

Main Idea: In the world's first sin, recorded in Genesis 3:1-7, we gain valuable insight into the greatest challenge that faces every family today, which is sin. We also discover that the temptation process involves three downward steps.

- I. It starts with foolish dialogue (1-5).
 - A. The tempter questioned God's Word (1).
 1. He undermined God's authority.
 2. He undermined God's goodness.
 - B. The woman misrepresented God's Word (2-3).
 1. She misquoted it.
 2. She added to it.
 - C. The tempter attacked God's Word (4-5).
 1. He offered a *rival* message.
 2. He made sin sound *good*.
- II. It leads to a forbidden decision (6).
 - A. Eve was deceived.
 1. She based her decision on what she *saw*.
 2. She based her decision on what she *wanted*.
 - B. Adam was just plain defiant.
 1. He became a passive husband.
 2. Instead of leading in a godly manner, he became a follower.
- III. It results in a fateful discovery (7).
 - A. They had changed.
 1. Their innocence was gone.
 2. They felt shame.
 3. They tried to hide their shame.
 - B. They were in trouble.

The remedy for sin in our families: Jesus came to reverse the curse.

It's a joy to be with you this morning and continue our series on *The Christian Family*. What we're after in this series is glory to Jesus Christ, for that's the purpose of the family, to reveal the beauty and grace of Christ through our relationships at home.

Sadly, there's much confusion regarding the family these days. And not just in the world, but in the church. Which is why it's vital that we go back, way back to *the beginning*. We're seeking to learn about the Christian family by looking carefully at the first family. Last week, we looked at the first marriage in Genesis 2. Today, we'll see another first in Genesis 3.

But first, a question. What is the greatest threat to today's family? I asked google that question and the top answer was threefold: materialism, secularism, and negative media influences.² Others suggested: mobile phones, social media, Hollywood, unchecked capitalism, fatherlessness, a throw-away-society. Another said, "Anything that causes you to stop breathing is a threat."³

The American Principles Project listed what it considers to be the top 25 threats to the American family, as follows. The top threat? Sell-out Republicans, it said. Then number two, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, followed by our current president, then our vice president, and so forth.

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2000 in our Genesis series.

² <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/relationships/family/three-big-threats-to-families/>

³ <https://www.quora.com/What-are-some-of-the-biggest-threats-to-families>

I disagree. I believe that Bible would disagree. The biggest threat to our families is not *out there*. It's not someone else. It's much closer to home, much more personal. The greatest threat to our families is *sin*. And not someone else's sin either. Our own sin.

Where did this problem begin? What is sin? And how does it manifest itself? And is there a solution for it? We'll find the answers to these vital questions by looking carefully at what happened to the first family.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-7

I cringe every time I read Genesis 3. Adam! Eve! Don't do it! But they did. It's there in black and white on the pages of God's Word, the record of the world's *first sin*.

Just what is sin anyway? Society doesn't like to talk about sin, and unfortunately, nor do many churches. Years ago I read this statement from Moody Monthly.

Man calls it an accident, God calls it abomination.

Man calls it a defect, God calls it a disease.

Man calls it an error, God calls it an enmity.

Man calls it a liberty, God calls it lawlessness.

Man calls it a trifle, God calls it a tragedy.

Man calls it a mistake, God calls it a madness.

Man calls it a weakness, God calls it willfulness.⁴

But realize this. Until we call it what God calls it there's no hope for it. We battle with sin and the effects of sin every day. How we experience victory?

Here's where we must start. We need to give serious attention to Genesis 3. In Genesis 3 we learn where sin originated and how sin operates. Our attention this morning will be the first seven verses of the chapter. In the next couple of weeks, we'll move through the rest of the chapter and see the consequences of sin, and God's gracious provision for it.

This is practical, life-changing truth. Our families need this passage. It's here that God gives us valuable insight into the greatest challenge that faces every family today. It's here that we learn the temptation process that leads to sin involves three downward steps.

