

Old Testament Survey - Part 6

by Dick Woodward

The sermon explores the crisis of sin in Genesis 3, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's will and communication with humanity.

Duration: 27:27

Scripture: Genesis 3:6, Genesis 3:9, Psalm 32:5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 30:21, John 10:27, Romans 12:2, Hebrews 4:13, James 4:17, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Original Sin", "Gods Will"

Description

This sermon delves into Genesis chapter 3, exploring the crisis of sin and the beginning of communication between God and man. It emphasizes the importance of aligning with God's will, understanding the consequences of disobedience, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with God to find one's true purpose and direction.

Transcript

For the third time, I would like to invite you to consider with me the book of Genesis, where we see God describing things, one thing after another, like it was, so that we might understand that thing like it is. Now, we've looked at creation like it was and like it is, and we've looked at the home like it was and like it is, or man himself like he was and like he is. And now, in this session, I would like for us to consider one or two other things as they were and as they are.

In Genesis chapter 3, we have a description of what we might call the crisis, like it was and like it is. Now, we get the setting for this crisis in the second chapter of Genesis, verses 8 and 9, where we read these words, And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Now, in Genesis 3, having been given that setting, here is the description of what we have called the crisis. And we see this crisis described like it was, so we might understand this crisis today like it is. It says in verse 6 of Genesis 3, When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit the robin did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where are you? And he said, that is, Adam said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. And God said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded you that you should not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? Now, nobody has to tell us that there's something wrong with man.

We hear this every day on the newscast, we read it in our newspapers. If you work with people in any way, shape or form, nobody has to tell you that there's something wrong with man. Now, what is the source of man's problem? That's where we have our disagreement, perhaps.

This is where perhaps we're not as quickly convinced, but nobody seems to have a problem with the fact that man has a problem. I heard about a man who went to his psychiatrist, and he was a perfectly healthy specimen, except for one thing. Out of his forehead, he had growing this huge bullfrog.

It just grew right out of his forehead. And when the psychiatrist saw the man, he thought, Oh, I've seen one too many today, but he told the man to come in. It was in the evening, he'd had a long day, and he put the man on the couch, and then the psychiatrist said to the man, Well, now tell me, how did this happen? And the frog said, It all started with this wart on my back.

Which, of course, is a kind of a joke, which is trying to get at this point. Sure, there's something wrong with man, but where did it all start? What's the source of it? Well, Genesis chapter 3 is answering that question for us. It's telling us about the crisis that we all have many times every day, like it is, and in order for us to understand that crisis, we have all the time like it is.

Genesis tells us about that crisis like it was. It's the crisis the Bible calls sin, and it really comes down to this simple proposition. God puts man in this world, and he tells man to do certain things.

And the issue becomes this, is man going to do God's will or his own will? Is man going to have it his way or God's way? That's really the issue, but it's pictured for us, I believe, in beautiful allegorical language. Remember again now, truth can be allegorical and still be historical. In Galatians 4.24, Paul said, Abraham had two sons, this is an allegory.

Now, we know it's historical, it's a historical fact that Abraham had two sons, but Paul says, in addition to this being historical and being true, this is also, of course, an allegory. Now, in Genesis 3, without taking anything away from the historicity of the story, we can say that there's allegory here. There has to be allegory in this story.

Have you ever heard a voice walk or seen a voice walk? Have you ever seen a tree of knowledge or a tree of life? Now, I believe if we look at the allegorical language of this chapter, asking this question again, what does it say? What truth is here that can help me to live the way God wants me to live today? What truth is here that really I need for my life today? If we do that, then I think we come to this conclusion. The key to the allegorical truth is in the trees of the garden. In chapter 2, it says, God put man in the garden,

which I think is this world, and God said to man as he put him in this garden, I know your needs better than you do.

Now, we are a grand central station of needs. If you major in psychology, you know that. We're just a grand central station of needs.

