Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Fall of Man, Part 1
Scripture: Genesis 3:1-5
Code: 90-238

I want you to turn in your Bible now to the third chapter of Genesis and we finally arrive at the text itself. We have talked about this chapter. And we have done a lot of background on the chapter, on the issue of sin, the problem of evil in the universe and evil in the world. And all of that was really prelude to the text itself, the biblical record of why the world is the way it is. The Fall of man and the Fall of the created universe is presented in this chapter. This is God's Word on that most defining and influencing of all events. It is the divine record of the entrance of evil into the natural world.

And I want to say, although it goes without saying, that the true and historical and actual way in which it happened is precisely what is described here in Genesis 3. This tells us how the perfect good creation of the all good and only good God became corrupted and evil. The New Testament does not treat this as fiction. The New Testament does not treat it as legend, does not treat it as allegory, does not treat it as myth. If you study the New Testament you will find a number of references to Adam, one of them is in the genealogy of Jesus in Luke chapter 3 verse 38, the genealogy of Jesus starts from Adam through his son all the way down to the Lord Himself. You will find New Testament references to Satan as the serpent in the Garden as the one who lied to Eve, as the one who deceived Eve. You will find references to Eve as the one being deceived.

So, the New Testament gives many, many references back to Genesis chapter 3 and all of them treat it as actual people, a man named Adam, a woman named Eve, in a garden and a serpent who was none other than the devil and Satan. There are in every case where references made to this event no indications that it is anything other than actual history. Even Jude 14 says Enoch, identifying him in human chronology, was the seventh from Adam. Adam was the first man, Eve was the first woman, and this is the real story of how sin came into the world.

Let's read the first seven verses, you follow as I read.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden God has said you shall not eat from it or touch it lest you die.' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die, for God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God knowing good and evil.'

"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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate and gave also to her husband with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."

And that is exactly how it happened. God has revealed to us this account as an explanation of the sinfulness and fallenness of our universe.

Now this is by far the saddest event in history, obviously. All problems, personal and environmental, all that is wrong, evil, immoral, incomplete, all that is decaying, all that is inferior, all failure, all disappointment, all weakness, all sadness, all sorrow, all pain, all disillusionment, all trouble, all discomfort, all remorse, all regret, all conflict, all hate, all jealousy, all envy, all bitterness, all vengeance, all fear, all crime, all selfishness, all confusion, all lies, all deception, all error, all intimidation, all manipulation, all deviation, all distortion, everything that fails to be as perfect as God is came from this one event. This then is a monumental event. It truly defines life in our universe. It is the reason for all imperfection and death.

Now the story is built on several elements. And I always like to create a little outline so we can work our way through and we'll do that, and we'll take one at a time. First of all, I want to introduce to you the solicitor...the solicitor, or the tempter who is none other than Satan. And we've discussed this in detail but in reference to this outline of the text itself I want to just pick that up.

Verse 1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." The Lord God had made a lot of animals, as we well know, that creation of animals is discussed back in the first chapter. And the Lord made a wonderful world of animals, including reptiles. More than any other animal which God had made, this particular serpent was wise and the reason he was wise is because Satan himself, that fallen angel, Lucifer, son of the morning who had been thrown out of heaven for his rebellion, had moved into that reptile and was speaking through that reptile the supernatural wisdom that he possessed as a fallen angel. This is a real reptile, a reptile--the term nachash as sometimes synonymous with tannin which is the word for dragon. Sometimes serpent, sometimes dragon and that's consistent with Revelation 12:9, Revelation 20 verse 2 which says of Satan that he is the serpent and the dragon. Some kind of an upright reptile who approached Eve, but really it was Satan. Satan, that fallen angel, that supernatural enemy of God and man, wiser more cunning than any animal because literally this animal had the very mind of the supernatural being Satan. He had fallen, as we remember from Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. We also remember from Revelation 12 that when he fell he took a third of the angels with him. So it is Satan who speaks through this animal and that is why this animal is more cunning, more wise, more intelligent than any other animal.

Satan has one objective in mind, he is the solicitor of evil. He wants to solicit Eve and Adam into sin. He wants to solicit their disobedience to God. He wants to corrupt God's good creation. And so we have met the solicitor in detail in weeks past, and you can get the tapes if you want a further study of that.