I. It starts with foolish dialogue (1-5).

Verse 1 begins, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made."

Remember the context. According to Genesis 1:1, in the beginning there was God. Nothing existed prior to God. Just God.

Then, as Genesis 1 records, the self-existent God created the universe. In six days, He fashioned the heavens and the earth, all that is, and then rested. At the conclusion of His creative work God assessed all that He had made and declared that it was "very good (1:31)."

In Genesis 2, Moses, the human author of this account, puts the spotlight on the events of Day 6. He explains in detail how God formed the *first man*, and from him the *first woman*, and then how God arranged the *first marriage*. Genesis 2 concludes with Adam and Eve living in a perfect environment, enjoying a perfect relationship with God, with each other, and with the created order. In the words of Genesis 2:25, "The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."

⁴Moody Monthly

Time passed. How much time? I don't know since the biblical text doesn't say. But one day Adam and Eve woke up and began their routine, not realizing that they were about to take the ride down the slippery slope of sin.

In the first verse we're introduced to "the serpent." What was this serpent? Moses informs us of some important details concerning this creature. For starters, it was a *creature*. God, the Creator, had made it. In addition, we're told that it was part of the animal world--it was one of the "wild animals" [NIV, the term is translated "beast" in the ESV and KJV].

Was it a snake? Whatever it was, it was different then than now. According to verse 14, the curse changed its physiological structure, for it used to walk in an upright fashion, but after the curse it crawled on its belly and ate dust.

This was a special creature. How special? The text states that it was "more crafty" ["subtle" in the KJV] than any of the wild animals. There's been plenty of debate about the word translated "crafty." Should this term be understood in a positive or negative light? As it appears elsewhere in Scripture it is used in a favorable sense, and is translated "prudent" or "wise" (Prov 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15). In a few places it's used in an unfavorable sense (Job 5:12; 15:5).

In light of the fact that everything that God made was "very good" (1:31), I'm inclined to understand the word in its positive sense. Whatever it was, this was an incredible creature, perhaps the most skillful creature in the animal kingdom.

The narrative continues, "He said to the woman." Whoa! Here's a talking animal! Don't miss that, and don't read Narnia back into this account. That should have raised a red flag for Eve. What's going on here? A talking animal?

What's going on, as the Bible later explains, is that this animal was being used by another being. This serpent was a tool in the hands of Satan. In Revelation 12:9 Satan is called "that ancient serpent." Jesus called the devil a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

Satan was once an angel who lived in the presence of God, who actually worshipped God. But he became proud, and dissatisfied with his position. He wanted more. He wanted to be like God, and convinced other angels to follow him. Consequently, he was cast from the presence of God in heaven, along with the other rebellious angels.

So the devil is a fallen angel, and a very active one. He and his wicked followers present themselves as "angels of light (2 Cor 11:14)."

In Genesis 3, the serpent, energized by the evil one, comes to Eve. Why? What is his intent? He wants, he craves attention, influence, obedience. Remember, he wanted to be like God, and he still does.

Satan is many things, but novel is not one of them. His strategy hasn't changed since Genesis 3. He works the same way today as he did in the garden. He seeks to disrupt God's good creation by tempting creatures to do what he has done, to turn away from their Maker, to rebel against Him, to disobey Him.

Of course, he doesn't say that up front. After all, he is a deceiver. He is the temptor, and his temptation process involves three points of attack.

A. The tempter questioned God's Word (1). Note the rest of verse 1, "He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

The serpent began with a question. He's subtle. He acts like he's merely requesting information, but as will be apparent from his follow-up statement in verses 4-5, he already knows the answer to his question. The tempter knows what God has said. His aim at this point is to initiate a dialogue. Why? To undermine the true God in two ways. First, by asking this question, the tempter is going after God's authority.

