

# Genesis 3

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 19 August 2007

Preacher: Jonathan Worthington

[ 0 : 00 ] This morning, we looked in Genesis 3, and we looked specifically at Adam's sin and our sin, and that both of those, they really are that bad, but that they even work death in not only us, but in people we love, and work death in others.

But that the Lord still extends hope to us in Jesus. Well, tonight, we're going to do something a bit different, even though it has a lot of similarities. We're going to try to do Ephesians 6.11.

Paul says, put on the whole armor of God, so that you might take your stand against the schemes of the devil. So we're going to try to do that, put on the whole armor of God.

And the way we're going to do that is look at a few other aspects of Genesis 3, where the devil tempts Adam. So we're going to focus on the temptation.

And we're going to think not only about Adam's temptation, but like this morning, where we can't look at Adam and remain aloof. We're also going to think about our own temptation. And not only that, but we're really going to get at the idea of God's character.

[ 1 : 18 ] The fact that our temptation, when we give in to it, it is attacking God's character. And it's saying that God is not good. That's usually the way that the temptation comes to us, is us thinking in some way God is not good.

But we're going to look at that idea in Genesis 3. But like this morning, again, Genesis 3, we need to actually start with that command in Genesis 2, where God says something to the man.

So look at chapter 2, verses 16 and 17. We looked at it this morning, but let's look at it in a slightly different way tonight. So chapter 2, verses 16 and 17.

Where the Lord God commanded the man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden. But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must not eat.

For when you eat of it, you will surely die. When we think about God's laws, well, actually, I'll just ask it this way. If someone were to ask you, what is God's command to Adam?

[ 2 : 26 ] And off the top of your head, how do you think you'd answer it? I probably would simply say, well, God's command for Adam was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But how often do we do that?

Do we forget the entire first part of what God's command actually is to Adam? His command. Look at it. He says, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden. But don't eat from this tree.

God's law is prefaced with, is begun by His benevolence, His goodness. Him giving so much. He says, here, have it all. I'm giving it to you.

Eat. But not from this one. It's sort of like the boss who says to his worker, all right, go out and rest and have fun.

That's an order. It's great. God, when we think about His laws, we need to think first and foremost about His goodness, of how much He has actually given to us.

[ 3 : 24 ] So when we look at God's statement there, His command, we should be struck first by God's goodness, then also by implication.

That should cause us to think something like this. You know, if God is good, therefore, whatever He tells us to avoid, it's not bad to avoid that.

That would be a good thing, since God is good. All right, this will start making a little more sense as we continue moving on and we see what the serpent actually does with God, with God's character.

So turn with me to chapter 3, verses 4 and 5. So we've just seen how God establishes His goodness. But look at what the serpent does in verses 4 and 5.

He says to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. All right, let's think about this statement.

[ 4 : 29 ] He basically says three things. First, He says, You will not surely die. Then He says, God knows that your eyes will be opened. And then He says, God knows that you'll become like Him, knowing good and evil.

So, if we ask the question, what's wrong and what's right with that? How do we understand what the devil is actually saying to Adam?

Well, the first one's obviously wrong because it's outright denying God. You will die. And Satan says, you won't die. So that one's obviously wrong. But what about the second one? God knows that when you eat this, your eyes will be opened.

Well, look at verse 6. No, I'm sorry, verse 7. What happens when they eat the fruit? Then the eyes of both of them were opened.

Well, that's interesting. That one was actually true. God did know that when they ate from the fruit, their eyes would be opened. What about that third one where He says, basically, God knows that you'll be like Him, knowing good and evil.

[ 5 : 38 ] Well, again, turn with me to verse 22. In chapter 3, verse 22. Look what God Himself says. Verse 22.

And the Lord God said, the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Well, that's interesting because that means that that one was actually true as well.

So when the serpent actually says to them, God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat this, well, their eyes do get opened. And when He says, God knows that you'll be like Him, knowing good and evil, that's true.

God even says, He's become like me, knowing good and evil. So if I were to ask again, what of those three statements, what in this temptation is wrong, it might be tempting to say, well, just the first one.

But I would say, no, actually all three of them are wrong. And you might think, well, Jonathan, you're bonkers after what you've just said, what you've just shown us from this.

[ 6 : 45 ] You're crazy. Well, let's think about this. The attitude that the serpent puts on these true words, make it wrong.

the implicit statement that the serpent is making by pointing out what actually will happen, but that's not the message that he's giving.

