

## A Fur Coat and an Eviction Notice

3, Genesis chapter 3. We are back in Genesis today, and Lord willing, we're going to finish out this section of Scripture today. We've been exploring these studies on the fallout after Adam and Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden. And I trust as we've been studying that, that there's been this mega theme that you have seen over Genesis 3 amid the failure, amid the fallout, and that is the grace of God that triumphs over human failure.

The grace of God triumphing over human failure has been the unmistakable theme of all that we've seen in Genesis chapter 3. And there's been many truths that we've been cleaning, but that, of course, is kind of the mega theme over the whole section. And since it's been a couple of weeks, just to kind of remind you, we've traversed a lot of ground in Genesis 3. We've seen a lot of truths. And just to name a few, we witnessed the wisdom and goodness of God in its original created design.

We saw there the garden that God created as a place of life and abundance for man. We saw the generosity of God that He didn't have a lot of rules in the garden. In fact, He gave man the opportunity to eat from any tree in the garden except for one.

And so, there we saw the generosity of God and the goodness of God to withhold nothing beneficial from man. He was in no way stingy. And then, of course, we began to see the penchant of the human heart, which is to instinctively distrust the character of God.

Deep down inside, there's the thought that God is not really as good as He says He is, or He will not treat me with generosity, or perhaps even He's withholding something good from me. And so, we saw then in the same way that Eve was susceptible to that lie, so too our hearts are susceptible to believing that lie. And furthermore, we saw Satan's schemes, which are to plant seeds of doubt, knowing the natural inclination of the human heart, to fan the flames of pride in our hearts, to sow distrust toward the Lord, and frankly, we're spiritually gullible, so we often take the bait, do we not? We saw the common pattern of temptation in the Bible bear out in the garden, namely the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life.

We saw how prone we are to deception, believing even that we can sin without consequence, believing that somehow we might be the exception, that we could somehow get away with sinning and avoiding consequences. And we watched Adam transgress, and it was heart-wrenching to watch him follow his wife into transgression. And furthermore, the reality that the text would indicate that he understood what he was doing, and he wanted to disobey in that moment.

He wanted to defy God. And then we saw the immediate devastation. The immediate devastation, the immediate awareness of nakedness and shame, and that physical nakedness represented the internal guilt and shame that they were both immediately feeling.

And then we saw the, what I would call maybe oh so cringy and oh so relatable response of the

human heart when we're caught in our sin, namely to do what? To try to cover our sin, to run and hide, to blame shift, to try to deny the issues that exist. This is just the human heart. Our flesh does not want to face the reality of who we are and what we've done.

The natural man, in fact, recoils from the knowledge of his own personal sin. He doesn't want anyone else to know about it. And then we saw the curses that came as a result of the fall, namely that every domain of life now, every domain of life has been impacted by the fallout of this first sin.

We saw that every area of life now is impacted by difficulty, beset with pain and sorrow and reduced productivity. And all of that, we walk through this life in the valley of the shadow of death with death looming as the last great enemy. And so every natural evil that you've ever experienced in your life, every moral evil outside of you that's come against you all finds its genesis right here in Genesis chapter 3. And so frankly, this has been a dark chapter, has it not? These have been some sobering themes.

It's been kind of heavy at times, gives us a peek under the hood of what's going on inside of us. It starts to make sense. Why do I think the way I think? Why do I desire what I desire? Why do I feel the way that I feel? Why do I do what I do? And all of this, of course, then has pointed to our need for a Redeemer.

And through it, we've watched the character of God on display and how He comes and deals with our first parents. And I just love this because what we see is that God is on the one hand uncompromising in His justice. And at the same time, He's merciful and He's gracious.

Let me just recount in this very chapter, Adam and Eve sin and God does not strike them dead immediately. What is that? That is mercy. That is grace.

And furthermore, we saw how although they had run and hid from God, God pursues them in the garden. He seeks them. He seeks the lost because Adam and Eve never would have come to God on their own to acknowledge their sin, but God pursues them.

