



## TRANSITION:

UMMPH!...Good morning Church! If you have a Bible or Bible App, and I hope you do, go ahead and open it to **Genesis chapter 3/Genesis 3**... While you're gettin' there, I wanna let you know that this past week we started something that I am REALLY excited about. Something we're calling "**Dive-Deeper**" *webinars* - hour-long or so, interactive discussions, lead by various folks within this church family, on important topics, that get raised here on Sundays as we go through the whole Bible together this year. And I'm excited about it, not only cuz I think it's gonna be a great supplement for you to these messages/especially since you'll be hearing from folks you already know and love and who are, in some way, close to the topic at hand, but excited because I also think it'll be a great resource for inviting friends and neighbors to connect around substantive things. Cuz with these, we're not trying to present definitive answers, but rather clear perspectives that help YOU and those you know and love come to some definitive answers in your own life. So last week, after I taught from **Genesis 1** and the Bible's Creation account, our very own Ed Spence lead a really great webinar entitled "**Evidence for Creation,**" that both Christians and skeptics would've felt comfortable joining because it wasn't a Bible study so much as it was simply a look at various forms of scientific evidence that really push us to re-consider some of the narratives we've been taught or come to believe about the origins of life...THIS week/specifically this **Wednesday, from 7-8pm** when, after looking at Genesis 3 today, we'll be hosting our second "**Dive-Deeper**" Webinar entitled, **Sex & Labor Trafficking here in New England**...which'll be lead by our very own **Chelsey Wiesman, who serves as the Project Coordinator for the Boston Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit, AND who's been kind enough to organize a panel featuring staff and survivor leaders from the New England Coalition Against Trafficking**...So needless to say, you will not want to miss that OR any of our "**Dive Deeper**" *webinars* throughout this series - ALL of which you can learn about by continuously checking the calendar page at **HubChurchBoston.com** and following us on our **@HubChurchBoston** social media accounts. Ok?

## INTRO:

Ok, **Genesis chapter 3**. Where are we in the story? Well if you recall from our first message in the series/**Psalm 119**, we saw that the Bible is not simply a collection of humanity's thoughts about God, but rather the inspired collection of God's thoughts about Himself to us. God graciously revealing Himself to YOU, in hopes that YOU would tie YOUR story to HIS...And as we saw 2 weeks ago in **Genesis 1**, that begins by understanding that as Creator, ALL life is found in God and there is no life outside of Him, such that unless you wrap your meaning, purpose, love, and hope up in God, you're gonna miss out on His life...TODAY, we're sticking with **Genesis** because as the name implies, "Genesis" is really the origin story of humanity...And we all love origin stories right? About great people or great companies... Well, the book of Genesis is the origin story of humanity - the story of how the founder of a great company we'll call "Life," not only started the company, but built it into an empire UNTIL the first "employees" rebelled against their "employer." - Genesis 3 is the story of the Fall of the human race. The whole point of these verses is to show us what those first employees/our ancestral parents did, and what WE do! It's a picture of our condition, and as such is, maybe one of the most important

passages in all the Bible for helping you understand WHY the world/your life is the way it is....SO...follow along if you will, as **Lorna Spence** reads **Genesis 3:1-19** to us...**Lorna...**