Now, God knows that. Every need we have, God put it there. And God says this to man when he puts him in the garden.

I know your needs, and I will meet those needs. Now, in order to meet your needs, I'm going to provide these trees in the garden. Now, these are very interesting trees, as we've suggested.

The trees are described in terms of how they meet the needs of man. And there's an order of priority listed here. God puts, first of all, the trees that will meet the need of man's eye, and then the trees that will meet his need for food, and then the trees that will give him life.

But then there's a tree of knowledge, and God says, don't eat of that tree. Now, when they sin, when they do whatever they did there in Genesis 3, they confuse the priority of these trees. They put the tree that's good for food first, and then the tree that meets the need of the eye.

Now, this priority is mentioned second, whereas it should have been first. And they never do get to life, they get death, and it's the tree of knowledge from which they eat. Now, when you sort out all of that allegory, what is it saying? Well, in the Scripture, which is filled with allegorical language, you know, it says the Jews required a sign.

They thought in a beautiful sign language. Now, if you look at the sign language of the Jew, or the allegorical language of the Scripture, the eye is very significant. Jesus said, the lamp of the body is the eye.

If the eye is whole, or healthy, or single, the whole body is full of light. But if the eye is defective, the whole body is full of darkness. Now, what does that mean? Well, I think that eye there means your mind, your mindset, we might call it today, or your outlook.

How do you see things? That's really the basic, basic question that's being focused for us here. What is your value system? What is your mindset? That's what will determine your lifestyle, and the kind of consequences that you have to experience. Now, Jesus said, if we can just get that mindset right, if the outlook, if how we see things is what it ought to be, our whole body can be full of light.

But if the way we see things is off, our whole body can be full of darkness. I think Moses was talking about this same thing in Deuteronomy 8, verse 3. And Jesus quotes this in the Temptation and the Wilderness. Moses said, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

That's how man lives. If a man really wants to live, then let him just get every word that's ever come from the throne of God, and understand that word, and obey that word, and apply that word, and he'll really live. You see, we might illustrate it this way.

We have these needs. Now, let's suppose that you're a young person, and you're discovering that you have a sex drive. Now, God made you sexual, and God knows that you have a sex drive.

Let's suppose, however, when you discover that you have this sex need, or this sex drive, you decide to go along with the going perspective, which is, if it feels good, do it. Just go out and gratify that need. Just go out and satisfy that need.

Now, if you do that, that's not going to lead you to life. The thing that will lead you to life is this. You come to God, and you say, God, I am sexual.

You have made me sexual. I have this sex drive. I have this sex need.

Now, show me through your word. What is its place? What is its purpose? What is its function? Now, if you will put that first, and the gratification of the need second, if you will interpret the need in the light of the scripture, and not interpret the scripture in the light of the need, if you will put God's word first, and then say to God, now, I don't know anything about these needs until you tell me, and you show me how these needs are supposed to be met through your word, now you're getting at the message of Genesis 3. That's what Genesis 3 is trying to tell us. You see, the trees that met the need of man's eye, that's the word of God.

That's the revelation that God says man needs. You see, there are two possibilities. The tree of knowledge or the trees that meet the need of the eye.

Do you need a revelation? Have you ever come to God and said, God, I just don't know. I need a revelation. I don't know what to do.

Give me a revelation of what your will is through your word. Now, those trees that met the need of the eye, I believe that's what they represent. The tree of knowledge, I believe, represents what so many people feel today that we're so intelligent.

We have such great minds. We don't need a revelation. We don't need God.

We can figure it out by ourselves. This is the going humanistic philosophy. Now, I believe that's what Genesis 3 is trying to describe for us.

Many people are surprised when they actually read Genesis 3 to discover there's no mention of an apple in that chapter. People are taught perhaps in Sunday school that they ate an apple. I've heard people say that it was a sexual sin that they had sex in the garden.

