



READ: Selections from Genesis 2-3 (ESV)

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:8-9, 16-17)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Genesis 3:1-7)

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 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." (Genesis 3:13-15)

And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in 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.

(Genesis 3:21-24)

ENTER THE STORY:

It might be hard for us to imagine, but there was a time when sin and death did not exist. We read about this yesterday in Genesis chapter 1. God created the world and everything in it and called it "good". God placed the first two people, Adam and Eve, in the garden and told them to work the land and take care of it. Adam and Eve had a close relationship with God where they regularly walked and talked with him. They were in charge of the garden and everything in it. There were trees all over the beautiful garden and they could eat from all of them, except one specific tree in the middle of the garden, the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did NOT live happily ever after, because they chose to listen to the voice of God's enemy... the devil, and disobey God.

It feels like our story has just begun, and already everything is falling apart.

- Sin has taken root in God's good world like an obnoxious weed. Stubborn and pervasive, it seems impossible to rid the garden of it. But contrary to what we might think, God was not surprised or caught off guard by Adam and Eve's disobedience. God is omniscient, a big word which means he knows everything. Their disobedience simply set in motion the plan that he already had (*remember we said that the story of Christmas actually started in Genesis?*)
- There is always a consequence for sin, whether we can see it or not, and because God is just (*always does what is right*) and holy (*set apart and unlike us*), He HAS to punish sin. Even the serpent was cursed for his part in deceiving Eve. The bad news for Adam and Eve was that their disobedience caused them to have to leave the garden and the presence of their Creator. But in the midst of their pain, God gave them a glimmer of hope.
- In Genesis 3:15, God said that one day – an offspring from Eve's family line would crush the head of the serpent and defeat him forever. The word "offspring" in the Hebrew language is the word "seed" and it refers to a single male person. Our hope rests completely on the actions of the "seed" of Eve...the prophesied "Serpent Crusher."
- **READ Genesis 3:21 again.** What did God do right before He kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden?
- From the very beginning of time, God establishes a system where the punishment for sin is death. We see this echoed in the New Testament as well. **Romans 6:23 says, "...the wages of sin is DEATH..."**
- By "covering" Adam and Eve with the skin of the animal, God was covering the cost of their sin with the death of the animal. They tried to cover themselves with fig leaves, but that was not enough.
- Through Adam and Eve...sin and death entered the world and changed everything, but the hope of Christmas is that the Serpent Crusher and promised Messiah – Jesus, would be born in human flesh so that he could die and permanently cover the cost of our sin.
- **PRAY:** *Jesus, your mercy in giving up your position in heaven to enter our suffering as a tiny and vulnerable baby is astounding to us. Along with Adam and Eve, we are the ones who eat the fruit we shouldn't--and we are the ones who run away from you and hide – yet you are the one who willingly takes our punishment to re-unite us back to the Father. Forgive us for believing the lies of your enemy, and thank you for providing a way for us to be forgiven. May the good news of your gospel never grow old to us. Amen.*