But let's move secondly to the strategy. The strategy unfolds in the middle of verse 1 down through the end of verse 5. The solicitor is Satan, the strategy is lies, or deception...if you will. What Satan needs to do to effect the result he wants is to create a lie that Eve believes. He had to deceive her. And that is why Jesus in John 8:44 called Satan the father of lies. Here you have the first lie, as far as we know, ever told. And that is what Satan does, he lies. And mark this down. He lies about two things...one, he lies about the character of God, and he lies about the Word of God. And that's where his assault is inevitably directed.

Satan, who has fallen himself at this point, Satan who has taken a third of the angels along with him in the rebellion, moves in to target God's highest creation in the natural world, man. Man must have been a novel creature to Satan. He had never since his own creation seen anyone who could procreate. There was no procreation, of course, in the Godhead, the trinity was eternal. There was no procreation among animals, among angels, I mean. There were, as the New Testament says, neither marry or given in marriage. Angels were all created at the same time and there are as many now as there ever has been, although some now are fallen and some are holy. But this was a creature who had the capacity of angels to consciously worship God and to have relationships and the relationship with the living God, but a creature who could reproduce. This was something very different than what Satan had experienced. I'm not sure that Satan knew that by getting Eve to sin he could corrupt the whole of humanity that would come from Eve, but it was certainly a possibility.

Satan moves in then as the originator of lies and his lies always have to do with the character of God and the Word of God. And if you understand that then you understand that his strategy is basically very simple. He disguises himself, however, as an angel of light, according to 2 Corinthians 11:14. He wants you to believe that he is telling you the truth and God, the God of the Bible, is the liar. That's the strategy. If he can get you to believe that the character of God can't be trusted and therefore the Word of God can't be trusted but he can be trusted, then he has accomplished his goal. And that's essentially what he did with Eve. He got her to doubt the character of God, doubt the Word of God and believe Satan...and that's exactly what he does in the world even in your life and mine.

Only in lying is Satan consistent, okay? That's one of the things you learn by studying Satan and demonology, as it's called. One of the things you learn is that there's a massive amount of inconsistency in the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of darkness can't get its act together because there really is no sovereign over the kingdom of darkness that can control it. Satan obviously is the leader but he cannot control what his wicked minions and demons do and so there is massive

inconsistency in the kingdom of darkness. But in one thing they are constant and consistent, and that is in lying. They are void of the truth. And everything coming out of that kingdom is deceptive.

Satan approaches Eve with what sounds like an innocent question from an interested observer who really is concerned for Eve's well being. Satan passes himself off, first of all, as just a sort of neutral observer asking a very innocuous question of Eve. He moves from being an innocent observer to convincing Eve that he really is the one who has her well-being in view and that if he can get her to follow him, she will reach great heights of bliss and blessing that God would like to deprive her of. He tells Eve in so many words that he knows more than God knows and he also knows things about God that Eve doesn't know because God doesn't want her to know and if she did know she would be very disappointed in God. She (John means--He) gets Eve to lower her view of God and then to disbelieve God's Word and to believe him. Jesus also said in John 8:44, not only is he the father of lies, but he is the first murderer. In the garden he told the first lie and in the garden he killed Adam and Eve and the whole human race. From the outset, he is a liar and a murderer.

Now let's follow the strategy. It is fascinating and maybe not immediately visible on the surface because the words are so simple and straightforward, it might be easy to miss. Let's go to verse 1 in the middle of the verse. "He said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said that you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'"

First of all, just to note, I ask questions when I study the Bible, my first question is...why did he go to Eve and not Adam? Why did he go to Eve and not Adam? Well I think maybe the best answer is 1 Peter 3:7 that the woman by God's design from the physical standpoint, from the emotional structure standpoint is the weaker vessel. God has poured into the lives of women sensitivities, compassions, a certain level of tenderness. She is not by created design the warrior, the fighter, the defender, the protector, she is the one to be defended, to be protected. She is the one who needs to be covered and cared for. That's why in Ephesians 5 husbands are to love their wives and they're to be the guardians of their wives purity and the guardians of their wives character and they are to nourish them and to cherish them. At the same time they are to be their savior, as Christ is the Savior and provider of His church. And 1 Timothy 2 the Apostle Paul says, "I do not permit a woman in the church to take leadership, to teach, but rather she is to learn." And the New Testament even says she is to go home if she has questions and ask her husband. The husband is the leader, the husband is the spiritual guardian and the spiritual protector of this woman because she is wired to be tender, she is wired to be compliant,k she is wired to be compassionate because that is such a critical matter in the rearing of children and in offsetting the strength of her husband. The balance is wonderful.

