

Sermon Transcript from February 7th, 2016
Act 2: Naked and Ashamed
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Last week we began a series called "The Story of God." It's a meta narrative series through the whole Bible. Here's the working definition of the Bible that we unpacked in our last series. We said this. We said the Bible is a library of writings, that are both divine and human, that together tell a unified story which leads us to Jesus. That's like the working definition of the Bible as we've been going through the Bible.

That "unified story" piece is the series that we're in right now. We're trying to tell the unified story, the meta narrative. The Bible is one story told through many different authors in brilliant ways through different types of writings and plots and subplots. And we're trying to tell this one meta story; this one single story. Here's the big picture story that we talked about last week in a six-act play. Now, last week I told you five acts. I'm not adding an act to the Bible. I always wrestle with do I make Act 5 two parts or add an Act 6? Different theologians do different things, not that I'm a theologian. But, different people do different things with it.

I think, for our purposes, it actually might be good just to make it six acts. So, Act 1: Creation. That was last week. Today, The Fall. Next week, Israel and the Covenant and then Jesus. And then Church: Living in a New Covenant. And then Act 6 is the restoration of all things.

So, why is story and why is this story so important when we're reading the Bible and getting the meta narrative? Here's a quote from a book called "The Drama of Scripture." Very very important book when it comes to getting the story of God. The writers say this in their book:

"The Bible has the shape of a story that is an immense, sprawling, capacious narrative. It functions as the authoritative Word of God for us when it becomes the one basic story through which we understand our own experience and thought and the foundation upon which we base our decisions and our actions."

It is one thing to confess the Bible to be the Word of God. That's, "Yeah, okay. Good." But often quite another thing it is to know how to read the Bible in a way that lets it influence the whole of our lives. I would imagine there's a lot of people that come to this church in a part of this community that would say, "Yes, I would confess the Bible to be the Word of God." But it's quite another thing to allow the Scriptures and the way that you read the Bible to influence the whole of your life.

So today, we're going to talk about the fall. And I'm not going to do the thing where I talk about the fall and like, "These are three points on what it means."

Today, most of the sermon will be the story and what's going on in the story. And I want you to find yourself in the story. I think there's a reason why the author writes it as Adam and Eve and then, when it gets back into judgment, it's not as personal anymore and it's more Adam and Eve as their names in Hebrew. Humanity and Life. Humanity and Life are under this curse now. We all find ourselves here. And all of us might have different stories of why there's evil in the world, and this is what the Bible says, and I believe it to be, we believe it to be the true story of what's wrong with the world and what God's doing about it.

So, I'm not going to do the sermon thing and go, "Here's three things that rhyme with 'R' or whatever." You know? Like the way you're supposed to do. I'm just going to read it to you and then we're going to spend time pursuing and seeking God in worship. That's what we're going to do.

So, let me read to you Genesis 3. But, I'm going to read a couple – it's on the screen. Not the verses, but the verse I want to read. Genesis 2:15-17 and 25, and then Genesis 3:1-13. Just follow along. I'll let you know where we're at. We covered this last week, but this is important.

Genesis 2:15-17: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and care for it. And the Lord 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 from it you will certainly die.'"

Skip to verse 25.

Genesis 2:25-3:14, "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He

said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'

"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not even touch it, or you will die.'

"You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you're at from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

"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 of it and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her," – very important point – "and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?'

"He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'

"And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?'

"The man said, 'The woman you put me here with—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'

"Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'

"The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'

"So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, 'Cursed...'"

And He curses the livestock and the animals and then the serpent and then the ground and then child bearing and it goes on. Look at verse 21.

Genesis 3:21-24, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing both good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat it, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had come. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way back to the tree of life."

That's God's Word. Let me pray.

God, would You give us this morning wisdom and insight and understanding to this, our story? I pray, in Christ's name, that You would give me as well unction and Your Spirit. May Your Spirit be here, God, and may You teach us, all of us, God. I submit everything in my capacities to You. Teach us today, Lord. We sit underneath Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you are new to the Bible, you might have known this story. Of course, you probably know this story. But, when you read it for yourself, you realize how strange this literature is, because you're on page 3 and you have a talking snake. Okay? Or, okay, page 3 you have a talking snake or page 3 you have a woman speaking Parseltongue. Like, either way you're like, "This is weird. This is super weird. This is a really strange piece of literature."