### TEXT:

**Thanks Lorna...** So I'd like to begin with a *disclaimer* and an *observation*. The disclaimer is very simply: There are more nuggets of truth in this passage than I could ever hope to unpack in our time today, WHICH MEANS that my goal is to essentially raise more questions in your mind, than give you answers, IN HOPES THAT, you'll take what we discuss here and expand on it during your Missional Family Meetings and within your own study. That's the *disclaimer!*... The observation is a little more nuanced. And that is: Whether you embrace the Christian faith or not, most of us know that something is just not right with the world. I was reminded of that this week, when in reading an article, I learned that, according to research, there's apparently a big optimism gap between how we feel about our own lives and how we feel about the world. Cuz on average almost 7 out of 10 of us feel ok about our own lives. BUT only 4 out of 10 of us feel ok about the world.<sup>1</sup> I think we all kinda know something's just not right with the world...BUT perhaps too, just not right with us either. Cuz let me ask you: In your more reflective moments, don't you sense that, even if you believe that what's wrong with the world can be attributed to things like a lack of education, or poverty, or the breakdown of the family, or just some dangerous political ideology, that those things, as harmful as they may be, don't really account for what's wrong inside of you?...Ya know, like when you have one of those moments where something slips out of you that's totally embarrassing: maybe anger, or you say something about or to someone, and later feel bad about it, so you go to em and say, *"I'm so sorry. I didn't mean that. That's really not me."*...But don't we kinda have to admit that it really IS you and that the only reason it wasn't "you" before is cuz you did a good job of filtering it?...Like, don't we have to admit, that maybe what snuck out of us in that moment actually IS the best reflection of what's IN us?, especially given how awful it'd be if there were someone, who whenever they wanted, could just read out whatever you were thinking?<sup>2</sup>...I think we all kinda understand that theres' not only something wrong out there, but something wrong...in here...Something for which we need a better word than just try harder, filter better, learn more, change your circumstances, vote differently, or the like...Genesis 3 is that better word, because in raising the issue of sin, it actually gives us an intellectually comprehensive way for understanding why the world/and our lives are the way they are. So let's look at 3 tings this text tells us about sin: **1: What It Is**, un-tethered from it's religious'y assumptions. **2: What The Consequences of It Are**, so we know what we're dealing with. And **3: Where We Find The Answer To It**.

**First, What It Is:** Now remember where we are in the story here. God has just created the world right? And not only made it inhabitable for His pinnacle creation; you and me, but made it beautiful and perfect, telling Adam and Eve that He's given them everything they could ever want or need for life and happiness. The analogy we used two weeks ago, if you remember, was that of a dance. From eternity past, God as Trinity, has been dancing this perfect dance of love,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gq.com/story/how-to-be-more-optimistic>

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3.1-19 - What Went Wrong - J.D. Greear.pdf

deference, service, joy, and community within Himself. A dance so wonderful that He, in a sense, exploded with a desire to invite you and me into it. As we saw in Genesis 1, He said, *“Let us make man in our image,”* which is basically God saying, *“Let’s make beings who’re able to give what we’re giving each other. Give and be loved, know and be known, praise and be praised. Let’s make em capable of entering our dance.”*<sup>3</sup> So out of just extravagant love, God not only brings us into existence, but sets us down in like the original all-inclusive resort. Sandals Mid-East but without the watered down daiquiris!...And in doing, so we’re told that He tells Adam and Eve that they everything they could ever want or need. The only the can’t do is eat from one particular tree in the Garden; *“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”* And you say, *“why would God even allow for a tree like that in the first place?”* And the short answer is: Because God is most interested in relationship with you. And relationship requires choice. When you propose to someone, what are you doing? You’re giving em the choice as to whether or not to marry you right? Because in a true, loving relationship there’s consent and choice. Anytime, there’s not, it’s abuse...God is not an abuser. He will never force Himself on you. Rather, He invites you to see how much He loves you, and then asks you to choose whether or not you’ll love Him back and allow Him to be the main character in your story!...That’s the scene here.

But *v.1* says, *“HE said to the woman ...”* Who’s the *“he”*? The serpent right? And almost everybody understands the serpent to represent Satan/the Devil/evil incarnate. And I wish I could say more about all this, but for the sake of time let me just commend to you 2 things so we can keep moving: One an action step and Two a thought. The action step is: Write down these passages and go read em on your own: ***Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-19*** and ***Matthew 4:1-11***. The first two, while in their immediate context, refer to evil kings in history, have often been seen as allusions to the origin story of Satan...While Matthew 4 there, is Jesus’ own experience with and affirmation OF the existence of Satan. Read those on your own...The thought though is this: Even though talk of Satan/the devil seems crazy in our current age, the reality is, if you don’t acknowledge a kind of transcendent evil, you’re actually being overly simplistic and naive ABOUT the evil we see in the world. Steven Pinker, who’s a very prominent public intellectual - professor of psychology at MIT - wrote in the New York Times some years ago something to the effect of, *“The prevailing wisdom among intellectuals being that evil has nothing to do with human nature and must merely be attributed to social and political institutions. And that you’re ignorant if you don’t believe that.”* But THEN he calls that very same view *“saccharine,”*/overly sweet and simplistic, BECAUSE it just doesn’t account for, as he says, *“the very distinct patterns of cruelty and callousness that keep coming up in history, and keep cutting across all times, places, and political systems.”*<sup>4</sup>...You see what he’s saying? He’s saying there’s gotta be something deeper than just a few environmental or political problems. That’s just naive.