But when a woman is taken out of that protection, there is a level of vulnerability there. That is why the Bible it is normal, it is the standard approach, there are some exceptions by God's design, but it is normal for women to have a husband, that is the design of God because a woman was designed by God to be a helper to a man, to be covered, protected, sheltered, cared for by a man and to take that

tender side and use it in the lives of children as well as in the life of her husband. And where a woman does not have a husband, she is still to be the special care of a father who offers her that oversight and that care that she cannot receive from a husband. And we're reminded by the Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy that when a young woman loses her husband and becomes a widow, she should marry because she needs that covering, she needs that protection. And that is also why wherever you have divorce with biblical grounds, you have the allowance for remarriage because God knows that women are designed not to go through the world in an unprotected fashion, particularly those women who need to be married who have been designed by God to be married, they need the covering and the protection of a husband.

Now this situation is exactly what Satan would have wanted, an uncovered, unprotected, sensitive Eve. This is what the Apostle Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 3, "I'm afraid lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." What happened was, Eve was led astray. She wandered off. She was found, I'm sure, by Satan in an unprotected condition and that's exactly what he wanted. Now he may well have succeeded with Adam, but he believed he had a better opportunity to launch this thing with Eve.

Now the fact that a reptile walked up to her and talked to her doesn't seem to surprise her. And people have asked that in many of the writings about the third chapter of Genesis...how is it that she wasn't surprised? Well she may have been surprised, it doesn't just say it. It's not really essential to the account. But on the other hand, this was, after all, the garden of Eden and everything was absolutely wonderful and all of a sudden a talking serpent, a talking dragon, a talking reptile just could have been another wonderful thing. But on the other hand, it seems to me she should have been a bit surprised by it since the whole parade of animals had walked by her husband before she was created and he had named them all and there was probably never any indication from Adam, surely, that there was anything other than non-communication. But it perhaps should have raised some question in her mind, but again here may be a level of her vulnerability that exposes her to this in a very clear way.

She falls rather innocently into the conversation and the solicitor's strategy is progressively deceptive. It begins with what appears as this very innocuous question by just this interested observer. Here's just an animal in the garden like a lot of other animals and this animal comes up and says, "Indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" This is the first question, by the way, in the Bible. Before this there was only answers. There weren't any dilemmas cause there was nobody to introduce a dilemma. And the question is designed to start Eve on a path, a path of questioning God, a path that leads from questioning God to doubting God, to distrusting God to disobeying God. It's a very clever plan and it's the essence of all sin. All sin follows the same pattern. You have a right to question God, you have a right to doubt God, you have a right to distrust God that leads to disobedience.

Now this is very subtle to Eve, not to subtle to us on this end of it because we live with this assault quite regularly. The way to translate that statement could be, "So, God has said, has He, you shall not eat from any tree of the garden...or you shall not eat from every tree of the garden. So, Eve, I guess God says you can't eat everything in the garden." Listen to this, for the first time, the most deadly spiritual force ever released was by that question released into the world...and it is this deadly force, the assumption that what God said is subject to our judgment. That's the issue, that's what launches this entire attack. "Hey, Eve, let's talk about what God said and how we feel about it."

Really. Here is the deadliest force that has ever been released in the world and it's covertly smuggled into the world by means of Satan using a reptile as an instrument. The assumption is that what God says is subject to our judgment, our evaluation, our assessment. Now listen. All temptation, all temptation, I mean that, all temptation starts with the idea that we have a right to evaluate what God has said or required. It is subject to human judgment.

By the way, the fact that he says, "Indeed, has God said..." is a giveaway because from chapter 2 verse 4 on, once you got pass the original creation, from chapter 2 verse 4 on would you please notice in verse 4, "Lord God," verse 5, "Lord God," verse 7, "Lord God," verse 8, "Lord God," verse 9, "Lord God," verse 18, "Lord God," verse 19, "Lord God," verse 21, 22, chapter 3 verse 1, "Lord God." And you find again the Lord God walking in the garden in verse 8, the Lord God calling to man in verse 9, the Lord God saying to the woman in verse 13, the Lord God saying to the serpent in verse 14. Verse 21, the Lord God made garments, verse 22, the Lord God said, 23, the Lord God sent. The word "Lord" is what puts the emphasis on His sovereignty and that's the word Satan wants to leave out because if there's anything he hates it is the sovereignty of God. He will not acknowledge Him as Yahweh, Yahweh the eternal I am, he calls Him Elohim which is a more generic word for God and he drops the term "Lord" because he will not affirm His sovereignty. It's that sovereignty that he sought to overthrow in his rebellion. It is that sovereignty that got him thrown out of heaven, along with the rest of his fallen angels. And so he really in a demeaning way refers to the one who has now been clearly identified as the Lord God simply as God.