But, there's probably not a more deliberate attempt to treat the problem of evil and temptation in the entire Bible than right here. The point being that we would find ourselves in this story. The point is that you and I would read this story and find ourselves in it because a lot of us have questions about why the world is the way it is. Why is the world both beautiful and also tragically messed up? What went wrong with this world and where did that come from?

Today, you might be watching the Super Bowl later on today. You'll probably see a lot of great aerial shots above San Francisco, though the Super Bowl is not playing here. But,

whatever. A bunch of beautiful shots of San Francisco. But, they probably won't show you the 13th Street underpass. They probably won't show you shots of that. But, they'll show you these great beautiful like – it'll look like Eden this afternoon. But, they won't show you that.

Why is this world messed up? Not just this world, but why am I so messed up? Why are you so messed up? If I was to sum up, in one sentence, what sin is, it would be a lyric from a Bruno Mars song. But, he doesn't sing it. He has a song called "Uptown Funk." You might have heard it.

The hook of the song uses a line from a Trinidad James song. He's a hip hop artist. They stole this line from one of his songs – well, they didn't steal it. They paid for it. A lot of money. That whole line in that Uptown Funk, "Don't believe me just watch," – don't believe me just watch. I think I just sang. Sorry. That, "Don't believe me just watch," came from a Trinidad James song. So, they have a Trinidad James remix of this song. You should listen to it. It's really good.

Trinidad James, at the beginning of the song, raps at the very beginning of the song. He has this line. I think this line is probably the single best line describing sin ever. He says this:

"I like myself on Instagram."

This is such a great line. Think about it. I know. I'm going to get philosophical for a second. But, this is it. It's like, "Number one, I take a selfie," which I think I've taught on that phrase before, right? That's sin. Selfie. "Myself. Me."

But, you go take it a step further and you post yourself. "Look at me, everyone." And then you see yourself and you're like, "I like it. I like I like I like."

You like yourself on the selfie that you told everyone to like. If you've ever done that, you are under the judgment of God. Like, just... and you know you are. Even if you don't believe in God. You will stand before God one day and God will be like, "How do you think you did?"

You're like, "I think I did pretty good."

He goes, "Mmm... remember that time you liked yourself on Instagram?"

"Oh, yeah. Yeah."

He's like, "Yeah."

You're like, "Hell, huh?"

And He's like, "Yeah. Yeah."

You will go, "You know what? Yeah. I get that. I totally get that."

I think that's just the best line to describe what sin is. What's going on in Genesis 3? What's going on right here to explain all of that? The brokenness in our world, the brokenness in us, the fact that sin has this systemic sort of thing to where our sin that we think is just affects everyone? Like, you might be suffering under the sin of your great great grandparents. You might be suffering under the sin of something that's gone on for generations. You might be suffering the sin of some very rich person who owns your building. You might be suffering under the sin of – we're all connected. Humanity's connected. We're connected with our environment. This is the way God made it, and there is a chasm, there's a brokenness that happens that affects everything.

So, your sin doesn't just affect you, it affects our environment and animals and other people that you don't even know of. The clothes that you buy can affect someone across the other side of the world and keep them in slavery. Like, our choices and our sins affect people.

Last week we said that the creation narrative provides the answers to the most fundamental questions. The Bible in Genesis 1, 2 and 3, it's not really trying to do new science. If you were at our John Walton lecture last week, he did a great job explaining this. It's trying to do origins and identity. That's what Genesis 1, 2 and 3 are doing. If you thought that

Genesis 1, 2 and 3 were trying to do science and you're like, "This is why I don't like the Bible," you're just reading the Bible wrong. It's doing origins and it's doing identity.

I used this quote last week from Christopher Wright, Cambridge PhD. He's an Old Testament theologian. He says this:

"The creation narrative provides answers for the two most fundamental questions that all philosophies and religions answer in different ways. Where are we and who are we? And then second, what does it mean to be human? Does human life have any value, meaning and purpose?"

This is what the creation narratives are trying to do at the very beginning. That "who" piece has a lot to do with who we are right now. Who are we right now? We are a people who have potential for tremendous good and horrendous evil at the same time. Why is that? Someone give an answer to why that is. Why can we absolutely kill it at our jobs but ruin almost everyone that gets close to us relationally? What is that about? Why am I so good at what I do but I ruin every relationship I'm in somehow? What is that about? Give me an explanation for that.

