

Genesis

Foundations for Life

Wk 3: The Fall: When Unbelief takes over - Ch 3v1-24

This Weeks Summary

The enemy deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, causing sin and death to enter God's perfect world. We live in that fallen world and face the same enemy trying to tempt us away from God's perfect rule.

For Study:

Read and reflect on the following verses that speak of our battle with temptation:

- **James 1:12-18** - the anatomy of temptation
- **Luke 4:1-13** - the Master resists temptation
- **Psalm 119:9-16, Matthew 26:36-41, 1 Peter 5:6-11, Ephesians 6:10-18** - our weapons against temptation
- **1 Cor 10:12-13, Hebrews 4:14-16** - good news for those who are tempted

Here are a couple of areas that our passage today touches on:

Original Sin:

This is the teaching that flows from the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Literally, their sin affected the whole of humanity - every human being that would be born from that day until the end of time is born cursed because of what they did. We don't come into this life with a clean slate and the chance to keep ourselves away from sin - we are born into this world with the inevitability that we will fall into all kinds of evil because we are 'by nature children of wrath' (Ephesians 2:3). King David also speaks of this reality in the Psalms when he says that he was 'brought forth (born) in iniquity' (Psalm 51:5).

This isn't a popular teaching by any means, but it is an important one. It brings up all kinds of questions about where babies and young children stand, who don't seem to have had the chance to choose between right and wrong. People will also use this teaching to claim that God is incredibly unfair in not giving us the ability to escape sin, but is effectively punishing us for what someone else has done. The Bible doesn't answer all these questions in detail, but as we consider them we can remember a few things that the Bible definitely does say about God. Firstly, God is entirely just and fair - there will not be a single person who is judged by God for eternity in hell who will be able to complain about their guilty verdict. Secondly, redemption is available for absolutely everyone through the all-sufficient blood of Jesus - there is no favouritism in God, and thirdly we should remember that we still serve the God of Genesis 1 - a God who is good in everything He does. We may not entirely understand Him, but we can trust Him, and that is what matters.

This teaching should also do a couple of things for us - firstly it should magnify grace in our lives. We were born into this world completely incapable of rescuing ourselves. Before we knew how to walk and talk our sinful nature was already rearing its ugly head, and there was nothing we could do to break free of that downward slide. It was into that place that the grace of God reached down to us in the person of Jesus. There was nothing in us that prompted such amazing love, but we're here today as recipients of it just the same. In a strange way the reality of original sin should lead us to

worship! Secondly it should cause us to get on our knees as we look at a world that is just as lost as we were. There's nothing wrong with trying to articulate and argue for the truth of Christianity as well as we can, but we must realise that our clever arguments can never perform such a great rescue - only God can.

Resisting Temptation

We saw in our passage this week the progression that Eve went through before she took the forbidden fruit and the world fell into sin. It brings us a really important question of how we can resist the temptations that come our way. James 1:12-18 gives us a good breakdown of what temptation looks like for us, and it tells us that our desires are at the heart of the problem. All of us have all kinds of desires flying round in our minds and hearts, and many of them aren't even for bad things. Our problem comes when we start to try and fulfil that desire in whatever place we can, and at whatever cost is necessary. In James' language, this is where a desire has 'conceived' and will no longer be satisfied to wait patiently for fulfilment, but will go out and find it wherever it can. For example, a desire to be successful at work isn't a wrong one, but when that desire has so gripped a person that they will treat their colleagues any way they have to in order to succeed, then that desire has 'conceived' and will now bring forth sin. So how do we stop this happening? James tells us the primary battle-ground that we fight this war on by saying 'do not be deceived, my beloved brothers'. This is a war of deception versus truth, and it's in this place we will stand or fall in our battle against temptation. As Jesus said, it's the truth that will make us free, and it will free us by showing us the sin never pays, but walking with God does. Back to our example - if we saw the truth that success at work isn't necessarily being at the top of the tree, and that treating other human beings like dirt to get to the top is worthy of judgment, then we wouldn't even think of living that way, instead we'd listen to the Bible when it tells us to work with all our hearts 'for the Lord, and not for men' (Colossians 3:23) - that is real success. James concludes this small section by encouraging us with the truth that would have saved Adam and Eve (and all of us) a lot of heartache if they'd believed it - '**every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**' - not from the lips of a talking snake!

For GC Discussion:

- How does living in a fallen world affect our lives, and how should we respond to this?
- How can we recognise the schemes of the enemy in our lives that try to turn us away from Jesus?
- What can we learn from the way Jesus dealt with temptation
- What other weapons do we have in our armoury to resist those temptations?

For the Kids: What does it feel like to be tempted to do something wrong? How can we stop ourselves giving in to that feeling?

In 2 Weeks time:

We will study the story of **Cain and Abel** in Genesis 4 as the effects of sin entering the world begin to be seen.

Notes & Questions

For Worship: listen to '**Lord, I need you**' by Chris Tomlin - you can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.