

Is Sin Really That Bad?

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[0 : 00] is found on page 5 of the Bible. It's Genesis chapter 3 and we'll be reading from verse 6, not verse 7, to 13. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, Where are you?

He answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid. And he said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?

The man said, The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? The woman said, The snake deceived me, and I ate.

[1 : 24] May the Lord add his blessing to the reading of this word. Thanks, Rebecca. I'm Robbie.

If we've not met before, I'm the youth pastor in training here at St. Silas. And let me add my welcome to Simon's. It's so great to see so many people here on a Sunday evening. Really, the title of the sermon is, Is sin really that big a deal?

And when I start to talk about sin, I wonder what you think of. Maybe we all have different connotations for that word. What does it mean? Maybe when I say sin, your brain immediately goes to that acronym we teach our kids, and kids don't shove off God.

I'm in charge. No to your rule. Or maybe actually when you think of sin, what you think of it is that it's something the church has created to keep people thinking that they need to go to church.

The more people think they are sinners, the more they need church, the more they'll give money. It's a total con organized by the church. Or maybe you don't think that's true, but you do think the church puts way too much a bigger deal on sin.

[2 : 29] It's not actually that bad. I mean, some are, you know, murder, theft, adultery. They're all pretty bad. But the smaller things, they're not that big a deal. I mean, why do people even think sin is that bad?

Is it just because God is a bit grumpy? He gives us a list of rules, and if we don't do what he wants, then we sin, and that's bad because he doesn't like it. Maybe if God was a bit more easygoing, life would be fine.

We wouldn't need to worry about sin. It could be that you think any one of these things, or all of these things, at different times. Or maybe tonight is your first night at church, and you've never heard what sin is, or you don't have a clue what I'm talking about.

Well, if that's you, you're in the right place. Tonight we're going to find out what it is and what it does, and why it is such a big deal. Lots of people could say all the things I've said so far, but they do all miss some crucial aspects of sin that our passage tonight really highlight for us.

So tonight we're in chapter 3 of Genesis, and two weeks ago we saw the serpent's deception. We saw the lies he told Adam and Eve that led to them eating the apple, the one thing they weren't allowed to eat.

[3 : 40] The serpent twisted God's words, and they believed his lies. And now in verses 6 to 13, we see the immediate consequences of sin. And what we see is that sinning is not just the result of breaking rules set by God.

Instead, sin breaks everything. Sin is the destroyer of all things good. That isn't the only thing this passage shows us. In these verses, we see the horrific nature of sin, but we see the gracious nature of God.

We see the way that he cares for sinners, even when they sin, reject him, and run and hide. But before we dig into all that, I'm going to pray for our time looking at God's word together.

Father God, help us to understand your word tonight. May your spirit open our eyes to the effects of sin. May you show us where we reject and hide from you. Lord, warm our hearts with your truly gracious nature.

Help me, give me the words to speak from your words that we might see how great you are. In your son's holy name, amen. So tonight, we're going to look at two things about sin, and then we're going to see three things about God.

[4 : 51] And they are in your notice sheet, so you can follow along and see where we are as we go. So the first thing sin does is sin brings shame. It's worth taking a few more minutes to think back to Genesis 2 before we dig into this part of Genesis 3.

Genesis 2 is the story of what Eden was like for Adam and Eve. It was amazing. There was unlimited provision. There was a wonderful garden to live in. The views must have been amazing. They were in the very presence of God. They were able to work under God's rule, and Adam was able to work alongside his wife. It was a great deal. The final summary of that wonderful time in history is at the end of chapter 2, verse 25, where it says, Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Adam and Eve were entirely comfortable with who they are and who they were in each other's presence. And they were comfortable in the sight of God. They were happy to be seen as they were because there was no reason for shame or self-consciousness.

Everything was good. But then we get to tonight's passage in chapter 3, a whole six verses later, where it says, Eve took some of the fruits and she ate it.

[6 : 05] Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. They ate the fruit, rejected God's rule, and suddenly everything is not okay.

Suddenly they are overwhelmed by shame. Eden is no longer that place of joy. It's a place where they're going to be found out. And that's what they know.

This shame makes them terrified that God will see them. And, well, he might kill them because he said eating the fruit would lead them to certainly die. Suddenly, Adam and Eve know that everything that once was right is wrong because of what they've done.

