

Genesis 3:8-24

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, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he

placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Sermon: New Creation

Please have your Bibles turned to **Genesis 3 – starting at verse 8 – then we'll look at 2 Corinthians chapter 2.**

There's an **outline** – if you'd like to take some notes.

Let me **pray** first...

Intro/Context

This morning in our Bible passages we have **some bad news** and **some good news**
Some people prefer the **good news** **first** and some people prefer the **bad news**
first

In our Old Testament passage this morning from **Genesis 3 – verses 8 to 21** there is some **bad news** [[Please turn there now](#)]

[Slide 1-Context]

The **context** is that the first two human beings **Adam and Eve** – have been **deceived by Satan** – disguised as a serpent – and they have **broken God's rule**.
God told Adam and Eve they were **NOT** to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the Garden of Eden – and if they did – they will **certainly die** (Genesis 2:17)

And of course, they **DID** eat from that tree...

Bad News - Creation Broken (Genesis 3:8-21)

And that **brings bad news** in bucket loads

As we pick up the story - from verse 8

Adam and Eve **realize they've broken God's rule** and they **hear God walking in the garden** – and just like children – when they know they're in trouble from their parents – **they hide**

When God confronts him - **Adam admits** – he was afraid and hid - because **he was naked** (v10)

And **God** also **knows what Adam and Eve have broken His rule** – v11

Then comes the **blame game**!

And we all do this – when we get caught out – it's always **someone else's fault** – we say things like ***“he/she made me do out” – “it was so and so's idea” – or - “I knew it was a bad idea but I didn't want to hurt their feelings so I went along with it”*** ... God's heard every excuse there is!

V12 – **Adam blames** - **God** and **Eve** – ***“the woman YOU (God) put here – she gave me some fruit”***

V13 – **Eve blames** the **serpent** for deceiving her!

(pause)

Now – **God is not going to stand by and accept the breaking of His rules** – there are **major consequences** – for the Serpent (Satan) – for the woman (Eve) – and for the man (Adam)

[Slide 2-Bad News Consequences]

1st the **consequences for the serpent** that Satan used. The serpent will be cursed **more than any other animal** and will have to **crawl on its belly** instead of walking on legs like any other land animal (v14)

The **serpent** will **“eat dust”** all the days of its life.

This was true for the serpent as an animal - but also true for Satan. To **“eat dust”** has the idea of **total defeat** (Isaiah 65:25; Micah 7:17)

God’s judgment on Satan is for him **to always know defeat** – Satan will think he has victory but he will be crushed (Romans 16:20)

2nd the **consequences for the woman** (v16) – Eve like all women from that point on – **will experience pain in child birth** –

And also there will be **difficulty** in the woman’s relationship with her husband (end of v16) – **the woman will desire to please her husband** – and perhaps even try to rule over him – and yet - the **husband will lord it over the woman**.

Anyone who’s married here this morning – knows - **marriage isn’t easy** – there is **often tension** – **sometimes disagreements** about decisions and plans – poor communication – each wanting their own way. It can be **difficult to navigate this**. **We have inherited these problems** as a result of Adam and Eve’s sin and rebellion.

The Apostle Paul puts it this way in **Romans 5:12** – **“sin came into the world through one man (Adam)”**

3rd the **consequences for the man** (v17) – because Adam listened to Eve and ate the forbidden fruit – **there is a curse on the ground**. Before this curse, the **ground**

only produced good. After this curse, it still produced good, but thorns and thistles will come faster and easier than good fruit. We only have to weed our garden to see how quickly the weeds come back!

In fact, the Apostle Paul says - all creation is cursed – Paul says in **Romans 8:20-21** *“creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one [God] who subjected it, in hope that creation itself will be liberated from this bondage and decay...”*

No wonder we have earthquakes, volcanoes, cyclones, tsunamis; droughts, flood and bush fires. Creation is frustrated and under bondage and decay!

Also, still in v17 – for the man - it's going to be painful toil (hard work) to put food on the table – the man is going to have to work hard all his life to make a living.

I think most of us have experienced that.

I can remember my Dad working – Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights – 12-hour night shifts. He called it “*misery weekend*”

And that's not the end of the consequences

Look at v19 – after working hard all our lives.