So, we have to back up. We have to back up to Genesis 1 and 2 and it says this. Here's a little recap of last week:

God created the world from chaos. God created the world from darkness, it says in Genesis 1:1-2, right? And He created the world good. He created the world, it says at the very end of Genesis 1, very good. The very first thing that you have to do if you start reading the Bible and you're a skeptic, secular or if you just don't believe it and you're reading it for the first time, which is great. Welcome. You have to confront this idea that when you open the Bible, this ancient text, its radical claim that the world is good.

Now, you're a modern person. You might think, "Well, yeah. Of course. Everyone believes that."

Not when this was written. This was a radically new idea. The world is good. It says that the world is good and, if you think that, you have the Bible to thank for that, by the way. The Bible says that world is full of meaning and potential and beauty. God brings, in Genesis 2, a garden out of chaos. He brings a garden out of this dark chaos and He plants a garden in Genesis 2.

Now, this is essential to the story. Please listen. There is still, when God creates a garden, some chaos, some sort of chaos and some sort of darkness, in the good world God created. Now, I know that might butt up against something that you might have believed growing up. You probably were taught that God created the world perfect. It never uses the word perfect. It says "good." That God ordered it and it was good. Chaos and darkness are ordered by God, but there are still more things to be done. There is still some kind of chaos and darkness and we're really not told how this is. We're just told that it is.

We're told that there is a snake in the garden. A serpent in the garden which God created, which was an ancient chaos-monster. So, in the middle of God's good created order, He puts Adam and Eve in there to keep the ordering going, to keep the good spreading out. But, in the midst of the garden, there's a chaos-monster, there's a serpent. And what we have to intuit was that Adam and Eve were supposed to rule over this cunning, created serpent. They were supposed to rule over it in a good way and a kind way. Adam and Eve were given the tools and the authority to rule over this serpent and the rest of the world. And the question that hangs over Genesis 2 is "how will they rule the world?"

Because God has created them in His image, He's created them to be in relationship with Him and with each other and He's created them to be vegetarians, but that's a whole different thing. He's created them to rule over the world. This is how He's created them. The question is "how will they rule?"

And, in Genesis 2:15-17, God shows Adam two trees. One he should eat from and one he cannot eat from. The question will be how will he rule? How will he create? How will Adam and Eve bring about beauty and goodness and order? How will they do that?

Two options. Will Adam and Eve trust and submit themselves to God's knowledge of good and evil? Will we see ourselves or will they see themselves as creatures and God is the creator? Will they respect that divine order? Will they go, "Wisdom starts with the fear of God. I'm not God. You're God. And I'm going to thrive under the order that you have established on this world; this good earth. I'm going to thrive under that order."

Will they do that or will they see satanism and hijack the definition of good and evil for themselves and bring vandalism of God's good world? How will they do it? Now, this is the dramatic, low reverberating tension that's hanging at the end of chapter 2. And just to add one more bit of tension, the author uses this line which is so important to this whole narrative. He says this:

"Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame."

So, they're in the garden and they're called to rule and create and order and spread the good. And the author just adds one more line before he moves on to the serpent narrative. "And they were naked and they felt no shame."

When you read that, you're like, "That is what life should be. It should be filled with no shame to where I can bare my soul and my body before another person and there's no shame at all."

Then the dialogue happens.

Genesis 3:1, **"Now the serpent was more craft than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made."**

This is very important. First of all, notice the word "crafty" there is not like this evil word. It just means tricky or shrewd. And the Lord created this serpent, okay? Adam knew this. Okay, remember Adam met all the animals before Eve was made? He knew the serpent. God's like, "This is the serpent. He's tricky."

He's like, "I know you're tricky."

Like, he met him. He knows. He knows that God made him and he knows he's a bit tricky. He knows he's shrewd. He got equated with him. He knows this. And then he said this to the woman:

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

Now, let me point out the obvious. This tricky snake started with questioning God. This trick snake which also should hint there's some sort of chaos going on here or something evil underneath the hood here. There's something going on here where this snake is doing something. He's questioning God and His Word and God's intentions.

This wasn't a yes or no question. This is a very smart and tricky question. He goes up to Eve and says, "God says you can't eat any fruit in the garden? What's up with that?"

I mean, that's not a yes or no question. You can't go, "No, God didn't say... Well, yes. No. Well He... We can eat the trees, but we can't eat one of the trees. You're just taking it a little too far."