They've sinned and ruined everything. What was innocent and open, there was no shame when they were naked, has become guilty and filled with shame. And this shame leads them to try and cover themselves up.

They sow some fig leaves together. That's in verse 7. They try and make some clothing for themselves because they know that when God comes to them, he's going to see them for exactly who they are.

[7 : 09] He will see them for what they've done and how they've rejected him. And they can't stand that thought. They need to hide themselves. They try to cover the shame.

They try to pretend it didn't happen. You know, the shame, the shame that sin brings destroys the perfect relationship that man had with God in the garden. What once was perfect between God and mankind is now completely broken.

We see more of that when God enters the scene. This is verse 8. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Doesn't that verse just bring equal parts joy and sorrow?

In Eden, God walked through the garden day by day. He was present there in a way we could never fully understand today. And he isn't patrolling the garden.

He isn't walking through looking for wrongs. No, he's walking in the cool of the day. Think of when you're on holiday and it's that golden hour. It's about 7 o'clock. The sun's setting.

[8 : 15] There's that perfect light across the beach. It's just cool enough. You're in shorts and a t-shirt. You don't have to worry about getting too cold or being too hot. There's this beautiful orange glow and you're able to just walk in the cool of the day.

The God of all creation went for gentle strolls through Eden. And he probably wanted to go with Adam and Eve so they could enjoy the creation together that he's made. Can you imagine getting to

go for a walk with God?

It's just awe-inspiring. The second we see that we're hit by sorrow and sadness. It's overwhelming grief. We see this snapshot of what life could have been like with God, what life was like with God in Eden.

And we see what sin has caused us to miss out on. That personal relationship with God that mankind once had in Eden was replaced by separation where we try and cover ourselves and hide. Makes you ache for that pre-fall good relationship. No longer are Adam and Eve able to walk with God because they are weighed down by that shame.

[9 : 26] They are desperate to avoid being seen. Not only do they attempt to clothe themselves from the shame, they attempt to just hide from God in his garden that he created from nothingness.

They don't do a very good job. Have you ever played hide-and-seek with a three- or four-year-old? You start, you count to 20, you turn around and you walk into the room and they're hiding behind a lampshade and they're giggling because they think they've hidden and they're like, this is amazing, they can't see me.

But you can definitely see them. That is what Adam and Eve are doing here. They've thought, we better go and hide and God is able to see everything. It's totally useless attempting to hide.

He made Adam from dust. He made Eve from Adam's rib. Of course he knows where they are and what they've done. Sin doesn't just lead to a cover-up, it leads to hiding from what we've done.

It leads to hiding from who has made us. Adam and Eve know that when God sees them, they will be punished. They will face the consequences for the wrongs they've done.

[10 : 32] So they run away, looking to put as much distance between them for as long as possible. The more they cover up, the further away that golden hour walk becomes.

But sin doesn't just bring shame. Sin doesn't just break relationship between man and God. Sin also points blame. God comes into the garden and the first thing he does is call out to Adam.

And he asks him, have you eaten from the tree? And how does Adam respond? Well, if you look down in your Bibles to verse 11 with me, Adam says, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.

Well, it wasn't my fault. She gave it to me. It's her fault. She made me do it. Straight away, he casts blame elsewhere. As soon as God sees him, as soon as he walks out in front of God, he tries to divert his gaze.

Doesn't it sound so petty and childish? Eve doesn't do much better. Verse 13, God asks her what happened and she says, well, the serpent deceived me and I ate.

[11 : 43] It's not my fault. The snake made me do it. Blame him. Look away from me and try and deal with him, not me. It wasn't my fault. Neither of them are willing to take responsibility for what they've done.

Well, it's obvious that they did it. Their coverings show that. The fact they've had to hide themselves proves that they've done something wrong. God sees them for who they are and what they've done despite their best effort to hide it.

It's not just relationship between man and God that is broken. It is the relationship between man and woman, between every one of us. It took Adam one question to turn on Eve.

He would do horribly under interrogation, wouldn't he? Sin makes Adam turn inwards. His sole worry is not to lead his wife. It's not to act like the head of that relationship which he was given to be.

Suddenly, Adam is solely out to protect himself. And it's just, it's a pitiful excuse. Can you imagine that first night out of Eden? Adam and Eve have left the garden, they've found somewhere to lie down.

[12 : 52] There's going to be a cold silence in that bed, isn't there? That is not a happy relationship. Sin has brought selfishness upon Adam and it's broken them apart. We do the same.

