

Memory Verse:

Jeremiah 2:13

¹³ for my people have committed two evils (ra): they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Sin: Idols of the Heart



Define sin:

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And **God saw that the light was good.** And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. ⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. ¹⁴ ¶ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. ²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.** ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. ²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds--livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.** ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And **God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.** And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2:1

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God **rested** from all his work that he had done in creation. ⁴ ¶ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up--for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground-- ⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden (**pleasure**), in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is **pleasant to the sight and good for food**. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. ¹⁰ ¶ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ ¶ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **work it and keep it**. ¹⁶ And the LORD God **commanded** the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall **surely die**." ¹⁸ ¶ Then the LORD God said, "It is **not good** that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and **while he slept** took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Temptation to Sin



According to 2:16, what was the first commandment that God gave?



In what way is gaining a knowledge of good (tob) and evil (ra) sinful (cf.2:16)?



Exodus 20:1

And God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

What are the similarities between Exodus 20:1 and the first commandment given in the Garden of Eden; "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:16-17).



Martin Luther on Idolatry

All those who do not at *all times* trust God and do not in *all their works* or sufferings, life and death, trust in His favor, grace and good-will, but seek His favor in other things or in themselves, do not keep this [First] Commandment, and practice real idolatry, even if they were to do the works of all the other Commandments, and in addition had all the prayers, obedience, patience, and chastity of all the saints combined... If we doubt or do not believe that God is gracious to us and is pleased with us, or if we presumptuously expect to please Him only through and after our works, then it is all pure deception, outwardly honoring God, but inwardly setting up self as a false [savior]....

(Martin Luther, *Treatise Concerning Good Works (1520)*, Excerpts from Part X. XI)



Application- Doubting God's Goodness

In Genesis 1 there is the repeated phrase: "It was good." All of God's creation was for the benefit of Adam and Eve so that they would perfectly reflect His beauty, power, majesty and intelligence. But in Genesis 3:1-5 the serpent casts doubt on God's goodness. He makes Eve believe that God is withholding something good and desirable from her. Notice that Eve's sin was not first an action of reaching out and taking the forbidden fruit, it was an attitude of the heart.

All sin is a result of doubting the goodness, provision and grace of God. Is there any area of your life where you have been doubting God's goodness? Will you confess it and ask Christ to show you His goodness revealed on Calvary? Romans 5:8 says, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Only a revelation of Christ's love on the cross can break the idols of our hearts.

I. One aspect of the temptation to sin is to doubt God's

Genesis 3:1-7

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'?" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ 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.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ 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. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.



List everything you learn about the serpent from this passage:



Compare Genesis 2:27 with Genesis 3:3. What is significant about the woman's statement in 3:3?



Eve was essentially the first Pharisee. She added to God's commandments. Jesus said that the Pharisees "tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger" (Matthew 23:4). Why would Eve do this to herself?



Prone To Wander, Lord I Know It



All Christians are prone to legalism. At the heart of legalism is the belief that we can earn God's favor by keeping His Law. The lie we believe is that we have goodness (tob) to offer God. But from Genesis 1-2 we have seen that God is the Author and Giver of life and all good things (tob). He needs nothing and is dependent upon no one. He freely gives and extends grace, goodness and glory to His created beings. With legalism, instead of being dependant upon God's goodness and grace we become dependant upon our own goodness (tob). This always results in self-righteousness towards others and guilt towards ourselves.

In our Gospel presentation we must get to the heart of legalism by showing people that they have built an idol of self-righteousness. They have rejected God's goodness, grace and glory displayed most significantly in Jesus Christ.



Man was created in the “likeness” of God (cf. 1:26). The serpent told the woman that if she ate of the fruit, she would be “like God.” Why was it sinful for the woman to want to be “like God?”



The De-goding of God

D.A. Carson says that we have “de-goded God.” The all-satisfying, all-sovereign, gracious creator God has promised only goodness (tob) to us. But we have believed the lie that we can find goodness, joy, and pleasure apart from God.

Do you see yourself in the story of Genesis 1-3? We are no different than our first parents. We are idolaters. We covet wisdom apart from God. We want to be the god of our lives. We want to determine what is good (tob) and evil (ra) for our lives. We want autonomy. We don’t “seek after God” (cf. Rom. 3:11). We all have gone astray from God. This is at the root of every sin.

II. One aspect of the temptation to be _____ apart from God.

Romans 1:18-25

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks (glory) to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.



Sin: Building Your Life On Idols

Tim Keller defines sin like this:

I take a page from Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* and define sin as building your identity-your self-worth and happiness-on anything other than God. That is, I use the biblical definition of sin as idolatry. That puts the emphasis not as much on "doing bad things" but on "making good things into ultimate things."

