

Today, many people who would claim to ‘share the Gospel’ do not begin with the underlying foundation or reason why we need the Gospel in the first place. There are (at least) three important aspects of the Gospel: the sin of man, the judgment of God and the mercy of God. All of these are present in Genesis 3. The Gospel message begins with man’s sin – his falling short of God’s glory. Without sin, there would be no need for salvation, or the Gospel per se. Scripture tells us that as a result of sin, God has condemned all to death (Rom 3:23). In spite of this condemnation, however, from the very beginning we see God’s mercy plan unfolding. Beginning from Genesis 3, the Bible shows us that God extends mercy to us by giving us the opportunity to repent and be reconciled to Him, ultimately through Jesus Christ.

1. If you had an opportunity to share the Gospel with someone, what would you say? What would you be sure to include in your Gospel presentation? Take a few minutes to pair off in your groups, and have one volunteer in each group to try ‘sharing the Gospel’ with the other person.

Read Genesis 3

I. MAN’S SIN

1. What was the question that the serpent posed to Eve (v.1)? In what ways was the serpent aiming to deceive Eve (v.4-5)? What was Eve’s response to this (v. 2, 6)? What was Adam’s response to this (v.6)?
 - “Did God really say...?”
 - Serpent was planting doubts in Eve’s mind of God’s Word; He wanted to cause her to doubt 1) His truthfulness (“You will not surely die...”, 2) His goodness (“For God knows that... you will be like God”) as if God were withholding the best from Adam & Eve
 - Tries to make God’s ordinance seem unreasonable (“...Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”
 - Eve believed the serpent, and allowed herself to be enticed by the lie told to her, eating of the forbidden fruit and convincing Adam to do the same
2. The serpent is elsewhere in the Bible referred to as “...the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.” (Rev 12:9). What does this tell us about the nature of the proposition that the serpent was presenting to Adam & Eve? What is merely a proposition to fulfill physical desires of hunger?
 - That it spiritual in nature; it was prompted by more than just the physical realm of human desire
3. What happened after their disobedience of God’s command (v. 7-8)? Why do you think this was the case?
 - Their eyes were opened, and they realized their own nakedness = their own shame
 - They sewed fig leaves together as a covering
 - They heard the Lord walking in the garden and hid because they were afraid – ashamed of their

II. GOD'S JUDGMENT

1. In what ways did God exact His judgment upon the Serpent (and Satan), Adam and Eve (v.14-19, v.23)? Ultimately, what was the most severe judgment that God placed on Adam and Eve (v.19)? What does this tell us about God's attitude towards sin?

- On the serpent: v.14 (curse of the natural serpent) pronounced curse on the serpent above all other animals; condemned it to crawl on the earth as the lowest of the low; v.15 (curse of the supernatural Satan) to be an enemy of the woman and her offspring; there would be an ongoing struggle between its offspring and the woman's with the serpent being finally defeated in the end
- The curse placed on the Serpent was a symbolic reminder to us about Satan's defeat; the animal itself was not a moral creature – it was merely used by Satan to do his deceptive work; in speaking of the 'New heavens and the New earth', Isaiah 65 points out that while God's curse will be lifted from all of creation, the serpent will continue to crawl on the ground (Isa 65:25) as a reminder of Satan's permanent defeat
- On the woman: what was meant as a blessing to "... be fruitful and increase in number" (1:28) would now be the very thing that would bring suffering and pain to the woman; what was meant as a perfect partnership between man and woman in headship and submission, would now be characterized by a great selfish struggle for power, "...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." (v.16b)
- On Adam: the work of rulership and subduing the earth, given as a blessing in chapter 1, would now be arduous, tedious, fruitless, and painful; a reminder of physical death is brought to Adam in v.19
- God banished Adam & Eve from the Garden of Eden (v. 23)
- Ultimate judgment was death (2:17)
- God hates sin and punishes those that partake of sin; God's judgment is thorough and measured and fair

2. Read Genesis 3:24. What did God place between Adam and Eve and the Tree of Life? From the following passages, what is the significance and symbolism of this?

- Deut 4:23-24, Heb 12:28-29 → Our God is a 'consuming fire'
- Rev 19:11-15. Who is this passage referring to? What comes out of His mouth, and what is its purpose?
 - Refers to Jesus Christ, who's 'name is the Word of God'
 - A sword comes from his mouth, and is used for judgment; Also... His 'eyes are like blazing fire'
- Heb 4:12-13. What does the sword symbolize in this passage? What does this tell about the God's judgment of the world?
 - Refers to Jesus Christ, who's 'name is the Word of God'
- Thus, the flaming sword represents God's judgment, based on His perfect, holy character; His holiness is why He is a consuming fire
- The sword is symbolic of the Word of God. Jesus said people would be judged according to how they respond to His Word (John 12:46-50); Adam & Eve disobeyed God's Word and were cursed

