

“The Cover-Up”—Genesis 3:1-13

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Grab a Bible and meet me in Genesis 3...

We have a lot of ground to cover today, so I want us to make haste into our text this morning. You’ve probably notice that we will be sharing the Lord’s Supper with one another today. This is one of those Christian ordinances that we participate in as a faith family, whereby we remember the saving work of Christ and the difference it makes in our life. He is our only hope in life and death, and when we share this meal we are reminding ourselves of that fact. You do not need to be a member of our church to join us, but you do need to be a member of the body of Christ—meaning you have experienced God’s salvation, through faith in Christ alone. You recognize that you cannot save yourself, and at some point you have trust in Christ and His work—His perfect life, His saving death, and His victorious resurrection—as the sole basis for your forgiveness and right standing before God. If that’s you, at the end of our service, please join us. If that’s not you, then we hope that by the end of our time together today you will know this Jesus in a personal and saving way today. Listen carefully today, because there is hope for you. There is good news.

But to see it, we have to first look at a really depressing story. Let’s do that now. Hopefully you have found your way to Genesis 3. I will begin reading at the beginning. Follow along as I do. May God give us ears to hear.

“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”?’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.’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.

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.’” (Genesis 3:1-13)

This is God’s Word...

Last Sunday, we looked pretty closely at the first verses of this chapter. We saw how Scripture elsewhere identifies this villainous serpent as Satan himself. And we considered the M.O. (*modus operandi*) of Satan when it comes to his deceiving ways. In particular we saw that...

Satan's Deception Begins with Questioning God
Satan's Deception Leads to Contradicting God
Satan's Deception Encourages Rebellion Against God
Satan Deceives You Because He Wants to Devour You

We also examined how we see the same pattern observed in Genesis 3 playing out elsewhere in Scripture, including in Jesus' episode of temptation with the devil in the wilderness. Satan is a deceiver. He's not particularly creative when it comes to his deceptive ways. We get a sense of his M.O. right here in Genesis 3.

So let's dig a little deeper into this text, beginning with some thoughts on this tree that is at the center of our story (and the garden setting) in Genesis 3. The tree in the midst of the garden is called "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*" in the previous chapter, where Adam was instructed not to eat of its fruit (Gen 2:17). It's not necessary for us to imagine this fruit as having some sort of magical properties. Yes, I know, when they eat of it we are told that "*their eyes were opened*" (3:7), but that doesn't necessarily mean the fruit was anything special. Their experience was brought on because in that moment of rebellion they had lost their innocence. In eating of its fruit, they had become sinners, experiencing a spiritual death in a real sense. Now they knew guilt and shame. But I think this is owing to the sin, not to the properties of the fruit. I agree with J. I. Packer, who wrote,

"It would seem that the tree bore this name because the issue was whether Adam would let God tell him what was good and bad for him or would seek to decide that for himself, in disregard of what God had said. By eating from the tree Adam would, in effect, be claiming that he could know and decide what was good and evil for him without any reference to God."¹

Do you see? The tree bore the name because it represents a decision—the decision of who gets to determine what is right and wrong for humanity. If Adam were to eat of the fruit, breaking the law of God, it will be because Adam has decided that he doesn't want God to be the one determining what is right and wrong for him. He wants to determine that for himself. That's what this tree represents—a decision concerning who has the authority to determine right and wrong. So when Eve, guided by the serpent's lies, first eats, she is, in essence, saying to God, "I pronounce my own good, thank you very much, and I do not need you to tell me what I may or may not do....No, I will declare my own good. What you declare to be evil, I will declare to be good. What you say is good, I will declare to be evil."² This is what D. A. Carson has described as an attempt to "de-god" God, it's an attempt for a person to make themselves God, the arbiter of what is right and wrong. It's a revolution, an attempted coup. It's installing ourselves as our own personal gods. Idolatry. It's not the power of fruit that's in view then. It's about the allure of treason. Carson writes,

"For God has this sovereign, grounded-in-infinite-knowledge ability to pronounce what is good. Now this woman wants this God-like function. God says, in effect, 'It is not good to eat that particular fruit. You will die.' But if she does, instead of delighting in the wisdom of her Maker, she is pronouncing, independently, her own choices as to what is good and evil. She is becoming 'like God,' claiming the sort of independence that belongs only to God, the self-existence that belongs only to God, the moral absoluteness that belongs only to God."³

So this tree of knowledge of good and evil is not merely about *knowing* what is right and wrong, but about claiming for ourselves the authority to *decide* what is right and wrong. The sin of eating the forbidden fruit is not merely a sin of "law-breaking," but "law-making."⁴ Is sin any different today?

