**Paradise Lost**

**Reading - Genesis 3: 1-8**

**Discussion Questions:**

* Do you remember a time when you were explicitly told to not do something (or told to do something) and it was hard to comply? Why is it so hard for us to follow directions?
* Why would knowing good and evil cause Adam and Eve to be “like God?” and why was this so enticing?
* The bible is filled with instructions for reader to grow in wisdom (defined as knowledge of good/evil) why was this forbidden initially with Adam and Eve but expected thereafter?

Read Romans 1:18-25

* What is sin at its core?
* Share an example of sin from our lives, try to see how this ties to a refusal to give God glory
* Why is it so hard to notice sins in our lives? What should our response to sin be?

**Sermon Notes:**

**Slide 1: Defining Sin**

We tend to think of sinners (real sinners) as evil men who do evil things.

Evil is usually a word we reserve for special occasions. Like an adolf hitler, ivan the terrible, osama bin laden. Or maybe for a system or institution

As church going people, we probably don’t have a problem calling ourselves sinful – but evil? That seems unnecessary, harsh…

I want to tease that line a bit, between evil and sinful – and along the way try to figure out what exactly DOES sinful mean? And why Holy God would allow sin to exist.

Here’s why this is important:

Without a clear understanding of sin, I would distort the doctrine of justification, I would confuse what Christ died for, I would misunderstand what happens in conversion and baptism, I would disregard repentance, I would not truly be able to grasp what heaven is.

I would not have the right kind of love and gratitude that corresponds to the horrors of what I was rescued from and to the price the most beautiful and innocent person paid for that rescue.

**Slide 2: Fritz Haber**

Let’s start with an example of a man some might consider evil. A genuine mad scientist.

1900s Germany, and much of the world, faced starvation. Not enough fertilizer. Nitrogen in the air but plants can’t use it.

Fritz Haber was the German chemist who figured out how to capture nitrogen.

7 billion

1918 Nobel prize in chem, but a war criminal.

World war 1, Haber was above all else a patriot.

Made explosives

Invented the use of chemical weapons and trained gas warfare troops

Blistered skins, lungs fill with fluids, and choke to death.

Also invented the insecticide that was later repurposed by Hitler’s men

Greatest irony is that Haber himself WAS jewish

exiled from his own country that he loved so much. He died alone, destitute, and in poor health in a hotel room in a foreign country.

Imagine being a high school chemistry student and being asked by your teacher whether Haber was basically good or basically evil… 4 years of telling this story, I’ve never had a student say good.

This is us. We know we do bad things sometimes, but we’re also quick to point out the good we’ve done, as though that is enough to atone. I wanted to start off by pointing out this moral calculus we do

**Slide 3: Genesis 3 – Defining Sin**

Quick summary of genesis 1-2

Genesis 3 comes along…

Sin in four stages

Broken window story

**Slide 4: Doubt**

The bible refers to satan as deceiver – the best deceptions aren’t the lies you tell others, but the lies you get others to tell themselves.

Satan starts off with the words “did God really say?”

Doubt God’s instructions, doubt God’s goodness, doubt God’s intentions

Seeds of doubt is where sin begins to grow

Broken window: Do I really have to tell…?

**Slide 5: Idolatry**

When we doubt God’s goodness and his capacity to rule, we desire something else to worship

Ultimately, idolatry is about our desire to choose for ourselves what is good and what is evil – our desire to be like God

This is all mental

Broken window: I need to avoid punishment, my temporary freedom is more important than my parents’ trust in me

**Slide 6: Rebel**

Without trust in God, our desires runs rampant and pulls us further from God

Where idolatry is a mental process, rebellion is an active process

Eve eats the fruit and passes it to Adam

Notice how the rebellion spreads from one person to another like linking branches? Rebellion is something we learn and teach so naturally from each other.

Broken window: Clean up the pieces and keep my mouth shut

**Slide 7: Shame**

Here is the conclusion of sin, the final fruit of the entire thing

Sin is often defined as the thing that separates us from God, but this shame does something even worse – it prevents us from even desiring to be with God at all.

This means that even if God reaches out to us, our naturally dark inclination is to run from him. We get defensive, we hide, we lie – anything to get away from confronting the light that is in God and the darkness that is in us.

Broken window: I lied about the window, was so filled with shame but didn’t know what else to do, mom didn’t believe me..

**Slide 8: Defining Sin**

Ppl usually think of sin as simple an action (a lie, a theft, a murder) – but it’s all of it, the doubt, the idolatry, the shame. Seed, trunk, branches, to bitter fruit.

But what IS sin at its core?!

Root of sin: Roman 7:8

Coveting is a sin right? It’s one of the 10 commandmants (thou shallt not covet)

But…

i.e. There’s something deeper than the covetousness that’s producing the covetousness.