And when He meets them, He doesn't begin with a lecture, but He begins by asking them questions. Why? So He can restore them, so He can bring about a right relationship. And then before He doles out the consequences and begins to delineate the curse, He gives them the promise of hope.

And so while He's dealing with Satan, He lets Adam and Eve know before they even get their consequences, by the way, I'm going to send a promised seed. I'm going to be merciful to you. In my wrath, I will remember mercy.

And so right here in the opening pages of the Bible, we have the message loud and clear screaming our human condition, and then God's disposition toward His own people, that He comes to us in our sin and He's gracious and He remedies our problem. Surely this is grace upon grace, grace upon grace. That was the terminology that the Apostle John used in his

prologue, where he's talking about partaking in the fullness of Jesus Christ.

He says, in Him we have received grace, not just grace, but grace upon grace. One commentator writes, this phrase suggests an ongoing abundant supply of grace. It's emphasizing the continuous and overflowing nature of God's favor and blessings through Christ.

It can be understood in this way, one grace replacing another grace, indicating the progressive and cumulative nature of God's work in believers' lives. You understand God's grace to you is not a one-time event. Rather, it characterizes His disposition towards you, His treatment of you as His child.

It is ever-flowing, and it is overflowing, and it is comprehensive in our lives. It is lavish. And so grace, the word itself, does not appear in our text this morning.

But as we will see, the theme is demonstrated over and over in how God deals with Adam. I've entitled this morning's message, A Fur Coat and an Eviction Notice. A fur coat and an eviction notice.

Genesis chapter 3, I want to read our text this morning, beginning in verse 20. The man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Then the one of us, and knowing good and evil, now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

If you're keeping an outline this morning, this text yields three more evidences of grace in the fallout. Three more evidences of grace in the fallout. We've been chronicling God's grace to Adam and Eve in the fallout, the aftermath of their sin, and I would say the text this morning is going to yield three more evidences of this same grace on display toward our first parents.

The first evidence of grace in the fallout here is that Adam is convinced of God's promise. Point number one, Adam is convinced of God's promise. Verse 20, we read, the man called his wife's name Eve.

You know, so far Eve has been called a number of different things. She's been referred to in various ways. Chapter 1 verse 27, God said, let us make man, and he was referring to Adam and Eve at that time.

So it's appropriate in that sense we say, all men are created equal, or God and man, or man and beast, that Eve, although a female, is also a man. She's a human. That's the type that she is.

She's a man in the sense of all mankind. Later in verse 27, she's not only called man or mankind generically, but a female. Then in chapter 2 verse 18, she's called a helper.

In chapter 2 verse 22, she's called a woman. And then in chapter 2 verse 24, she's called a wife. So, Eve so far has been called man, female, helper, woman, wife, and now it's time for Eve to get a proper name.

And so, Adam, by virtue of his role in the relationship, okay, as the head of this home, as the head of this household in the marital relationship, he is created first. He carries out the pattern intended in the marriage relationship, not that husbands for all time name their wives, but in this case, Eve needs a name. And so, Adam is going to be the one to bestow that upon her.

If you remember, Adam had given names to all the livestock and all of the birds of the heavens and every beast of the field back in chapter 2 verse 20. When he wakes up and he meets the companion that God made for him out of one of his ribs, what does he say? She shall be called woman. So, he kind of starts this general idea in chapter 2 verse 23, and there begins a pattern in Scripture regarding naming, and it's this, here's the name, here's the reason for the name.

So, in chapter 2 verse 23, Adam says she's going to be called woman, and Moses tells us why. He says, because she was taken out of man. So, the word woman was derived from man.

In the Hebrew, it would be ish and ishah. So, the woman is derived from the man, the name comes from the man. And that pattern continues of a name and a reason throughout the next pages even of Genesis.

Just a little bit, we're going to read about Noah's name. Call him Noah. Why? Because he will bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.

And then we're going to read, call him Ishmael. Why? Because the Lord has listened to your affliction. Call him Reuben will come, because the Lord has looked upon my affliction.

Pharaoh's daughter would say, name him Moses, because I drew him out of the water. Hannah would say, call him Samuel, because I have asked for him from the Lord. Matthew later will record that Joseph heard from the angel, call his name Jesus.