So, she has to explain herself. She has to dialogue with the snake at this point and talk with it.

Genesis 3:2, **"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, '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.'"**

So she says to the serpent, "Yeah, we can actually eat all the trees. They're all good. But, there's one in the middle of the garden that God said, 'Don't eat, don't touch or you will die.'"

Now, some people have said, "Well, Eve added to the Word of God there. Eve said, 'Do not touch it.' God never said that. Eve added to the Word of God."

Okay. Maybe. Maybe. Or maybe it was just her way of getting her point across to the snake. Like, "Hey, I don't want to talk about this. Don't even touch it, snake. Okay? Don't even touch it."

A way of being emphatic. Like, "We can't eat it. Just don't even go by it."

It could be that. That could totally be the case. Or it may be that that was the way she interpreted "do not eat." If you're not going to eat it, why would you touch it? Or it could be the way that Adam told her about the tree. Like, "Hey, Eve. Let's just not even go

over there. Let's not even touch it. It's not even worth it. God said don't do it."

We don't know. We just know that both Adam and Eve knew that God told them don't eat this tree. Okay? So, verse 4.

Genesis 3:4, **"You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman."**

This is – guys, pay attention here. The plot of the narrative hangs here. This is the most important sentence in this entire scene. Listen carefully.

"You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

This is what God said to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve are in the garden and God says to them, "Trust me. The tree, that tree, is dangerous. And that tree will kill you. The knowledge of good and evil will kill you and you are not mature enough right now to handle that tree. Trust me."

This is God. "Trust me. Eat from the Tree of Life. Be in love. Love that tree. Rule the earth. Be in relationship. Be naked. Create order. Extend goodness. Eat from the Tree of Life, just don't eat this tree. You can't handle it. Trust me. It's bad. I mean, it's not bad, but it's bad for you right now. Don't do it."

"So, God says trust God, tree is dangerous, it will kill you."

This is what the serpent said to Adam and Eve. Are you sure you can trust God? The tree is good, God is not good and God is the dangerous one. Look what the serpent says: "God is bad, the tree is good and you won't die."

This is very very important. God is saying, "Trust me. The tree is dangerous and it will kill you," and the serpent's like, "It's God who's the bad guy. The tree is really good and you won't die."

The snake turns God into the bad person in the story. The snake implied that God was trying to keep His knowledge from them. The snake said, "Well, God is keeping something from you."

Guys, let's find ourselves in the story. Please. The snake is saying, "God is keeping something from you," but the whole narrative suggests that God was keeping the knowledge of good for them. All of the good that God created was for them. See, up to this point, the author depicts God as the one who both knows what is good for humanity and is intent on providing the good for them. God authors good and provides good. And this is what makes what's happening right here so tragic.

Adam and Eve had all the good they would've ever needed and all the knowledge they would've ever needed as created humanity. They had it all. But, they wanted more. And they thought that God was holding out on them and that there was still more good to be had and that God was keeping it from them. And they wanted to be like God.

This is what the serpent said, "Don't you know that your eyes will be opened and you will be like God? Don't you know that, once you eat of this fruit, you're going to have your eyes open and you're going to be like God?"

This is the tragic irony here. The tragic irony is that they were already like God. That's the tragic irony. Satan's like, "Don't you want to be like God?" And if you've known this part of the whole story, they were made in God's image. During the crowing part of God's creations, God's personality comes out and He says, "Let us make mankind in our image. Let us make man in our image."

God makes us in His image and He breathes in us the breath of life and everything that God wanted to share with us, He did. He shared with us relationship, He shared with us co-ruling with Him, being His image-bearers, bring about His goodness and His order. This is what it means to be like God. And God shared that with us. The irony is that they said, "We want to be like God," but they didn't realize they were like God.

To be like God is to share in God's relationship; to share in the Trinity. Like, being in a relationship with God and then everything God's in a relationship with. Right? Like,

humanity, without ourselves, with each other, with the world, with animals, with everything. That was what it means to be like God. To be in relationship with everything and everything's ordered and to rule and to order and to be part of extending the good. That's what God defines as being like God.

But then the serpent redefines what it means to be like God. He says, "What it means to be like God is that you know good and evil for yourself."