Christians look at Genesis 3 here and say, *“You’re right. It is naive, cuz the evil we see in the world is far more complex. There’s a spiritual driver at work,”* and as you see, this driver started

<sup>3</sup> Made for Relationship - Genesis—The Gospel According to God—October 29, 2000 - Genesis 1:26–27; 2:18–25 - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Pinker quote from “Paradise Lost - Genesis—The Gospel According to God—November 5, 2000 - Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–9” - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

by speaking to Eve. He said, “*Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?*” And in the Hebrew it’s easier to see, but what he’s doing is essentially sneering at Eve/saying, “*You gotta be kidding me. God actually said you shouldn’t eat of that tree...*” What’s he doing? He’s trying to cast doubt in Eve’s mind about God’s goodness...But keep going, cuz after Eve responds that if they eat of the tree they’ll die, he says in **v.4**: “*You will NOT surely die!*” You see? First, he mocks in order to basically deconstruct their belief. THEN he lies in order RE-construct it...around a falsehood. So that when in **v.5**, he says, “*For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you’ll be like (Him),*” he’s already got his hooks in em. He’s got em thinking: “*Maybe you’re right! Maybe we don’t need God in order to understand the world. Maybe God’s ripping us off. MAYBE He doesn’t have our best interest in mind.*”<sup>5</sup>...And so it says, “*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes, and that (it) was to be desired to make one wise, she took of it, ate, gave some to her husband, and he ate.*”...And here’s where we learn **What Sin Really Is**: “Me-ism”...“Me-ism!” What Satan is doing is trying to get Adam and Eve to do is paint themselves as the main character in God’s story/Assume that life is about...“Me!”...As author Brett McCracken says,<sup>6</sup> perhaps this is why we all love our iPhones so much; with their ingenious “i” branding, to the now famous “solitary person dancing to their own beat” commercials, to the ways app interfaces put the focus on our individual preferences, to even the bitten apple logo itself...ALL of it proclaiming that, “*I/Me’ should be at the center!*”...“Me’ism”...making ourselves/rather than God the “point” of our lives EITHER by outright rejecting His authority and assuming that eternity has no bearing on our lives, and that all that matters is the here and now, or more subtly, when, even as Christians, we just assume we know best; what job is best, person is best, feeling is best, rather than heeding what God says is best...**Sin as “Me’ism.”**

You say, “*Ok, well is that really so bad?*”...No. Let’s Pray!...YES! IT IS!...Because **Second**, look at **The Consequences of Adam and Eve’s Sin**: They’re all over the place: **v.7** says there’s immediate **shame**/“*that their eyes were opened, and they (now) knew that they were naked.*” St. Augustine said that before they sinned, Adam and Eve were of course naked, but they were naked and UNashamed, because they were clothed in God’s love and acceptance. They’d always *been* naked, but NOW without God’s approval, they *felt* naked/felt **shame**...That’s a picture of us: We feel exposed and unacceptable<sup>7</sup>...Keep going/**v.8** it says there’s **fear.**, “*(When) they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden..the man and his wife hid...*” Why? Because they’re afraid. They know they’re gonna be called to account for what they did/they feel **condemned**. I’ve shared this with you before, but in his book *The Trial* author Franz Kafka tells the fictional story of a man who’s been condemned of a crime, but never told what the crime is and so he’s constantly trying to figure out what he’s done wrong without ever being given the answer, until at the end, he just dies in his cell basically believing that he was guilty...And in a little interview about the book, Kafka said he wrote the story to show how modern man/us who