Contrast that with what we saw in Jesus last week. Jesus faced the same temptations in the wilderness. The parallels, you will recall, were remarkable. But when the evil one tempted Him to eat, do you remember His response? He quotes God's Word, saying, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matt 4:4). That's the opposite of what we see in the garden. "Jesus endures his trial, and instead of demanding an autonomous right to interpret good and evil for himself, he submits to 'every word

that comes from the mouth of God”⁵ That’s how we were meant to live—in submission to God’s Word, trusting in His good intentions for us—not like these first humans.

Now, let me address a question that some of us may be asking—Why would God even put a tree in the middle of the garden and then tell them not to eat of it? The existence of such a test admits the possibility of failure. We could have been spared a lot of trouble, we might think, if God had not created this one tree and given this one prohibition to not eat of the tree.

I understand the curiosity, and while I don’t presume to know the mind of God, I want you to consider the alternative. Glen Scrivener points out that “if there was literally nothing humanity could do to demonstrate *mistrust* of God, then there would also be nothing they could do to demonstrate their *trust* in God.” The tree in the midst of the garden, therefore, provides an opportunity for these first humans to express their love and allegiance to their Creator, something, I imagine, they would have longed to have an opportunity to express.⁶

Yet guided by the lies of the serpent, they use this tree instead as a means of rebellion. In choosing to eat of it the woman is declaring that she does not trust her Maker. She does not trust that her Creator knows what is best for her. And Adam, we read, was with her the whole time. Verse 6 tells us that after the woman ate, “*she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*”⁷ These are “some of the most consequential words in the Bible.”⁸

The sin of Adam is particularly heinous. The New Testament does make a distinction between the sin of man and the sin of his wife. Multiple times we are told later in Scripture that Eve, the wife, was deceived by the serpent (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14). But Adam was not deceived. He sinned with eyes wide open. What do I mean? Simply that Adam knew better. It was Adam, not his wife, who received the command from God concerning the tree. Look back at Genesis 2:16-17.

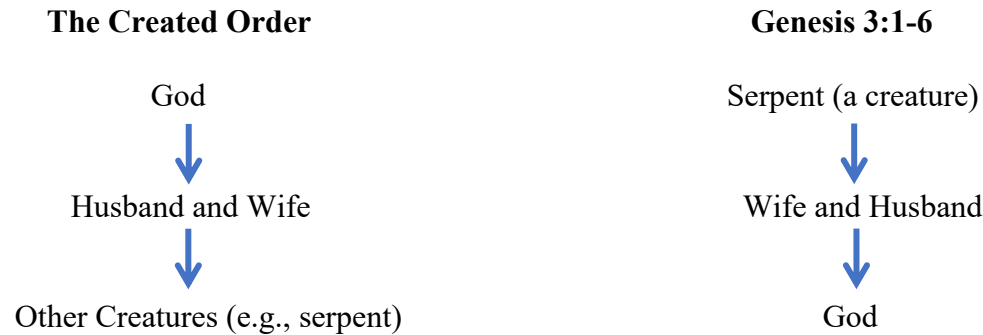
“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’.” (Genesis 2:16-17)

Notice that the command was given to the man. In fact, the woman has not even been created yet. So Eve’s impression of the command of God was, presumably, owing to her husband’s testimony. Therefore, when she answers the serpent in chapter 3—adding to the command by stating that God would not allow them to even touch the fruit (3:3)—we are left to wonder where that addition came from. Did Adam give her that impression? Did she make the addition herself? There’s no way of knowing. What we can know, however, is that Adam knew better. He could have stepped up, since he was with Eve in that moment, and corrected her and cast out the serpent. He should have intervened. But he doesn’t. He’s stood there idly. He listened. He bit his tongue. He let her be deceived. He took to hear the serpent’s words and disregarded the Lord’s. He took the fruit from the palm of his wife. And he ate.

