

Judgment, Mercy, and Grace

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[0:00] Genesis chapter 3. We'll wrap up chapter 3 tonight.

! Unless something happens to hinder us, I don't think it will.! We've got plenty of time to do it. You just never know, do you? Genesis chapter 3, if you'll find verse 16, I'm going to read from 16 all the way to the end of the chapter, and then as we work through some of this, we'll be rereading some of these verses again.

Starting with verse 16, To the woman He said, or God said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. In pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. Then to Adam he said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

[1:21] In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever.

Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Alright, so there's the passage. Pretty lengthy text, but I think we can move through this tonight. I read, it was in a book, but it was a copy of a sign that appeared in a Catholic convent.

[2:33] And the sign read as follows, Absolutely no trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And it was signed by the Sisters of Mercy.

Now I tell that at the beginning because other than, in addition to trying to discern and understand the meaning of the text, and all that this text tells us, we need to also see something about God.

About not just his judgment, which is clearly revealed here, his judgment on Adam and Eve, his curse upon them. And we talked about the curse upon the serpents last time.

But there's not only that, but there's also mercy and grace. And we see these things side by side. Because see that sign, as comical as that sounds, and I suppose it's a real life sign that really did appear in the convent.

As comical as that is, it does represent a theological problem that many Christians wrestle with in life.

[3:48] And maybe I could describe it this way. It is a confusion, sometimes, about the relationship between God's grace and God's judgment.

And so you have it on both sides, both extremes. You'll find within the body, some Christians believe that God is so gracious that He overlooks sin.

I mean, you go to that extreme. And so they pride themselves, of course, on their tolerance and their acceptance of everyone, regardless of how wicked they, or how terrible their sin may have been.

And their scriptural battle cry, I guess we could say, would be John 8, 7, where the Bible says, let him who is without sin cast the first stone. So there's that extreme.

But then on the other side, the opposite end of the spectrum, and I think you probably could recognize this as well, some Christians minimize grace and then overemphasize God's wrath.

[4:50] And so they are stern and judgmental, just like their view of God. And I guess we could say there, scriptural battle cry would be Amos 4, 12, prepare to meet thy God.

You know, that kind of thing. And now, neither extreme reflects the full and true biblical picture of God.

And the first group that I mentioned a moment ago emphasizes God's love and grace, but loses sight of God's moral perfection and His holiness.

The other group emphasizes God's absolute holiness, and then, of course, loses sight of His mercy and His grace and His love. God is both loving and holy.

He's both gracious and righteous. God is both of these things. He's both merciful and just. And that said, I think it's pretty clear in the latter part of chapter 3 in Genesis, that that portion of Scripture gives us the proper view of God.

[6:02] Even when God is cursing, giving a curse, there is grace and mercy implied in it. And we'll see that as we go along.

And then, of course, the chapter ends with His marvelous grace, His saving grace. Now, when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, and we studied this last time or last couple of times, what happened?

Did God strike them dead right there on the spot? Well, no, He didn't. Although, I think His holiness alone would have required that.

But neither did He say, that's okay, we'll let it slide this time. That guy, He didn't say that. Which His love and His mercy may have required.

His love and mercy alone would have required. What did God do? Instead, He did two things. And I know I did not give you any notes and you're mad at me, but I don't know.

[7:10] I can't seem to get that done. But you can jot this down because these are the two points, the main points of the latter part of this chapter. And I'm sorry, one of the points I'm going to have to explain to you, but it's the perfect word to use.

And I'll explain that in a minute. Here are the two things we see. Again, thinking of God in the sense of His judgment, but also His mercy, His grace. Number one, this is what He did.

He imposed the penalty His holiness required. God did do that here. He didn't just wink His eye, let it slide.

God did impose the penalty for their sin, the penalty that His holiness required. He did that here. but second, number two, here's the word that might need to be explained.

He interposed, interposed the provision His grace requires.