We point fingers and we find any possible excuse that we can for the wrongdoing we've done. but every single time we do that, all we do is erode the relationship between us and other people. Either it's the person we've sinned against, either it's the person we're trying to blame, or it's the person we're excusing ourselves to.

Sin kills those relationships every single time. When we sin, we are ashamed. When we sin, we point blame and when we do those things, relationships snap in half.

Don't you see that sin is not just an issue because we're breaking a rule? Well, if that were the case, after the sin, the big problems would happen when God sees them and curses them, which we will look at next week and that is something that happens when we sin.

But sin is not just breaking a rule. Sin is breaking relationships. Sin is inwardly being selfish and hiding and covering up and excusing ourselves. Sin is bad because it destroys what is good.

[14:11] For us to really understand the impact sin has on every single one of us, we need to understand this. Every time we put our own needs first over what God wants and we realize it, we see the pattern of shame and blame.

We see relationships being destroyed. Sin always has real effects. We cannot pretend otherwise. That isn't what culture tells us of sin.

The outside world, well, they tell us that, sometimes they tell us sin is made up. It's just some religious guilt trip. Even if you're not a believer, even if you don't necessarily think the Bible is true, look at your life.

See the times you have done something wrong and see that pattern of shame and blame. Sin is not just a punishment from God. Sin destroys relationships all on its own.

We are always sinning against someone when we do wrong, whether it's our friends, our spouse, the government, our employers, the stranger in the streets. And as soon as you realize what you've done, you're covered in shame because we know we shouldn't have done it.

[15:21] What's that one thing this week? Maybe you lashed out in anger. Maybe you watched something you shouldn't have. Maybe you went out on a night out and got way too drunk.

That next morning, I bet you woke up and realized I shouldn't have done that. You're covered in shame and you try and hide it. You make excuses. Well, they bought me that drink. Well, that person was really annoying me.

They deserve the snack. Every single time we see this pattern play out. And even beyond the people around us, the Bible tells us that every single one of us sin against God first and foremost. And it's when we realize that, when we see it, that this good God who made us, that we've rejected him, then the shame we are filled with is even worse. It brings us to a pit of despair.

We hope desperately that God won't see us for who we really are. We hope that the coverings and hiding that we do, what we realize only makes things worse.

[16:25] It emphasizes our guilt and shame. And every time we do those things, we realize that they do nothing. God will never fall for your excuse.

You can never hide from him because he sees everything. That doesn't stop us trying to hide like Adam and Eve did. It doesn't stop sin breaking down relationships.

But actually, that's a great thing. God still sees us. And this God is a God of grace. I hope as we've read this and we've been thinking about the impact of sin that it's hitting you hard.

It is important that we understand the real effect of sin. I hope you leave tonight examining your life and realizing that it is a real problem. One that we need to fix.

But this passage doesn't just leave us with the challenge of sin. It also shows us the character of God. So I want to draw out three things about God.

[17:28] The first thing God does is God calls us. So we've already spoken about how pathetic Adam and Eve's best attempts at hiding are. God knows where they are immediately, but he doesn't just see them and go up to them.

Instead, as he walks through the garden, God calls out to Adam. Verse 9, Adam, where are you? Why does he do that? Why is he asking the question when he knows where they are?

To put it plainly, it's because God is a gracious God. God calls out to Adam to give him a chance to come out of hiding. God doesn't want that relationship to be broken forever.

So he reaches out and gives Adam a chance. Earlier, I used the analogy of hide and seek with the three-year-olds. But I think normally when we use that picture of hide and seek with God, often we think of ourselves being the person seeking and God is the one hiding.

We're trying to find him and we look everywhere. We've looked in nature and we couldn't see him. We've tried in science and he wasn't there. We've tried to experience God and felt nothing. So when we can't find him, well, we give up.

[18:44] He's not there. He doesn't want to be found. There's no point playing this game anymore. There's a totally different picture in Genesis. God is the one who seeks.

He is looking for us. He is calling us. He wants us to find him and speak to him. He wants us to join him out in the open instead of hiding in the shadows of our shame.

God calls us out from our shame and not only does he call us, he questions us. Where are you is not the only question God asks.

In fact, in these seven verses, God only speaks in questions. Every time he's giving Adam and Eve the opportunity to tell him what has happened, he gives them the chance to own up to what they've done.