<sup>5</sup> Idea of what they are thinking adapted from “Temptation - Spiritual Warfare—The War—January 12, 1992 - Genesis 3:1–15” - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013). + “Paradise Lost - Genesis—The Gospel According to God—November 5, 2000 - Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–9” - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/apples-logo-edens-forbidden-fruit/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=tcgblog](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/apples-logo-edens-forbidden-fruit/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=tcgblog)

<sup>7</sup> “The Bottomless Search for Approval” **DEVOTIONAL** - PASTOR J.D.MAY 6, 2019

no longer believe in sin nevertheless still finds ourselves in a state of guilt. We still have a deep sense that if we were examined, we wouldn't pass. We have a sense that we're not lovable the way we are... That's because of sin. We had the pleasure of God, but've now lost it.<sup>8</sup>... So there's **shame, fear, condemnation**. In **v.12** you see there's even **blaming** with Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming the serpent and everyone claiming they're a victim... In **vv.16-17** there's **the amplification of pain**, starting with childbirth, cuz as J.D. Greear says, while it's specifically talking about childbirth, it's probably really referring more to life - **STARTING AT BIRTH** - being painful!<sup>9</sup>... **shame, fear, condemnation, pain**... Too there's **futility**/that sense that no matter how hard you work or plan, you're still often met with frustration, heartbreak, and angst. As God says, "*cursed is the ground cuz of you... thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.*"... And finally/worse yet, there's **death**. God says, "*for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*" And of course, when Adam and Eve sinned/when we sin, we don't immediately die. God is gracious and so He hasn't given us death in one lump sum. Rather, it's that we've slowly been cut off from the life or light source that is God; like a watch that begins to lose it's glow or a hose that drips less-and-less water. Which is why, overtime, our bodies decay; our hearts decay and get all out of order so that we rage against God's wisdom and ways; our relationships decay because without the presence and love of God we now have to use others to get love. And when they don't give it or stand in our way of getting it, we throw em under the bus/even go so far as to oppress and marginalize people!... Don't you see? Everything breaks and none of us are immune to it. As **Romans 3:9-10** says, "*ALL/both Jew and Greek/those considered religious and those not, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one."*"... Which is perhaps why the author G.K. Chesterton, when asked to respond to an article in *The Times of London* entitled, "What's Wrong with the World?" simply replied, "*I am. Sincerely yours, G.K. Chesterton.*"<sup>10</sup>... You see? Sin is the **ONLY** thing that truly explains **WHY** the world/your life is the way it is.

So Finally, **What's The Answer?** Cuz in every other myth, story, this would've been the end... But as Sally Lloyd Jones says in her Jesus Storybook Bible, "*not in this story.*"<sup>11</sup> Because in this story, you get a turning point so shocking that the Apostle Peter would later say in the NT<sup>12</sup> that the angels looked on it with bewilderment... And you see it in **v.9**, when it says that God came looking for man. "*Adam, Where are you?*" And why's that's shocking/what's the expectation here/or better yet, how do you hear that question? As, "*Adam WHERE ARE YOU?*" Or, "*Adam, where are you.*" Unfortunately, I think most of us hear it in the first way don't we?, cuz honestly every other religion in the world hears it in the first way. Every other religion says some form of, "*we have to work to impress God. And if God's impressed, He'll bless. But if He's not; He's coming to punish!*"... In every other religion or just philosophy the expectation is/was for Adam and Eve, that God was coming to destroy. "*Adam WHERE ARE YOU?*"... But that's not what He's doing. No! He's not coming to destroy. He's coming to search for his lost son. He's not

<sup>8</sup> Citation adapted from Tim Keller, "Becoming Clean." MP3 Sermon on Mark 7:14-23.

