



Genesis 3:1-24

PRAY

In the film 'Good Morning Vietnam' Robin Williams plays the character of an American Forces DJ based in Saigon during the Vietnam War. In this film there is a scene that vividly shows us what the world we live in is like. The character plays the song 'What a Wonderful World' by Louis Armstrong. The one that goes 'I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom for me and you. And I think to myself, what a wonderful world'. But as this song is being played we are shown horrific pictures of the Vietnam War.

This is what the world we live in is like. It is a wonderful world. There is so much that is good and wonderful. A night sky full of stars; a beautiful sunset; fields covered in snow; hugging your nearest and dearest; the smell of food sizzling in the kitchen. But at the same time so much in this world is horrible. Young children being murdered; war; AIDS; terrorist attacks.

The world we live in is both wonderful and horrible at the same time. But it wasn't always that way. At the end of Genesis 2 the world Adam and Eve lived in was just wonderful. There were good things to see, good things to eat, good things to do, Adam and Eve were happily married and living in a beautiful garden with the God who made them.

How did this world become horrible? That's the question that Genesis 3 will answer for us! Genesis 3 shows the moment it all went wrong. It is not a made up story. It really did happen. There was a serpent. Adam and Eve were real people who disobeyed God and got kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

As we look at Genesis 3 now, I want us to see six things this passage teaches us about. The first thing it teaches us about, on your handout, is the serpent.

1. The Serpent (v1-5)

Look at verse 1: "*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.*" In the Garden of Eden there were lots of different animals, but one animal stood out as being crafty or more cunning than the rest and that was the serpent. This serpent slithers up to Eve and begins to plant seeds of doubt about God into her mind.

Now remember that one of the jobs that Adam and Eve were given to do was to rule over the animals, but here at the start of Genesis 3 this doesn't happen as Eve listens to what the serpent says. Look at the first thing the serpent says in verse 1: "*Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"* It appears to be an innocent question. 'Eve, are you sure that God said you shouldn't eat from any tree in the garden? Are you sure you didn't mishear Him?' The serpent by asking this question is trying to get Eve to doubt God's Word.

Rather than telling the serpent to shut it, she answers his question with her own little addition; she said that touching the fruit in the middle of the garden will lead to death, but that's not what God said.

The serpent response is to call God a liar. Look at verse 4: "*You will not surely die,*" *the serpent said to the woman.*" The serpent wants Eve now to doubt God's judgment. He tells her that God won't punish her for eating the fruit from the tree. God wasn't being serious when He said that you will die if you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – He won't punish you!

But there's a third thing the serpent tempt Eve to doubt, that's God's goodness. Look at verse 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.*" The serpent says to Eve that God is stopping you from being like Him, that you're missing out on something. Even though God had given them so much, and everything He had given them was good, actually He wasn't that good because he was denying them this knowledge of good and evil.

We are told in the New Testament that the serpent was under the influence of Satan, the ultimate enemy of God. Satan still wants people to doubt God's Word, God's judgment and God's goodness, to believe these things aren't true. The serpent reminds us to be on our guard against Satan who will do anything to make us believe that God's Word is not true, God's judgment is not real and that God is not good.

Up until verse 5 everything's still okay. Eve has been tempted by the serpent to disobey God by eating the fruit but she hasn't yet. Then in verse 6 comes the sin. That's the second point on your handout.

2. The Sin (v6)

Look at verse 6: *"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."*

Adam and Eve reject the goodness of living God's way and sin. She saw, she took, she gave, he ate. Eve saw how appealing the fruit was. Licking her lips, she picks some from the tree and eats it. She then gives some of the fruit to Adam. What will he do? Will he obey God or will he obey his wife? He chooses to obey his wife and joins Eve in sinning against God.

What is sin?

Genesis 3 teaches us that sin two things. Firstly, it is rebellion. It is disobeying God's Word. It's clear in Genesis 3 that Adam and Eve have rebelled and disobeyed God's command by eating the fruit He told them not to eat. But it's more than rebellion. Look at verse 5 again: *"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Sin is also revolution. Adam and Eve ate the fruit because they want to be like God. They wanted to decide what is good and what is evil, what is right and wrong, rather than be told by God. In Genesis 1 and 2, God is clearly seen as King over the entire world. He made it and therefore makes the rules. But by sinning and disobeying God's Word, Adam and Eve were saying to God, "We want you job! We want to make the rules!" Can you see how stupid this is? To think that you know better than God!

Sadly this sin is the sin that every human being since Adam and Eve has committed. I have and you have. We all have rebelled against God by disobeying God's Word. None of us have kept God's good commands perfectly. Like Adam and Eve our natural desire is to be our god. We want to decide what is best for us. We don't like being told what to do. We are all sinners and this has a devastating effect on our lives because it brings shame. That's the next point on your handout, the shame.

3. The Shame (v7-8)

The woman was expecting the fruit to open her eyes to a new good that God hadn't given them, but instead her eyes were opened to an evil she had never experienced. At the end of Genesis 2 we are told that they were both naked, and they felt no shame. Now after eating the fruit their eyes were opened and they realised they were naked and experienced shame.