Guys, think about this. God's like, "To be like me means to be in friendship with me, in relationship with yourself and with each other and with the environment and with animals. Just to be connected, the shalom, the peace of God everywhere, and to rule in a great way and extend the goodness of my creation. That's what it means to be like God."

And the serpent's like, "No it's not. You know what it means to be like God? Choosing good and evil for yourself. Being your own judge and ruler. Saying, 'This is good and this is evil and I will choose for myself what is good and evil. And I will call this good because it fits into what I want to do in life and I'll call this bad. And I'm going to do it myself. I don't listen to God. I do it myself.'"

And the serpent is redefining what it means to be God-like. He doesn't say this, but the implications are that you can be autonomous and be a god yourself. You can define what is good and what is evil, you can know and you can be wise, all of that, apart from God. Now, this sort of thing is in our blood, this sort of thing is in our psyche and we do it in a million ways every single day. And at the root of this whole thing is the original seed that was planted there by the snake. "God is holding something back from you. The thing you want is good and God is not good."

That's the seed of it all. And so we hoard and we use people to make money or to get ahead because God isn't good enough to satisfy us. I need money and stuff and achievement. And I will never stop, I won't rest, I won't Sabbath. Whatever you want to call it. I won't rest. I won't take a day off because I must keep working because I have to control my world because God is not good and in control. I have to control it.

This thing spins out in a billion different ways. But it goes all the way back to this original thing. What happens next is theologically known as "The Fall" or "Original Sin." And it's pervasive. It's in all of us now. Adam and Eve, whose names can mean "human" and "life" in Hebrew. It's in all of us. Sin is in Adam and Eve or in human and life. Humanity and life. It's in all of us. Eve takes the fruit, Eve grabs the fruit and she calls it good – which is reserved only for God up to this point in the narrative – and eats it and gives it to Adam, who is with her, and he eats.

And this is what the Bible calls the first sin. Now, what is sin? Sin's a really strange word because we've made the word "sin" to mean some sort of like chocolate indulgence or something like that. Like, "Oh my gosh. That ice cream was so sinful." Or whatever. Or some enjoyable naughtiness or something. The pleasurable consumption of something is sin.

The word has been hijacked by our culture. There's a book that came out a couple years ago called "Unapologetic" by Francis Spufford. I think I've shared it with you before a couple years ago. He's writing it to more secular people. He's just making a case for why sin is real today. And he says that if you want to make people worried, you don't use the word sin. You change the word. You talk about eating disorders or addictions. You go to a whole different vocabulary cloud altogether.

But then he defines sin. It's a little PG-13, so bear with me, just so you know. He defines sin like this. He says:

"What I and most other believers understand by the word I'm not saying to you has got very little to do with yummy transgression. For us, it refers to something much more like the human tendency, the human propensity to 'F' up. Or, let's add one more word. The human propensity to 'F' things up. Because what we're talking about here is not just our tendency to lurch and stumble and screw up by accident, our passive role as agents of entropy, it's our active inclination to break stuff. 'Stuff' here including moods, promises, relationships we care about and our own well-being and other people's. As well as material objects, whose high gloss positively seems to invite a big fat scratch. Now, I hope we're on common ground. In the end, almost everyone recognizes this as one of the truths about themselves."

That human propensity to "F" things up, the Bible says started here. It's like, when things

are going great, we can't – something goes wrong. It usually starts with us. It says that when she saw the fruit of the tree was good, she took it and ate it. I think this is really important.

In Genesis 3:7, **"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked."**

Let's talk about this nudity here for a second. This is, again, another tragic irony. They called the shots of good and evil and they realized that they're naked. I find this very fascinating. There could've been a lot of things that happened as a result of eating the fruit, but the text gives us only one before and after glimpse. Right? The text could've said all kinds of stuff about before eating the fruit and then after eating the fruit, but it gives us one.

It says, "Before, they were naked and unashamed, and then after they ate it, they realized they were naked and they hid."

That's the only crossover that we have. That's the only before and after glimpse we get of when they ate the fruit. What was it like before the fruit? Naked and unashamed. What was it like after the fruit? Naked and shamed. What's going on there? Before eating, they were naked and unashamed. They lived together in – by the way, they knew they were naked. They saw each other. They knew they were naked. But, the word for naked in chapter 3 is different from the word naked in chapter 2. When they realized they were naked, it's a slightly different word in Hebrew. It's subtle, but it's there. And the author uses a slightly different word as a clue to what the story means.