[8:19] Let me say those again because these are two very important points. And everything that's said in these verses I read a moment ago hang on those two realities of what God did here with Adam and Eve after they sinned.

He imposed the penalty that His holiness required. And He interposed His provision, the provision His grace required.

The word interposed means to place something in between. You might remember Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing that old hymn. And we don't sing it very much.

Great words. And part of the words go like this. I'm not going to sing it for you. But Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God He to rescue me from danger interposed His precious blood.

But His blood between me and a holy God. Or I would have not survived. Alright, so let's look at those two things real quickly.

[9:29] Number one, then, God imposed the penalty His holiness required. Now we've already seen, again, that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. We've already looked at that part of the passage.

They broke the one commandment. There's only one they had. And they broke it. And then last week I think it was we saw God's judgment on the serpent. And I divided that judgment.

I think first He's judging the physical serpent as a constant reminder of what took place there in the garden. But then He also judged the supernatural serpent and that would be Satan, of course.

Alright, so we've already seen that and now God is going to judge the woman first and then the man. So let's see the woman first.

That's where God begins. And we're going to see here the twofold curse of the woman. Twofold curse of the woman. In fact, let me read verse 16 again so that we keep it in our minds here.

[10:32] He said to the woman, or to the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. In pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. There's the curse. And it's twofold. And I want to explain it.

The first part of the curse, the curse as applied to the woman, involved first of all this, that she would experience increased pain in childbearing.

Alright, it's right there in the text. Now, we could possibly, though it's a little difficult as far as the language is concerned, the grammar, we might even see three, a threefold, or maybe this first one could be divided into two.

Not only pain in childbirth, but that she would have more children. And that is the way it reads. In fact, in the Hebrew text, the word and is there, and so it reads just like it does in this text.

[11:37] Greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. And some scholars think that prior to the fall, of course, God's plan was for the woman to have children.

They were to be fruitful and multiply, but probably not as many children. But after the fall, of course, Eve, she had a whole lot of kids.

Of course, she lived a long time. But I think the thing we need to see, though, that's very clear, is that God is saying, you are going to have multiplied pain, physical pain, through childbirth, that this would be magnified.

That's the first part of a two-fold curse upon the woman. And, you know, let's just, it's obvious, isn't it, that down through history, many women have died in childbirth.

Even in our day, when we have advanced medical technology and so forth, childbearing involves intense pain. I'm not speaking as one with experience. I have no idea other than to be there when it's happening.

[12:46] And to know that this woman is in tremendous pain. And just recently, you know, there in Atlanta, and being in the hospital, you know, a good 50 feet away from the delivery room, and I could still hear my daughter-in-law screaming in there because of the pain.

It's a painful thing. And you women know that. And childbearing involves that, and this is part of what God is saying. From now on, physical pain of childbirth will be magnified.

I believe this is part of the curse. Someone has said, and I think it's interesting, they said that one reason God may have increased the woman's pain in childbearing was to give us an object lesson of the pain which God would now endure in order to bring forth spiritual children.

Not a physical pain, but a pain nonetheless. His own son, the second person of the Trinity, would have to go to the cross and suffer not only the physical pain of the crucifixion, but also the indescribable agony of separation from the Father as our sin bearer.

It's an interesting thought to see that God would use that as an object lesson for that. But now, I want you to notice, and I mentioned this a while ago, that even in the curse, God's cursing, God's judging, there's a mixture of mercy.

[14:14] And this is interesting, I think, God mercifully tempers the pain of childbirth with the great joy of having children.

And every mother knows this and has experienced this. Jesus said in John 16, 21, a woman when she is in labor has sorrow because her hour has come, but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

And so you see, even with God's judgment, His curse, there is mercy. There's mercy. And God is both of these things. Now, the curse as applied to the woman, not only involved pain and childbearing, but from now on, and this is the second part of the twofold curse, from now on every woman will experience a different or new relationship with her husband.