Because he prefaces it with, God's a liar. God's not good. You know, God prefaced His own command with, have everything, with His own goodness.

the serpent prefaces these two observations that are true with, God lied to you. Therefore, when you read these two things where the serpent says, your eyes will be open and you'll be like God, your attitude towards God is, well, He forbade me to have those things, but they must be good.

That's what the serpent is trying to get across. God lied to you. He's bad. And He's trying to keep you from good things. He knows that this will happen and He knows this will happen. Those are actually good. You should pursue those.

[ 8 : 03 ] So the words are right. Those things actually will happen to them. But that doesn't mean they're good. Just because their eyes will be opened does not mean that it is good for their eyes to be opened.

And just because it will happen that they'll become like God knowing good and evil, that doesn't mean that that's a good thing. But that's exactly what the serpent, what Satan is using to tempt them.

These things are going to happen, therefore they must be good. And since God is a liar, He must not want you to have good things. So, let me give you an example of how somebody's attitude can just twist the way that you look at somebody else and what they say.

Think of a father who says to his young son, and maybe his son is with a friend. The father says to the son, alright, you can play. You can play anywhere. All this ground is yours to play.

But don't go into the street or you'll get hurt. So the boy and the friend run off and the friend says to the boy, oh, come on. You're not really going to get hurt.

[ 9 : 11 ] Your dad's just a spoil sport. He doesn't want you to have any fun. Oh, don't go in the road. Right. I've seen your own father go in the road. It's similar.

The friend has taken the words that the father actually said and he's twisted them and he's put a new attitude on them so that it's actually now desirable to go into the road because dad's just a spoil sport.

Dad even goes into the road. It must be good. It must be ours for the taking. There's something very subtle going on here and it's hard to figure out temptation.

But isn't that the case in our day-to-day lives when we're faced with temptation, wrestling with whether to sin or not? Isn't it fairly complex trying to figure out what is right and what is wrong? So let me just summarize a few points before we move on. God said, have it all but I don't want you to be like me in this way.

[10:17] Satan says, God lied to you and he doesn't want you to be like him in this way. The meaning, it's good to do these things that God forbid because God is not good.

So God's, sorry, Satan is challenging these two ideas. God is not good and these things are good and you should pursue them on your own. God's not good enough to give you what you should have.

God's goodness. The spiritual battle that's going on here is really centered around God's goodness. It's around his character.

So let's jump from Adam and from the temptation right here and think about this application to our own lives, our own temptations, some of which we looked at this morning but I'm hoping to get even more practical tonight building on the foundation from this morning.

God gives a lot of commands to us. There are a lot of can-haves. You can have this. You can have all these things but you can't have X, Y, or Z.

[11:33] So for instance, you can have many possessions sort of like he said, you can eat from any tree in the garden. You can have many possessions.

You can even acquire more. Now not all people are called to this, but a lot of people, you can even acquire more and you can even enjoy these things. But do not covet.

There are a lot of can-haves but there also is a cannot-have. Or how about you can desire your spouse sexually, but don't lust.

Or how about you can talk about others. You can tell stories about others, but don't gossip. Or even you can be angry, angry at wrongdoing.

You can be. You have that freedom. Be angry at wrongdoing, but don't hate the one who does wrong to you. And don't seek vengeance, revenge on that person.

[12:35] But when we're wrestling with temptations, we often forget all of the can-haves. We often forget God's goodness. We forget that God says you can have anything in this garden.

You can eat it all, but not this. We forget God's goodness. So our temptation is basically this. I don't have enough. I don't have what I should have.

which means God has not given me what I should have. God's not good enough to give me what I need or what I want.

So I'll take more. These things are good. I'll go for them. God's not good enough to give them to me.

So let me mention with those four sins that we've been looking at a bit, let me just highlight how this temptation in Scripture is applied to our lives and how we basically are attacking God's character when we give in to these temptations.

For instance, coveting. The temptation to covet often comes in something like this. We have freedom to enjoy things.

[13:54] Sort of like the serpent saying, your eyes will be opened. Well, that's true. we have freedom to enjoy things. Therefore, crave this thing and go get it.

Well, it's true that we have the freedom to enjoy things, but that does not mean that it's good to crave this. And in fact, what are we really saying when we do crave the things that God forbids? We're actually saying, you know, God has not provided me with everything that I should have. we're attacking God's goodness or with lust.