"Has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" Well, Satan starts by quoting Scripture, right? Because that's exactly what God did say back in chapter 2 verse 16, "The Lord God commanded the man saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the garden...the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat from it you shall surely die." So he starts by simply bringing up a fact...as indeed, has God really said...but he casts doubt on it and makes it subject to her judgment. "Has God really said you shall not eat from every tree of the garden? Has God put some limitation in there?" And Satan reflects a knowledge of God's Word, he reflects a knowledge of God's command. But he does turn the positive to a negative, reversing or inverting the emphasis by saying it the way he does. God said...you remember...you shall eat of every tree of the garden, but this one of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But

Satan reverses it, you shall not eat from every tree of the garden? So he casts the negative tone over it and inverts the emphasis to not eating where when God originally gave the command it was the emphasis on eating everything, except that one tree. Now it's the not eating that is up front.

In this way he focuses Eve's attention on the prohibition and sets her up to question or to judge or to evaluate God and His Word. What he is saying to her is...Really, did God actually say that? And the implication, very clear implication is that isn't this a bit restrictive? Now follow this. The tone is...Did God tell you you just couldn't eat of everything here? Did He restrict you in some way? Really.

And the tone here is that...Eve, doesn't it strike you as strange that God has restricted you? Do you question that? Let's have a conversation about that.

And the further implication is that there's something in God that wants to deprive you of some great delight. There's something in God's character, the implication is, there's something in God's nature that makes Him want to limit you, He wants to steal your joy. He wants to take away your complete freedom. You know, God is the cosmic killjoy concept. There's some pleasure over there and God is needlessly restrictive, don't you think?

That's the tone of it, that's the negative twist and inversion of it. It's almost like...Eve, I can't believe, did God really tell you you couldn't eat everything in here? Don't you get the picture that that's a little narrow of God? It's a little strict? Can you kind of catch the tone here that God is needlessly limiting your enjoyment and there must be something about that tree that God doesn't want you to enjoy?

You know what? As this thought settles, you might get the idea that there's a cruel streak in God, well certainly an uncaring streak, or certainly a limiting streak, or certainly a depriving streak in God. And the subtlety of it is in the mind of Eve she's going to be saying...I never thought of that before but it is strange. And Satan is subtlely suggesting that he is more devoted to Eve's best interests than God because he is not restrictive. By the way, have you noticed that? Have you noticed that? Oh, Satan is for freedom. God is pro-bondage, narrow, restrictive, binding. Satan is pro-freedom.

You see, the fact that God gave them everything in the garden to eat, absolutely everything, is set aside as negligible. Satan doesn't want to talk about that. He wants to go right to that one tree and he wants to paint a picture in her mind that this is a serious, unacceptable restriction that casts suspicion on God's goodness.

You know, she's not...she's just talking to a talking reptile, she doesn't know what's going on. She's unaware of his subtleties. So she replies to this...in some ways naively with a very weak defense of God. Verse 2, "And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat.'" Really. This is her entrance into the conversation. She didn't know she was talking to the supernatural adversary of God. She didn't know she was talking to a fallen angel. She kind of thought

that this was somebody who had her best interests in mind and this personality had raised this question about why would God be restrictive and narrow and was He really unkind and was He wanting to put her in bondage and limit her joy and freedom and her pleasure? And, you know, it seemed to her that this creature talking to her seemed to want her to enjoy everything and enjoy freedom. And he really was the one interested in her fulfilling herself and satisfying her every desire.

Now, you may be saying to yourself...But Eve, you can't be too hard on this lady, she's at a severe disadvantage in this confrontation. She's got no idea who she's talking to. And she doesn't understand what's at stake. She didn't know her enemy. And this point she's naive and she's innocent.

But listen, I want to stop you there lest you think too long that way. She knew enough that she could have stopped Satan at that point. She had sufficient advantages to do that. What were those advantages? She knew God. She knew God. At that point she should have said...I don't know who you are or where you've come from but you don't understand God...God is good, God cares and God has given us everything we could ever need or want for pleasure and delight and satisfaction and fulfillment.

She knew God was good and only good because that's what all creation was. And she had experienced personally in her life all around her all of God's goodness. She knew enough to say...Hold it, I will not question the goodness of God...I will not question His kindness toward me.