1. *He undermined God's authority.* "Did God really say?" the serpent asks. The question seems fairly innocent. It's not. Concealed in the question is a malicious craftiness. He's asking the created woman to take the Creator's seat.

Answer this. Is the Creator's Word subject to the creature's judgment? Do we have a right to evaluate what our Maker says? Is it okay for a creature to inspect the speech of the Creator? Did God really say...?

"Did God really say homosexuality is wrong? His words in the Bible are cultural, aren't they?"

"Did God really say that sexual intimacy before marriage, or outside of marriage, is wrong? You two are different. You *love* each other. It can't be wrong for you."

"Did God really say that stealing is wrong *in all situations*? Your circumstances are unique. You need the money. And your company won't even miss it. Go ahead. You deserve it."

"Did God really say you need to forgive *that* person, after what they did to you? That person hurt you deeply and will never learn their lesson if you forgive them. No, what God says doesn't apply in your situation. You're different."

Then and now, this is Satan's tactic. He seeks to undermine God's authority. Then...

2. *He undermined God's goodness.* "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" In the Hebrew text, the devil arranges his words so that his statement can be understood in two ways. It can be read, "not from every tree," or "not from any tree."⁵ What's the devil trying to do? He is seeking to arouse suspicion in the mind of the woman. Suspicion of whom? Of *God*. He wants to cast a shadow on the *goodness* of God.

"From *any* tree, Eve? Is that what God said? He won't let you eat from *any* tree?" And the unspoken insinuation? What a stingy God!

The evil one loves to twist God's Word, doesn't he? And he sounds so reasonable, so caring at first. He teases our pride. He convinces us that we have the right to decide whether something is good or not.

And at the same time, he makes God seem miserly and stingy and out of touch with what's best for us. Again, what he's doing with Eve, he does with us.

"You don't want to be a Christian, do you? You can't do *anything*. Just a bunch of rules that cramp your lifestyle. God won't let you have *any* fun!"

"And you don't want to live by some outdated morality system, do you? How could it be wrong to enjoy sex with someone just because they're the same sex? God made you that way, didn't He? It seems pretty cruel for Him to make you a certain way, and not let you be true to yourself, isn't it?"

No, Satan's tactics have not changed. Henry Morris remarks (57), "If he can just get a person to begin, even in the slightest degree, to doubt God's Word or His sovereign goodness, then it is easy to go on, step by step, until that person is either openly rebellious against God or else utterly unable to accomplish God's purpose in his life. How blasphemous for one who is a *creature* of God to question in any respect what his Creator has said or done!"

The foolish dialogue began when the tempter questioned God's Word. It continues in verses 2-3.

B. The woman misrepresented God's Word (2-3). "And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not

⁵Aalders, p. 99.

eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' ”

Apparently Eve thought she was doing God a favor by entering into this dialogue. Sort of, “You poor serpent. I'd better straighten you out. You've got your facts mixed up.” In the end *she* became mixed up, and misrepresented God's Word in two ways.

1. *She misquoted it.* How so? Let's compare what God actually said with what Eve *said* that God said. In Genesis 2:16-17 we find God's actual words, "And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'"

Sidney Harris put it this way, "Once we assuage our conscience by calling something a 'necessary evil,' it begins to look more and more necessary and less and less evil."

Notice how Eve misquotes God's Word. She calls it "the tree that is in the middle of the garden" (NIV) rather than "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," as God did. And then, where God had said you will "surely die," she says, "you will die."

What's she doing? She's misquoting God's Word. A problem? Yes, and there's a warning in this for us. Fuzzy Bible knowledge leads to foolish decisions. If we do not know the Scriptures *well*, we are fair game for the tempter. Eve got into trouble when, first, she misquoted God's Word. Then...

2. *She added to it.* Regarding the tree she said, "You must not eat fruit from it...and you must not *touch it*." Did God say that? No, He did not. So what's Eve doing? She's adding to God's Word, and by so doing, she's making God appear *stricter* than He is.