So, the temptation often comes this way. Sex is pleasurable. Therefore, take it however you can get it. Well, it's true that sex is pleasurable.

God made it that way. That's true, but that does not mean that it's good therefore to have it in any way you can get it. You see the subtle difference. it's true that their eyes will be open, that they will be like God knowing good and evil, but that doesn't mean that it's good and to pursue it.

[15:04] And what are we really saying when we lust? Well, we're saying something very similar to what the serpent said. It could be something like this.

God made me with certain desires, but He has not given me the way to satisfy these desires. and that's wrong.

He's made me in a certain way, but He hasn't given me the ability to act upon it. God made a mistake or God did something wrong in that. He should have given me something. So we're saying God is not good, not good enough for me, and I should therefore act upon what I know to be best. We might even say something like that friend of the boy. Well, God's just a spoil sport trying to keep me from having a good time. Something that's not really that bad anyway. Or how about gossip? The temptation to gossip can often come in this way. It's fun to tell stories about other people. And this one happens to be true anyway, right?

[16:10] Or maybe true. So therefore, let's go ahead and tell it. It's good to tell it. But again, it's falling to the same trap that we saw in Genesis 3.

Yes, it is true that it's fun to tell stories about people. But that does not mean that it's therefore good to tell negative stories that will defame people.

And what is it saying about God? God? God? God? I had that blank in my notes and my mind went blank. So I'm going to skip over what I just said and move on to anger.

So I'll let you think about what gossip and giving into that temptation says about God and His goodness. Okay, anger. Being, specifically being resentful and seeking vengeance.

the temptation can often come in a similar way that it came in Genesis 3. Evildoers must be repaid with punishment.

[17:15] Therefore, I'm going to repay this person for hurting me. Well, again, it's true that evildoers must be repaid with punishment.

But that does not mean that it's good for us to pursue meeting out our own justice on them the way that we see fit. And what does it say about God when we give in to the temptation to be angry in this way?

It basically says, you know, God's not going to take care of me in this situation. I've been hurt. And I might even get hurt more, and maybe even unhealably.

Perhaps I've been shamed by someone. Maybe I'll even be shamed again, irredeemably. Or something like this. And so we say, God's not going to fix this, and He's not going to take care of me.

Therefore, I need to take care of this, and give punishment to this person who hurt me. All of these things are basically saying what the serpent said in the original temptation.

[18:24] God is not good. He's not good enough. And He's trying to withhold from you things that you should have. So, since God's not good enough to take care of me, I'm going to take care of these things on my own, give these things to myself.

So now it's time to get very practical and to look at maybe some remedies for these moments when we are tempted in these ways. for example, when we're being tempted, we're attacking God's goodness.

So therefore, in these moments when we're being tempted, when we're desiring to sin, to do something we know is wrong, in those moments, how about if we try practicing God's goodness?

For example, this is something that somebody told me once and it's been incredibly helpful.

In these moments where I'm tempted to do something, what I'm basically saying is I'm not satisfied with what I have, I want this. So, start making a list in your mind, or even writing it down, a thankfulness list.

Just start listing a few of the things that God in His goodness has already given you. Maybe even in this specific area that you're being tempted. How has God already been so good to me? So also, maybe start practicing those things that God says you can have.

[19:53] You remember that part of His command. What would have happened if Adam and Eve had said, you know, that tree that we're not supposed to have, it does look good, but so do all these other trees.

That tree is desirable, but so are all these other trees. Because God said not to eat that one, and God is good, I'm therefore not going to eat that. I'm actually going to go and eat these.

Actually practicing what God has commanded you to do. The can haves could really help in those moments where we're tempted to take this cannot have. So for example, when we're tempted to covet something, what if we think of some good things, some genuinely good things, and try to crave those?

Crave godliness? Crave God's presence? Actually practice coveting, but coveting things that we're told to desire, to covet. Or perhaps maybe even do the opposite of coveting.

In that moment where you're really struggling with wanting that, how about you try giving something away? And that's a can-have that God has told you you can do.

[ 21 : 05 ] Practice His goodness. Show it to others. Actually give something away. I wonder what that would do for that temptation. Or what about when you're tempted to lust?

Well, if we're married, practice desiring your spouse. Of course, if we're not married, if there are any of you out there who are not married, it is difficult because God has not given you an outlet for sexuality while you're not married.