Why? For he will save his people from their sin. So, there was a lot of thoughtfulness in naming in the Old Testament. I appreciate the thoughtfulness.

You know, in our day, we ask someone, well, hey, why did you choose that name for your child? And typically, what we hear is, we just thought it was so, so cute. It was like the cutest name. Okay.

I mean, that's cool. That's a good reason. But here in the Scriptures, there's typically a little bit of a deeper reason than we thought it was a cute name.

Adam could have named the woman all kinds of things, would have been pretty easy to find

something unique and special. I mean, anything except for Adam, right, would have been completely unique. And he could have even had options of good names that had significance.

Like, for example, he could have named her something like Theodora, because she was a gift from God. And that could be Moses explaining. Theodora means gift from God.

And that was why he called her, that would be a precious thing to name your wife. Or he could have named her something like Bella, because she was beautiful. That would have been very endearing.

Or perhaps if you want to be accurate, and he was feeling a little bit passive-aggressive, he could have named her Lorelei, which means temptress. Maybe Bella Lorelei, beautiful temptress. All the different things that he could have said about her.

So many fitting names, and yet Adam names her Eve. And Eve means, very simply, living one or life giver. The text says, because she was the mother of all living.

Because she was the mother of all living. This name had a purpose. It had a significance.

And it might seem like an obvious choice for us, because we understand that everyone who's here ultimately can trace our line back to Eve's womb. She's the great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother all the way back. But if we think it was obvious, then we're moving too quickly through the narrative.

See, Adam calls his wife's name Eve, and this is pre-children. Okay, Genesis 4 is when Adam knows his wife and she conceives. So, she is not conceived yet.

The name comes first. And so, Adam names Eve, indicating faith on Adam's part. Say, what do you mean? Well, Genesis 2.17, Adam knows the terms of the agreement.

And the day that you eat of the tree, you will surely die. That's going to be the consequence. Life is going to end in death.

And yet God, in His wrath, remembers mercy, and He deals with Adam's failure. And as He's doling out a consequence to the serpent, He says, don't lose heart, because you will produce an offspring. You and Eve aren't going to be the end of the line.

This isn't the end of humanity. Rather, you will have an offspring. And this isn't just the general idea that procreation and the grace of family life will continue, although that's true.

Rather, this particular offspring will crush the serpent's head. And so, Adam here is naming Eve as an act of faith that there is coming through God's grace, a promised seed, a chosen one, who's going to be a victor. You're saying this is faith on Adam's part.

Do you think this was a challenge to believe God in that moment? I mean, all he has is the very Word of God. We don't know yet that he understands the details of reproduction, conception,

pregnancy, birth. He certainly hasn't experienced any of it yet.

Not only that, but the recognition of death and sin that he's brought into the world, the sense of my failure is overwhelming right now. I've messed everything up. And yet, God gave me a promise that I'll have an offspring, and that offspring is going to correct the error that we just made.

That offspring is going to be victorious where we failed. And so, Adam believes that with Eve, there will one day be a new life produced, and among all of the living beings, one of those will be a Savior. See, Adam is convinced of God's promise, and this is a sign of grace.

I mean, the very expression of faith in the life of a believer is a demonstration of God's grace to you, the grace of a regenerated heart that could exercise faith. And so, the implication here is just to simply ask, do you believe God when all you have to corroborate His promise is His promise? And when you hear the word, you believe it, whether there's additional evidence or not. Do you see God's grace towards you even in your failure? I mean, I get it.

I know. I know. I'm the same way.

I would love to get through life without any kind of moral failing. I would love to stop sinning, but I can't. I'm still in this body of flesh beset by weakness.

And I know that you would like to not live in the dark shadow of the knowledge of all the times that you failed the Lord, the embarrassing things you've done, the humiliating things you've done, the settled patterns of rebellion at times in your heart. And yet, right here is a testimony that God's grace is not nullified by human failure. Rather, it's displayed preeminently because of human failure.

