14 & 15.
- Discuss the curse that God placed on Eve in verse 16.
- Discuss the curse that God placed on Adam in verses 17-19.
- Why is it significant that Adam names the woman Eve in verse 20?

REFLECT:

- Who is responsible for the world being the way it is today, Satan or God? Why is this significant? (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

RESPOND:

- How do you need to respond to God's mercy today?
- How has this teaching changed the way you view this fallen world?

MEDITATE:

- Ephesians 2:1-7 - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

MEMORIZE:

- Genesis 3:15 - I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

PRAYER FOCUS:

- TJC Director of Community: **Laura DiLeonardi**
- NAMB Church Planter: **Cody Snyder** - Lovettsville, VA - *Lovettsville Baptist Church*
- Unreached People Group (UPG): **Acehnese** in Indonesia
 - Population: 3,995,000
 - Christian: 0.12%
 - Evangelical: 0.01%
 - Primary Religion: Islam
 - Primary Language: Aceh
 - Status: **Unreached**