<sup>9</sup> Insight adapted from <https://summitchurch.com/GetFile.ashx?Guid=52db7e92-f18b-4dad-8e48-152a7dfd1999>

<sup>10</sup> David Jeremiah, "What Must I Do to Be Saved?," <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/turning-point/read/articles/what-must-i-do-to-be-saved-15277.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Sally Lloyd Jones, *The Jesus Story Book Bible*, chapter 2.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Peter 1:12

coming to condemn. He's coming like parent who cares. "*Adam, where are you? Stay put! I coming for you. And I'll take care of everything.*" God's issuing His own search party. You ever delved into the details of a search party/maybe one you've heard about in the news? They're incredibly expensive. I heard of one that was issued when two skiers got lost in the mountains of Colorado. Apparently, it cost this particular town in Colorado, \$20,000 to do a two day search in order to find em. Searches are incredibly expensive, which is the reason they eventually get cut off. But let me ask: What if your child is lost? And when they've stopped the search, you still haven't found em? What do you do? You keep searching! That's what every parent would do! And yet it's incredibly expensive. You may go days, months even. Everything gets put on hold. You don't go into work. Your career suffers. You don't think about anything else. Your mental health suffers/Everything! But that's what you do<sup>13</sup>... THAT is what God's doing here! "*Adam, where are you? Don't worry! I'll move heaven and earth if I have to to find you.*"

And, by the way, we know this is what God's doing, because when He finds Adam and Eve, He makes a promise. To the serpent, He says in **v.15**, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; HE shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*"...That's the first promise of Christ we find in the Bible...The first promise of God saying, "*I'll leave everything. I'll give up everything...I'll suffer everything...if it means YOU coming out of hiding, and ME having YOU back!*"...As the Puritan Pastor Richard Sibbes said, "*Thank God there's more mercy in Christ than there is sin in us.*"<sup>14</sup>

Don't you see? Every story/every turn after this moment is gonna flow out of this promise! Every command, every character, every chapter is going to be calling to you saying, "*If sin is Me'ism, then Salvation is ceasing to be the main character of your story.*"...Calling to you and telling you to come out of hiding and into the arms of God who's searching for and wants you back, no matter how far you've gone from Him. Because as one person says, here's the ultimate rule of the Gospel: ***If you cover your sin, Jesus will expose it. BUT if you expose your sin, Jesus will cover it!***...Genesis 3, you see, isn't JUST the story of why the world is the way it is. It's our story and why WE are the way we are! ***Have you realized that God is looking for you just like He looked for Adam and Eve?*** And that, in the person and work of His Son Jesus, He's undertaken the most gracious, loving...and costly search party in human history...BECAUSE YOU mean that much to Him! Come out of hiding, let Him find you, and cease being the main character of your story? ***Will you do that today?***...Take a minute to think about that to yourself, after which we'll move into a brief time of discussion and application. Take a minute...

### **APPLICATION:**

So at this time we're gonna move into breakout rooms for just 10 minutes, so that you have a chance to not only contemplate that question, but BEGIN discussing and applying it in community...And each of these Breakouts'll be organized by Missional Family Meeting. So if you're connected to one, you'll be automatically placed with others in your Missional Family. If

<sup>13</sup> Illustration adapted from "People of the Lie - Lent—Nature of Sin—March 7, 1993 - Genesis 3:1-9 - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Quote cited in <https://summitchurch.com/GetFile.ashx?Guid=52db7e92-f18b-4dad-8e48-152a7dfd1999>

not - no worries - you're welcome to jump off/though we hope you'll stay and just remain here for a low-key time to connect and ask questions...But after 10min discussing the question that's gonna be put onscreen **NOW**...we'll all re-gather back here for a sending blessing...Ok? Ok! At this time we'll move into those breakout rooms and you can begin chatting together..."

- ***This Sunday's Application Questions: In a world of "me," what would it look like for you to joyfully cease being the main character of your story?***
- ***CHARLIE BREAKOUT: Welcome > How Connected > Q&A/Abridged Covenant Card Share***

**SENDING:**

Hey, Welcome back! I know 10 minutes is certainly not long enough to fully APPLY a question like that. BUT that's kinda the point. Our hope is that you would take this question, along with what we discussed today and continue the conversation in your respective Missional Family Meetings, as that's REALLY where we're invited IN to apply and live OUT the Scriptures together.

But in the meantime, Church as you are SENT into your week, receive this blessing from ***Ezekiel 34:11 and 16***: "*For thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out...I will seek the lost, I will bring back the strayed, I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak...'*" Go in peace trusting that Jesus Christ, longs to cover your sins if only you'll uncover your "Me'ism." Thanks. You are Sent Together!