And so, Adam here is believing God. He's believing that God's grace here, in spite of my undeserving nature, will provide for us one day a Savior. We're still going to procreate.

And when we do, this mother of all the living will produce an offspring, one day a Savior. It's the first evidence of grace in the fallout, grace upon grace, lavish grace, overflowing grace, hitting not just one moment in the moment of failure, but continuing on in Adam's life as now he has faith to believe the promise of God. The second evidence of grace in the fallout here in our text today, point number two, is Adam and Eve are covered by God's provision.

Verse 21, Adam and Eve are covered by God's provision. First, Adam is convinced of God's promise. He believes it's true and it will happen.

Secondly, now, Adam and Eve find themselves covered by God's provision. Verse 21, and the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. And so, when we read, then the Lord God made, this is no surprise to us by this point.

Is it not? I mean, we're used to God making things. He has been the master maker. Genesis

chapter 1, Genesis chapter 2, chronicling the creative power of the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all 146.

And so far, what we've seen is everything that God makes is good. Everything he has done has been productive. It has brought forth life.

It's always multiplied or improved or produced. Even that little surgical procedure with Adam, where he took out one rib, produced another human being, created another life. And yet, when we come to verse 21, and we read, the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them, we see the very first time that God making something requires ruining something else, requires destruction.

In this case, to make clothes required destroying the life or most likely lives of some animal. Moses tells us very clearly that these were garments of skins. These are the first for coats in the history of the world.

And so, I want you to take this in for a minute, okay? This is not the scene. The scene is not Adam and Eve standing there with some freshly sheared goats bleeding next to them who've lost their wool coats and now it's being combed and woven by God to produce cashmere jumpsuits. There's no bleeding.

It's not that the wool was shaved off. It's that the skin was removed, meaning that there's carcasses. There's dead bodies.

I mean, not human bodies, but animal carcasses. It's bloody. It's violent.

It's the first occurrence of death, the ending of a life. And although an animal life is not precious in the same way as a human life, because humans are created in the image of God, this would have been arresting for Adam and Eve. I mean, the first time you encounter a large animal carcass, it's usually a little bit arresting.

And we know of death. Adam and Eve had never seen it before. We don't know exactly what Adam and Eve saw, whether they watched the death, whether God slayed the animal in front of them, or whether He slayed the animal and cleaned it all up and then just brought them the skins, tailor-made, ready to go.

It's just stated. But either way, our first parents would have understood that these garments came to them by the necessity of the death of another. We aren't told what kind of animal growing up.

There was, of course, a white lamb. So Adam and Eve had fresh white wool suits. We don't know.

Most likely, the garments, though, required more than a single animal. For example, a single sheepskin leather jacket typically requires more than one sheep just for a jacket. If you wanted to make a fur coat, it would require 15 to 40 foxes, 50 to 60 minks, or 150 to 300 chinchillas.

It takes a lot of chinchillas to make a fur coat. The reason, of course, that the flannel graph would make this animal a lamb was to make a theological connection in Genesis 3 to say that here we see the doctrine of substitution, that sin brings death and the consequences or penalty of sin must be paid for. And this, in fact, is the teaching of the Bible from cover to cover that everyone on the planet is guilty and you will face the penalty for your sin or you will trust in God's provision for your sin.

Those are the only two options. And that provision comes to you freely, but it did not come freely. Rather, the Bible teaches the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement.

That is a legal substitute, a legal substitution, namely, Jesus Christ being charged legally with the guilt of all those who trust in Him. And in His death on the cross, He paid for their sins. He made atonement and God is satisfied, satisfied with that substitutionary atonement on behalf of His people.

And so, when you place your faith in Jesus Christ, you receive forgiveness. It means all of your sins are paid for, they are atoned for. This is central to the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is preeminent in the teaching of the Bible. And as Christians, we live each day in the goodness of penal substitutionary atonement, and we will for all of eternity. And so, when you feel the weight of the reality that you continue to sin in the flesh, you're to be reminding yourself and be comforted ever and always by the reality that your sin has been paid for by the death of Jesus Christ on your behalf.