In so doing, he sinned against God. He failed to lead and protect his wife. He didn’t live up to the calling of God to have dominion over “*every living thing that moves on the earth*” (1:28). He should have cast out the serpent. He should have slain the dragon, and saved the girl. But he was derelict in his duty. He blew it. And the Bible blames him, not Eve, for the aftermath that follows. She was deceived. He let it happen. He willingly participated, when he should have known better. He is responsible for mankind’s fall into sin. Scripture consistently blames him (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:21-22).

And notice how inverted the picture is. God created everything and gave dominion to those created in His image—man and woman. Within that home, man was delegated a responsibility to lead his household, so that together they could fulfill the mandate that God had given them. That mandate gave them authority over the rest of God’s creation. So we have God at the top, delegating authority to humanity, and every other creature under

them. But what did we just witness in the sequence of chapter 3? A reversal of that order. The serpent ended up ruling over humanity, the woman leading the man, and God's authority altogether disregarded.⁹



Then, in verses 8 and following, God enters the scene again. And what does He do? He puts things back in order, addressing each in order of their responsibility. So he begins with Adam. He starts with Adam because Adam received the command, he is the head of the husband-wife relationship (as we've seen in previous weeks), and he is held primarily responsible for the judgment that comes. We will get to the particulars of that judgment next week, but the effects of consequences are felt to this very day. The most obvious one is death. In Adam, all die (1 Cor 12:22). Every single one of us share in the consequences because humanities federal head—Adam—sinned against God and passed on his guilt.

Now that raises some questions. I suspect two of them are most pressing in our minds this morning. On the one hand we may be wondering, "What's the big deal about taking a bite of this fruit?" And, on the other hand, "Is it really fair that all of us share in Adam's guilt?" These are good questions. Let's address them in turn, starting with the first.

What's the big deal with eating a piece of fruit? It seems like, on the spectrum of sins that could be committed, this one seems a bit minor. But is it really? No, not really. Do you remember what James 2:10 says? It reads, "*For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*" So think about God's law in terms of the Ten Commandments. I know they haven't been given yet, but it's generally agreed that these commands are a summary of all of God's moral law. Think about those commands in light of this sin in Genesis 3. Mark Jones, in a book called *Knowing Sin*, helps give us some perspective. He writes,

"Adam's transgression was against the whole of God's moral law, which was written on his heart as one made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). His unbelief and pride revealed self-love, self-seeking, and self-promotion, which are violations of the first commandment. As the prophet, priest, and king of God's garden-temple, Adam was bound to worship God in a specific manner, which includes both what he should and should not do. By eating from the forbidden tree, he transgressed proper worship laws. In addition, he tolerated false religion in the temple and did not, as the guardian, destroy the works of the devil. In these ways he broke the second commandment. As God's image-bearing son, Adam was obligated to bring honor upon his Father through holy living. Adam failed to revere the word not only engraved on his heart but also spoken to him directly. This rejection of God's word constituted a dismissal of God's name and so a violation of the third commandment. Adam's disobedience also threatened his and his wife's participation in the eternal Sabbath rest (see Heb. 4:11) as they sought to rest outside of God. He thus transgressed the fourth commandment and placed the eternal state of his posterity in jeopardy.

As far as the so-called second table of the law is concerned, Adam failed to honor his Father (against the fifth commandment) in the garden, forfeiting 'long days.' Instead of providing life for his descendants, he brought death through sin as a murderer not unlike the devil (against the sixth commandment). Adam neglected to love and protect his wife with a proper sense of jealousy by allowing her to be entertained by the devil (against the seventh commandment). Eve subsequently stole

from God in taking the forbidden fruit (against the eighth commandment) while Adam not only did nothing to prevent it but also took himself. Adam failed to counter the devil's lies and Eve's reception of them with the truth (and the ninth commandment), acting rather in the likeness of the Father of lies (John 8:44). Finally, being discontent with his own estate and blessing from God, Adam coveted what did not belong to him (against the tenth commandment)...[All of this] displays the evil of Adam's transgression, which was ultimately a sin against God but in the particulars a rejection of the entire law of God (James 2:10-11)."¹⁰

Far from being "no big deal," the rebellion of Adam in the garden was an outright rejection of God and His ways. It's a big deal. And the consequences that still linger to this day testify to that.