We end up returning to the ground.

Adam – created from dust (Genesis 2:7) must return to dust!

This means – **humans** – can't live forever – as they were originally designed to do when God created them on Day 6 – when everything was perfect

Instead – because of Adam and Eve’s sin and rebellion – as God said would happen
 – **if they ate from the forbidden tree – they would certainly die!**

And we all face that prospect – one day we will die too.

There’s **one further consequence** of this sin and rebellion.

Look at v23

God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden – and they were not allowed to eat from the tree of life and live forever (v22)

What we have here is - **Adam and Eve – separated from God** and no longer able to enjoy that close intimate relationship they had with God in the Garden!

[Slide 3-Consequences for us]

For us it means – because of **Adam and Eve**

We inherit **SIN**

We inherit **DEATH**

And we inherit **a broken separated relationship with God**

This is indeed – **VERY BAD NEWS**

(pause)

Like any broken relationship – **it needs fixing somehow!**

[Slide 4-Hint of Good News]

And we have a huge HINT of GOOD NEWS – which we skipped over in v15

When God was dishing out the consequences to the Serpent (aka Satan) – let's look more closely at what God says:

*I [God] will put enmity [opposition and hostility]
between you [Satan] and the woman,
and between your [Satan's] offspring and hers [Eve's offspring];
he [Eve's offspring] will crush your [Satan's] head,
and you [Satan] will strike his [Eve's offspring's] heel."*

Here we have a promise from God that even though there is - **enmity** – **active opposition and hostility** – warfare – between Satan and Eve – and between Satan's offspring (his demons) and one of Eve's offspring.

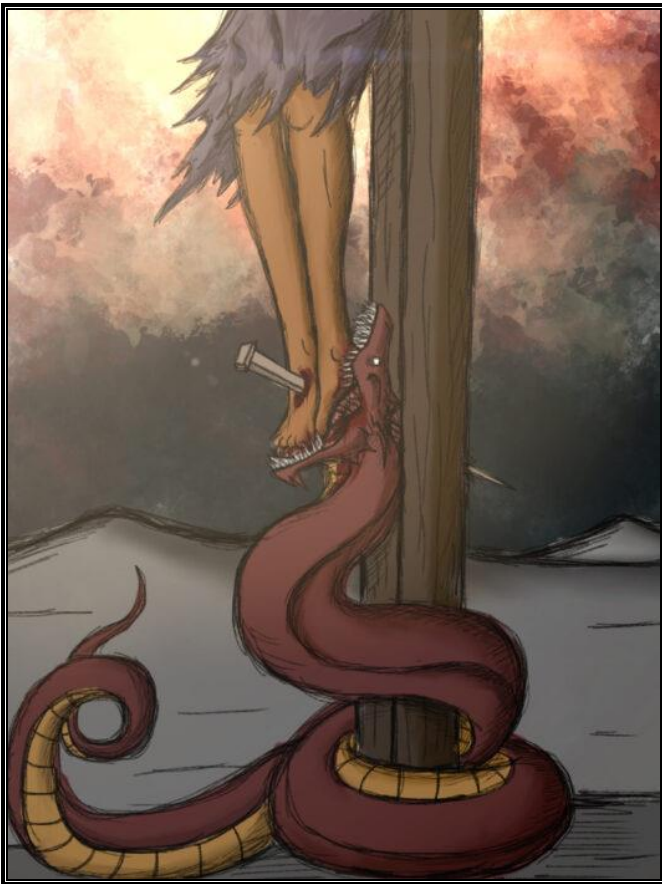
God has a plan to fix this broken relationship

[Slide 4a-click] Eve's offspring is of course pointing to - **our Lord Jesus** –

Eve's offspring – Jesus – will crush Satan's head – even though Satan will strike at Jesus' heel.

[Slide 5-Cross]

Here's a great picture of what this looks like



Here we have **Jesus being crucified on the cross**

Satan thinks he's won a victory and he's snapping at Jesus' heels

But **Jesus has crushed Satan's head**

Because **Jesus' death on the cross – means He has taken the punishment for sins off human beings – and He's taken that punishment on Himself – and God has accepted Jesus' death on the cross as payment for people's sins to be forgiven.**

Remember – **death was the punishment for Adam and Eve's sin**

All sin is punishable by death – but Jesus - God's Son - was willing to lay down His life – and die for our sin - instead of us.

