

CCH 17OCT21 Genesis 3:1-13 “Introducing Sin”

PRAY. v4.

Look at the news on any particular day and you’ll see bad news. Look at the news last Friday and you see an **MP** being murdered in a church by a knifeman while doing his job as a public servant. It is appalling. Add to that racism, Covid, suicide bombers, fraud, poverty, global warming, what is going on? What has gone wrong? What has gone wrong with the world?

Over the last 5 weeks at CCH we have been seeing how good everything was. A relationship with our Creator, a beautiful garden, the gifts of work and rest, and relationships. **So what has gone wrong? Why is the world so messed up?** Well Genesis 3 answers that loud and clear with the account of the Fall which we are going to look at over 2 weeks. And although many of us are familiar with this story, we cannot view life without the lens of this chapter. So let’s look at the story in **3 parts**.

1) First THE TEMPTATION

In verse 1 we meet the snake. There’s no attempt to explain or defend a talking snake, or explain how in a perfect word he came to sow seeds of temptation and rebellion. (There are many questions that Genesis raises but doesn’t answer!). But we do know that later in the Bible he is identified with Satan, an evil spiritual reality who has himself rebelled against God and who with devastating hatred wants to turn God’s people away from him.

He’s nasty, but he’s no match for God. I think that’s part of the reason why he’s described as just an animal- not an equal and opposite threat to God. And since the animals of creation should have been under mankind, we are beginning to see how things are beginning to turn upside down.

So he’s no match for God, but this snake is seriously crafty. Let’s look at **3** of his tactics, because they are tactics that he still uses today.

1) He questions God’s word

Satan is the master of spin. He’s so crafty. He doesn’t go straight for the jugular, just telling Adam and Eve outright to eat the fruit. He starts with a subtle question and a very loaded one. v1. Did God really say “you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”

Questions are powerful. They sow seeds of doubt in your mind. This one is already starting to suggest that God is mean. Rather than marvel at the generosity of the other 999 trees they can eat from, he zeroes in on the one tree that they are to stay away from. But more fundamentally he questions God’s word, attacking what God has said.

➡ Straight away there’s a lesson here for us. Satan strikes at God’s Word. God is good, and he relates to us through speech. He gives us loving and protective guidance to care for us. But if Satan can undermine confidence in what God is saying, he’s onto a winner and our trust in God is severed.

He still attacks God’s word today in a million ways. In the **home**. trying to stop you from reading your Bible, by distracting you with a thousand more “urgent” things. In the **theological colleges**, convincing future vicars that the Bible is not up to date. And in the **church**. Across the planet today, he’ll be sowing seeds of doubt and distraction as God’s word is read and preached. “Did God really say..... It’s not that clear. It’s open to debate”.

He’s crafty. But he’s not massively original. And for thousands of years he’s been questioning God’s word. 2nd he’s been **denying God’s judgment**.

2) He denies God's judgement.

Let's play spot the difference between what God says and what Eve says....
2:16 *"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 certainly die"*.

Here's how Eve reports it in 3:2,3 *"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"*.

God never said don't touch. It's only a small addition, but right from the beginning of the Bible, we see Eve adding a rule. We might call this the beginnings of legalism. She's already been sucked in to .

And so Satan blatantly denies that God will carry out his punishment. "Oh, he won't actually do it. It's an empty threat. You will certainly not die".

➡ Satan does the same to us. Who will you listen to, when he whispers that it doesn't matter? A loving and kind God who says "you will certainly die", or a crafty creature who he says "you will not certainly die".

And as much as we'd like to think that we wouldn't fall for this, we all do. We listen to that lie... "Forget the consequences. It won't matter. There won't be any serious repercussions". But tragically you will die. And from Genesis 3 onwards, funerals came into the world. Because of our sin.

Hands up if you have been to a funeral in the last 2 years? Who was right? Satan or God? We must stop thinking that we are special and can get away with it. **YOU WILL CERTAINLY DIE.**

Third Tactic 3) He questions God's motives.

This is perhaps the most subtle of all.... v5 *"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"*.

Satan whispers, "There's a reason God doesn't want you to take this fruit. He's trying to withhold something you. He's out to spoil your fun. Don't trust him. The minute you eat it, you will walk through a doorway into a new world where you get to be like God!"

That's ironic, because they already were like God. They were under him in his image, little gods over the world. But that's not enough, they can be big G Gods. They can have God's place.

And above all they can know good and evil. More on that in a moment. But do you see how Satan questions God's motives.

➡ He will do anything he can to make you think that his good ways are bad ways. That he's out to spoil your fun.

And we believe the lie. Like teenagers with their parents, we shake our fists at God. It's so unfair. You never let me be a grown up. You just want to make my life miserable. Why won't you let me do the one thing I want to do. (when all along he is protecting us).

But we are not robots, and we have free will, and so he lets us choose. And so onto the middle point, and actually the middle of this section right at the centre for emphasis. And here is the moment where the virus of sin entered the world to do its catastrophic and irreversible damage.

2) THE SIN

v6a. *“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”* Well she’s already sunk. All her senses and desires are locked on target now. How is she ever going to go back from this? So *“she took some and ate it”*.

