

“Fall”

The Story of Everything Sermon Series | Week Two | Newbreak Church

April 10th, 2022

Newbreak's Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

In this week's study, we talk about where the story of everything got derailed into ruin and chaos. Understanding where things went wrong to gain perspective as to why the world is hurting today.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- Sunrise versus sunset. Which one is better? Why?
- At what age did you really recognize that the world is broken? What did this look like for you?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Genesis 3:1–7

Understand where things went wrong to gain perspective as to why the world is hurting today.

Point 1 – The world's brokenness goes back to lies and deception.

Have you heard the saying, “Misery loves company?” After Satan's separation from God, this became his mantra. He is miserable and wants all people, everywhere, for all time, to suffer right along with him. In John 8:44b Jesus says, “He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” The way that Satan tries to get what he wants, total misery and complete destruction, is to lie and deceive. The skill he has in selling his lies is because he believes he knows better than God what is best for us. So, God says don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because He doesn't want our minds to be perverted and for us to have to hide in shame; and Satan says it's okay for you to do whatever seems good to you because God doesn't really want the best for you. The lie is that God doesn't want the best for

you and the deception is not telling you what will happen long term after you “eat the fruit.”

Satan would like us to believe that if God were truly a good God, He would let us do whatever we wanted and would not give us any consequences. He would not let us suffer at all for anything we had done. We know from experience, especially if we have kids, that love is shown most when we have to discipline to teach a lesson that will help us for the rest of our future, or when we have to restrain in order to protect and save, “because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in” (Proverbs 3:12, NIV). There is no deception with God. He loves us completely and fully and only wants what’s best for us in the long term. He even tells us that sin is pleasurable at the time, but that pleasure is short lived. God is thinking about our eternal well-being. He doesn’t want us to give in to fleeting temptations. He knows that the reward is never worth the cost. Satan does not love us. He loses nothing when we sin and have to bear the consequences of that sin. In fact, this makes him feel victorious because he wants us to fail, he wants us to live apart from God, and he wants us to join him in his misery.

The other lie that Satan would like us to believe is that God keeps us from things because God doesn’t want us to have good things, that He’s trying to keep all the good things for Himself. The deception in this is that Satan doesn’t tell us what God is protecting us *from*. “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15). This is how Jesus prays for us. He wants us to have the good things of life, just not at the *expense* of our lives. “And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Satan wants to steal, kill and destroy and he uses deceit and lies to accomplish his goals.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What lies about yourself have you let Satan convince you of? Why? How can you begin to believe the truths of God’s love for you?
- How has Satan deceived you in the past? What were the consequences? What is one way you can not fall prey to that deception in the future?

Point 2 – Our God-given identity and purpose are distorted when we don't trust what God says is best.

Genesis 3:5-6 (NLT)

⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, **knowing both good and evil.**” ⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and **she wanted the wisdom it would give her.** So she took some of the fruit and ate it.

The Hebrew grammar is important because the participial phrase “knowing good and evil” modifies and unpacks in what specific way Adam and Eve wanted to be “like God.”

- Adam and Eve were already "like God" created in His likeness (Genesis 1:26).
- Also, "good and evil" is a biblical merism for knowing everything. So that part was what tempted Adam and Eve—to know what God knows.
- The idea is that they could take a shortcut towards the knowledge of God outside of trusting God. It was saying that they wanted to take sovereignty (rulership) into their own hands.

The achievement of knowledge of good and evil is not in and of itself evil; instead, it is *how* that knowledge is achieved which makes it good or bad. Adam and Eve snatched that knowledge on their own, apart from God. Adam and Eve sought to discover good and evil on their own terms—saying to God: **“We can rule this world without you.”** This is simply not true! Humanity ruling apart from God is what we can chalk up to the twentieth century being the bloodiest century in recorded human history! Yet, it also misses the main point. Ruling the world righteously misses the end goal if it is ruling apart from God. Displaced trust dislodged the relationship and dislocated humanity out of Eden and into exile.

