

Genesis 3: Three Trees, Three Gardens: The Imago Dei and the Gospel

Opening Illustration: *So we keep waiting, Waiting on the world to change, We keep on waiting, waiting on the world to change... Now if we had the power to bring our neighbors home from war they would have never missed a Christmas no more ribbons on their door. And when you trust your television what you get is what you got cause when they own the information, oh They can bend it all they want. That's why we're waiting, waiting on the world to change. We keep on waiting, Waiting on the world to change*

John Mayer – is singing what we all know – something is wrong with the world – We all instinctively (even Atheist) long for Justice and something different, as if we have a sense of what the World is supposed to be!

J.R.R. Tolkien “*We all long for Eden, and we are constantly glimpsing it: our whole nature at its best and least corrupted, its gentlest and most humane, is still soaked with the sense of ‘exile’. If you come to think of it, your (very just) horror at the stupid murder of the hawk...are derived from Eden*” – **this is because the World was once much different!**

The Problem is nothing takes back there – nothing solves our problems: Some think education, government, science will solve our problems and yet they don't! **But the bible explains why this is so and what the answer is that will make sense of the World!**

- *It tells us what went wrong with our race, what our race was meant for, and how we can be restored to that purpose*

Transition to the Text: Moses is telling us in this passage why there is pain, strife, brokenness in our world, and in the midst of all of it – HOPE!

Main Point – *Man was created uniquely to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, instead man rebelled and tried to replace the Creator with himself, but God does not leave us in our rebellion but restores us to our purpose*
I felt this passage a good link between Advent/Imago Dei series – because will join the two together!

Part One: “Special Creation” – Created in His Image (Imago Dei) to Bring Him Glory and Enjoy Him Forever

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” [29] And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

To understand chapter 3 we have to look at the background of the text – We see the Triune God of the universe creating us in His Image, the crowning work of Creation – This is an act of grace that He allows anything other than Himself to exist!

- **In this we are not like the animals (*according to their kind*) but instead created after His likeness and are called to be God's Vice-Regents on earth – and He says of us, the climax of creation, **VERY GOOD!****

- **And what is this Image?** It is that we are like Him – the ability of reason, morality, and rationality, a will, and most importantly relationship, namely relationship with HIM! **And it carries with it a regal role of leadership in Creation – we have dominion, we rule in His place!**
 - o And after this is Completion – **It is Finished! No refrain of evening and morning**
- **What is the purpose of His Imago Dei?** Our purpose is bringing Him glory by filling the earth with worshippers of Him! Fill the Earth with faithful, godly children who worship and serve Him, the Creator!
 - o **We are to make music, art, etc by using what He has created to bring Him glory – reflecting Him to the ends of the Earth!**
- **And so the basic Goal/Purpose (same as the Great Commission) – Bring Him glory by a world filled with worshippers that are Fruitful and multiplying (*Corum Deo* – glorify Him by our Work – so excel in art, technology, etc)**
- **And we are put in a lush paradise for communion with our creator and environment for our purpose!**

Now to the text – Genesis 3 – **so we see not only the uniqueness and special nature of man, but see our horrific rebellion against our Creator and the consequence it brings**

Part Two “Terrible Creature” *We Rebel against our Creator*

[3:1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

First we must note – The Serpent (Satan who Revelation 12 names and is an accuser and slanderer) is a creation – we need to be clear, God did not create anything evil, but all good, and yet left us with choice and so evil entered – the text is never really trying to say where he came from but instead is singling out our rebellion and God’s grace

- **First thing Satan does is call into question the Word of God – he mocks, ridicules – DID GOD REALLY SAY/DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?** And this is how it is, people try to make us feel ridiculous about the truth of the Scriptures and God.
- **Satan is implying that God’s Word can be questioned or analyzed**

Application: Do we listen to other voices than God? Are the Scriptures our authority?

This is a subtle attack – he is trying to make them think that the Word of God is up for our judgment and our interpretation

[2] And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” [4] 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.”