And just in case we think all the blame is with Eve right now. Where is Adam? He was the leader, born first to protect and cherish his wife. He has abdicated responsibility and all this time he has been right there, silent, completely failing to do what is right. v6b *“She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it”*.

What’s at the heart of this sin? The key is verse 5. Knowing Good and Evil. They already knew the difference between Good and Evil, but this is a taste of being the arbiter of good and evil. It’s basically taking God’s place, wanting to call the shots. “Knowing” Good and Evil”. And in a way, Satan is right their eyes will be opened, but rather than being liberated and released into a new era of autonomy and freedom, they will be chained into shame and chaos. God said just one thing. Don’t eat from this tree. They ate.

➡ Now I know you come to church to be uplifted and not depressed, but you will never understand the uplifting good news of Jesus Christ unless you first understand this chapter.

We all do this. We’re all in the same boat here. No-one in church is any better than anyone outside of church. We are fallen sinners.

Many of us have read this chapter many times. We could probably give a talk about this passage. But we need to feel afresh the horror of what we have done, and we need to understand this accurately.

You see, it’s easy to have a simplistic view of Sin. Sin is not just **breaking** rules. It is **making** the rules.

It is not simply that It is that God says don’t do this, and we do it. Don’t walk on the grass. (Breaking the rule).

But it’s more than that. It’s **making** rules. We want to be the one who decides. That’s what It’s a desire to be in God’s place. It’s a desire to overrule him. It’s a desire to be like God, knowing Good and evil.

▲ In the houses of parliament there is a jewel encrusted velvet embroidered throne where the monarch sits at the state opening of parliament. I heard of a group of tourists once looking around the Houses of Parliament, and for a brief moment when the tour guide’s back was turned, an Aussie tourist snuck behind the rope and sat on the chair. “What are you doing?” said the tour guide in horror, “I’m just having a go” said the tourist.

It’s just a chair, and Queen Elizabeth as much as we love her is just a human. But each of us has decided we prefer ourselves to sit on God’s throne rather than him. We think that we can “have a go” at being the ruler.

We have believed Satan’s lie that we can be in God’s place, knowing, deciding between, choosing, good and evil. We want God’s spot. We want the autonomy to decide!

And we’ve been doing it for so long that we just don’t realise how outrageous it is. It started with the first captain of the human race, Adam, and we follow in his footsteps.

We want to know good from evil, we want to be able to decide. We want God's place. We don't want him there. And this means that we need to repent of the good things that we do not just the bad things!

Well in verses 7-13 we see **3) THE CONSEQUENCES**. These are just the initial ones. We'll see a whole lot more later in the chapter next week, as God pronounces sentence on the serpent, the woman and the man.

But let's see two consequences.

1) Shame...

v7. End of chapter 2 they were unashamed. But now they hide.

First they **hide from each other**. v7 They sew fig leaves together. They were absolutely fine in their nakedness before one another, but now the other is a threat.

And we've been doing it ever since. Our fig leaves may be a bit more subtle- we hide behind our achievements at work, or our alternative lifestyle, our Sunday faces. But they are all attempts to paper over the cracks. They are all ways in which we seek to feel better about ourselves.

Could it be that if we're honest we don't want people to really know the real me. We don't want them to find what's lurking here. So we hide. We put on the fig leaves and the masks. But we can't cover up. We are guilty.

But they don't just hide from one another. **They hide from God**. v8. Like that is possible!

God calls out to them, and asks them a series of questions. Not because he doesn't know the answers, but because he wants them to see the gravity of what they have done.

▲ In the wonderful children's book, Treasures of the Snow by Patricia StJohn, Lucien winds up his neighbour Dani by holding his kitten over a precipice above the alpine village where they live. But when he accidentally drops him, little Dani hurls himself over the edge to try and save the kitten. Lucien is convinced that he has killed Dani, and he does just what Adam and Eve do. He hides. (spoiler alert, Dani isn't dead, but his leg is broken!)

Could this be the real reason we don't always want to come to church? Shame? We're not that pleased with ourselves. Don't hide. We need each other. We come as sinners, and we come to Christ.

2) Blame...

v12. That's a nice double swipe isn't it. At Eve and at God in one sentence. Not, it's my fault. I've sinned. It's her fault. and it's your fault.

v13. The snake. I'm sure you've heard the old joke... "Adam blamed Eve, Adam blamed the snake, and the snake didn't have a leg to stand on".

Workplaces, marriages, schools, factories, homes, shops, They are places of shame and blame. We hide and we pass the buck.

God comes to us and he confronts us in this tragic mess.

▲ GK Chesterton- "what's wrong with the world". "Sir, I am"
What a mess.

BUT!

He still comes. He comes looking. He hasn't given up on us.

Yes He comes with a question that **convicts**.

But it's also a question that **reaches out**.

But he comes after them.

He takes the initiative.

We are stuck. We are lost, we are hiding.

But he comes after us.

And he comes after you.

And where one man brought sin and death into the world.

Another man brought life and forgiveness.

Later in the service we will sing "I was lost but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray. Threw his loving arms around me, drew me back into his way".

It is right that we examine our sin (we're going to do that now in a confession song that Johnny has written). But we must never stay there. We must flee to the cross of Christ, where a fountain of forgiveness was poured out.