God was not holding out on Adam and Eve; God is not holding out on us. He was simply taking them—and us—through a courtship process of love and growth. They would go through gradual stages of progress and, with their growth, the graduation of original creation to its higher form. But that is not what we see. And ever since then, the same Serpent—the Antagonist—has tried to slither his way into our hearts and continue to ruin what God is redeeming in us.

2 Corinthians 11:3 says: “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

This verse suggests that the same Serpent from the garden is still at work trying to lead us away from Christ.

Believing the lies of the Serpent was not just a simple act with brief consequences... it did something to our soul—it marred us and made us full of shame—it made our propensity to be one where we run or hide from God. We became antagonists to God's good plan.

The tragedy of the Fall is more than a bite into a fruit. Two bites took place at the moment of the Fall. The bite into the forbidden fruit and the bite of the Serpent into the heart of humanity—infesting humans with the curse of rebellion. This truly does help us see why the world is the way it is! But it should also help us see that the world does not have to be this way. We are always faced with a choice.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- How did your understanding of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” increase by discussing this section?
- “God was not holding out on Adam and Eve; God is not holding out on us.” In what ways have you—or are you still—battling this lie that God is holding out on you?

Read Genesis 3:7–15

Point 3 – God seeks after us even when we hide from Him.

Let's imagine that life is like a game of Hide and Seek. If the characters are God and humanity, then who is the one doing the hiding and who is the one doing the seeking? Humans are the ones who hide. God is the one who seeks.

Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit... and here is what happened.

Genesis 3:7–9, NLT

⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. ⁸ When the cool

evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. ⁹ Then the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

“Where are you?” It’s a profound question with layers to it.

If the fall of Adam and Eve tells us anything about human nature, it’s this: We hide from God. He doesn’t hide from us. The Bible is the story of God seeking humanity, not the other way around. Religions try to tell you how to get to God. The Bible tells us how God comes to us.

God asks, “Where are you?” What a question coming from the God who is omniscient! The God who knows all asks, with sincerity, “Where are you?” By putting this question out there, he gives us a chance to respond by vocalizing our vulnerability. We get a chance to call out that we have lost our way. But he chases us.

Look again at what Adam and Eve did in Genesis 3:7. When they realized they were naked—exposed and vulnerable—they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves. Isn’t that what we do? We try to cover ourselves up and make sin seem like it hasn’t affected us that much. But who are we fooling?

What are the “fig leaves” you cover yourself with? In what ways do you try to make yourself seem more put together? It seems that Genesis 3 is a microcosm of everyday life.

Shame was not part of the fabric of God’s original creation. It is one of the byproducts of sin. Instead of allowing ourselves to be spiritually “naked” before God, we cover ourselves, putting on such a charade that many of us even trick ourselves into believing the lie. But the story didn’t end there. And although God announced the dreadful reality that sin brought into the world, he also introduced the hope of one who would crush the serpent. Genesis 3:15 contains this announcement, known as the *protoeuangelion*, which means “first gospel,” because it was the first time anyone heard the good news of someone coming to reverse the curse of sin.

This is the story of the fall of humanity. And amidst the great tragedy, we see something of the great grace of God, that he is the one who pursues us. If this is a game of Hide and Seek, he is the one calling out, “Ready or not here I come!” We may hide from God, but he does not hide from us. And he does not want to play this game forever. Our

separation from God is self-inflicted. Like Adam and Eve, we are the ones who place ourselves in hiding.

God is calling out, “Where are you?” And so, we ask: “Where are you?” Are you covering yourself in some facade of fig leaves? Or are you allowing God to find you just as you are?

There is no reason to fear calling out to God: “Here I am.”

- You might even say, “Here I am. I feel broken, confused, hurt, betrayed, shame, pain, horror, deep sadness, and grief.”
- None of the reasons we find ourselves in hiding are too much or too big for God.
- He is the God that covers us.
- He is the God who pursues us. He is the God that seeks those in hiding and says, “I found you, and I see you.”

“Returning to God is the art of being found by God.”

We need to be found by him *again and again*.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Read Genesis 3:15. How do you see this foreshadowing of what Jesus will do to rescue us?
- Reflect on God being the one who seeks after us. How does this enlarge your view of who He is?
- In what areas of my life do I need to be “found” by God?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week’s message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?