Eve Responds – but now Satan openly contradicts God – He is a liar seeking the ill of those in God’s Image - “He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

- **“You will not surely die”** And so we see the first doctrine to be questioned is judgment – and it is still so today (Manny) – **the issue is however, we all believe in judgment (Hitler) we just draw the line short of our self.**

Satan has now caused our parents to put themselves in the place of evaluating God's Word – And he does this by having them question God's goodness and love (implying that God is selfish) and that being created in His image isn't enough

- That is the irony – they were already like God, but he now is appealing that they should decide for themselves what is good and evil
- And so he is challenging the refrain of Genesis that God is good and the supplier of good – he is saying grasp for this yourself

Satan loves to make promises that are alluring (like Cotton Candy) – having us seek satisfaction in other places but God – he doesn't do this by questioning the existence of God, or asking them to switch allegiance (though this happens) or His law, or His holiness, but through questioning the love and goodness of God – he is simply asking them to question God's claims and authority

- Satan is saying don't trust God – and so it is with our sin – God says don't sleep with someone who isn't your spouse and we don't trust Him, He says don't be greedy and we don't trust Him – **our heart is saying if we obey we wont be happy!**

And here we see the basic commandment under attack – no other gods – God is treating us like image bearers who can obey and trust and we don't – and this leads to us forfeiting dominion to Satan

[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, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

We see here how subtle the temptation was – the fruit is good to eat – sin is always about **misplaced desires** and appetites

And now we see the great Rebellion – The term Fall doesn't do it justice: *“Flagrant Rebellion...against the divine word by the pinnacle of creation, which has just been invested with the divine rule, is a heinous crime against the cosmos and its creator” Dempster*

- They have sought to replace God with themselves (Substitute), and this failed attempt leads to a **massive curse** – they have rejected his authority and word, that is the sin, not the fruit itself because Eve listened to the voice of a creature rather than Creator (**Rom. 1**)

Tragic – Adam should have stopped this as leader by crushing the skull of the tempter and exercising dominion but instead they **give into a subordinate** through WILLFUL REBELLION

- *They had counted equality with God as something to be grasped, instead of trusting him as source of knowledge of good and evil they seek it on their own*

All that was required was trust and obedience, but they don't want it – instead our parents wanted to make their own rules and be like God!

- And why is this so heinous? **Because we have now rejected God as our authority, our protection, and our joy by seeking self-exaltation** and this leads to horrific consequences

The Tree wasn't merely a test of obedience, but of whether we would be reliant upon God to reveal to us knowledge of good and – **He would have taught us through our dependence because He alone is the arbiter of good and evil** – but that wasn't good enough and so we tried to reach around it so we could be the arbiter of good and evil – DETERMINE FOR OURSELVES!

Application – See our sin in this – its about Substitution – we don't trust that He is a good gift giver! t

- The moralist doesn't and so tries earn salvation instead of trusting
- The licentious doesn't trust God for His satisfaction and pleasure so seeks it elsewhere

- **Neither trust the love and grace of God** – and so we are like our parents seek good and pleasure apart from God!
- **Our project now is self liberation** – This is what Satan holds out for us, determine for yourself what is RIGHT! **Cease to see yourself as a creation but as a god, and so now the guiding principle for us is autonomy and not obedience and humble reliance.** And ironically this project of freedom leads to chains! (Gaga)

Illustration – Imagine this great Rebellion – like CP30 spitting at young Anakin – and this causes a cosmos shifting effect

God’s Judgment and Mercy (8-24) – what is the punishment?

[8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. [9] But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” [10] And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” [11] He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” [12] The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” [13] Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” [14] The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. [15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” [16] To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” [17] And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; [18] thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. [19] By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Though we will see great judgment here, we see first God’s grace in that He doesn’t smite them – He takes the initiative to seek out the rebels, though we see the damage!

- **But God confronts Adam first, who is pictured as the greater rebel, holding him responsible because he has not led** – she was leading, he had received direct commands to rule and he didn’t, he was a passive man – **sound familiar?** – *It’s even possible he did not eat first, because he was waiting to see if she died*
- **What does he expect from them? Confession** –so they will learn. He's actually trying to help to learn good. Admit what you've done, own it, and take responsibility.

And now we are hiders – self-justifiers who blame shift – Both blame shift with Adam even blaming God and the good gift God gave him!

Illustration – No Talking during the Test – we want to justify ourselves instead of trusting another!

And what is broken here, what is the tragic result? 3 Broken Relationships

- **With God** – now instead of communing/walking with God (*Hebrew idiom that meant friendship*) we hid from him
- **With each other (among humanity)** – the sexes don’t get along, the races don’t get along... or most intimate and profound relationships now frustrated. Why? Cause we want to be God! Plays out in marriage huh?

