

2 The Fall

This is the second talk outline in The God Story Sermon Series. The related chapter in The God Story book is Chapter 2, *The Fall*. The book in the Bible this chapter corresponds with is Genesis, chapters 3-11.

Teaching Outline

Key aims

To explore the introduction of an enemy in the story, his tactics to destroy God's creation and the tragic consequences of humankind's disobedience.

The God Story storytelling method

The God Story Storyteller understands that to teach The God Story effectively a dual teaching method is required. This is the art of teaching in a way that both **unfolds the eternal purposes of God through history and also releases them into personal encounter**. Practically this will mean prayerfully considering in each talk outline what parts you want to 'go deeper' in and what parts you want to mention at a headline level. We trust the Spirit will inspire and guide you to find the right cadence as you aim to give a passionate sweep of the unfolding narrative while also narrowing the focus in certain places to emphasise personal application and encounter.

Key Bible passages

You may want to read a short passage of scripture before you begin your talk. The passages below are the ones we believe are most relevant to this particular talk.

We recommend you choose one of these:

[Genesis 3](#)[Isaiah 14:12-14](#)[Genesis 4](#)[Genesis 11](#)

Teaching notes

The notes provided will equip you to understand more of the context and more of the story as you prepare your talk. Generally speaking the talk outline follows the structure of the corresponding chapter in The God Story book. We feel the key sections in the Talk Outline below relate to the main flow of the unfolding scriptural narrative and so we have included key Biblical passages and quotes from The God Story to assist you in this. We recommend using these sections to shape your talk but please choose the parts which you feel are most helpful for your context.

Opportunity for application or reflection

Throughout the teaching notes there are a few places we identify as an 'Application Opportunity' to enable preachers to think about suggested responses or a call to action. At the end of each talk outline we have included the 'Questions for Reflection' section contained at the end of the respective chapter in The God Story book. We hope this may serve as a resource to help preachers think about how they could encourage more application and reflection among their listeners. If your church is also following the associated 'The God Story Small Group Guide' you can instruct listeners that these questions will make up the main part of their small group discussion in the corresponding week.

Continue to the sermon 

Introduction

Recap of previous session(s)

We now know God is an Eternal Family of perfect love and belonging who, in the beginning, created all things by the power of his Word. The crown of God's creation was Adam and Eve, human beings made in his own image, placed in God's exquisite Garden of Eden. Humankind's image-bearing nature was marked by their intimate communion with one another, their friendship and oneness with each other and their vocational commission to steward blessing throughout the earth.

Talk overview

The Fall narrative sets the scene for the unfolding drama of resistance woven through the rest of The God Story and the incalculable level of devastation which is to follow. The serpent has been introduced to the story, representing an agency of evil, commonly known as Satan, who along with his kingdom of darkness stands in direct opposition to God's rule and reign on earth. This serpent is 'crafty' and comes to steal the God-given identity which has been imprinted on Adam and Eve's hearts. In succumbing to the luring temptation of the serpent, Adam and Eve allowed the root of sin - self-exaltation - to enter their souls. The result of humankind's disobedience means sin would infect the human heart like a self-destructing virus, doing untold damage to themselves, one another and creation. Contrary to what we might expect though God does not abandon humankind rather God goes looking for them for God cannot stand the distance! Despite God's pursuit, generation after generation will walk further and further away from him. It becomes clear humanity cannot be trusted and will need to be rescued.

Talk Outline

Key Teaching Sections

1 Life in the garden (Gen 2:16)

re-emphasise points made in Ch 1 - how the Two Trees in the garden of Eden revealed God's original intention for humankind.

- + **Tree of Life:** 'The Tree of Life' symbolised God's desire for Adam and Eve to find their loving dependency and secure identity in God alone.

- + **Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:** eating of this tree would symbolise an act of outright independence, a desire for wisdom apart from God, and a violation of their wholehearted union with God.