Now, what does this mean? Well, honestly, I'll tell you that the latter half of verse 16 is difficult to translate. It really is.

The Bible says here to the woman, this is what God said to her. He said, Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

[15:38] That's what the text says, and that's a pretty literal translation. And understanding, the key to understanding what that phrase, that sentence means, rests with the word desire.

And here's where the controversy is. There are two views words, as to the meaning of that passage. And the first one I would tell you about really sees this not as a curse, but as a blessing.

That this is not part of the curse, this is part of a blessing. In fact, they would say that it's a blessing to kind of counterbalance the curse itself. And here's the view, that in spite of the woman's increased pain and childbearing, she would continue to have physical, sexual desires for her husband.

That's the view of what that means. And so here's what the idea is, that those who hold to this interpretation, they would point to the word desire, and then they would go to Song of Solomon, chapter 7, verse 10, and the word desire there.

And so the idea is that the word is there to describe the desire of a lover for his beloved. And this is the view.

[16:55] And so the woman's pleasure in the physical act of marriage serves as a gracious blessing to offset the pain in childbirth. And literally, that God has ordained, this God ordained pain in childbirth, but graciously he allows the woman to enjoy the act that leads to the conception itself.

That's the view. You can take that or leave that if you want to. And I think I'll leave it because there's a problem with this because it doesn't fit the context.

God's not pronouncing a blessing, he's pronouncing a curse because of Adam and Eve's sin. So there's a curse here. That's the context.

And so here's the second view and it's not a view that I came up with myself, but I think it's the right one. The second view sees this as the second part of the twofold curse on the woman.

The word desire, again we have to go to the word desire. The word desire, the word that's used here in the text, only appears three times in the Old Testament. Two times other than right here in chapter three.

[18:10] One I've already mentioned, Song of Solomon. The other time it appears just in the very next chapter. Genesis chapter 4 verse 7. In fact, let's look at that.

In fact, I'll start with verse 6. So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?

And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door and its desire is for you. but you should rule over it.

Almost the same construction as you find in chapter 3 verse 16. Its desire is for you, but you shall rule over it.

The word desire means that it wants to control you, dominate you, master you, but you should rule over it.

[19:14] Now, if in this view that I'm about to tell you, there is the explanation for the battle of the sexes, that it's part of the curse, that the woman is cursed with the inclination to dominate the man, dominate her husband.

I'm not trying to be funny, you know, and some of you are looking at me real hateful actually. Only the women. Yeah, only the women.

But we're not finished yet, because you need to understand the full curse here. There is this inherent tendency then, that the woman now has as part of the curse, to rule over, to dominate, to control the man, the husband.

but then his inclination is to rule over the woman. And not in the sense of authority, because certainly in scripture it's taught very clearly, that the man is the head of the home, head of the wife. And there's an authority structure here. We're not just talking about a position of authority, we're talking about the idea of taking it by force. And so then you have the conflict, don't you?

[20:44] The potential conflict, there's not intimacy, there's not a closeness, not tranquility, not a one flesh kind of relationship, but part of the curse is that there will be this tendency now, this kind of inherent tendency for the woman to rule over the man, and the man to take by force what he believes is his authority.

Do you understand? The conflict of this is I think is the curse. And both then, see, the woman dominating her husband, the husband dominating the wife, both do battle against this beautiful one flesh relationship that did exist very clearly prior to the fall.

One flesh between Adam and Eve, Genesis chapter 2 verse 24. And so, this curse will do battle against that, and that's why I think Paul says that it's only in Christ that the relationship Adam and Eve had before the fall, it's only in Christ that that can be restored.

And he tells us about that in Ephesians chapter 5. In fact, chapter 5 verses 22 to 33 are all about that. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, and then husbands, love your wife just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her.

And all that he says in and around those two major statements in that portion of scripture. And Paul is talking about restoring that one flesh, that intimacy between a husband and wife that was lost in the fall.

[22:28] And this is part of the curse. A curse that can only be remedied through Christ. Through Christ. Alright, so that's the twofold curse of the woman.

