

# Sin and God's Good News

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** People sinned against God and ruptured our created purpose, but God has provided forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

**MAIN PASSAGES:** Genesis 3:1-7,14-21; 4:1-8

As a society, it seems that we sure don't agree on much these days. Actually, about the only thing we might agree on is that something is not right with the world. The broken world we see on the news, streaming through our social media feeds, or in the lives of those closest to us hammers home one key truth: somewhere at some time in our long history, something has gone horribly, tragically wrong.



When have you said or done something you were ashamed of, and how did you respond afterward?

# Group Time

## Point 1: Sin is defiance against God (Gen. 3:1-7).

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. <sup>3</sup> But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup> “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup> The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The lies of unbelief, idolatry, and rebellion were first believed by Adam and Eve and now bubble up from every human heart. They are everywhere in our culture. It has become almost an assumed dogma that to “follow your heart” is the best path to happiness and freedom. But Scripture shows that those who follow their heart, apart from the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, are actually following the voice of Satan.

**Sin as Rebellion:** Sin is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ disobedience, the raising of a \_\_\_\_\_ toward the One who made us.



How have you seen these three aspects of sin—unbelief, idolatry, or rebellion—in your community? How have you seen them in yourself?

List some ways people try to hide their sin from God and from others.

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## Point 2: Sin brought death and ruptured our created purpose, but hope remains (Gen. 3:14-21).

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

<sup>16</sup> He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

<sup>17</sup> And he said to the man, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’: The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.”

<sup>20</sup> The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

The sin of the first couple had devastating consequences for Adam and Eve, and it does for us as well. The Creator God handed down His punishments to the serpent, the woman, and the man for their part in this sin, and we bear those same consequences today, both for their sin and for our own.



How does sin damage the lives of people?

Sin has wrecked and ruptured our created purpose to rule over God’s creation and steward it for His glory and the good of others. The consequences of sin are severe, but from the first moment of sin, God also responded with a message of hope to His people.



Looking back at how sin has damaged your life or the lives of others you know, what truths about Jesus and the gospel give you hope?



### Voices from Church History

“There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.”<sup>1</sup>

—Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)

### Point 3: Sin and death have spread to all humanity (Gen. 4:1-8).

<sup>1</sup> The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, “I have had a male child with the LORD’s help.” <sup>2</sup> She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground.

<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> And Abel also presented an offering—some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, won’t you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup> Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Cain and Abel gave God the very first offerings of the entire Bible, but God only accepted one. Perhaps the key difference between the two was the way they were offered. Abel gave some of the firstborn of his flock, his “first and best”—an act of faith before any other animals were born. Cain may have waited to see what he had before committing it to God, giving only after he knew he could spare some.

**Sin as Selfishness:** When we sin, we are acting out of a selfish attitude and mind-set that assumes our action will lead us to more \_\_\_\_\_ than if we were to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

When we make our happiness, our pleasure, and our freedom paramount, we become capable of almost anything. But the true fruit of selfish sin is unhappiness, hatred, worry, and despair, for both ourselves and those around us. Our sin exposes our desperate need of salvation and our need of God’s grace. We all need Someone to come who can crush the sin crouching at our door so we can rule over it and do what is right.



What are some ways people demonstrate selfish sin today?



# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read Genesis 3:1-7

When you read through Genesis 1–2 for the first time, the final verse of these chapters might seem rather odd. Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. Why would God include that detail—one that is prone to make us blush?

We find the answer seven verses later. After Adam and Eve sinned, their eyes were opened and they *knew* they were both naked, so in shame, they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. These two verses work together, as bookends to the first sin. The first verse shows God’s intention for Adam and Eve. They were to enjoy complete intimacy and acceptance of one another in marriage. There were no barriers between them. The second verse shows sin’s immediate and devastating consequences. What God had intended for Adam and Eve to enjoy was lost. Intimacy and acceptance gave way to barriers and shame.