- **Curse for Woman** – what she was blessed with will now be her curse (*striking at heart of who she is*) her companionship (ruling over husband) and child bearing – striking at very heart of who she is
- **Curse for the Man** – what he was supposed to be and do is now cursed as well – to lead and have dominion of the earth, now it will be frustrated.
 - **He has abdicated his role and now will struggle to have dominion** as he was supposed to – **with the ground and with his wife**. So now work will be labor and this dominion will be fought at ever turn, as this rebel tastes his own medicine, what he was to rule now rebels against him (weeds)
- **With Creation** – **thorns and thistles** – this isn't natural and we long for Eden knowing that in a Christian Worldview Tsunamis are not the way things are supposed to be

Man has now plunged the World into a cataclysmic fall and curse (BFM2000) – *Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation.*

- This sin is pervasive and spreads like a germ throughout our race

Illustration: So I jokingly say I will punch Adam – but truth is, we all sin willfully and if in same position we would bring worry into a fall and curse and the Result- DEATH! (Rom. 3:23) 6 FEET OF DIRT/DUST!

[20] The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. [21] And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

In the midst of Despair is Hope – He names his wife the mother of all living with the idea that creation itself will be restored and there will be life

- **The very thing that is frustrated is a sign of the redemption to come, a sign the serpent will be defeated** – God will keep His promise of sending one to defeat the dragon and will do this through child bearing
- **And in further grace God clothes them from the harsh climate! God goes back to work – we will see this again!**

[22] Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” [23] therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [24] He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Now we see the true punishment, Exile/True Death – they are indeed exiled, they die, and they are cut off from God, to live outside the garden in hostility and not paradise

- **God did not want them to live forever is the wretched state, and the punishment for sin was banishment – and so cherubim now block the entrance to God so they cant eat from Tree of Life** – God doesn't want man eternal in His depraved state

The one who was to guard the garden is now guarded from the garden – This is not the way it is supposed to be. **This is why the World is in turmoil. The one who was to rule abdicated that rule to a murderer.** All was under his feet, and yet he turns rule over to a creature (Satan) because he refused to be reliant upon his high king and listened to the voice of a murderer.

- **The intimacy they shared with God is now replaced by alienation and exile – they are like the Lepers (Lev. 13:46) sent outside the camp to a hostile world of death!**

And so we are left ALL OF CREATION IS ASKING Adam, Where are you? And so we see a garden of life that leads to death BUT THIS ISNT THE END OF THE STORY!

Part Three (Genesis 3:15) – “Gracious Creator” who makes a way to restore us to what we were meant to be

GENESIS 3:15 is a promise that God doesn't leave us in Rebellion but will send someone to crush the snake HEAD and reverse the curse, and regain dominion and entrance to the Garden – **rest of OT is asking who is this seed (birth of Seth is hope as Eve alludes to 3:15 *“God has appointed for me another offspring”*)**

- We see that the conqueror will be hurt, but will prevail (Crush or Strike) – see glimpses of skull crushers (**Goliath and Dagon**) – but all fall short and die – until you come to a man by the name of Jesus of Nazareth

And He comes on the Scene, and His miracles make a Point: He is demonstrating that He is this man who will fix what is broken (healing, and even the winds and the waves obey Him – Dominion)

He accomplishes the reverse of the curse and new creation by entering in and through a 2nd tree and garden

John's Gospel – A Genesis type of thing – Enarche (READ John 19-20) – And especially interesting that John's Passion week parallels the Creation Week...

- 6th day? Pinnacle of Creation - What does Pilate say when he sees Jesus, **Behold The Man (19:5)**
- **End of Day 6?** And what is the *Last thing Jesus says on the cross? On a tree as Galatians says*
- **7th day?** God rests in the Tomb
- **And on the 8th Day**, again in a Garden, NEW CREATION...

This is the point of the Scriptures, Jesus is Re-creating the World, Restoring the World, making sure again that there is a mandate for all of creation to bring glory to the Triune God and restoring us to our created purpose. So that we can be new creations!

How does He accomplish this? How does He restore – He does so by taking the thorns and thistles that come out of the ground on His head... BY BECOMING THE CURSE OUTSIDE THE CAMP

- He does so by taking every bit of the Fall into Himself Gal 3/2 Cor.
- **RESTORING ALL THAT WAS BROKEN**
 - o **Relationship with God – Notice what he says to Mary, "My Father and Your Father"**
 - o **With one another – Go get my brothers – foretaste in the church (1 John 1 – community of the Trinity)**
 - o **Creation – no more death or pain or tsunamis**

THE QUESTION HAS TO BE HOW CAN SINFUL REBELS be restored back into the PRESENCE OF HOLY GOD AND HERE IT IS...THROUGH JESUS!

