

Ephesians 6:11

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- [0 : 0 0] Please turn back to Genesis 3, if you will. God has been incredibly gracious toward us. I've been learning a lot about grace recently, and one of the things that I've been learning is how easy it is for me to forget just how gracious grace is. In just our day-to-day lives, as we go about our humdrum business, the amazing grace somehow just simply doesn't seem amazing. We say it is, but how amazing is God's grace in your life? We're going to look at Genesis 3 for a bit this morning. And let me just mention a statement from a different part of the Bible, Romans 5, you don't need to turn there, Romans 5, verse 12, where Paul talks about Adam. And one thing Paul says is this, through one man, sin entered into the world, and through sin, death. So, that last phrase, through sin, death, we're going to contemplate that for a little bit this morning as we look at Genesis 3.
- [1 : 1 6] The connection between death and sin. Another thing, let me mention, anytime we turn to the Eden story, and we think about Adam, we need to be careful about standing far away and looking at Adam over there, and somehow being disconnected, and simply thinking about him on his own. Because in Genesis 5, 3, it says that Adam bore a child in his likeness, in his image. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talks about that. And he says that we all, we all bore the image of the man of dust. So, when we read about Adam, we can't be far away, because Adam is basically like a mirror. We see our image in him, because we, in some ways, are in his image. So, we're not only going to think about Adam, we're going to think about ourselves as well. But we are going to start by looking at Adam himself. So, death. Death enters into the scene in the Bible. Not in Genesis 3, but for the first place, the word at least, in Genesis 2, when God says to the man something.
- [2 : 4 0] So, look at Genesis 2, verse 16 and 17. 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. Alright, so that's the first mention of death. Connecting sin and death. Some people have a difficult time with capital punishment, with the death penalty. And I'm certainly not up here to argue it one way or the other about that, except that here, death is a very fitting, penalty for what God has told Adam not to do. And if he does, he will die. Because Adam and Eve were not simply, it wasn't simply eating a fruit that was bad. And God said, you know, if you eat that fruit, you're going to die. As if it was a poison fruit of some sort. What happened? We read already about it. Adam and Eve did eat the fruit. They sinned against God. And if we think about what Adam and Eve were actually doing, they were joining the serpent in a mutiny against God.

[4 : 00] God said, when you eat that, you will surely die. The very first thing the serpent says, well, not the first thing, but one thing the serpent says is, you are not surely going to die.

And Adam and Eve jumped over here with the serpent and they said to God, basically, God, you lied to us. We're not really going to die. We believe the serpent. And they went ahead and ate. They're participating in a mutiny against the Creator, the King of the Earth.

Now, I don't, you know, a lot of countries, they don't like the death penalty. A lot of states in America don't like the death penalty. But pretty much anybody, even if they don't like it and don't use it, almost all countries use it for one crime at least, for being a traitor to the country, a traitor to the crown.

Which is exactly what Adam and Eve were doing. They were betraying, dethroning, attempting to, dethrone God Himself and placed themselves on that throne.

God speaks a very fitting punishment. It's not only about a fruit. He's created them and He says, if you disobey what I'm commanding you, you will surely die.

[5 : 14] Now, turn back to Genesis 3 because this is where we see death actually enter into the scene. And where it enters back into the scene is the serpent of what He actually challenges.

So, God has promised death for sin and what does Satan do? He says, you're not surely going to die. So, it was simply outright denied by Satan.

God is wrong. He says, you're going to die, you're not. Now, let me ask a question. Are we very much different than the serpent?

Think about in those moments when you and I are tempted to sin. We're contemplating a sin that we want to do. Have you ever thought or said this?

Something like this. Oh, come on. It's not that bad. I'm not actually going to die if I do this. Does that sound familiar? How satanic is that response to sin?

[6 : 18] Which, unfortunately, I know all too well. Oh, it's not that bad. It's not like I'm going to die. Why? So, God promises death for sin.

And Satan, that's what he denies. Outright rejects. You're not going to die. But was death actually given by God? As we proceed in Genesis 3, people have been confused as they read this.

They say, okay, God promised in the day you eat this, you will die. They eat the tree. They eat the fruit. Do they die? Well, some people have even said, not only do they not die, they actually go on and they start having children and propagating life.

It's opposite of what God promised. Other people say, well, I know God's true, so they must have died in some way. Maybe, maybe a part of them died.

Like, their body obviously didn't because they're still, their heart's still beating. Their will didn't because they're still making choices. Maybe their spirit died. Or something like that. Just to figure out how they died.

[7 : 30] Let me read to you a few statements that Paul says about this situation of death. And then we're going to jump back to Genesis 3. You don't need to turn anywhere. Just listen to a few things that Paul says.

He says in Romans 8, the mind of sinful man is death. But the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God.

It does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it cannot. So the mind of sinful man is death. Or again, just a few verses later in Romans 8, 10, he says, but if Christ is in you, your spirit is alive because of righteousness even though your body is dead because of sin.

So Paul's concept is your body is actually dead because of sin. And since he says Christ in you is the only way your spirit is alive, or when you're not a Christian, it's safe to assume your spirit was also dead before you were a Christian.

Or again, in Romans 7, it's a famous passage. It's when Paul is wrestling with some very deep issues and saying things like, the good that I want to do, I don't do. But the evil that I don't want to do, that's what I end up doing.

[8 : 53] And he wrestles with this very deep tension that involves things like the will, the desires, as well as the action. And all of that, that entire situation of willing, of desiring, of acting, all of that, Paul summarizes at the end by saying this, who will deliver me from this body of death?

So, we see that Paul has a bigger view of the reality of death. Our minds, our will, our desires, our body, our spirit, the whole person, in some way, all of us, we're actually dead.

Now, talking about non-Christians here, referring back to Adam now, we ask the question, did he actually die? Did he and Eve actually die like God promised in the day that you eat this tree, in the day that you sin?

Let's work through just a few things in Genesis 3 where death keeps coming up. For instance, look at verse 19. chapter 3, verse 19.

God has now turned, after they've sinned, turns to the serpent and says, here is the punishment for you. Then he turns to the lady and he says, here's the punishment for you.

[10 : 22] Then he turns to Adam and he says, here's your punishment. And what is it in verse 19 that he reminds Adam of and that he pronounces on him? He says, by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground since from it you are taken.

For dust you are and to dust you will return. God had promised, in the day you eat of this, in the day you sin against me, you will die.

You will surely die. And here, in that day that Adam sins against God, God reminds him of this. He says, you're dust and you're going to return to dust.

So God makes this pronouncement of you are, you're going to die. And as we know, God's pronouncement, even if it happens in the future, it's true now. There's no way to avoid it.

But look even further. Look at verse 22. 22 and 23. And the Lord God said, the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

[11 : 27] He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

And then in verse 24, he bars the way with angelic beings and a flaming sword going this way and that. So Adam, as well as Eve, Adam, Eve, and any children that they'll have in the future are all counted in Adam right here when it says that Adam was exiled from the Garden.

Everybody is exiled with him. When God said this, he kicked Adam out from the only possibility of having life. The tree of life.

This garden where God's presence of blessing is. The place where God decides this is where you'll have life. There's the tree of life. This is it. God kicks him out of this and bars the way so that he...