It's a glorious doctrine. It's a rich doctrine. It's all over Scripture.

But we need to be careful about how we make theological connections from texts of Scripture. We want to make sure that they're warranted. So, I don't think substitution is actually the primary emphasis.

It's close, but not the primary emphasis here of Genesis 3.21. It's true that an animal is being put to death, but the lesson is more nuanced. And God is, of course, introducing a concept here that will later mature into the sacrificial system whereby animals are put to death and those who demonstrate faith in God's provision receive His forgiveness. It all points to substitution and, of course, our ultimate substitute, Jesus.

But I think there's a simpler basic lesson being taught here. In the same way that you teach a preschooler by laying forth a basic concept that will be filled in later, there's a beauty and a simplicity to this lesson. I think the lesson here is the principle of God covering, which is the basic concept of atonement.

In other words, it's not that the animals die, so now Adam and Eve don't need to. It's not that the animal sacrifice has now been a substitute for sin, and now Adam and Eve receive forgiveness, but rather that God is the one who provides the covering. That is the lesson.



So, look at the text, the Lord God. The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. And so, Adam and Eve are standing there, right? Although they have fig leaves on, they still sense their nakedness and their shame.

And so, they made clothes for themselves, and yet their solution is inadequate. And so, God provides clothes for Adam and Eve. These clothes are adequate, and these clothes are costly.

And so, as you and I read this, we're immediately reminded that our sin has created a moral problem in our lives, where we find ourselves at enmity with God. And any solution that you could offer to address your own moral condition before God is inadequate. God alone provides an adequate solution.

That's the lesson. And the solution is costly, not to you, but to someone else, and in this case, of course, ultimately, Jesus Christ. So, the point here in Genesis 3.21 is not that Adam and Eve's guilt is transferred to an animal.

The animal, strictly speaking, is not a substitute for sin. The point is not that the animal dies, so Adam and Eve live. That's all coming later.

But what is being taught here is the rudimentary lesson that God provides for the hopeless condition of His people. And so, that's the lesson that God is teaching our first parents. That sin brings consequences, not just to us, but to others.

And then God is the one who provides the covering that you cannot ultimately fix the fall of your sin. You must come to God for this. He alone can do it, and He's willing to do it.

And it shows the hopelessness of trying to manage the consequences, or the penalty, or the outcome, or the power of sin in your own strength and by your own means. Adam already tried this. Genesis 3.7, they made for themselves loincloths, and yet it's inadequate.

I just asked you this morning, beloved, if you're in Christ, do you carry with you an ongoing burden of guilt? Do you carry an ongoing burden of guilt if you are in Christ? Do you live under a sense of condemnation from the law? Because if you do, you are dishonoring the Lamb who was slain for us, the one who provided atonement. To the point of the Christian life, it's not that you and I glory in our own righteousness, but rather we receive that which God provides for us, His covering for sin, His forgiving work. You say, yeah, but I still sin.

Exactly. So, you and I are not to find comfort, glorying in our own righteousness, or in our own performance. We're to glory in the fact that we're wearing clothes that God has provided for us.

Beloved, if you're in Christ, your life is to be characterized by things like joy, and peace, and hope, and comfort, and confidence, and zeal for righteousness. It's all born out of understanding positionally, God has dealt with my sin problem. So, for Adam and Eve, this moment was going to be a perpetual lesson for all time, a perpetual reminder.

Even the scenario of every day waking up and putting on clothes, and the clothes you're putting on are the skin of another provided to you by God. And so, God has orchestrated this whole scenario in the garden, the nakedness, the need for clothing, the provision that He would offer, to point to a greater spiritual reality, of course. See, the Scriptures depict you and I in our natural spiritual condition as either being naked, or having on dirty clothes.

Those are kind of the two analogies in Scripture. We're either naked, or we're wearing dirty clothes. And the only way that you get clean clothes is by God providing them.

The Lord would say through the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 61:10, I will rejoice, or I greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. Sometimes we ask one another, hey, man, where'd you get that shirt? And so, then we say, like, well, I ordered it online, or I bought it somewhere.