Which brings us to the second question—Is it really fair that we should be inherit Adam's guilt and pain? Why must we die? That seems unfair to many. Why should Adam represent us? People really struggle with this idea of him being the head of humanity and his guilt being imputed to us.

But the question, as always, is not do you think this is fair. That's the question the serpent would have us ask. He would have us sit in judgment on God and His ways. But that's the wrong question. The question is not do you think this is fair, but is this what God's Word has revealed? And if so, are we going to take God at His word, or follow the serpent, making our own judgments on what is right and wrong, like Adam and Eve did? Don't do that. Learn the lesson.

And furthermore, just think it over. What happens if you abandon this teaching that theologians sometimes call "federal headship"—which has to do with representation, in this case Adam representing us when he fell into sin—then you actually end up pulling the rug out on our salvation—which involves Christ representing us in His life and death. If you reject the notion, in other words, of Adam being our federal head because you don't like the idea of someone else's actions counting for your own, then what do you do with the Gospel, which is good news precisely because it announces that through Christ's actions can be counted as your own? You can't have one without the other. Your guilty "in Adam," but made righteous "in Christ." You can't abandon the former in principle, without losing the latter. And you should abandon neither because both are biblical ideas. Consider Paul's words to the Romans to see this:

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:12-19)

You see? Christ is our federal head! He's a better Adam! The last Adam! And that is good news! And this is not the only place Paul talks like this (e.g., 1 Cor 15:21-22). When we realize our guilt in Adam, and we recognize our inability to remove it, we can look to Christ in faith to save us by His grace, and we are counted righteous in Him. His righteousness is credit to our spiritual account. We are counted morally pure and perfectly obedient because we are now "in Him." His death on the cross as our substitute, absorbed judgment deserved for our guilt as sinners—who sin by nature (in Adam) and by choice. His work saves, not our own. Realizing this, and

trusting in Christ alone to save us changes the ledgers in our favor. We are no longer condemned in Adam, but redeemed in Christ.

Is that your story? If so, then you love the doctrine of federal headship because Christ is your federal head. You may not have known you love that doctrine, but if you love the Gospel, you do! And if that is not your story, it can be. It can be today. Turn from your sin and self-reliance and works, and trust instead in the work of Christ alone. Believe that He died for your sin. Trust that He alone can save. Admit your guilt and sin, and call to Him to save you. There's no one better at saving. There's no one else who *can* save. He won't turn you away if you come in faith. You can trust Him today and be saved. And if you have questions, or want to discuss this further, let's talk. Fill out a response card in the pew, give us a way to contact you, and drop it in the plate at the doors as you leave today. Better yet, tell one of the pastors at the doors when you leave that you need to talk about this salvation. We can have a conversation. Nothing would delight us more. Trust me.

If you are unwilling though to trust in Christ for your salvation, then you will remain guilty in Adam. And that's not a fun place to be. And it doesn't get better moving forward. Just look at the immediate aftermath of this first sin in the garden. What we see in the ensuing verses is an utter breakdown in relationships. The authors of one book summarize the breakdown like this:

“Vertically, they experienced alienation and condemnation from God. Horizontally, they experienced alienation from each other. Internally (and schizophrenically), they experienced alienation within themselves. Cosmically, they experienced alienation in the world they were created to rule. These four effects of sin play out across the Bible's story, but they are immediately apparent from the very moment sin enters the world.”¹¹

How are they apparent? The cosmic implications we will consider later, when God's judgments are articulated in the second half of the chapter. And we will elaborate the first three in greater detail when we get to those verses too, but we already see some indication of the relational turmoil in the preceding verse. How so?

Well, to begin with, the damage to their relationship with God is obvious the moment they hear God approaching. What does verse 8 say?

