

THE GARDEN, US & JESUS: TEMPTATION

We're going to spend some time in Genesis 3 over the next few weeks, because in it we find fundamental lessons that set us up for the rest of God's word. Talking about marriage roles? You can easily find yourself in Genesis 3. Temptation? Genesis 3. Why the world seems "diseased"? Genesis 3. Sin, punishment, asking if God is good, is man inherently evil, the plan of salvation? Genesis 3. Now, originally Moses wrote this for the Israelites. It had a direct purpose and meaning for them, but as you know, these things were also written and recorded for us all:

Romans 15:4 *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

1 Corinthians 10:11-13 *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

We're going to discuss the nature of temptation, sin, God's goodness and His plan of salvation.

Let's put ourselves (as best as possible) in the garden with them. Everything around you is good. God has created you and views it as "very good." You're in heaven on earth if you will. In wonderful fellowship with God. It's just you, your spouse (and more importantly) God. He has provided for you everything you need. He's given you every tree of the garden to eat except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree you cannot eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

At this point you see the goodness of God. You're living in it. You're not familiar with sin and its consequences. The next thing you experience besides His goodness is temptation.

Genesis 3

1-6 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' " But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So 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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

- The serpent is mentioned and then identified in:
 - **2 Corinthians 11:3** *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
 - **Revelation 12:9** *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

- **Revelation 20:2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,
- He's subtly introducing doubt towards God and a false reality.
 - The bait is that she can be a god herself. Their idea is that true life is around the corner.
- Temptation needs to be understood. It is not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted.
 - We can be tempted with something that isn't necessarily sinful. For example: there's nothing wrong with finding something to be good to eat and appealing. Wisdom is good.
 - It becomes wrong when used without authority or when the motive is off. They were told not to eat that fruit. She wanted to be like good. Her quality of life was more important than God's provision and promise.
 - God does will test us to purify and build trust, but He does not do so to pull us away. That's Satan's role.
 - When we give into temptation, we should only point the finger at ourselves: **James 1:12-15**. We also need to understand that what happened to them in the garden isn't unique. The principle is seen in **1 John 2:15-17**.
 - We also see another reality: the temptation started with Satan, but Eve turned around and hurt her husband. We have take responsibility not only when Satan tempts us, but when we tempt others.
- Consider Jesus. Isn't it interesting that right after His baptism and before He begins His ministry, He's taken to the wilderness?
 - **Matthew 4:1-11**.
 - We should see that Jesus is sacrificing what could be His own desire or need for God. We want to think about sacrificing our desires to the Lord because Jesus was sacrificed for us. You see - some sacrifices have to be made.
 - We learn that Jesus fought against Satan by clinging to God's word. God's word is there to give life, not kill. It's there to protect. It also screams of free will or else no law would need to be given. You'd just do what you're programmed to do. It's the **Deuteronomy 6** principle. The **Psalm 119** theme. It's behind **Romans 7:7-13**, but the problem is that law alone can't save you when you've sinned. All the law can do is give you more law in regards of sin. Doing the right thing doesn't make up for the wrong in this context.

Listen, no one would give into temptation if it didn't offer you something. That's not the point. The point is that we're being tested to see whether we truly believe and trust in God. It's talking about our love and commitment to Him. It's asking if we're willing to sacrifice for Him (even though the thing we're sacrificing actually turns out to benefit us by being holy and reaping the goodness of God's counsel). Imagine being an Israelite and hearing this. Think about how God helped them so many times, but they struggled to trust in Him.

What about you this morning? What are you struggling with? What's Satan saying to you? What's the lie? Knowing what you know today and being reminded of the garden in the beginning . . . how badly do you want to be there with Him? Haven't you learned that He's for you?