As commentator Luphold(?) said, "The whole of creation formed a strong symphony of protest against any suspicions of God's good will." She should have stopped him in his tracks. Just like you when Satan comes to you and says...What kind of a God do you worship? Just this cosmic killjoy who comes along and says...there's one having fun, get him. He wants to rain on your parade, wants to confine you and bring you into bondage. Why don't you just go out there and be free. You need to question the goodness of a God who would restrict you from all these normal satisfactions and pleasures. That's where you have to stop and say...Wait a minute, that's a lie. My God always provides for me what is the purest and truest good, amen? And it's when I violate that that I forfeit it, that's what all sin is...it is a failure to believe that obedience brings to you the purest good and true satisfaction.

Furthermore, not only did she know the character of God, not only did she know God personally and not only had she had experience with His goodness and seen the manifest goodness of God, but she also had a clear command from God. And I think she should have been suspicious of a talking reptile. I think I would be, especially one poking around about the character of God. And you know what I think? She should have pressed a little further to find out who she was talking to. It would have been good if she had said, "Who are you and where have you come from?" She didn't. Luphold again says, "We strongly maintain that the taking of the fruit was not the fall into sin. The Fall occurred before that

act. The taking of the fruit was an incidental bit of evidence of the fact that man had already fallen. However...he writes...the Fall as such was nothing less in character than an entirely inexcusable piece of rebellion against a very gracious Father who not only had withheld nothing good from man, but had even bestowed such an overwhelming wealth of good things that revolt against such a one must in the very nature of the case be a sin of the deepest hue, yes even the one great sin in the history of the human race." You know what the sin was? The sin was not the act of obedience, the sin was the moment she believed God was not good and that God had restricted her from something good. That lie plunged the human race into depravity. She bought it.

Really the Fall comes immediately, verse 3, "From the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden," she goes on, "God has said you shall not eat from it or touch it lest you die." What she should have said, instead of agreeing with Satan, "You know, you're right, God did say we can't eat that fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, we can't even touch it or we'll die."

Now nobody had ever experienced death, but the concept of ceasing to exist would be conceivable. She said, in effect, "You know, the probing that you're doing on this question, I understand it because He did tell us we couldn't eat it, we couldn't touch it, or we would die." What kind of a good God would do that? You know what she should have done? She should have made a strong and emphatic disavowal of all suspicion about God. She should have said, "I'm sorry, I don't know who you are or where you've come from, but I'm not going to stand here in this garden and talk to a reptile that's trying to undermine my trust in God." You know who did talk like that? Jesus when Satan came to Him and tempted Him. In every case He refused to let Satan impugn the character and the Word of God which is what all three of the temptations against Jesus intended to do. She should have said, "I'm sorry my God is not restrictive, my God is not limiting, my God is not trying to put us in bondage, my God does not withhold any true joy or any true delight, my God is good and only good and always good." She should have made a strong affirmation of God's goodness, but instead she began to suspect in her mind that God was not all good because He was narrow and restrictive...cause that's what Satan focused on and she bought into it.

Her reply in some ways is sort of a weak effort of refuting Satan's suspicions because she says..."No, you know, we can eat of everything, it's just that one tree in the middle of the garden that God has said you shall not eat from it or touch it lest you die." And so while there's a sort of a weak affirmation of what God had said, her heart has been filled with doubt.

The point is this. As soon as one, whether it's Eve or you or me, as soon as one does not completely, wholeheartedly, unreservedly trust in the wisdom and goodness of God...you hear that?...as soon as you do not trust completely, wholeheartedly and unreservedly in the wisdom and goodness of God, you're in trouble...you've sinned. And she sinned, not when she ate, she sinned when she stopped believing God was good and only good.

And then it followed that if there was a flaw in God's character, you couldn't always trust His Word. When you do not completely and wholeheartedly and unreservedly trust in the wisdom and goodness of God and believe that His commandments are for your good and your highest joy, you have fallen. All sin comes from distrusting God, His character, that's how it gains a foothold and it begins to show up in verse 3.

Eve omits the "all" in verse 2 from the fruit of all the trees of the garden we may eat. She didn't use the word "all", indicating that she's beginning to get drawn in by Satan and losing sight of the boundless, limitless goodness of God. And then she restates the command of God in verse 3 without any defense of God's goodness. She could have said, "And by the way, I believe that God is good and only good and seeks for His own only good." But she doesn't. She even adds to the command the words "Or touch it." Go back to chapter 2, you're not going to find that in God's command in chapter 2:17, God didn't say that. Now it's possible that this had been a warning given to her by Adam. Some commentators believe that. I make a reference to that in the study Bible. It's possible that Adam had sort of added that as a P.S. to keep her away from the tree.