2 The tactics of the enemy (Gen 3:1-5)

explain the enemies primary weapon of distortion ("*Now the serpent was more crafty*" = deception) in two main ways:

- + **Distorting who God is:** "Did God really say" (v.1)
 - Causes us to doubt God's Goodness and God's loving identity-forming Voice
- + **Distorting who we are:** "God knows...you will be like God knowing good from evil" (v.5)
- + **Application opportunity:** When we believe the lie that God's goodness is not enough for us we will soon believe we are not enough, therefore we have to do something to be like God.

≡ Key quote

*"Genesis 3 is the most devastating account of identity-theft you will ever read. Here we witness the enemy steal the core of humankind's identity in the tender place of their belonging. Adam and Eve were already made in the image and likeness of God. The luring voice of the serpent deceived them to believe there was something more they needed to do. It was the voice that says 'know more', 'achieve more', 'become more.' It was the voice that says 'don't settle for being like God, you can be God!'"*¹

3 The great pursuit begins (Gen. 3:8-9)

emphasise how God's immediate response is not to abandon Adam and Eve but to pursue them.

- + Highlight the aching cry of God's heart in vs 9, '**Where are you?**' and how this sets the course for the rest of The God Story. The unfailing nature of God's love means God cannot stand the distance.

4 The tragic consequences of disobedience (Gen. 3:6-7)

- + While God will still come looking for humankind, emphasise how something tragic has taken place that has changed almost everything

≡ Key quote

*"Their once innocent and captivating view of the world has now been corrupted into a chaotic and distorted reality field. Everything appears different now - God, themselves, the world. In particular, Adam and Eve experience two new psychological realities which will become the perennial archenemies of the human soul. Fear and Shame."*²

- + Unpack the ways in which 'fear, shame and the blame game' have done untold damage to humankind.
 - **Shame** (vs 7-8): Innocence has been lost as shame seeps into their souls and the inward-looking glare of condemnation kicks in.
 - **Fear** (v.10): In the absence of the Father's securing love, fear becomes their new way of apprehending reality. Fear brings new questions - what will God do to us now? Does he still love us? Does he really want the best for us?
 - **Blame Game** (11-13): Adam blamed Eve and God, Eve blamed the serpent. The cycle will continue...
 - **Summarise:** Shame distorted how Adam and Eve felt about themselves. Fear distorted how they understood God. Blame became the way they treated one another.
 - **Application opportunity:** Adam and Eve's manifestations of shame and fear involved covering themselves and hiding. What are our fig leaves? In what ways do we hide and cover? In what ways do we self-protect, deflecting shame by blaming others?

5 The disease and Impact of sin

- + Emphasise how The Fall narrative reveals the essence of sin is not simply 'doing bad things' but the unrelenting force of independence within us which seeks to gratify 'self' at all costs. Highlight how this impacts all three elements of humankind's original design

≡ Key quotes

*"The consequences of Adam and Eve's act of disobedience are far-reaching. The complete reversal of the original blessing mandate ('God blessed them and said, "be fruitful and multiply"') began to take place. Sin rather than blessing multiplies."*³

*"The three main elements of humankind's original glory are tragically impacted; humankind's relationship with God, one another and creation are ruptured and broken."*⁴

- + Highlight how God explains the consequences of disobedience to the serpent, Eve and Adam: (Gen 3:14-19)

6 Glimmers of grace (Gen 3:15-24)

despite humankind's rebellion and the tragic consequences of this, emphasise how the narrative reveals evidence of God's gracious response.