That word "naked" would later be used in the Pentateuch, the same writer, as meaning to come under God's judgment. So, when you are naked in the Genesis 3 word, is to come under God's judgment as in Deuteronomy 28:48. Like, God judged and you would be naked. So, the affect of the fall was not simply that men and women came to know they were naked, but they came to know they were naked in the sense of being under God's judgment. No one told them that. That was immediately what they thought when they ate the fruit.

This is what this means. They were naked in the sense that they knew that their relationship with God had changed and they knew their relationship with each other had changed as soon as they sinned. You might not believe in sin, but as soon as you sin, something changes. As soon as you sin against a friend, against your neighbor, against God, that relationship changes ever so slightly or ever so not slightly. Something happens. Something concrete happens in the relationship and then you try to hide it. You don't want to tell people that. You don't want to tell your spouse or tell your friend or tell your roommate that that thing happened. You want to hide it; you want to cover it up. This is where this comes from. Like, this naked and ashamed feeling, it's like being under the judgment of something. They hid from God.

So, they hide from God because they hear God. So, they hear God. And that word "hear" is always, later on, tied to the word "obey." So, they hear God and they realize, "We didn't obey God," and they hide from God. They think God is coming to destroy them. But, God is coming to find them. And then they lie and then they blame shift. And Adam was like, "I heard you coming and I hid because I was naked."

God's like, "First of all, you've always been naked. So, there's that. Second of all, who told you you were naked. What do you mean by 'naked?'" Like, that word. Who told you that? Did you eat from the fruit?"

And then Adam immediately starts blame shifting. He said, literally it says this, "The woman you gave me gave me fruit."

That's what he's saying. He's like, "I'm just here, God. You gave me her and then she gave me the fruit. I'm just here. You're just giving me stuff and she's giving me stuff and I don't know."

And he turns a gift from God into the curse. He turns the gift like, "God's given you this partner and now she's the problem."

That happens immediately. And Eve does know better. She blames the snake. She goes, "But the snake."

And God's like, "Why are you talking to snakes?"

No, He didn't say that. But, He should say that. "Why are you talking to snakes?"

"The snake did it. He tempted me and he tricked me and I was tricked."

I think this is true. I think Eve was sincerely tricked. Later on, we're told that Adam sinned and Eve was deceived. Eve was deceived in that Adam spent time with the snake before Eve was around. Adam had some knowledge of what he was doing and he didn't pass that knowledge on. And Eve was literally deceived like, "Oh, this looks good and it seems right."

And they lie and they blame shift. And the tragic irony is that humans then withdraw within themselves. Now, if you trace this out it's that they withdraw within themselves. If you follow the story, they are actually becoming less human as the story goes along from the tree. They are less open to relationships, they know less, they're not known anymore, there's less ruling, there's less ordering and chaos takes over again. They undo the order that God has placed.

Sin creates a reality. It creates something in the air, in the room, it's pervasive. It doesn't just stop, but affects everything. It's like when you're driving – I don't know if you drive, but say you're driving, okay? And you decide, "I know I'm supposed to go from point A to point B like this, but I don't want to do it like that. I want to drive this way on a one-way street. I want to cross over here. I want to turn left when it says, 'No turning left.'"

Have you ever been around this people? Like, "No turning left," and the guy's like, "No. Not me. I'm turning left here."

And everyone's honking like, "You are ruining it for everyone. You're ruining my life right now. Your sin is affecting me."

That's what sin does. That is a perfect example of sin. You are in sin, you think that you can drive any way you want to here, and it's affecting me. Someone might rear end me because they're coming up because of your sin. This is what sin does. It's not just your thing. "I just sinned, but it was just my..."

It affects everything. It affects your friends and your family and your community and your church. The ripple effects are insane. All God wants to do is bring order. See, at the end of this story, God's at work again. I love this. The Lord makes the heavens and the earth by speaking, and then He rests. But then in Genesis 3:21, it says, "The Lord God made..."

It's like He's making again. He made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and He clothed them. Sin is introduced in the world and so is shame. And so is hiding from God and hiding from each other and brokenness and disorder and chaos all over again. And God goes to work to cover it. God goes to work to redeem it. When sin is introduced into the world, I want you to notice something. Who is fleeing and who is pursuing? Who is hiding and who is seeking?