- *"who became for all sinners all that God must judge so that we in Christ might become all that God cannot judge!"*
- **ALL ABOUT SUBSTITUTION** – We try to substitute ourselves for God and in Grace He substitutes Himself for us! *Jesus turned a tree of death into a tree of life!*

And Where is this taking us? Resurrection and New Creation – may not be 3 days, but its coming!

New Creation/Restored to Eden – Return to the Garden, The Final Tree and Final Garden (Revelation 22)

[22:1] Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb [2] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [3] No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. [4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. [5] And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

The 3rd Tree and Garden – Paradise Regained (*nothing accursed – no more curse*) – back in Eden (Physical reality, not clouds)

You see, Jesus is bringing about New Creation, not just for us individually, but for the entire Cosmos – a place un-frustrated by the fall – **imagine the beauty – and all 3 relationships restored!**

- With God: **Best of all God will be with us (Immanuel) – and we will call father ABBA as we live as worshippers glorifying and enjoying!**
- With Each Other: **Restored to one another as well – Rev. 5 all nations – with our bros and sis**
- **And Creation is restored – Romans 8**

Here the Imago Dei conformed to Christ is restored where there is no pain, tears, fall, curse, child cancer, aids, drug overdoses, school shootings – just communing with our King in the cool of the day!

Christocentric – why does Christ have right to accomplish this?

- **Christ was tempted as Adam in an even more vulnerable state** – Wilderness and not lush paradise, fasting not enjoying ripe fruit – not about Scripture Memorization – *who did not account equality with God a thing to be grasped*
- **Jesus is the Obedient Man who can restores Dominion and deals with the effects of the Tree** – He substitutes Himself for us. Adam’s command was “obey” and you have life, now Christ in Garden of Gethsemane “obey” me and you get death – as **The 2nd Adam takes the Consequences of the 1st Adam’s sin on Himself**
 - o **Outside the Camp: the truly Obedient Son who went outside the camp so we could be brought back in– AND HE COULD DO THIS BECAUSE HE WAS TRULY OBEDIENT – LIVED THE LIFE WE COULD NOT!**
- **Jesus makes a way for us back into the presence of God because He goes through the Sword of the Cherubim** – and on that Friday as He is being crushed for our iniquities the veil of Cherubim is torn in 2 – ACCESS to GOD **and by Sunday He has defeated the ancient murders final weapons** of accusation and death as He walks out of that tomb in the Middle East!
- **Now Jesus, like God in the garden, goes on a Mission seeking sinful humanity** – and what does He do on that day? **He Clothes us, the Scriptures speak of Him clothing us in Righteousness** and now not even nakedness can separate us from the Love of God in Christ! THAT’S GOOD NEWS!
- **And after He sits down completing His work** – it is finished restoring us to who we were meant to be and the cosmos itself to what it was meant to be

Conclusion

So the question has to be, is your life oriented towards His glory or toward your own glory? This is what you were made for – *it was broken in the fall but restored in the Gospel and is to be enjoyed in eternity in a new garden where we will perfectly fulfill our created purpose* – **so have you been restored?**

UNBELIEVER – If you have not, to be a Christian means simply to cry out to God in Christ and say have mercy on me, don't judge me on my own, but **clothe me in the Righteousness of Christ**

- Nothing else will restore you – **not being good enough**, or success, those are but fig leaves when you need another set of clothes
- **And the end of this chapter in Revelation, is what we hold out to you now** – *The Spirit and the Bride say “come” and let the one who is thirsty come... and let the one drink from the water of life without price!*

Believer:

- **Our call is the same** – Utter Dependence – Trust in His Word/Voice – **so are you living in humble reliance upon Him or are you grasping?**
- **Only way we will truly know God**
- **We are also called to Join in Christ's Mission** – **Bring the future into the present seeing restoration of 3 things broken (Rom. 16 – so are we crushing the works of Satan both physically and spiritually)** – **filling the earth with Worshipers**

And do you have unshakable hope today in the midst of this cursed world? You see death now is not the end of the story – there is a world to come without the CURSE (Beautiful)

- **Moody** *"someday you will read in the papers that Moody is dead... Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now"*
- **Bonheoffer** – *“This is the end – but for me the beginning of life!”*
- **Can we say this? Do we believe this?**

I close with the final words of the Last Battle *“And as He spoke, He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”*

And so we keep waiting on the world to change, but not for long, and we do so knowing that when it does we will be in Eden with our King in which every chapter will be better than the one before! – And now we turn to the table as a foretaste of that day when we will take and eat...