And of course, that's ludicrous because God brought them together into a sexual union before Genesis 3. That's what he did at the end of Genesis 1 and 2. He brought them together into a sexual union. I believe what is being described in Genesis 3 as the crisis is simply this. The trees that meet the need of the eye, they represent the word of God.

Are you going to live because you have taken your need for food, whatever that represents, all of your needs, and submitted that to God's word? If you will bring all your needs to God and say, God, show me in your word how my needs are to be met, then you'll have life. I believe that's what's being described for us in Genesis 3. Like it was, so we can understand it like it is. Now in Genesis 3, you have something else like it was and like it is.

We might call it the beginning of the communication. Someone has said all the religions of the world can be summed up this way. Man seeking after God.

But the Hebrew Christians in Revelation of Truth can be summed up this way. God seeking after man. This is what you see here in Genesis 3 after Adam and Eve fail to pass this crisis.

When they do the wrong thing, when they put the priorities in the wrong perspective there, immediately the consequences come. Robert Louis Stevenson said sooner or later every man must sit down to a banquet of consequences. Now one of the best teachers is the banquet of consequences.

Experience is not the only teacher, it's just a very convincing teacher. And one of God's best teaching tools in our lives is that banquet of consequences. Now the consequences come.

Some of them are negative in Genesis 3, but some of them are very beautiful and very positive. And here's a beautiful positive consequence of what we call the fall of man. Just as soon as they do the wrong thing, it says that they hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Now they hide from him, but he seeks them out. See, this is God seeking after man and he haunts them with these questions. Where are you? Who told you? Have you eaten from the trees whereby I instructed you not to eat? What have you done? Isn't it interesting that God begins his dialogue with man by asking man questions? Isn't it interesting that the very first words of God to fallen men are questions? Why did the Creator ask the creature questions? Was it because he didn't know the answers? Because he lacked information? Look at this first question.

Where are you? I don't know if you've heard this little story about a young man who broke into a hotel room during the 60s. I guess he was a hippie or a yippee or something and he was robbing this hotel room, but the man who lived in the room had forgotten something and had to come back for it and he started to unlock the door. And when the hippie heard this, there was nothing else to do, so he just jumped in a closet and pulled the door shut.

And when the man came in and saw that his room had been raided, he thought about his clothes, so he jerked open the closet door and here stood the hippie. And the man said to the hippie, What are you doing here? And the hippie said, Oh, come on, man. Everybody's got to be somewhere.

Now, there's more truth and humor in that. Everybody has to be somewhere. According to the way Genesis begins, we see God communicating with man.

This is the beginning of the communication between God and man. So that we might understand God communicating with us today, so that we can understand communication with God like it is. We need to go back and get communication with God like it was in perspective.

Now, God comes and asks man this question, Where are you? And what he's implying by this question is there's some place you're supposed to be. Everybody's supposed to be somewhere, but you're not there. Now, when a man is lost, he'll never be found until he discovers that he's lost.

One of the first things he needs to know is that he's lost. And it would seem that the purpose of this first question on the part of God is to make man aware of the fact that he's lost. But remember, this is not describing something like it was.

It's describing something like it is. Do you have this crisis today where you have a choice? You're either going to do God's will or your will and you decide to do your will and then you find yourself eating a banquet of consequences and you're confused and you're overwhelmed and then you hear the voice of

God coming to you saying, where are you? Do you really think you're where you're supposed to be? That's a loving God doing that. Now, when he asked man that question, where are you? Man responded by saying, well, I'll tell you where I am.

I hear your voice. I'm not so far from you that I can't hear your voice, but every time I hear your voice it frightens me because I'm naked and I know that if I keep listening to your voice my nakedness is going to be exposed, so I'm hiding. That's where I am.

Now, I've had a lot of friends who are therapists tell me that that's a beautiful commentary on human nature because that's where man is today. For a therapist to help someone they have to guide them to the truth that will set them free and as they skillfully try to guide people to the truth that can set them free from their problems, they discover something. People really hide from that truth.