Then we have the twofold curse of the man. Verse 17 and 19, let me read it again. Then to Adam he said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you, and you shall eat the herb of the field in the sweat of your face.

You shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. There's the curse that is applied to the man.

Let me say something, the curse that has applied to the woman affects the man too. in fact it has affected all of mankind from this day on.

[23:37] The curse as applied to the man affects the woman too. It has affected all of mankind from that day when God cursed Adam and Eve from that day on and on in our day.

So it's not just a curse against the woman, it's only her problem, only her burden to bear, it affects all of us, likewise with the man. But what about the man? It is again I think a twofold curse of the man.

Now understand that Adam sinned not only by eating of the forbidden fruit, but also by allowing his wife to have dominion over him.

I'm just making all kinds of friends in here with the ladies, but hear me out because I don't make that statement of myself. This is what God said in verse 17, because you have heeded to the voice of your wife.

Now, guys, I'm sorry to say sometimes, I would say a lot of times, listening to the voice of your wife is the wisest thing you can ever do. But, it is wrong, wrong to listen to the voice of your wife if that voice is contradicting God's word.

[24:57] And here was Adam's problem, he set his wife above God. And that's what God is saying to him, because you heeded to the voice of your wife.

Now, if I had been there and Sherry had been there, she would have said, Don, don't you eat of that tree. She would have said the right thing. Yeah, I've really wasted that. Would you pass that on to her?

But anyway, just as the curse on the woman was twofold, God's curse on the man is also twofold, and here's the first one. From now on, God says the ground is cursed.

The ground is cursed. Cursed is the ground, he said, for your sake, because of your sin. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

In toil. Now, there is mercy here, because the ground does produce great things to eat, doesn't it? There is that also, but you have to work hard for it.

[26:02] But I think we should understand that the curse on the ground involved more than just simply thorns and thistles. God mentions that in the Word, in this passage.

More than just weeds growing where you don't want them to grow, and so forth. In fact, Romans 8 and 20, 20 and 21, I think companion to really explain this curse in its fullest sense, where Paul said for the creation was subjected to futility.

It was cursed. Not willingly, meaning it wasn't the creation's fault, it was Adam's fault. Not willingly, but because of him, and it's a capital H, by the way, because of God, who subjected it to this futility, but then he adds the words, in hope, in hope, and this is pointing to a day that's going to come one day, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, so one day there will be a redemption of the creation too, but until then it groans, and it's subjective futility, and it's been cursed, and so everything in creation, which right now is opposed to man, and a whole lot of it is, from mosquitoes, to viruses, different kind of viruses, to natural disasters,

I think all those are included, all of it can be traced back to the fall. Now, right now, foremost in my mind, would be leaves falling from my tree. That's part of the curse.

Clogging up my gutters, and piling up around my back door, I just constantly have to rake those things up, and every time I open the garage door to pull the car out, they blow in there, you know,

cursed.

[28:07] And then, of course, you know, you've got to get out there and rake them up, and that is if you can, unless you can afford somebody to do that for you, but you've got to rake them up, mulch them up, bag them up, and you know, whatever you've got to do.

So I don't think it's a stretch in our thinking to understand that the ground is cursed, this creation is cursed, and everything that we need to do to survive and live, and you don't have to be a farmer to know this, you have to do it with sweat and toil and so forth.

And that's the curse. Second part of the curse applied to man is the severest of all, I guess, and yet there's mercy mixed here too.

God says from now on, physical death will touch every person. and that's what he said in verse 19, didn't he? And you've heard these words before, I know you have tonight because I've read it twice now already.

But he says, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. So death is going to touch every single person.

[29:21] Our bodies will return to dust. Death is in that sense the enemy of every person. In here, we can spend our lives working toward some certain goal in life, and yet without a moment's notice be struck down by the most trivial of accidents, just out of nowhere.