- + God attempts to hide Adam and Eve's nakedness to cover their shame. (Gen 3:21)
- + God promises redemption through the woman's seed, a victory over the serpent (Gen 3:15)

≡ Key quote

*"Humanity will endure the results of their rebellion, but a hopeful thread has already started to be woven - one of Eve's offspring, will one day deal with this curse decisively, eventually crushing the evil serpent's head. God may be lamenting His dream but he is not feeling sorry for Himself. Plans have been made and a divine strategy has been conceived. The cost will be a 'bruising' unlike anything the world has ever seen, yet the rescue mission has begun. The serpent will not have the last word."*⁵

- + Even though humankind must leave Eden, God guards the way to the tree of life. Pride cannot survive in the presence of God so God is saving Adam and Eve from their own destruction. (Gen 3:22-24)

East of Eden (Gen 3:24)

Highlight how the phrase 'east of Eden' will become an unfortunate moniker for humankind's movement away from their original homeland - the presence of God. Teach how from this point in the story sin doesn't slowly mature but quickly multiplies in humanity (Gen 4:23), spinning wildly out of control. Siblings will turn against siblings, children against parents, nation against nation. Highlight the main episodes:

- + **Cain and Abel** (Gen 4): After Cain kills Abel, highlight the gut-wrenching nature of v.16, *"So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden."*
- + **The flood** (Gen 6-9): Emphasise how the flood narrative speaks to us about the world returning to its primordial watery chaos in order that the story can restart. Focus on how God is 'grieved' (6:6) and in deep anguish over the state of the world
 - Noah, 'a righteous man', offers an alternative and through him the creation mandate can be reinstated. Highlight how after the flood God makes covenant with Noah and blessed him, repeating what he said to Adam, *"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"* (9:1)
 - Sadly after God makes a covenant with Noah, an echo of the fall of Eden takes place i.e. Noah plants a garden and sins in that garden. (9:18-27)
- + **Babel** (Genesis 11): Explain how after Noah, sin once again spirals through humankind and crescendos in a City and tower built to human independence and pride - "let us make a name for ourselves." (v.4)
 - Explain how The Tower of Babel serves as a graphic reminder of where things will end up when humankind chooses to walk its own self determined path in independence from God.

≡ Key quote

*"Babel is a precursor to the regime of Babylon....it carries the image of an empire architected around human power working in opposition to the loving reign of God on the earth. This type of self-serving regime promotes a way of civilisation built on independence and alienation from divine love and relationship."*⁶

- + Explain how it has become clear by the end of Genesis 11 that humankind on their own cannot be trusted and need saving from their own destruction. Describe how God promised not to flood the earth but has to do something, again this is to protect them from themselves. This time God scatters them over the face of the earth by confusing them with different languages.

8 Helpful summary of The Fall narrative

- + The influence of the crafty serpent has become pronounced throughout the story, distorting humanity's view of God and themselves, ensnaring them in chains of fear and shame. The disease of self-gratification which infected the human heart through Adam and Eve's disobedience has spread throughout the earth, proving itself as an uncontrollable destructive force within humankind. Generation after generation have moved further east of Eden, away from their true home.

≡ Key quote

"But make no mistake. Divine desire has not been diminished. Longing love has not given up. Just as God came looking in the garden, God will keep searching for the ones he loves. God may have scattered the nations but within this dispersing there is a plan. A rescue mission to redeem, renew and restore his fallen creation. God will narrow the focus on a particular people with the hope that through them God's eternal purpose to woo all nations back to Himself will come to pass. The question is will God find a suitable partner, a people who will carry his name?"⁷

Questions for Reflection or Further Application

Is there anything causing you to hide from God in fear or cover yourself because of shame? Sin ruins relationships. Is there any relationship you have that needs to be reconciled and what steps can you take now towards that end?

Three Sacred Themes

The closing page of each chapter in The God Story book includes a summary shaped around three sacred themes which we believe helps knit the overarching storyline together. Feel free to use this as an extra resource to The God Story Sermon Series if you feel this would be helpful to summarise each talk. You will find this for *The Fall* on p.38 of the book.

End of sermon

1 Alain Emerson and Adam Cox, The God Story; Encountering unfailing love in the unfolding narrative of scripture; (London, Form SPCK Group 2024), p.25

2 Ibid, p.26-27

3 Ibid, p.30

4 Ibid, p.30

5 Ibid, p.31

6 Ibid, p.36

7 Ibid, p.36

*All Bible passages quoted are taken from NIV unless stated.