We likewise get into trouble whenever we add to God's Word. Eve put another command alongside God's. Is it okay to do that? Be careful how you answer that.

Is it okay to have to have standards in areas where the Bible is silent? Is it okay to have *personal preferences* (say for instance, regarding food choices and entertainment)? Sure, as long as we call them what they are. *Personal preferences*. We get into trouble when we attribute our personal preferences *to God*, and insist they came from Him.

Some families home school, while others send their children to public school, or Christian school. Some have cable tv, while others choose not to do so. Families must make lots of decisions like these, involving personal preferences.

But here's where we get into trouble, when we attribute our personal preferences to God. And so our kids grow up and marry someone whose family had different personal preferences. And if both of them justify their preferences based on a conviction it came from God, there's going to be some tension.

Look again at Eve. She misrepresented God's Word. In essence, she made the command *more* severe and the penalty for disobedience *less* severe than what God had said.

How should Eve have responded? Like Jesus did in Matthew 4. Remember what happened there? The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for a forty day period of testing. At the end what happened to Jesus? Satan *tempted* Jesus with three temptations. Why did Jesus subject Himself to the temptation? Because as the Last Adam He had come to undo what the First Adam did. And how did Jesus respond to the tempter? Did He dialogue with him? No. He refused to analyze and question God's Word. Instead of debating the Scriptures, Jesus *quoted* them. *Three* times He said, "It is written."

In many ways, Eve lost the battle by the time verse 3 ends. She had entered into foolish dialogue with the tempter, who questioned God's Word, and led her to misrepresent God's Word.

Then the tempter brought out the heavy arsenal in verses 4-5. "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die.'⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

C. The tempter attacked God's Word (4-5).

There's a "No Trespassing" sign in west Texas signed in blood red paint at the bottom by the rancher. It reads: "STOP. I know you're thinking about crossing this gate. What you should know is that if the Coyotes, Cactus, Mesquite, Heat, Dust or Rattlers don't get you, I will."

That's what I call blunt. And blunt is what Satan was in verse 4. He's no longer being subtle. In fact, once Satan gets us to question God's Word and casts a doubt on it, he's got us where he wants us. Then comes the all out assault. First he questions, then he attacks. In Eve's case he attacked in two ways.

1. *He offered a rival message.* "You will *not* die," he said. There's a blatant contradiction. God says, "Eat and you will die." The tempter says, "No, not true. God is lying. He's keeping you from the 'good stuff.'" That's a rival message, isn't it?

Friends, there are two rival voices in the world. One says, "If you sin, you will die." And the other says, "If you sin, you will not die."

When we turn on the television we hear the conflicting, rival voice saying, "If you're not satisfied with your spouse, then get another. You deserve to be happy." But God's voice says, "No, till death do us part. Marriage takes work, and I'll help you, if you'll ask."

You turn the channel and hit the commercials. What's the rival voice saying now? "Think of yourself. Buy for yourself—use credit if you need to. Don't deny what your senses crave. You only go around once in life." But God says, "No, don't love the world neither the things that are in the world. Learn to deny yourself, and use your resources for the glory of God and the good of others. By grace, learn to be a giver, rather a getter."

Have we been listening to the rival message or God's message? Satan's strategy is to attack God's Word, and in Eve's case he did it first of all by offering a rival voice.

2. *He made sin sound good.* What did he tell Eve? Three *half-truths* in verse 5. One, if you eat your eyes will be opened. Two, you will be like God. And three, you will know good and evil.

There's an element of truth in what Satan said, isn't there? There usually is. Would their eyes be opened? Indeed, they were about to see what they had never seen before. Would they become like God? The fact is, by eating the fruit they would usurp the place of God. And would they know good and evil? Sadly, they were created innocent, yet were about to experience evil. Oh, how Satan loves to make sin sound good!