But if you really look at that, it goes deeper than that. I really is reflective of the process in Eve's mind. She's beginning to feel the restriction. Satan has gotten her to the place where she feels she's in bondage, that there are delights being prevented, that she is being restricted by God from something that is desirable and wonderful and satisfying and pleasurable. And so she's beginning to think that God is harsh and it shows up because she makes God even harsher. And she says, "We can't even touch it." Well, God never said that. But she's bought into the lie that God is harsh and restrictive and narrow and binding and she even in a sort of sarcastic way says...Yeah, and God says we're not even to eat from it, we're not even to touch it.

She's now bought into it. Her heart has set its course. She is not defending God. She is not defending God's goodness. She is not affirming God's glorious majesty. She is not taking that...telling that reptile to get out of there. She is not saying God's desires for me are all good and only good and they are the highest and the best. And you know what? She is not taking offense at the wicked insults to God's character...and that's when the Fall came. The first time she ever had a thought that God was not perfect goodness, she fell. Eve, a being that had been made holy and been equipped with the strength necessary to maintain moral integrity and a right relationship to God, freely chose to despise God's goodness and distrust God and severed her relationship with Him thereby. And that's what all sin is, all of it. All sin is believing Satan's lie that there's pleasure out there, there's satisfaction out there, there's fulfillment out there, there's fun out there, there's joy out there, there's delight out there and God is just trying to restrict you and you're going to have to go for the joy because God is narrow and limiting and restrictive. And you have sinned when you believe that God has any desire to withhold from you the highest and the best...believing that God is anything less than good and seeks anything less than your highest good is a sin.

Well, Satan knows he's succeeded. First he introduced the fact that God was subject to judgment. God's Word was subject to a discussion and an evaluation and a verdict could be rendered on what God said. He moves that seemingly innocent approach, let's have a discussion about God, to planting the idea that God can't be trusted. God is cruel. God is uncaring. God is needlessly narrow. God is putting you into bondage and the real fun stuff is outside of His confinement. She has fallen into distrusting God and to questioning....listen to this...God's character, the sin of all sins. And as Martin Luther said, "Satan knows now that the wall has begun to topple," so Luther said, "Satan started pushing against it so that it could completely crush Eve."

Verse 4, "And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die.'" Now this is just a flat out lie, right? But it takes him a while to get there. This is a bold denial of what God has said. God said you'll die, Satan said...what?...you won't die. And that's the bottom line, folks. God tells you the truth and Satan lies. Satan lied and called God a liar.

Now where is Eve? "Boy...not only is God putting me in bondage, not only is God restrictive and narrow needlessly, not only is God trying to withhold from me some delight, some joy, some satisfaction, but do you know God is actually dishonest? God doesn't tell the truth. He's not good. He's not caring. And He's not even honest." And now her mind is totally corrupted with wicked thoughts about God. His majesty as been insulted. He has been dishonored and Satan moves in for the kill.

"God is a liar," he says. "God will deceive you and God will harm you and God will take your freedom and God will restrict your joy and He'll do it by telling you things that aren't true. You know how He does it, you know how God does it? God tells you if you do the things He tells you not to do, you'll die and that's a big lie."

Wow. The ultimate lie for Satan is this, there never will be any judgment for sin. Right? And you've got to come in with that one sooner or later, right? Because Eve could have said, "Well, but...but, I appreciate the conversation and I'm thinking things I never thought and maybe God isn't caring and maybe He's narrow and maybe He's limiting and maybe He's restrictive and all of that and He's trying to keep back some good from me, but after all if I go and do it, I'm going to die."

So that in the end, restraint is placed by God in the form of judgment. So what does Satan want to do? He wants to eliminate that restraint. He wants to make sure people think when they die they'll just get recycled, reincarnation. Or that when they die they'll just go wandering off into the happy hunting ground, or at the end of the long black tunnel there's a bright light and they're going to go in to some wonderful happy place. Or he wants to make people think when they die they just go out of existence. So Satan always lies about judgment.

This is summing up what Satan says. "You know, God is so restrictive, so narrow. There's so much bondage, so confining, so many rules. Now me, I just offer you freedom. You can be whatever you want to be. You can do whatever you want to do, you know. I don't recognize any sexual preference, or anything else. And by the way, when you're doing whatever you're doing, don't worry about it, there is no judgment. There are no divine laws." Satan says, "There's no absolute authority. There is no standard. It's your life and you can do whatever you want to do. And by the way, there are no consequences. Isn't that great? You're not going to die, Eve. It's not going to happen."