Each question is an opportunity for them to return to him. And each question shows us more of God's grace. He didn't have to do any of this.

[19 : 45] He didn't have to ask any question. The second Adam and Eve ate the fruit, he could have clicked his fingers and everything would have been gone. He'd have ended it all. There was no need for this to continue.

But instead, God walked through the garden looking for them, talking to them, giving them this chance to stop hiding and to own up to their mistakes. Once God has called us and questioned us, well, he clothes us.

Adam and Eve are filled with shame. They are naked, covering themselves. They're about to face further consequences. Again, we'll see next week what these curses are, the judgment for their sin, the punishment for the wrong they've done.

But I want to skip for a little bit to verse 21. After the long section of curses given to the serpent and Eve and Adam, God provides them clothing.

God gives them, he gives them garments to wear. As they're about to be cast out of Eden, God graciously gives them a gift to cover their shame.

[20 : 56] He covers their nakedness. And it's a blessing at the end of these curses. They tried and failed miserably to cover up their own shame.

But God gives them a satisfactory covering. One that will do as they continue their lives away from him. But that garment, it doesn't remove their shame completely.

It only covers their nakedness. But this isn't the last time we see in Scripture that God clothes his people. We're going to go from Genesis 3 and we're going to skip all the way forward to Revelation chapter 7.

It's page 1230 of the Church Bibles. Please turn there and read it with me. So Revelation chapter 7 starting at verse 9 says this.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

[22 : 05] They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches. God clothes Adam and Eve with garments of skin and the very end of the Bible when the new heavens come he clothes all of his people in robes of dazzling white.

Not just two but multitudes more than we can ever imagine from every single person every single country in the world over the entirety of history. Every believer who has ever lived will be clothed by God so they can worship the Lamb and that white is more than just decorative design it symbolizes the purity and perfection that God will give his people.

This clothing isn't just a mercy to cover us it's clothing that shows us to be free from sin forever. Our shame will be totally removed as we sing worshipping Jesus Christ sitting on the throne.

Revelation doesn't just tell us that we will be clean it also shows us how verse 13 says these in white robes who are they and where did they come from?

And the response a few verses later they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That Lamb is Jesus it's the blood of Christ shed on the cross that washes us clean.

[23 : 35] Those horrifying results of sin the shame and the guilt the things we need to try and cover up the things we try and hide from God the sin we do every single day the time we reject Him the blaming the broken relationships the pain the striving we come across every single day because of our sin every last ounce of that shame is washed clean in the blood of the Lamb.

God calls us to Him He gives us the chance to return to Him and when we do return to Him He washes us completely in the blood of the Lamb we are given robes of dazzling white we have no reason to hide anymore there is no more shame there is no more sin we are washed clean and all relationships are made perfect once more the next few verses in Revelation are filled with

recreation language what I want to focus on is that restored relationship with God no longer will we reject Him and feel the pain of sin instead the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherds He will lead them to springs of living water and God will wipe every tear from their eye this God is not one who is strict He has not set us impossible rules and given us sin to keep us down sin is not something the church has given to try and keep us coming every Sunday instead every Sunday at church we get to hear of this gracious God who shepherds us who gives us living water that will quench our thirst who washes us clean in the blood of the Lamb this is a God who has made us aware of sin because He knew the brokenness that follows it so is sin really that bad yes it brings shame it casts blame and it breaks every relationship we have every one of us sin every day in our lives and we can't take that lightly but every day we have a God who calls us back to Himself gives us the chance to return and when we do He clothes us He makes us white He covers all the shame and guilt in robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb let's feel the weight of these truths the real problems that sin causes but the joy that comes with the grace of God we're taking communion to remember what He did on the cross we drink the wine and eat the bread to look to that sacrifice to wash us clean sin is heavy we need to feel that and remember that so that when we realize and when we're given the freedom that we are we can live up to that rightly loving our God let me pray to close

Father God we are sorry that we turn from you so often we are sorry that when we sin we break our relationship with you and with others Lord help us as we go into weeks ahead help us know the seriousness of our sin help us to strive to live lives for you empowered by your spirit we thank you that you are so gracious thank you that you call us out you give us places and spaces to respond and return to you and Lord we praise you for clothing us for washing us clean in the blood of the lamb help us to remember that truth as we sing and eat the bread and drink the wine in holy communion Lord you are a great God and in your son's holy name Amen warmer Thank you.