You could ask your brother or sister, hey, where did you get those righteous clothes? Say, they were given to me. They're very expensive. I couldn't have ever bought them myself, but they were given to me.

I didn't pay for them, but they're mine. They belong to me now. I mean, this is my favorite part of explaining the gospel to an unbeliever.

I love this part, to let them know that if they die in their current spiritual condition, God is going to punish them. And yet, if I were to die right now, I get to go to heaven, and God is going to welcome me in. And of course, they tend to think, well, that's because you think that you're a goody two-shoes, and I'm not.

And then I get to explain, you know the only difference between you and me? Somebody paid my way. Somebody paid my way, that's it. Usually a little bit befuddled by that response.

The issue here is not that I'm less of a sinner than you. The issue is not that I've achieved a greater standing in personal righteousness. If you die right now, your sins are not yet paid for, and so you will pay for them.

And I stand here saying my sins have been paid for me. See, God is so gracious, grace upon grace upon grace. Even in the chastisement, the Lord is gracious.

And so Adam and Eve here are learning in this moment, we trust that God is going to provide the ultimate savior for our sin. Now we're seeing that God is going to come and provide clothing that we could not provide for ourselves. He's laying the foundation work for these timeless lessons.

Now we see one more evidence of grace in the fallout. Our third point, Adam and Eve are safeguarded by God's protection. Adam and Eve are safeguarded by God's protection.

First, Adam is convinced of God's promise. Secondly, Adam and Eve are covered by God's provision. And now thirdly, Adam and Eve are safeguarded by God's protection.

This is absolutely marvelous. Look at verse 22, then the Lord God said, behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Who is the us? And what does it mean to gain the knowledge of good and evil? Well, Adam and Eve, of course, ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And as we've said before, it's not a magical fruit where as soon as you taste it, you hit some kind of new mystical insight that is produced within you. Rather, it was a moral violation. And so in transgressing, Adam and Eve suddenly became experientially aware of sin.

They understood good and evil. They instantly understood innocence and guilt and judgment and righteousness. And so the question here is when we read the Lord God said, behold, the man has become like one of us, who is the us? It's really only about two options.

There's not a lot of people on earth right now. It's either angels or it's the members of the Godhead. Certainly, the angels were there at creation.

We know this from Job 38.47 that when God laid the foundation of the earth, there was singing and shouting for joy among the morning stars of glory. So, we know that the angels were there. This is kind of the classic Jewish interpretation of the text.

Primary issue is that man is made in the image of God, not in the image of God and angels. And so, I don't want to just assert that I believe this is really just a little glimpse at the Trinity, not yet fully explained or expounded upon, but a glimpse in Genesis 3. I want to demonstrate that for you, not merely assert it. You look back and just observe with me Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, verse 26, using the rules of observation, who is speaking? Verse 26, then God said, that's singular, let us make man in our image after our likeness.

Is this God or is this God and angels? Well, we come down to verse 27. We read, so God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female, He created them.

So, there's God speaking singularly in the plural. And then it's very clear the referent that man was created, not in the image of God and angels, but simply in the image of God. Keep your finger there and turn over to Genesis 11.

We're going to see a similar pattern yet again, Genesis chapter 11. So, of course, is the Tower of Babel. We'll be looking at that in like 10 years.

Verse 6, and the Lord said, behold, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down.

And they're confused their language so that they may not understand one another's speech. So again, the Lord says in verse 6, that's the singular, come, let us go down. Verse 7, and then who acts? Verse 8, so the Lord, singular, dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

So, turn back now to Genesis chapter 3, and we see here an established pattern of God, singular, speaking in the plural, and then acting in the singular. It's exactly what's happening here in Genesis chapter 3. So, I believe very clearly from the textual evidence that this is just not teaching us yet the doctrine of the Trinity, but God exists, one essence, three persons, and that is demonstrated here. And so, the Lord God said, verse 22, behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.

And so, this knowledge of good and evil then is somewhat asymmetrical in the way that God understands good and evil and the way that man understands good and evil, because Adam has partaken in good and evil. That's how he gained his knowledge. God in no way participates in evil.