You've been working for this great day when you're going to retire and travel like the villarils and the chastings, and something happens and it's all over.

It doesn't happen, doesn't it? Because we're not guaranteed that. And this is part of the curse. And death is no respecter of persons.

Young, old, rich, poor, Christian, non-Christian, the most spiritual among us. We can't avoid death. Neither can we avoid it touching any of our family members.

And that's part of the curse. And so God imposed the penalty that His holiness required. Second part of the chapter, and we'll be able to move through this pretty quickly, God interposed the provision His grace required.

[30:50] Verse 20. Read that again. And Adam called his wife's name Eve. Kind of seems out of place after all that, doesn't it?

Well, there's a reason for it to be there. We'll explain here in a minute. They called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living. Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin.

Made them clothes. And clothed them. Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

And then you have kind of an unfinished sentence there. I think there's reason for that. Therefore, the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man and he placed cherubim on the east of the garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

So nobody could eat of it. And I know somebody is going to want to come up to me afterward and say where do you think that garden of Eden is? Is that tree still there? I don't have any idea.

[32:01] So I didn't spend any time preparing an answer for that. You just have to guess if you want. Alright, now, what we have here though, is God's gracious gift of salvation.

That's what this is about. Is salvation. And it's a salvation that Adam and Eve received through faith. Because I don't see the word faith anywhere there.

And yet that saving faith is there. It was faith in God's promise. They received God's salvation through faith in His promise.

Now how do we know that? Well, the Bible says Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living. There's the faith.

I don't see faith there, but it really is clear if you think about it. What did Adam name his wife? Eve. Named her Eve.

[33:06] What does the name Eve stand for? Mean. It gives us the meaning right there, doesn't it? Literally, the word means life giver.

Life giver. Named his wife life giver. Now wait a minute. Eve hasn't had even one child yet. She's had no children.

And Adam names her Eve, mother of all living. You say, well, okay. what does that mean? Do you remember the promise we, I think we studied this, if not last Wednesday, a couple of Wednesdays ago.

Remember the promise that God gave of a Savior? It's in chapter 3, verse 15. He promised a Savior. And the Savior would be sent through the seed, the offspring of the woman. Which, by the way, is not a normal way that biologically that would be, you wouldn't refer it, you would say the seed of a man, the seed of a woman. Because the Savior, of course, is going to be born of a virgin.

[34 : 21] But there's the promise. The Savior would be sent through the seed, the offspring of the woman. Well, Adam and Eve believed that promise.

How do we know they believed Him? Because He named His wife Eve, even before she had any children. They believed that God was going to send a Savior, that He would come forth of the woman.

Now, they didn't know when that was going to be. I'm not trying to make any case there. But they believed God's promise that there would come forth from the woman one that would crush Satan's head.

They believed in Jesus. Now, they didn't know His name. But they believed the promise of the Savior. And, folks, by faith, Adam named his wife Eve, the mother of all living, even before she had conceived a single child.

Because salvation is now and always has been by faith in God's promise. faith. And before Jesus Christ came into the world, all throughout the Old Testament days, before Jesus eventually came, a person's faith looked forward to the Christ who would come, the Savior who would come.

[35 : 52] And, of course, you know, since Christ, faith looks back to the Christ who has come. But it's the same faith, same trust in God's promise, God's gracious provision.

And, God has always granted salvation, His gracious salvation, through faith. Always through faith. That is in response to a person's taking Him at His word, is that faith.

Now, salvation is through faith, but it's by grace. grace. It's by grace, and if we were telling the gospel, we would reverse the order here, but God in the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to begin with man's experience first, faith, and then move to God, God's part.

But, really, it all begins with God, and God's grace. And, so the second thing is, by grace, salvation comes by grace, and that is accomplished through God's provision.

And, it's a provision of a blood atonement. Here's the interposition, interposing. Verse 21, again, is the famous verse here in this passage.

[37 : 17] Also, for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. a short little verse. And, we could really want to have a little bit more information here about this.