[\(http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/keller-explains-the-gospel/\)](http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/keller-explains-the-gospel/)

Tim Keller also defines sin as a failure to trust in God's grace and goodness. This will always result in trying to find a false savior for our problems.



"The human heart is a factory of idols...Everyone of us is, from his mother's womb, an expert in inventing idols. The evil in our desire typically does not lie in what we want, but that we want it too much."

John Calvin



Sin: A Failure To Treasure God Above All Things

John Piper defines sin well. He says:

Sin is anything you find pleasure in more than God. Most sins are not manifested like drunkenness is. Most of the time, sin is when we delight in innocent things more than God.

“Sin always has power because of the promise it makes. Therefore, sin is killed by a superior promise.”



“ An idol is something within creation that is inflated to function as God. All sorts of things are potential idols, depending only on our attitudes and actions toward them...Idolatry may not involve explicit denials of God’s existence or character. It may well come in the form of an over-attachment to something that is, in itself perfectly good...An idol can be a physical object, a property, a person, an activity, a role, an institution, a hope, an image, an idea, a pleasure, a hero - anything that can substitute for God.” *Richard Keyes*

The Curse of Sin

Genesis 3:7-13

⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (cf. Is. 65:25, Micah 7:17)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

²⁰ ¶ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. ²² ¶ Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever--" ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

I. Man is estranged from GOD



Deuteronomy 28:47-48 says, “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, **in nakedness**, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you” (cf. Ezekiel 16:39, 23:29).

What is significant about Adam and Eve knowing they were naked (3:7)?



Why did the man and woman hide “themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden (3:8)?”



In 2:18 God said that “it is not good for man to be alone,” so He gave Adam a helpmate. But now in 3:12 the man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” What is Adam saying to God?

II. Man is estranged from CREATION



God said in 3:17-18, “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.” How do we see this curse lived out today?

III. Man is estranged from HIMSELF



3:10 says, “I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” What kind of effect did Adam’s sin have on himself?

IV. Man is estranged from MAN



Notice what Adam and Eve do to each other in v.12-13. What does this reveal?



In 3:12 the man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." What is Adam saying here?

Genesis 4:1-12

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." ² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." ⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

1 John 3:11-18

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹² We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

John 8:42-45

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

We are either seed of the serpent, or seed of the woman



Yahoo News

January 29th, 2009

Nature: LOUISVILLE, Ky. More than a million people stranded in darkness Thursday in the wake of an icy winter storm could face a lengthy wait for electricity to course through their frosty homes, even as federal help was promised to two states hit hardest by the blast.

Relationships between Man: JERUSALEM – President Barack Obama's Mideast envoy turned his attention to the Western-backed Palestinian government in the West Bank on Thursday as rockets thudded into southern Israel and Israeli warplanes attacked new targets in Gaza.

Employment/Work: WASHINGTON – The number of people receiving unemployment benefits has reached an all-time record, the government said Thursday, as layoffs spread throughout the economy.

Government: SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Gov. Rod Blagojevich has reversed course and asked to make a closing argument Thursday at his impeachment trial, a move that comes days after avoiding the proceedings that could remove him from office.

What Is Original Sin?

Romans 5:12-21

¹² ¶ Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ ¶ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ ¶ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Original Sin

It might surprise you that *original sin* does not mean the first sin that was committed. Original sin is not an actual sin, it is our *fallen state* out of which we commit actual sin. A common quote explains this well by saying, “We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners.”

Before the Fall, man had the ability to sin and the ability not to sin. The Fall resulted in the inability not to sin (cf. Gen.6:5, Job 14:14, Jer. 13:23, 17:19, Rom. 3:10-18, 8:5-8). Because of the Fall, our character is now marred by sin and enslaved to sin.

The good news is that Jesus came to set us free from bondage of sin and the penalty of sin. **2 Corinthians 5:17 says**, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” We can be restored to the state of Adam before the Fall. We can now know, worship and serve the living God. We can reflect His goodness and grace to others by looking into the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). This is God’s free gift to all who will repent of idolatry and receive the goodness of Christ crucified and risen for them. May we come and enjoy Christ above all earthly things!

Closing Song

“Before The Throne Of God Above”

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea:
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on his hands,
My name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heaven he stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see him there
Who made an end of all my sin.

Because a sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
To look on Him and pardon me

Behold him there, the risen Lamb
My perfect, spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I am,
The King of glory and of grace!

One in himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by his blood
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God
With Christ, my Savior and my God