But, remember, God is good. And that means that He has given you everything that you need and everything that you should have. So at least remember God's goodness to you.

And maybe try that thankfulness list when you're tempted sexually and you don't have a spouse. Somebody that God has given to you. Maybe think about how God is good in all the other ways to your life.

What about when you're tempted to gossip? Well, maybe gossip good stories. Start telling something good about somebody. It's great to tell stories about other people.

[ 22 : 15 ] Just not in this way. God's given you this gift. Tell good things about someone. Try to build someone else up in the eyes of this person you're talking to.

Maybe that will help when you're tempted to gossip. Or perhaps the last one. When we're tempted to resent someone. Tempted to avenge.

To take revenge on someone who has hurt us or a loved one. Well, do the can-have. Be angry. God's given you that gift of being angered when someone has offended or hurt you or done wrong. But then forgive. And then do the opposite. Actually bless that person. When you're tempted to punish that person for hurting you, try to do something good for that person.

Is this not what Jesus tells us to do? Don't hate your enemies. Do good to those who persecute you. Pray for them. All right.

[ 23 : 17 ] So, this evening, as we've looked at the contrast between God, God's command of saying, here, look at me, I'm good. Incredibly good.

I've given you all of these things. But don't do this. And then we look at the temptation. What Satan says. God's not good. These other things are actually good.

Therefore, go for them. Because God hasn't given you what you should have. We've seen the conflict there. And we've hopefully seen some practical things that we can do in those moments when we are tempted.

I remember at the beginning I said that our hope for tonight was to do Ephesians 6, 11. To put on the whole armor of God so that we can take a stand against the devil's schemes.

So, for example, put on the belt of truth. Well, we've just been seeing that the truth is that God is incredibly good, incredibly gracious, and has given so many things.

[ 24 : 23 ] The breastplate of righteousness. Well, we've just taken a look at the good things that we can actually do, the righteous things we can do in place of those sins that we're tempted to do.

Having our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, well, hopefully, we're a bit more ready for temptation when it comes to us. And we're ready to respond in a way that actually promotes the gospel's peace now.

I hope that we're more ready for this. How about the shield of faith? Well, we're called to trust God's goodness.

Even when we don't have all the answers, even when we don't have all the reasons for why we're supposed to obey God in this, we trust God's goodness, that He knows what He's doing and it's good.

And so we have on us the shield of faith as we believe in God's goodness. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

[ 25 : 26 ] Well, we've just been looking a bit more in depth at Genesis 2 and 3, so hopefully we have the sword of the Spirit a bit more. we've also been looking now at Ephesians 6.

Hopefully we have the sword of the Spirit with us. What's that last one? The helmet of salvation. So to close, let's put on the helmet of salvation as I read to you, just in closing here, about God's goodness to us in salvation.

And let me read to you the verses that we read at the beginning from Romans 5 that celebrate how much better God's goodness in Jesus Christ is even to the evil of Adam's sin.

So please listen to Romans 5 12-21 as I read this section. Listen for God's goodness. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men because all sinned, I'm going to skip to verse 15, the gift, however, is not like the trespass.

For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by that grace of the one man Jesus Christ overflow to the many?

[ 26 : 51 ] Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin. The judgment followed one's sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

For if by the trespass of one man death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace, of the gift of righteousness, how much more will they reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

Consequently, just as the result of one man's trespass, I'm sorry, the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase, but where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

So that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 28 : 17 ] May the Lord clothe us in His armor so that we may stand against the devil's schemes. And may He bless us by this abundantly given grace and kindness of Him.

Please pray with me. Father, thank You for Your Word. And thank You for Your guidance through Your Word of how we can live life to honor You.

As we leave tonight, Lord, we ask that You, by Your Spirit, would work biblical wisdom into each of our lives so that we can stand by Your power against the temptations with how subtle they are.

Please equip us for godliness through Your Spirit, Lord. And above all, we ask that You would show us, each of us in here, that You would show us Your goodness, just how good You really are, so that we might crave You and Your presence and Your ways.

This is our heart's desire. We ask that You would give this to us tonight. And all of this, we ask You in the name of Jesus. Amen.

[ 29 : 44 ] Amen. If you want another place, this is our place, you, we ask You in the house, you, you, we ask us to stand together.

Neil, you, Peter, you, you, dear. My time to provide people using rewards and