Our blushing reminds us of what was lost. Just reading of Adam and Eve’s nakedness makes us uncomfortable. Deep down, when we read Genesis 2:25, we feel what the first couple didn’t feel in that moment—shame—revealing how deeply sin has affected us. And just like Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:7, we do all we can to cover our shame from one another and from God.



### Voices from Church History

“[Adam] had been naked, you see, of pretense, but clothed with divine light. Having turned away from this and turned to himself ... he saw his own nakedness, and was displeased with himself as not having anything he could call his very own.”<sup>2</sup>

—Augustine (354–430)



How do you try to hide your sin from God and others?

## Day 2: Read Genesis 3:8-13

“Where are you?” That is a curious question that God asked Adam in Genesis 3:9. Our omniscient, omnipresent God knew exactly where Adam was, exactly what Adam and Eve had done, and why they were cowering in the bushes that day. So why ask? Because God wanted to give Adam the opportunity to confess his sin, to come clean to what had happened as a critical step toward repentance.

This did not stop with Adam. God strategically asked individuals questions throughout Scripture. God asked Job if he knew more than Him and Jonah if He had the right to care more about a city full of people than the wayward prophet cared about a plant. Jesus questioned a man why he was asking about what is good and inquired of Peter repeatedly if he loved Him. None of these questions were designed to solicit knowledge. Instead, they each pointed the person to the heart of the issue, to what mattered most, so each could see God and themselves properly in light of Him, His Word and His gospel.



What sins do you need to confess to God?

## Day 3: Read Genesis 3:14-21

Like Adam, Jesus was tempted by Satan (see Luke 4:1-13). Adam was tempted once and yielded to that temptation. Jesus was tempted three times and He resisted each by doing what Adam failed to do: trust in God’s word. While Adam doubted God’s word, Jesus clung to it.

Adam was tempted in paradise, surrounded by beacons of God’s faithful provision and beauty. Jesus was tempted in a barren wilderness. Adam’s failure in paradise led to humanity being expelled into the wilderness of sin and death. Jesus’ resisting temptation in the wilderness affirmed He was the One who would bring sinners out of that wilderness and back into paradise.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, ate from a tree, and died. Jesus willingly obeyed God by being nailed to a tree to die for us. He took the bite of the serpent and the poison of the curse so that we could be released from both. And in doing so, Jesus crushed the serpent’s head.



Even in the midst of God’s judgment of sin in Eden, we see His grace. How have you experienced God’s kindness in times you have been disciplined by Him?

## Day 4: Read Genesis 3:22-24

The first man, Adam, had given in to temptation and rebelled against God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, resulting in disastrous consequences for him, his wife, and all humanity. Then God turned His attention toward the second named tree in Eden—the tree of life. To prevent Adam from eating of this tree and living forever in his sin, God banished the pair from the garden and stationed cherubim—angelic creatures—at its entrance with a flaming sword to bar access.

Just as God’s judgment of sin earlier in the chapter had been saturated with grace, so was this expulsion. God had a plan to provide life for Adam and Eve and the rest of humanity. And that plan included a tree, but it wasn’t the tree of life. God would provide life through His Son hanging on a tree—the cross. Salvation would not come through what man could do but through what God would do.



How are you prone to try to “fix” things when they go wrong in your life instead of relying on God?

## Day 5: Read Genesis 4:1-8

We often talk about “falling” into sin. One thing leads to another, and a married man “falls” into an affair. Trying something one time leads to a woman “falling” into an addiction. It’s almost as if we are innocent victims—sin just happens to us.

While there are times when we can “fall” into sin, the reality is that more often than not, we choose to jump into it. That’s what Cain did. God even warned him. “Do what is right and you will be okay, Cain. But look out because sin is crouching at the door, ready to devour you.”

As we know, Cain failed to heed God’s warning. He chose the crouching lion, led his brother into the fields, and killed him. In God’s kindness, He warns us of the danger of sin and presents to us the beauty of obedience—both for us to heed and to share with others.



Whom do you know who needs to be warned of sin? How can you share with him or her this week?