But, it's very clear that God is doing a whole lot more than just providing somatical clothing. If all this was about, God revealing proper clothing, then we'd all be wearing leather here tonight.

man is smart enough to use all kinds of materials to clothe those parts of our bodies we don't want exposed. Adam and Eve tried fig leaves, that was the first thing they came up with, and in and of itself, that would be adequate if all you're wanting to do is just cover your nakedness.

Well, I guess it would be, I can't imagine trying to sew together a bunch of fig leaves, but it apparently worked for them, you know. Probably, Adam looked at Eve said, you look good in green. I'm sure Eve did all the sewing, I doubt the guy knew how to do it, but this is more than just covering their nakedness, right? I mean, this is an incredible illustration of what God would do through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to provide salvation.

[38 : 47] And really, these verses I think show us four things real quickly, and it's going to have to really be quick. Four things about salvation, you can jot these down real quickly. Number one, what God did there, He did because man needed a covering for his sin.

Not just to cover his naked body. He needed a covering for his sin. Because man stands with his sin, not his skin, his sin exposed before the light of God's holiness.

and he needs a covering. Number two, man's attempts at covering his sin are absolutely inadequate.

Will not work. Again, Adam and Eve, you know, they put together the fig leaves, but that would not do. Would not do. Might cover their nakedness physically, but not their sin.

And, of course, the theological implication here is that all of the good works in the world will not take care of your sin.

[39:54] Will not. In fact, I was listening to the radio on the way over here and listening to Sean Hannity. Don't think badly of me because I was listening to him for a moment.

But he was talking to a Baptist pastor in South Carolina, I think. And he made some kind of statement about, I don't know what it was exactly, but he said, you know, he was telling this Baptist pastor, I'm a Catholic and I consider myself a Christian because I read the Bible and I'm helped a lot by the Bible and do the very best I can to obey what the Bible says.

I was disappointed that the Baptist pastor didn't have the right kind of response. But that's what Adam and Eve thought at the beginning. We'll just work this out ourselves, you know, and put together the fig leaves.

Good works will never, ever take care of sin, no matter how good they are. The third thing to understand here is that only God can provide the covering we need for sin.

Only God can do that. And it's a gracious God, by the way, who took the initiative there in covering Adam and Eve's sin. He took the initiative. They didn't request it.

[41:08] They didn't help him with it. He did it all himself. Now, the Bible doesn't describe how he did it. But he took the fig leaves off and he clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins and Adam and Eve did nothing.

God did all of that. And so, here's the lesson. We cannot receive God's salvation as long as we are offering him fig leaves. We won't accept that.

And we must let him provide everything. And he has, in fact, done that. That. Right? Through Christ. The fourth thing, final thing here in this list of things about salvation that are taught in this passage, the fourth and final thing is that the covering that God provided for Adam and Eve required the death of an innocent substitute.

If Adam and Eve witnessed the slaughter of these animals, and I think they probably did, if they did, then they must have been shocked. Because you need to remember this would have been the first time they ever saw a death.

First time. It would have been appalling. Shocking. And I think as they saw the animals, and I believe they were lambs, it's with the progressive revelation of Scripture of the lamb that goes all the way through Scripture.

[42:36] If, as they saw these animals, having their throats slit, however God did it, I think that's probably how he did it, because that's how he instructed the priests to do that all throughout the sacrificial system.

If he saw God slit their throat and then watched these lambs as they died there right before their eyes, then I think they would have gained, did gain, a new awareness of the seriousness of their sin.

And not only that, but the greatness of God's grace, God's provision for their sin. And they learned that without the shedding of blood there's no adequate covering for sin.

That's what was taking place here. But that God would accept the death of an innocent and acceptable substitute. That's what they learned.

Now, understand that the blood of the animals cannot take away our sin. It didn't take away Adam and Eve's sin. The blood of those animals in and of themselves.