“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.” (Genesis 3:8)

They hide from God. It's almost comical that they think God can't find them amid the trees, but that's their natural reaction to God as sinners—running from God, hiding. Their new guilt and shame have alienated them from God. They recoil from His presence, which was formerly a comfort to them.

What about their relationship with each other? It's broken too. The first indication is the way no one takes responsibility when questioned by God. Instead, everyone points the finger. Adam blames the woman (and perhaps even God) in verse 12, where he states, *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”* The woman blames the serpent in the next verse, justifying her actions, saying, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”* Blame shifting has begun, and it hasn't ceased for sinners ever since. We sin, and we immediately search for scapegoats.¹² Reflecting on these verses, D. A. Carson makes some helpful observations:

“One of the things that commonly occurs in the wake of defying God is this: we deny that we have any responsibility for what happened. Everything we do that's wrong is someone else's fault. To put this another way: one of the inevitable results of guilt and shame is *self-justification*. Adam justifies himself by blaming Eve; Eve justifies herself by blaming the serpent. Our only hope of being reconciled to God, however, is for *God* to justify us, for *God* to vindicate us. *Self-justification* cannot cut it, for we are

guilty; in fact, self-justification is merely one more evidence of idolatry—the idolatry of thinking we have the resources to save ourselves, the idolatry that is still so impressed by self that it cannot readily admit guilt.”¹³

He then calls to mind an oft-quoted anecdote from the life of G. K. Chesterton. Early in the twentieth century, the *Times* (a London publication) invited several famous authors to write articles related in response to a simple question: “What’s wrong with the world?” Chesterton submitted a contribution. It simply read,

“Dear Sirs,
I am.
Sincerely yours,
G. K. Chesterton”¹⁴

That man got it. Do you? Adam certainly didn’t in the moment. When he was questioned by God, there was an opportunity for him to come clean. Do you really think that God didn’t know Adam’s location, when He calls to Adam—“*Where are you?*”—in verse 9? Of course not. He calls to Adam because He is giving the man an opportunity to confess. The man should have said in that moment, “I have sinned. According to your word and because I have rebelled against *you*, I deserve to die. Please forgive me.”¹⁵ That’s what genuine confession looks like. Have you made such a confession to God? Or do you, like Adam, blame other or reach for self-justifications. The latter response will get us nowhere with God, but it is a response that is “endemic to the fallen human nature.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, only genuine confession opens us up to receive God’s grace. What a comfort to know, as God’s Word tells us, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9). Confess your sin and need to God. Christ died to make provisions for your sin. His work purifies us of our unrighteousness. What a gift.

Finally, we see the breakdown in our relationship with our selves. The plague that is guilt and shame is very clear in this text. Chapter 2 ended by telling us that “*the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed*” (Gen 2:25). But immediately after they partake of the forbidden fruit, what are we told? Look at verse 7 of chapter 3—“*Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*” The immediately feel shame for their nakedness. That’s what guilt brings—feelings of shame. And what do we do with our shame? We do what they did. We try to hide it. But our feeble attempts at hiding our guilt and shame from God and others are just that—feeble. They just won’t do.

So what does God do? Fast forward to verse 21.

“*And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them*” (Genesis 3:21)

Where did these garments come from? It would seem they came from animals. Which means blood was shed to cover the shame of their nakedness. In which case, this is the first of many sacrifices that we will encounter in the Old Testament, a precursor to the whole sacrificial system to come. As such, it points us to Jesus (as does every sacrifice in the Bible). “Here in Genesis 3 the death of an animal to cover the man and the woman is a picture of what is to come, the first step of an entire institution of sacrifices that points us finally to the supreme sacrifice and what Jesus did to take away our sin and cover up our shame.”¹⁷ God is already hinting at the cost of removing our shame. Blood must be spilled. And the garments that Adam and Eve were given were a constant reminder of this.

I so appreciate what Marcus Dods has written on this:

“It is also to be remarked that the clothing which God provided was in itself different from what man had thought of. Adam took leaves from an inanimate, unfeeling tree; God deprived an animal of life, that the shame of His creature might be relieved. This was the last thing Adam would have thought of doing.