III. GOD'S MERCY

Through Adam & Eve's sin came death for all whom Adam represented (Romans 5). This judgment was, and is, fully justified as no one can offend a holy God and live (Eze 18:4-9). Life, in fact, was conditional from the very beginning. In Genesis 2, God made very plain to Adam that his life was contingent upon his obedience to God (2:17). Even as soon as they sinned, however, we see God's mercy being shown to Adam & Eve. He allows them to live on for many years (until Adam was 930 years old), and in His mercy preserves their lives by providing for them and ensuring that descendants would follow. This mercy would continue as God provided man with a system of animal sacrifice to outwardly demonstrate

repentance of sin, in order for those seeking forgiveness to be reconciled to Him. Ultimately, all of this pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Lamb of God' who would one day come and sacrifice himself to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Many would believe on Him and be saved.

1. Read Lev 1:2-9, 4:22-36. Under the Law of Moses, what needed to be done by the priest offering an animal sacrifice as atonement for the sins of the people? If a fiery sword represents God's judgment, what was the symbolic meaning of what the priest was required to do?
 - The priest laid his hand on the animal's head, symbolically placing the sins of the people on the animal
 - Then he killed the animal with a sharp knife by slitting its throat ("slaughter")
 - The priest was to pour blood at the base of the altar and put some blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering
 - The he was to burn all the fat on the altar
 - In this way, the knife of the priest and the fire of altar symbolized the judgment of God's sword and fire

2. Read Lev 16:11-16a, Hebrews 9:22 and 10:19-22. What was the purpose of the blood taken from the animal offering in covering the sins of the people? Why is the 'shedding of blood' important? What was the shedding and sprinkling of blood in the sacrifices meant to foreshadow?
 - This was a substitute sacrifice: the blood of the animal took the place of the blood of the people
 - The sprinkling of blood represented the covering of sin
 - Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness – blood represents life

3. What is the significance of what God did in Genesis 3: 21? What was needed for this? Why couldn't have God simply made extra fig leave coverings for Adam & Eve?
 - God slaughtered animals in order to provide clothing for Adam & Eve; slaughter involved the shedding of blood, and in a sense it was through the sacrifice of animals and shedding of their blood that Adam & Eve's nakedness (shamefulness) were covered
 - This was a foreshadowing of the blood that needed to be shed by Jesus Christ in order to 'cover' our sins once and for all
 - In the same way that God sacrificed animals to cover the nakedness of Adam & Eve, God would one day sacrifice His only Son so that our sins would be covered.

4. Read Gen 3:15 again. Martin Luther said that this verse, "embraces and comprehends within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the scriptures." What does enmity mean? Who are the offspring of Satan (c.f. John 8:44)? Who is the offspring (or 'seed') of the woman referring to here?
 - Enmity means conflict, hostility, hatred
 - This struggle / conflict would continue on throughout the ages
 - Offspring of Satan would be those who followed him, and not Christ... Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me" (Matt 12:30)
 - Offspring of the woman, firstly, is singular: "HE will crush your head..." → It is pointing to Jesus Christ

How would this conflict end (v.15b)? In what way would Satan strike (or bruise) the Lord's heel and how would the Lord crush Satan's head? What was the glorious consequence of this (Heb 2:14-15 and Rom 16:20)?

- Though Satan would bruise His heel, Christ would ultimately CRUSH the Satan's head – i.e. Jesus would defeat Satan and all of his offspring
- Satan put the Lord to death on the cross (rather, God the Father did!), but Jesus rose from the grave, defeated death and “the one who holds the power of death” (Heb 2) ultimately freeing sinners from sin and Satan's power
- Rom 16:20 → God would crush Satan under the feet of the saints – Christ's victory is our victory!

5. How does Scripture say that God will ultimately deal with Satan (Rev 20: 1-3,7-10)?

- Ultimately, Jesus will crush Satan and cast him into the lake of fire for eternal punishment

Taking every thought captive...

As we share the Gospel with others, we must remember to begin where the Bible begins – with the utter sinfulness of man – and end with the great mercy of God. As Hugh Vickery says, “The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were imperfect sacrifices that could temporarily cover the sins of the people but could never purify the people of sin... The sacrifice of Christ, however, was a perfect sacrifice. He bore the full brunt of the sword and fire of God's judgment on the cross. Therefore, His sprinkled blood satisfies the judgment of God and makes atonement once and for all for our sins. Faith in Jesus and His atoning sacrifice is the only path to the Tree of Life and to fellowship with God. We cannot be stained with sin and enter the presence of God anymore than Adam and Eve could remain in God's garden stained with the sin of rebellion.” Through faith in Jesus' atonement, our sin is removed and Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness in the sight of God. Sin no longer is an issue between God and us. We can then freely enter His presence and eat of His life. To God be the Glory!