[43:43] Only the blood of Christ, but it was that blood that these animals were pointing to. Their blood was pointing to. Only the blood of Christ can take away our sin.

Now then, quickly, chapter three ends with Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden. And I would say to you that even this act is mixed with God's mercy and grace.

In fact, really the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden was not the curse. Not part of the curse. The curse had already been pronounced. You say, how awful make them leave the Garden. We often think about that. It was a terrible thing. They had to be expelled from Paradise. But in a direct sense, it was not curse, that was mercy and blessing as we'll see here in a moment.

In fact, I want to insert this. Art Linkletter, you might remember him years ago. He saw a little boy drawing a picture of a car and the car had a man in the front seat driving the car and a man and woman in the back seat.

[44:48] And Linkletter asked the little boy, what's this picture about? He said, well, this is God driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden. But, of course, it didn't happen that way.

But in this passage, in this last part of it, God states a problem that has to be solved. It's not a curse, this is a problem. And God didn't have problems, I don't mean that, but it's the problem that must be solved.

And he says that man has become like one of us. I think that's part of the revelation of the Trinity there. We'll not get into that. But he's saying man will become like one of us.

By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man had become like God in the sense that he now knows evil. Like God knows evil. Adam and Eve did not know evil before this.

Now they know it. And so that's why he said they'll be like one of us. Now there's a difference in how man knows evil and how God knows evil. I guess we could describe it this way.

[45 : 53] A man knows evil like a cancer patient knows cancer. But God knows evil like a cancer surgeon knows cancer. See the difference between those two?

Alright, then the last sentence of verse 22 is, and I mentioned it, is an unfinished sentence and I think there's a reason for that. And all this goes together to show God's mercy.

The last sentence, verse 22, says, And now, lest he, meaning Adam, put out his hand and take also the tree of life and eat and live forever. And then that's just an unfinished sentence.

And it's left open ended like that I think because here's the idea. If Adam and Eve had been allowed to stay in the garden and eat from the tree of life, now, after the fall, they would then have lived forever in their sinful body.

and we cannot even fathom what that could have been like. Maybe we could if we would just consider the history of mankind since the fall and the ever increasing wickedness of man.

[47 : 06] And now, imagine man living forever in that sinful condition. And so, what does God do? He banishes them from the garden so that they can't eat from the tree of life and live forever.

So, paradise is lost. It ceases to exist on this earth. I don't think it's anywhere on this earth now. It's gone. And this is a blessing.

It's not a curse. Ray Barnhouse, he explained, he said, how often it is necessary for God to drive us out of an apparent good to bring us to a place of real good.

And death actually is part of that mercy. that we would then understand the frailty of our life and our need for a Savior.

Hopeless. So, once sin had entered into the creation to live forever, it would have been hell on earth. So, you have again, I'll close it this way, judgment is tempered with grace, tempered by grace.

[48 : 11] I'll tell this little story and I'll be finished. This is again from Donald Ray Barnhouse. He told a story of a certain 19th century English artist by the name of Sir Edward.

They had more to the name, but we'll just keep it there. And he, as he told the story, he said, during the, or this 19th century artist went to visit his daughter, went to his daughter's home for tea.

tea. And during the tea, his little granddaughter misbehaved. And so, her mother made her stand in the corner, face the wall.

It's a form of punishment. I know none of you have ever done that. Right? Anyway, Sir Edward, you know, kind of bothered by it, but he did not want to interfere with the granddaughter's punishment.

The next day, he came back to the house, and this time he brought his paints and brushes. And he went to the wall where his little granddaughter had been forced to stand, and he proceeded to paint a number of pictures that would be delightful for a child, and he painted a kitten chasing its tail, and he painted some little lambs prancing in a field, and some goldfish, and so forth.

[49 : 27] And so, that if his granddaughter had to stand in the corner again, at least she would have something good to look at. And that's a, you know, falls way short of who God is, but God, I mean, judgment is tempered by grace, and that's our God.

Thank you.