Keep in mind that the serpent is talking to a person who literally has *everything*. A perfect environment. A perfect marriage. An intimate relationship with God. A fulfilling life. Yet in the end she *wants something more*.

You say, "I wish I'd been there. I'd have handled things differently."

Really? The fact is, we face the similar decisions every day. But you say, "No. I don't have all the resources Eve had."

Again, really? Do you know Christ? If we do, we have *every spiritual blessing* in heavenly places, according to Ephesians 1:3. If that's true, and according to God's Word it is, then the question for us is the same question Eve faced. "Are we satisfied with what God has given us, or do we *want something more*?"

Why do we sin? It boils down to this, our desires. Sin begins in the heart. We tell ourselves, I want *that*. I must have *that*. That's exactly what James explained in James

1:13-15, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil *desire*, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after *desire* has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Do you like to fish? A fisherman sees this principle in action, doesn't he? He throws that nice, attractive lure into the water, and begins to retrieve the line. Slowly, slowly, right past the large mouth bass, which eyes the enticing object, resists at first, and resists again, until finally, if the fish could speak we'd hear these words, “I *want* that! I *desire* that. I must *have* that! I'll do whatever it takes to *get* that.” And so he grabs it. Then while he's being yanked across the water by the hook in his cheek, you can hear him mumble, “Why did I do that?”

John Calvin said that the human heart is an idol factory. That's why we need Christ. Only Christ can give us a *new heart* that can withstand the rival voice and joyfully embrace our Creator's word.

Whose voice has the attention of your family, the tempter's or God's? This is where the downward spiral begins, with foolish dialogue.

II. It leads to a forbidden decision (6).

Notice the first part of verse 6, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate...”

We don't know what kind of fruit that tree bore. Legend suggests it was the apple, but the Bible doesn't say so. What we do know is that the foolish dialogue led to a forbidden decision by two parties.

A. Eve was deceived. There she stands. She contemplates the two conflicting messages, becomes the presiding judge, and comes to a verdict. Never a wise course of action, to place ourselves in a position of judgment over God's Word.

According to the text, two factors influence Eve in her decision.

1. *She based her decision on what she saw.* Verse 6 says, “So when the woman *saw*.” Eve is now doing what she was never created to do, that is, judge the validity of God's speech. And she does it by her senses, namely, what she *saw*.

What caught her eye? She saw two appealing features about the fruit. One, it was good for food. Two, it was pleasing to the eye.

But wait. Eve had plenty of other trees from which to choose, didn't she? Yes, according to Genesis 2:9, the other the trees in the garden were also “pleasing to the eye and good for food.” God has already given her everything she could ever need or want to satisfy her? Yet in this moment, she is not satisfied.

Why not? Why did Eve even entertain the foolish thought of picking the forbidden fruit? According to 2 Corinthians 11:3, she did for one simple reason. She was *deceived*. Tricked. Beguiled. Here's the apostle Paul's assessment (and application), “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

What happened to Eve? She was deceived. Rather than submitting to what God said, she based her decision on what she *saw*. And there was a second factor.

2. *She based her decision on what she wanted.* She saw the fruit was “desirable for gaining wisdom” (NIV; the ESV says, “that the tree was to be desired to make one wise”). The word “desired” or “desirable” comes from the root meaning “to covet.” This of course is the sin God later prohibited in the tenth commandment (Deut 5:21). Eve is now living by her desires (her feelings) rather than God's Word.

Several years ago I met with a man who was leaving his wife. "Why?" I asked. "You know the Bible forbids it. Why are you leaving her?" His response, in essence, was this, "I *want* to be happy, and I'm not." He too made a decision based on his desires instead of God's.

You say, "Is it wrong to want to be happy?" No. But it's wrong to think that we the creature know better than our Creator what will make us happy.