I was kind of thinking about it this way, perhaps this is helpful. I feel like I'm 50-50 on illustration, so we'll see. A few years ago, I had a problem with my Achilles tendon.

I went to a surgeon, and the surgeon knows far more about tendons and how they work than I do. But guess what? I'm the one with the tendon problem, and he's not. And so, I've tasted of this issue in a way that he hasn't.

He has not participated with me in my pain. That's not part of the qualification for his knowledge, but his knowledge far exceeds mine. And so, similar way, there's an asymmetry here in that God understands good and evil without participating in it.

Adam's participation is, hey, now I'm a sinner, and I've experienced what it means to participate in evil. I have a knowledge of transgression. And yet, the point here is not primarily the knowledge that Adam has gained, but rather it's referring to the fact that Adam has now fallen.

See, when you read the expression, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil, the idea here is that Adam gained this knowledge by becoming a sinner. He became a transgressor. That is his new status on the earth.

He's no longer innocent. He now has guilt. That is the idea here.

So, the fact that he has the knowledge is related to, it's a way of expressing his change in identity now, no longer as one who's innocent, but as one who's guilty. And now that makes sense of the rest of this verse, now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. This is the second tree, of course.

Adam's in a garden of many trees. There are two trees of particular significance, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. It's a real tree, has real edible fruit.

The eating of the tree has significance because God said so. And I always pictured this as a little kid, that it's kind of like, you know, Adam eats in the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He's getting in trouble.

He's finding out all the stuff going on. He's getting the garments, and it's kind of like, I need to make a mad dash to the tree of life so that I can try and find a remedy here for my problem. You know, get the anecdote before, or the antidote, excuse me, before death.

That's not what's happening here at all. Rather, this is God protecting Adam. Adam has a new status.

He now knows the knowledge of good and evil, which means he is a transgressor. He's no longer innocent, which means he's in a guilty state. And so look at what we read there in verse 23, therefore, therefore, that is to say, as a result of man's status, if he were to eat of the tree right now, then he gets eternal life starting right now.

Can you imagine that situation? I was just talking to some people about it this week. We were talking about longing for heaven, imagining heaven, how great heaven will be, how much we long for eternal life. But Adam right now is in his fallen state.

And so if you're Adam, do you really want eternal life starting right now in your current status? See, Adam right now, if he were to live forever in his fallen status, would never be freed from his body of death. See, in order to enjoy heaven, Adam needs to die so that he can be raised again with Christ, that he would have a new glorified body. One commentator says, immortality in a state of sin is not the eternal life which God designed for man, but it's endless misery, which the Scriptures call the second death.

He goes on to say, the expulsion from paradise, therefore, was a punishment, get this, inflicted for man's good, intended while exposing him to temporal death to preserve him from eternal death. Can you imagine that? That's like a life sentence without option for parole to be in that fallen state forever. And so, although it is a punishment to be sent from the garden, God's concern here is preserving Adam.

And so He doesn't want him to reach out His hand and take also the tree of life and eat and live forever. And you think, well, that's a little bit judgmental. Adam does not have a good track record when it comes to eating forbidden fruit.

Do you want to be enough for the Lord to say, don't eat of the tree of life? He's saying, you know what? Actually, I need to kick you out of the garden. And then what I'm going to do is I'm going to put a guardian angel with a flaming sword to prevent you from getting back in because I don't trust you around forbidden fruit. Brothers and sisters, do you see God's grace here toward Adam, even in the midst of chastisement? I mean, this is no doubt tragic.

The beauty of the garden, they're going to be leaving. Various artists over throughout history have attempted to depict what Adam and Eve looked like leaving the garden. They're always

looking back or they're dejected or they're a bit forlorn.

This was not a happy moment to get kicked out of the garden. In fact, verse 24, He drove out the man. He kicked him out.

I mean, this is an eviction notice. It's more than just being invited. God drives him away.

And at the east, verse 24 of the garden of Eden, He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. And so, the garden apparently had an eastern entrance. Later, Cain will be sent east.