To us life is cheap and death familiar, but Adam recognised death as the punishment of sin. Death was to early man a sign of God's anger. And he had to learn that sin could be covered not by a bunch of leaves snatched from a bush as he passed by and that would grow again next year, but only by pain and blood. Sin cannot be atoned for by any mechanical action nor without expenditure of feeling. Suffering must ever follow wrongdoing. From the first sin to the last, the track of the sinner is marked with blood. Once we have sinned we cannot regain permanent peace of conscience save through pain, and this not only pain of our own. The first hint of this was given as soon as conscience was aroused in man. It was made apparent that sin was a real and deep evil, and that by no easy and cheap process could the sinner be restored. The same lesson has been written on millions of consciences since. Men have found that their sin reaches beyond their own life and person, that it inflicts injury and involves disturbance and distress, that it changes utterly our relation to life and to God, and that we cannot rise above its consequences save by the intervention of God Himself, by an intervention which tells us of the sorrow He suffers on our account. For the chief point is that it is God who relieves man's shame."¹⁸

And this brings us to the table. The ordinance before us—the Lord's Supper as it is called—is a reminder of the suffering that Jesus endured to relieve sinners like us of guilt and shame. His body was broken, like bread. His blood poured out, like wine. His cross was a sacrifice for our sins. He paid the penalty owed to us. Through faith, we have a full and final salvation that only His precious blood could provide.

The first Adam plunged a race of people into sin and death when he *took* and *ate*. But isn't it interesting that the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, carried a new race of people—God's people—to forgiveness and life by His cross, which He called to mind when He told His disciples to what? *Take* and *eat*. This is my body, He said. What a reversal! The same invitation that destroyed us is turned on its head by Christ for our redemption. The first Adam found death when he took and ate. We find life when we take and eat, not of bread and wine, but in what the elements signify—Christ Himself. He died for our sins. And I hope that as we distribute the elements, I hope that you will reflect on His cross, on how He undid our undoing as described in Genesis 3. Use this time to confess your sin before God, hold fast to your hope in Christ's saving work, and worship God in view of Christ's sufficiency.

Let's pray...

[Deacon's coming forward. Lord's Supper elements distributed]

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career:
I saw One hanging on a Tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fix'd His languid eyes on me,
As near His Cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look:
It seem'd to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke:
My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins His Blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail Him there.

Alas! I knew not what I did!
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain!
—A second look He gave, which said,
‘I freely all forgive;
This Blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die, that thou may’st live.’

Thus, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.
With pleasing grief, and mournful joy,
My spirit now is fill’d,
That I should such a life destroy,—
Yet live by Him I kill’d!

John Newton (1725–1807)

Brothers and sisters, let me invite you to take, eat, and remember...

Let’s pray once more...

¹ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1993), 96.

² D. A. Carson, *The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God’s Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 33.

³ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁴ Vaughn Roberts, *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2002), 39.

⁵ Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology: Core Doctrines for Christian Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 137.

⁶ Glen Scrivener, *Long Story Short: The Bible in 12 Phrases* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2018), 33.

⁷ “Further support for the husband’s presence is found in the fact that, when speaking to the woman in verses 1-5, the Serpent repeatedly uses the plural *as if he is addressing them both*.” John D. Currid, *Genesis, Volume 1*, EPSC (Leyland, England: Evangelical Press, 2003), 119.

⁸ Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 87.

⁹ Carson, 34; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 33-35.

¹⁰ Mark Jones, *Knowing Sin: Seeing a Neglected Doctrine through the Eyes of the Puritans* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2022), 19-20.

¹¹ Hunter and Wellum, 87.

¹² “In ancient as in modern dualism, the problem of evil is identified with created nature in an effort to externalize sin by attributing it to the ‘other’—‘the woman you gave me,’ our physical or social environment, our family, or other circumstances beyond our control, but ultimately God. We look for scapegoats.” Horton, 145.

¹³ Carson, 35-36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵ Hunter and Wellum, 88.

¹⁶ Currid, 126.

¹⁷ Carson, 39.

¹⁸ Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis*, EB (Bottom of the Hill Publishing, repr. 2015), 25-26.