It's very difficult to get people to see the truth that they have to see in order to be set free from their problems. So this is a good commentary upon man. Man hides today and the man who's hiding does a lot of things.

He works too much. He plays too much. He sleeps too much.

He drinks too much. He does a lot of things too much, but a lot of these things that man does can really come under this heading he's hiding. He's hiding from God, but because God loves him God, you know, initiates the relationship and goes after him and he haunts him with this question where are you? We call this today the identity crisis.

How many times have you heard people say you know I'm not really sure that I'm doing what I should be doing. I sometimes think that I should go into another field or I should go to a college and get another degree or something because I'm not sure that I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. Well, I believe that's the identity crisis like it is and that's what's perhaps being described back here in Genesis like it was.

Now when man responds to God's question where are you by saying I'm hiding because I'm naked then God comes back with another question and that question is who told you that you were naked? Now here's a very beautiful question of all these questions here this is my favorite. The Hebrew actually puts it this way who made you know that you're naked? You know when you say God told me and I can understand you saying that someone's liable to say to you well let me ask you a question especially in these days I've always wondered about this was his voice masculine or was it feminine?

Was it a tenor voice or a bass voice? Well, if you hear these questions you probably realize you don't really mean that you heard a voice but what do you mean when you say God told me? Well, the Hebrew puts it so accurately I think what you really mean is God is making me know this now how does God make you know it? Well, that's the whole point here to Genesis 3 the second half of Genesis 3 God communicates with us he does make us know things have you ever made a statement I know God wants me to do such and such and such and such I used to hear people say perhaps a young man would say I believe that I'm supposed to go to seminary well when a young man would say that to me my favorite response would always be who told you that?

And at first they wouldn't get it well they took me literally and I would say did your mother tell you that? Don't go to seminary because your mother told you did your wife tell you? Did I tell you?

Now after exploring some possibilities we would finally say to a young man like this you know if no human being on earth has told you this then it is possible and you better consider this perhaps God is telling you that you're supposed to go to seminary you know Mary gave us a rule of thumb in the second chapter of John she said to those servants at that wedding where Jesus turned the water into wine whatsoever he saith unto you do it that's always a rule of thumb if you're sure it's God making you know something then that's what you ought to do I was a pastor for many years in a Navy town and so I heard a lot of Navy stories one of them that I'll always remember was about a convoy of ships that met under a cloak during World War II their destination and their mission was so secret that

nobody knew what the mission was on the flagship in the safe there were sealed orders and the third day at sea the captain of the flagship was supposed to open those sealed orders and only then would the whole convoy know what their mission was and what their objective and their destination was but the second day at sea there was a great storm and the convoy got scattered all over the sea so the third day at sea they were hopelessly scattered and this little LST a very small ship found itself all alone for about two hours they finally spotted an American cruiser on the horizon so they frantically flashed a signal to the cruiser where are we and the cruiser was kind of cagey the cruiser returned the signal where have you come from and the LST returned the signal that's classified and then

the cruiser returned this signal where are you and the LST replied we don't know well after a long pause this signal came from the cruiser if you don't know where you've come from and you don't know where you're going you don't need to know where you are well there are many people I believe today who have a problem with direction especially this is true with young people but it's also true with adult or older people problem of direction there was a time I believe when we had moral absolutes and when we had moral absolutes I think we had a better idea where we'd come from and where we're going and where we were but I believe we've had a couple of generations now of moral relativity and because of this moral relativity as a pastor I talked to a lot of young people who have no idea where

they've come from or where they're going and they're very very confused and disillusioned about where they are now the message of Genesis 3 is simply that there is some place that you're supposed to be the Apostle Paul in the New Testament calls it the good and acceptable and perfect will of God there is such a thing for everybody and that's where you're supposed to be and that will be the place of happiness for all of us I believe that one of the primary causes of unhappiness among people is they're not where they're supposed to be and they know it now the message of Genesis 3 is there's some place you're supposed to be and if you really want to know where it is God will tell you where are you who told you these are the questions with which God begins his dialogue with us and that's