Beloved, as long as we live by our self-focused *desires*, we will be like the chaff that the wind blows away in Psalm 1. Centuries ago Augustine explained it this way:

"Sin arises when things that are a minor good are pursued as though they were the most important goals in life. If money or affection or power are sought in disproportionate, obsessive ways, then sin occurs. And that sin is magnified when, for these lesser goals, we fail to pursue the highest good and the finest goals. So when we ask ourselves why, in a given situation, we committed a sin, the answer is usually one of two things. Either we wanted to obtain something we didn't have, or we feared losing something we had."⁶

That's when it happened for Eve. She took the fruit and ate it. She failed to ask God for guidance. She failed to consult with her husband about the matter. She made the decision on her own.

At this point I want to cry out, "Adam! Where are you? You're needed over here by the tree, right now! Your wife is in trouble, and it's your God-given job to protect her! Where are you, Adam?"

And where was he? Out tending the garden somewhere? No. He was standing *right next to his wife*. Notice the final statement in verse 6, "She also gave some to her husband, who was *with her*, and he ate it." Where was Adam? The preposition *with her* indicates he was *right there*.

Let that sink in. The forbidden decision was made by *two* parties. Eve was deceived, but not Adam.

B. Adam was just plain defiant. What is defiance? According to Webster it is "open disregard of or bold resistance to authority."

Eve took the first bite, but the Bible attributes the origin of sin *to Adam*. Romans 5:12 says, "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." Sin entered the world, not through the woman, but through the man.

How can that be? Here's Paul's explanation in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 states, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

So Eve was deceived, but not Adam. Apparently, he ate the fruit deliberately.

Think back. To whom did God give the command in Genesis 2:16-17, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat"? To Adam. This was *before* Eve's creation. Did Eve know about the command? Without a doubt Adam had told her, and she was certainly responsible for her actions. But who does God hold accountable as the most responsible person in this situation? The one He created to lead this family.

Men, please take a close look the first man, for we're so like him. Adam failed in two ways.

1. *He became a passive husband.* He should have stepped forward and said, "No, Eve. God is good, and He's already given us everything we need. What this creature is

⁶*The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Christian Classics in Modern English)

saying is not good.” But he didn’t. He shirked his role as a leader. In fact, they flip-flopped their roles. Eve led, and Adam followed. In other words...

2. *Instead of leading in a godly manner, he became a follower.* Notice the specific transgression of which God confronted Adam in verse 17, “Because you have *listened to the voice of your wife* and have eaten of the tree.” Adam followed his wife instead of following God's Word. One commentator calls him "Adam Tag-along."⁷

Men, let’s take inventory. Are we leading our families? Are we alert and seeking to protect those under our care from the evil one? Are we making it a priority to know God’s Word so we can detect the many subtle ways our adversary seeks to entice us? Are we praying with our wives and children? Are we giving God’s Word priority attention in our homes?

And ladies, are you making it easy for your man to be the spiritual leader in your home? Are you encouraging him, praying for him, seeking his counsel before decisions are made? Are you likewise doing everything in your power to make God’s Word central in your home?

This brings us to the third and final step. It begins with foolish dialogue, which leads to a forbidden decision.

III. It results in a fateful discovery (7).

Verse 7 sats, “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

Did you know that raccoons go through a glandular change at about 24 months? Apparently, they do, according to Gary Richmond, a former zoo keeper. He says that after that they often attack their owners. He explains that since a 30-pound raccoon can be equal to a 100-pound dog in a scrap, he once felt compelled to mention the change coming to a pet raccoon owned by a young friend of his, Julie. She listened politely as he explained the coming danger. He says, “I’ll never forget her answer. ‘It will be different for me...’ And she smiled as she added, ‘Bandit wouldn’t hurt me. He just wouldn’t.’”

Three months later Julie underwent plastic surgery for facial lacerations sustained when her adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason. Bandit was released into the wild.