Well, Eve's faced with a choice. She's already made it. Who is telling her the truth? Never does she say, "Stop your lying mouth, I don't know where you came from. Get away. I know God. I know God's goodness. I know God personally. Go away!"

No. She's already believed Satan. And she's decided that God can't be trusted and that God makes rules to restrict us from pleasure and satisfaction. And if we're ever going to get that pleasure and satisfaction, we have to break His rules. And we don't want to worry about that because there aren't any consequences. Satan has said, "Ah, don't let God jam you into some cramped existence, constrict you from all of life's potentialities." You know what he's saying, bottom line? "God doesn't love you. God doesn't love you. I love you. I'm the one who loves you. I have your freedom in mind. I don't want to restrict you." I heard that on the television the other night, somebody was talking about the Lesbians. I guess there's a new movie all about Lesbians and they were saying..."Well I don't know why anybody wants to sit in judgment on this, we all just need to love." And you know what? That is the love of hell, is what it is. It's Satan who is saying I'm the true lover, I love you so much I don't want to restrain your freedoms. Don't let God come along and restrict you and tell you if you break His law you die.

Who would you rather believe? That's easy for unregenerate people, isn't it? Satan is saying, "I love you so much, I don't have any rules, you can do whatever you want." By the way, the new morality isn't new, Genesis 3, that's the new morality, old stuff. The message is...God restricts you because He doesn't love you.

Modern psychology, you know, we can hear the tempter saying, modern psychology has brought to light the deep recesses of the human soul. The soul is a very tender thing and to restrain and bind it by the imposition of categorical law is to harm it. The soul needs to be free...free to develop itself and express itself. And you can only do that through free love. Narrowness and restriction and confinement and oh dread, absolute authority, what a horrible thing. Who in the world is so warped as to want to submit to an absolute authority? What kind of a warped person would you become?

At this point you would ask the question if you were Eve..."Okay, okay, but I don't get it. Why would God be this restrictive? What's His problem? Well...that's a fair question, why? I've known God since

He created me, walked and talked with God in the cool of the day," as Genesis 7 says, "it was in sweet communion and fellowship and we've known God in intimate and personal ways. Why? Why is He wanting to restrain and restrict and confine and put us into bondage? What's His motive? Why is He so restrictive?"

And Satan has his answer. You know what his answer is? God's character is basically seriously flawed. God has a major flaw in His character. Verse 5, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God."

Stop right there. "Oh man, if there's one thing God can't stand it's anybody like Him. He is not tolerant of people of personalities who tempt to rise to His level. He is envious. He is self-protective, selfish. He's got a serious character flaw. He resents anybody who seeks to be His equal."

Well Satan knew that personally, didn't he? Yeah, because he had sought to be God's equal and that's how he got thrown out of heaven. Isaiah 14:13 and 14, "I will...I'll rise and I'll be equal to God and I'll be equal to God," and kaboom, he's catapulted out. In his wicked mind he has determined that God doesn't want anybody getting anywhere near His equality. That's true but for holy reasons, not unholy ones. Satan hates God for what God did to him when he tried to be equal to God.

So he says to Eve..."There is this serious flaw in the character of God and that flaw is self-interest. He doesn't want anybody on His level and He knows that if you do that, you'll be like Him and He can't stand that and that's why He's restricted you."

Wow, what a twist because that's the compelling question. If I had been Eve and gotten that far, I would have said, "But I don't understand why God would do this. I mean, okay, He's narrow, okay He's restrictive. I mean, we've got a lot of freedoms, but you painted this picture that all God is is restrictive simply because there's one single tree in the whole of the created world that we can't eat." Eve has bought in to the restrictiveness of God because of the way Satan framed all of that and made her focus only on the restriction. But the question still comes up. Why? And his answer is because God's character is flawed, He hates competition. He hates anybody who attempts to be equal with God. And He knows that if you eat of that tree you're going to be like Him and He hates rivals.

So, Satan starts out...you have every right to question God. Let's talk about God, let's talk about what He says. You start questioning God, you start distrusting God, you start dishonoring God and then you come to the place where you think God lies and doesn't tell you the truth, and then you get to the place where you think He did all that out of wicked motives. It starts out God can be questioned, God can be narrow, God's not loving, God doesn't tell you the truth and God is evil by nature. That's where Satan took Eve...to the total demolishing of the character of God. And when you sin, and when I sin, we buy the lie that Satan led Eve through.