Sin Defined: Romans 1:18-25

So the root of sin is the desire to avoid glorifying and thanking God.

Sin hates glorifying God and thanking God.

In verse 18 Paul said we suppress the truth — namely, the truth that God is infinitely worthy of glory and thanks from our hearts. There is a part of us that hates that and therefore suppresses that truth- THAT is the root of sin.

**Slide 9: 3 burning questions**

Now….at this point, you may be struggling with a few burning questions

**What’s so wrong about biting a fruit?!**

Let’s be clear, Adam and Eve DID something wrong. Why else would they hide?

It’s because the moment their eyes were opened to the vast difference between them and God, they understood his holiness and their depravity completely

Peter, upon encountering jesus had the same reaction.

Eating the fruit WAS rebellion and a declaration of their choice to self-determine what is good and evil.

Kill a homeless person vs killing the president of united states

Severity of crime could be measured by the act itself OR by the dignity and worth of the victim

God is INFINITELY glorious and dignified, and any crime against him is therefore INFINITELY heinous.

Biting the fruit was an act of treason against the infinitely glorious and dignified God.

**Was God powerless to stop Satan from tempting adam and eve away from him?**

No.

Well that’s the short answer…

A few examples in the bible that clearly shows Satan in an odd position of being against God, but under God’s authority at the same time.

Job – needed God’s permission to test Job

Peter – Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. Asked. Had to get permission to try to sift Peter’s faith out of him.

One of my favourite stories about peter…. Jesus goes on to say I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail. And WHEN, not IF. WHEN. You return to me – strength your brothers.

God is not powerless in the face of satan’s attacks and whispers.

Why not just destroy satan…? Rev 20:10 said he’s gonna do it someday anyways…toss satan into lake of burning sulfur.. so why not just do it now?!

This is similar to question number 3

**Why did God plant that stupid tree there?!**

Couldn’t God have left the tree of knowledge of good and evil out?

I think so….but I think grampa adam and grandma eve would’ve found other ways to sin.

Couldn’t God have made adam and eve sinless?

Probably…but knowing God, he has a purpose for every molecule he bumps. A perfect understanding of the causality and eventuality of every choice.

This means there was a purpose for the stupid tree being there.

There was a purpose to the temptation

There was a purpose to eating of the fruit

There was and still is a purpose to the history of sin that followed.

[Isaiah 43:6–7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2043.6%E2%80%937): “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth [says the Lord] . . . everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory.”

[Psalm 106:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20106.7%E2%80%938): “Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider thy wonderful works...but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name’s sake that he might make known his mighty power.”

[Ezekiel 36:22–23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek%2036.22%E2%80%9323), [32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezekiel%2036.32) puts it like this: “Thus says the Lord God, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name . . .

**Slide 10: God’s Triumph and Glory**

The purpose was and always has been his own glory.

* In the end, Satan and all the pain he caused serves to magnify the power, wisdom, love, grace, mercy, patience, and wrath of Jesus Christ. We would not know him in the fullness of his glory if he had not defeated Satan in the way he did.

If the world had been created sinless, without the need for Christ’s sacrifice, we who are to worship God would not have understood as fully the depth and heights of his glory and mercy.

Now…you might be tempted to think of God as a vain puppeteer who dangles the world, and us on a string for his amusement and to make himself look glorious. Please, I beg of you, do not think that way. Giving up his son Jesus to death on a cross is much too painful for us to consider this to be amusing to God – yet that was the plan all along.

In making himself more glorious, is God’s greatest act of love and kindness towards us.

What is the best thing God can give us? Himself! Himself in all his glorious majesty is the best and most satisfying thing he can offer his believers in heaven. When we enjoy a thing we praise it, and the praise is a part of the pleasure of experiencing a thing. We praise what we enjoy because the delight is incomplete until it is expressed (watch a great movie and not having anyone to talk about it with). In presenting his glory to us most fully, allows us to experience him most fully and affords us the greatest possible pleasure in eternity. God is the only being in the universe for whom self-glorification is an act of love.

That ISN’T the answer most of us is looking for. We WANT this to be a story of human redemption, we WANT to be the main characters. I PRAY that that is the answer we can come to accept. At the end of all things, what separates those who stand on God’s side and those who don’t is NOT those who believe in jesus and those who do not (even Satan believes in jesus), it’s NOT even those who acknowledge that he is God (every knee will bow), it will be those who look upon God in all his majesty and glory and decides that yes, all of this is worth this history of suffering and sin.

**Slide 11: Final thoughts**

Do:

* Resist temptation (Cain)
* Repent
* Consider the magnitude of Christ’s love for us in dying for us while we were still his enemies

Do not:

* Keep on sinning (Romans 6)
* Forget that there is a God given purpose to every ounce of sin in your life and in the world
* Doubt God’s love and goodness through the tragedies of life