There's this really bad caricature of God that you are so sinful that you cannot stand in the presence of God. And it makes it sound like God is running from you. Like, you have blood and you're dirty and you're like, "God! God!" and He's like, "Ah! No. Not now. Clean yourself up. I can't. I can't even. Just no. I can't do it."

And we have that caricature of God. But this is God. Adam and Eve sinned and God, immediately, is going after them and they're hiding and they're running and they're covering themselves up. And you're probably wondering, "Okay, but they got kicked out of the garden. What is that? Why did God kick them out?"

This is tragic. But, because this tragic irony occurred, the fracturing of everything, the reason God kicked them out is not to protect Himself, but to protect us. Not to go, "I can't be around you anymore. You're too broken. You're too dirty," but to protect us. He said, "They can go for the Tree of Life and live forever like this. That's not happening. They can't live forever like this. They must be redeemed."

So, He pushes us east and He exiles us out so that He can start a redemptive plan to redeem us back to Himself. He's the one going after us and we're the ones hiding.

That's the story. And I know that in this room there's a lot of sin in this room. A lot of sin. I know it just got uncomfortable in here. There's a lot of sin in this room. There's sin of lies and deceit, big ones that we are keeping from our best friends and our family and our spouses, small ones that keep adding up. Sins of sex. A lot of that. Some done out of

loneliness, some out of anger, some out of stupidity. There's a lot of that in this room. Sin of pride, sin of self-centeredness, sin of abuse. Abuse of people, abuse of substances. Sins of rebellion and stubbornness. Sins of ignorance and lapses of judgment. Sins of anger and sins of neglect.

A lot of us know all of this full-well. Like, we know all those things. Like, all those things. Yes. But, some of those sins are hidden, even from us. We've done those things, but we don't even remember that we did them or we did them in ignorance, even to ourselves. But, God sees them. And all of these sins have a way of creating cracks, keeping us from one another and keeping us from God. They just bring separation. When we sin, we're not likely just to run to God. If we're honest, when we sin, we just run from God and we hide. Or we might say something like, "I've already confessed this one before. I'm not going to do it again. So, God's going to need to like come find me or forgive me or something because I'm tired of asking Him for forgiveness for this one."

All these sins just have a way of keeping us further and further and further from each other to where you've become, because of sin – and you've known it. You've seen it in movie characters, you've seen it in characters at your job, you've seen it as people, especially in the area that we live in, with greed. These people become less human. They're not human anymore. You look at them and you're like, "You are not a human."

This is what sin does. Our hope is that God is pursuing us. My hope for you, my prayer for you today, is that you know that God is really pursuing you. He is after you. He might be asking really really pointed questions like, "Who told you you were naked," or "Why are you trying to hide from me," or "Why do you keep doing that?"

But, God's hope is that He would cover us. He wants to cover us. He wants to forgive us. He wants all of our sins to come under His Lordship and His forgiveness and He wants to pardon us of our sin and heal us and maybe that healing will happen in our lives and then ripple out. Maybe some things we've done that we will just have to sit under the consequences of for some time. But, God desires to bring about your purification, your holiness, your rightness before Him and then set you off into a new way to be human.

So, we're going to spend some time responding to God. We do this on a Sunday where the lights will go down a bit and we will have communion up front. And, if you remember in that video, communion is a way that we reenact what Christ has done for us. And that's what I want us to do. I want us to confess. Confessing sins of omission, sins of commission. Ways that we're broken, ways that we find ourselves in the story.

Let's pray.

God, the human condition is just this really frail, fragile thing, God. You remember that we are just dust. That we're made from dust, that we're a mortal people, fragile. That have the propensity to mess things up bad. We confess this morning that we have the propensity to mess up our life with You, our connection with You by neglect, by sin, by anger, by just not trusting that You're good, that You won't provide the things that we want. We confess our propensity to mess up relationships. Relationships with people in our own family, people that we're married to, sins that we do affect people that we love the most. Forgive us, God, for being stupid of that and ignorant of that.

I pray that, as children, we would confess our sins to our parents and as parents, we confess our sins to our kids and our spouses. As members of God's household, we confess our sins to one another saying, "I'm sorry the way that I hurt you and I've damaged you."

God, forgive us of our sin. We see it. I see it. We need Your forgiveness. We need Your Spirit to wash us and cleanse us and set us right doing deeds of righteousness, recreated for good works. Help us, God. Help us now. In Jesus' name, amen.