And so, God puts a creature there to guard so that there will no longer be access to that tree. It's to protect Adam. That sword is depicted as moving from side to side to prevent anyone from passing or possibly even whirling around to cut to shreds anyone who tries to pass.

And so, I want you to understand that this is God's provision for man's weakness. I mean, every parent understands this. Like, there's times in the life of your children, you're going to say, you know what? You know what we're going to do right now? You're not allowed to talk for a while.

Because I'm concerned that the more you talk, the more guilt you're going to incur. And I just want to protect and preserve you. It's not even a punishment.

I want to preserve you right now because you're lacking self-control and I need to care for your spiritual condition. I want you to stop incurring additional sin. So, God here is merciful.

He's protecting Adam and Eve. Adam cannot be trusted. God wants to redeem Adam.

That is His plan. It's going to require Adam's death and then being raised in new life one day with Christ. So, this is a perspective that mature Christians have on the deprivations that the Lord brings into their life.

They see it as God's grace. See, Adam needed to see being evicted from the garden, although a painful consequence, to be an evidence of God's grace. Just think about it in your own life.

That job that you didn't get, a person that you didn't marry, the one who got away, that physical affliction, a financial crisis. I mean, I'm sure there was not a single day that Adam and Eve didn't wake up and feel some sense of regret over what they had lost. And yet, they're recognizing that this is God's grace to us to protect us from ourselves.

And every day they would have woken up and looked down and seen that they're wearing skin, animal skin. It would have been a reminder of God's covering, God's atonement. And so, even in the midst of sin, you and I are always to take encouragement in these very same realities, God's promise, his provision, and his protection, producing faith in Adam's life, providing a covering, and then safeguarding their path one day to restoration and future glory.

You know, I think about the human response would be, if you provided all those blessings for

Adam, you told him the consequence, you only forbid one thing, and then he went directly disobeyed, what would our response be? I don't think it'd be this kind of grace. This is marvelous. This is the character of God on display.

I invite you to pray with me this morning. God, thank you for being a God who's gracious, who is slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness. Thank you for preserving this lesson for us.

We certainly learn by proposition, by hearing truth asserted, and yet it's so impacting to see it play itself out in time, space, and history, in the lives of Adam and Eve. Lord, to see your providential care for them, to see your forgiving heart, Lord, to see the lessons that we need to be reminded of ourselves. Thank you so much for your grace to sinners, Lord.

We love you. We praise you. ...of partaking of the Lord's supper together, and this is for all who are in the family of Christ.

So, if you've repented and believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, you're invited to partake with us this morning. The Bible does teach us that we're to partake in a worthy manner, and so what that means is that you are to consider the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on your behalf in your partaking. It means that you're not to partake in hypocrisy or duplicity, and so I want to give you a moment just to prepare your heart, then I'm going to pray, and then I'll instruct you from there.

So, right now, you can just take a moment and begin to reflect, give thanks to the Lord in the quietness of the moment. Lord Jesus, we come to you and we thank you for your sacrifice on our behalf. Even as we say the words, thank you, they don't really seem to adequately express what you're worthy of and the praise that you're worthy of.

Lord Jesus, I pray that you would forgive us for the times that we have made little of your sacrifice. Lord, by dumbing down your righteous standards and pretending that we can attain them in our own strength. Lord, by trusting in ourselves and viewing others with contempt.

Lord, by covering and misdirecting when our sin would indict our hearts, rather than just owning it before you. Lord, there's certainly overt ways that we dishonor Christ, and yet subtle ways when we don't glory in your sacrifice, and realize that your grace is displayed against the backdrop of our unworthiness. Father, we want to embrace the cross as our only hope and see the practical ways that that works itself out.

Lord, as your people, we want to know the joy and comfort of trusting in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Lord, I thank you for all of the reminders here in Genesis 3, that you're the one who seeks the lost. You're the one who provides atonement.

You're the only answer for our sinful condition. And so, Lord, we confess for your praise and honor and glory this morning, that our only hope and our only boast is your righteousness. We love you.

Amen. I want you to stand with me this morning and we're going to sing.