As Richmond reminds us, sin too often comes dressed in an adorable guise, and as we play with it, how easy it is to say, “It will be different for me.” But the results are predictable.⁸

For Adam and Eve the forbidden decision resulted in a twofold, fateful discovery.

A. They had changed. How so? According to verse 7...

1. *Their innocence was gone.* Their eyes were opened, and now they saw themselves in a totally different light.

2. *They felt shame.* They realized they were “naked.” Before sin, there was total transparency, total, unhindered intimacy, with God and with each other. But now that’s gone now. They’re now guilty, and they feel shame.

Listen to this insightful comment by Hebrew scholars Keil & Delitzsch, “Shame entered first with sin, which destroyed the normal relation of the spirit to the body, exciting tendencies and lusts which warred against the soul, and turning the sacred ordinance of God into sensual impulses and the lust of the flesh.”⁹

⁷Claus Westermann, p. 23.

⁸Gary Richmond, *View From The Zoo*.

⁹Keil & Delitzsch, p. 91.

And what did the first couple do?

3. *They tried to hide their shame.* How? They took fig leaves, probably because the leaves were large, and sewed them together as coverings. Why? Not for warmth, for the climate is still tropical. It was because of something they knew for the first time.

B. They were in trouble. The world's first sinners tried to hide, and we've been doing it ever since. Sin. Shame. Hiding.

We may read verse 7 and say, "What do they think they're doing? You can't remedy your guilt with fig leaves." No, you can't. Nor can we fix our guilt with the rags of our own self-righteousness. But we try, don't we? We try to cover up our sinful hearts by putting on a "respectable" life.

Just ask the average person on the street how to get to heaven and you'll hear, "Just live a good life, and you'll be okay. Going to church won't hurt, but the bottom line is to do your best. If the good in your life outweighs the bad, you'll make it."

Is that true? Actually, it's no different than the mentality exhibited by Adam and Eve right here. Friends, we can't make ourselves "respectable" before a holy God, for our righteous deeds (the best we can offer God) are as filthy rags in His sight (Isa 64:6).

Is there hope for the sinner then? Praise God, there is! But it's not to be found in the sinner, but in the Savior God has provided for sinners. We need God to do for us what we can't do for ourselves. We need Him to clothe us with what Isaiah 61:10 calls "a garment of salvation" and "a robe of righteousness."

You say, "I need that robe. I'm a sinner, and I'm tired of trying to hide my shame."

I have good news for you, my friend. God will put this robe of righteousness on your shoulders today if you will repent and receive His Son as your Savior and Lord.

That's why Jesus Christ came to earth. He lived the perfect, righteous life that we have failed to live. And when He died on the cross, He took our sin and shame upon Himself, and paid our penalty in full. Then His Father raised Him from the dead, and now offers the gift of forgiveness and eternal life to all who will believe in His Son.

This is the remedy for sin in our families, dear friends. Jesus came to reverse the curse. We'll explore further what this means next time, the Lord willing.

Testimony of salvation: Abby Hall

Closing Song: #186 "*The Old Rugged Cross*" (all four verses)

Closing charge: Let the redeemed of the Lord...SAY SO.

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning we continued our series, *The Christian Family*. Last week in our community groups we shared about the families in which we were raised. Today, let's go a step further. What are some ways the Lord used your family upbringing to shape the person you are today?
2. In today's message, we looked at the world's first sin in Genesis 3:1-7. Take time to read the passage again, and then discuss the following. What is sin? What do we learn about sin from this incident in the first family?
3. Sin never just "happens". What contributed to the sins committed by Adam and Eve in the garden? How did a breakdown of marriage roles contribute to the first sin?
4. To answer the following questions, scan through the rest of Genesis 3 (and even Genesis 4). What affect did sin have on the first family? How did the first couple deal with their sin? What did God do in response to the first sin? What attributes did He express?
5. Take time as a group to pray for our families. Specifically, pray that we will grow in our ability to experience the grace of God in dealing with our sin.