The perfect relationship they had with each other was now gone. Look at verse 7: *"...they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."* Adam and Eve cover up. They are uncomfortable being completely open and honest with one another; they now wanted to hide parts of themselves from each other. The complete trust they had for each other was now gone.

The perfect relationship they had with God was gone too. In verse 8 God comes along to have His daily chat with Adam and Eve, but they don't want this chat so they hide. In their shame, they realise they are guilty and have done wrong and don't want to face God. The shame of sin leads to broken relationships.

As Adam and Eve in their shame hide among the trees, God comes searching for them. That's the fourth point, the search.

4. The Search (v9-13)

You often hear people say something like this: 'I'm searching for God'. But Genesis 3 paints a different picture. People are actually hiding from God. There was an American evangelist called Billy Sunday and he said that sinners can't find God for the same reason criminals can't find policemen – they aren't looking! Adam and Eve are hiding in the trees and it's God who is searching for them. Look at God's question in verse 9, one of the saddest questions in the Bible: *"Where are you?"*

You can imagine Adam coming out from amongst the trees, head bowed, like a child who has been caught doing something wrong. As God asks him the next question in verse 11 he is giving Adam the opportunity to own up, to admit his guilt, to say sorry. But Adam said what Shaggy later sang "It wasn't me!" He refuses to take responsibility for his actions. He blames Eve, it her fault, she gave me the fruit. But worse than that, he blames God. Look at verse 12: *"The man said, "The woman you put here with me..."* It's your fault God. If you had never created the woman I would have never disobeyed you. Then when God asks Eve what she's done in verse 13 she blames the serpent. They both refuse to take the

blame for their sin and disobedience. How often when we get found out do we try to make excuses rather than just accepting that we messed up?

As God searches and finds Adam and Eve, and ask them these questions, God shows that He is a just King who makes sure He gets the facts right before handing out His punishment, which He does in verses 14-24. After the search comes the fifth point on your handout, the sentence.

5. The Sentence (v16-24)

We will come back to the sentence given to the serpent in a moment. As Adam and Eve are found guilty of rebelling against their good Creator, all of the good things that they experienced when they were obeying God and living his way are affected. The woman experiences pain in her role as mother and wife. The man's work in providing food got tougher as he has work the ground rather than take from God's abundant provision in the Garden of Eden.

The sentence God gives the man and woman are to remind them and us that the consequence of sin is God's punishment. The cry of a woman as she gives birth should remind us that we are sinners and deserve God's punishment. When you go out to work and you are fed up with it, and don't want to get up on a Monday morning, it should remind you that you are a sinner and deserve God's punishment.

But the worst part of the sentence was that they would die. The serpent was wrong, Adam and Eve did die. Physical death was delayed, but spiritual death was immediate as they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. No longer could they enjoy being in God's presence, and no longer could they eat from the tree of life.

Imagine cutting a single rose off a rose bush and sticking it in a glass of water. It looks good and smells good (if you're into that sort of thing) but really it's dying. It's cut off from its source of life. Just like the rose, Adam and Eve are now cut off from the source of life, God, and as a result they died.

This is a depressing and tragic episode. But in amongst the doom and gloom there are a few rays of hope, a few hints that God hasn't completely given up on people. The blessing of childbirth is still there in verse 16. In verse 21, God clothes Adam and Eve with a proper outfit. But there is a much greater hope than that. It's there in sentence given to the serpent. Look at verse 15: *"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."*

In Genesis 3:15 we find the first indication that there will be a Saviour. That's the final point on your handout.

6. The Saviour (v14-15)

This Saviour will be one of the woman's offspring. This Saviour will be someone who will perfectly follow God's Word and will resist the temptations of Satan. This Saviour will be a serpent-crusher who will once and for all destroy Satan. This Saviour will be struck a blow by Satan.

The New Testament calls this man the last Adam. His name is Jesus. Jesus was fully human, a descendant of the woman born to a teenage girl called Mary. Jesus perfectly obeyed God and when he was in the wilderness resisted the temptations of Satan. He succeeded where Adam and Eve failed. Jesus was struck a blow by Satan; he was put to death on the cross. But on the cross Jesus once and for all defeated Satan; he crushed the serpent head, and proved this by coming back to life. He is the champion, and one day his victory will be fully complete when Satan is thrown into hell to face God's eternal punishment.

Jesus, like God in the Garden of Eden, came searching for people. He said of himself that he "came to seek and save what was lost". Today through God's Word and God's Spirit He comes looking for lost people, for sinners like you and me, with the offer of forgiveness and the promise of life in God's presence for eternity in a new garden for those who trust in Him.

Genesis 3 shows us the madness of going your own way by ignoring God's good way. That's what Moses wanted the Israelites about to enter the Promised Land to realise. That's what Moses wants us to see. He wants us to grasp that living God's way by trusting in the Saviour Jesus and by seeking to obey His Word is the best way to live, because it leads to life. He wants us to see that listening to the lies of Satan will only harm you. Sin never delivers what it promises, and it will only lead to you being punished with Satan in hell. If you haven't done already, choose to live God's way not your own by trusting in Jesus, the serpent-crusher.