Let me sum it up. The big lie is that the God of the Bible is narrow. The God of the Bible is restrictive. The God of the Bible is unkind. The God of the Bible has put us in bondage when we were made for freedom. The God of the Bible by His law has held us back from true good in free personal expression. The God of the Bible lies to us and He lies to us about the consequences of our sin because He wants to keep us from doing those things because when we do them we become like Him and He is so flawed in His character as to hate rivals. And Satan is the real lover. He is the one who cares about freedom, cares about delight and pleasure and satisfaction. He is the one who cares that everybody be fulfilled, everybody be satisfied. And he's the one who makes sure we all know that God lied when He said we would die and go to hell. That's a big lie. What God knows is that when you get to that highest pleasure and when you go where God says you can't go, you'll be so satisfied that you'll ascend to becoming a god. You'll know all the delights that God knows. You'll know all the pleasures that God knows.

That's the lie. That's a very intoxicating thought, by the way. When in verse 5 he says to Eve, "God knows the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God," that's a very intoxicating thought. I mean, that's what the Buddhists promise, that's what the Mormons promise, that's what a lot of false religions promise...you'll be like God. But, you know, on the surface it's a noble thing. You can understand Eve saying, "Wow, I mean, I honor God, I worship God, God is the creator God. That's a pretty wonderful thing to be like God." So there's a sort of a noble side to that. Wow, I could be like God. Even though He doesn't want me to be like Him, I would like to be a being like Him.

But being like God...Satan says in verse 5...means knowing good and evil...knowing good and evil. He was right about that, by the way. She would know good and evil, not in the way she thought, in a way she never thought. She would know good and evil, that was a deadly half truth. Go over to verse 22, "The Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us knowing good and evil.'" It happened. It happened. That was a half truth. Satan said you eat of that tree, you'll be like God knowing good and evil. You won't be like God in your nature, you won't become God. Although that was the implication. But the one thing about God that you will share in some way is that you will know good and evil.

But can I quickly add to this and then we'll stop at this point? She wouldn't know good and evil in the way that she thought she would. That is, God knows good and evil the way a cancer surgeon knows cancer...which is very different from the way a patient knows it. God knows good and evil outside of Himself. She knew good and evil inside of herself. She knew the cancer as a victim, not as a physician.

When she ate of the tree, as we'll see next time, we'll stop at this point, she immediately knew good and evil. Was there some magic in the fruit? No. Was there some magic in the tree? No. What

happened to make her know good and evil? Well, she already knew good, what happened to make her know evil was she did it. She knew it not by cognition, she knew it by...what?...experience. Nothing in the fruit was evil. That tree was as good as any tree. God made that tree, it was good and all the fruit in it was good. The evil was in the heart of Eve. She knew the evil not from some magic potion in the fruit but from her heart.

She had distrusted God's character. She had impugned God's motives. And she had disobeyed God's Word. She dragged God down. She stopped believing He was the God He was. She saw Him as a flawed God with corrupt motives and evil intent.

And, you know, that's always been Satan's lie, to tell people that the forbidden fruit is the doorway to fulfillment, right? What a lie. What a lie. So, at the point we are in verse 5, her mind is gone and she's fallen. What's left is her emotions and her body and they will follow because when lust conceives, where's that? James 1. When lust conceives, it brings forth sin...it's conceived in her mind now. She has fallen. It will move to her emotions and then it will move to her will and then it will show up in her behavior.

So, we've seen the solicitor and the strategy. And the next point for next week is the seduction. And we'll see how it moved from her mind to her emotions and her will and her behavior, and then what happened as a result. Okay, enough for now. Wow! Let's pray.

What a glorious experience it is, our Father, to submit ourselves to the greatness of Your truth, to find ourselves captivated by it, thrilled by it, the insights so profound and so applicable. Help us not to be ignorant of the strategies of Satan, to understand how he wants to break down our confidence in Your goodness, our trust that You want our well-being. How he wants us to mistrust Your character, mistrust Your motives, to disobey Your Word, to believe that You lied to withhold good things from us. He wants us to believe there are no consequence for sin. And every time we sin we believe Satan's lies. We show by our sins that we don't trust You. What a travesty. Keep us from that. May we win the battle when it begins as we are tempted not to trust Your goodness, and that You desire the very best and most satisfying and fulfilling for us. May You be honored in our lives. May You triumph in the battle with the enemy. We pray in the Savior's name and for His honor. Amen.

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