describing something like it was and like it is God has a will for you he has a place for you and God will communicate with you and tell you where that place is if that's where you really want to be I heard about another convoy of ships on maneuvers they were British ships and the flagship signaled a hard right turn and a big cruiser missed the signal and so this cruiser was thrashing around trying to get back in line and the signal came from the flagship what are your intentions a standard Navy signal and the skipper of the big British cruiser flashed the signal back my intentions are to buy a farm in the military you have a fast track and a slow track and if you make a big mistake like that you're probably going to be on the slow track so the skipper was saying he was going to opt to

get out and retire well I believe this is the essence of what Genesis 3 is saying to us that the church of Jesus Christ the body of Christ is like a convoy of ships and at the center of that convoy there's a flagship

and it's sending out signals all the time Jesus Christ is alive and well on the planet Earth that's the most dynamic truth in the New Testament and this Christ who is alive and well on the planet Earth can communicate with us he will communicate with us and he will lead us he will guide us he will teach us tell us that the steps of a believer are ordered of the Lord now in my opinion the people in the body of Christ who distinguish themselves do not distinguish themselves because they never miss one of those signals I believe outstanding people in the body of Christ are

outstanding because they happen to get a few signals and of course the application to the story is keep your eye on the flagship because if you'll just keep your eye on the flagship you will see the signals you will get now there were two other questions there in the third chapter of Genesis before this chapter comes to a conclusion we should mention them have you eaten from these trees where have I instructed you not to eat I think what that's suggesting to us is this is your banquet of consequences bitter herbs do you really have an unhappy life now if that's so can you attribute your unhappiness to the fact that you have obeyed and all your signals from him or would it be more accurate to say that your unhappiness your banquet of consequences that's unfavorable can be attributed to the

fact that you are either unaware of God's blueprint or God's signals or you're ignoring them or you're rebelling against them you see when man was lost God will understand his lostness and why he was lost and how he could find his direction again and so that's what this question means I believe have you been looking in the wrong place for your answers have you forgotten all about your moral absolutes and your direction from God the last question that God asked man in Genesis 3 was this question what have you done now again why did God ask that question did God not know what they did of course he did the word in the Bible for confess is a compound word it's made up of the words for saying and sameness to speak sameness that's what it means to confess when you confess you ask God what do

you say about what I just did now if you know God's word and if you have communication with God through his spirit you know what God says about what you've done now when you know what God says about it then you say the same thing you agree with him that's what confession is now I believe this question what have you done is asked by God to bring man into an experience of confession any parent will do this before he disciplines a child what have you done what did I tell you to do do you realize you've done wrong it's good for the parent to get that from a child before the child is disciplined and we'll see God do this throughout the scripture in order to bring a confession from man he asked this question what have you done well again in the book of Genesis Genesis tells it like it was so

that we might understand it like it is in this third chapter of Genesis you have two very important things as they were and as they are the first is what we have called the crisis the crisis like it was was the crisis of sin would man have it his way or would he have it God's way now that's a crisis not only like it was but like it is every day we have that crisis now the second consequence that we see here in Genesis chapter 3 or the second thing that we see here like it was and like it is is this communication between God and man beautiful descriptions of the gospel to be found anywhere in the word of God God's seeking after man because man's lost God's seeking him out and haunting him with these questions like where are you and who told you will you listen to the voice of God today

telling you that there's some place you're supposed to be will you listen to the voice of God as he tries to get through to you by asking you these questions like where know that.

Respond to the communication with God until God moves you on from where you are to the center of his perfect will for your life.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0frYO_fppBk.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dick-woodward/old-testament-survey-part-6/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net