Satan thinks he's won a victory by Jesus dying - but Jesus has the victory over Satan and over death - because Jesus didn't stay dead.

Jesus rose from the dead 3 days later and so He's defeated even death!

Jesus' resurrection means – Satan is crushed – and also means we have the opportunity – even when we die - to live forever in Heaven

The Good News is we have a REDEEMER

In our 1st Hymn this morning...

We sang about Jesus being our Redeemer

A Redeemer is *someone who regains possession of something or someone in exchange for payment*

God regains possession of us – and allows us to be in a right relationship with Him again – because He has accepted Jesus' death as the payment for our sins.

So, let's look at our NT passage from 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 and explore this Good News

[Please turn there now]

Good News - Creation Fixed (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

In this passage – the Apostle Paul writes to the Church of Corinth in Greece and tells them that **he and his fellow workers have this incredibly Good News**

The Good News that Jesus redeems people – and brings them back to God.

[Slide 6-Good News]

It's such Good News that Paul and his mates

Are **busy trying to persuade others about this Good News** (v11)

And they are not trying to make themselves look good (v12) – but they just thought the people of Corinth would feel good, even proud, that **they would also want to live by faith in their hearts and not live just by what is seen.**

Paul says even if they were so enthusiastic that they acted a bit crazy (v13) – **they did it for God!**

In fact, Paul says - **they were driven to tell people the Good News** – of Jesus - because - v14 – **Christ Jesus' love for people shown by His death on that cruel cross compels them to tell others this Good News!**

Paul is convinced – end of v14 – that ONE man (Jesus) died for all – so that - all could have the opportunity to receive this Good News of forgiveness and eternal life – and so it's like anyone who believes in Jesus - **was included in Jesus' death** – and their **old life** died with Jesus.

But they were also included in Jesus' resurrection – so as their old life dies with Jesus – **a new life begins where they belong to the risen Jesus** – and they live for Jesus – and don't live for themselves (v15)

As a result of this life – Paul says – they don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look (v16) – NOW – **they look at what's inside people's hearts and see that anyone who is united with Jesus gets a fresh start**

As v17 puts it – people who follow Jesus – are a **new Creation** – the curse that Adam and Eve received is gone because of Jesus

As the 3rd verse of our 2nd Hymn – ***“Joy to the World”*** puts it:

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground.*

*He comes to make His blessings flow,
 far as the curse is found,
 far as the curse is found.
 Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

That brokenness that people inherited from Adam and Eve – is fixed by Jesus – the old life is gone and a new life in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit - is here!
 It's a bit like the transformation from a caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly!
 (pause)

You see as V18 says – God is in reconciliation business – He reconciles us back to Him through His Son Jesus

In our final hymn today, we will sing:

*Hark! The herald angels sing
 Glory to the new-born King;
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!*

God reconciles us to Himself through Christ Jesus – v19 – by not counting people's sins against them

And that's because of God's amazing grace – v21 – *in that God made Him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us – so that in Him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God.*

That's amazing grace and mercy – all because of - God's love for us!

It's totally undeserved – but gratefully accepted – or it should be - gratefully accepted

And surely this amazing grace demands a response from us this morning – and beyond!

Our Response (2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

If we look carefully the **Apostle Paul has given us our response** in this passage:

[Slide 7-Our Response]

Because we are reconciled with God – through Jesus – Paul says in v18 – we have been given a ministry of reconciliation.

Just like Paul and his friends – the love Jesus showed us on the cross – *should compel us* (v14) – *to no longer live for ourselves* (v15) – *but live our lives for Jesus* (v15)

And what Jesus wants is for us to be His ambassadors (v20)

An ambassador is an *official representative of a country sent to a foreign country to promote the policies of their home country and to promote and maintain a good relationship with that foreign country*.

For example, former PM – Kevin Rudd – is **Australia's ambassador to USA**.

Mr. Rudd represents Australia – he **promotes Australian policies and trade** and promotes and ensures a good working relationship with the USA.

If Mr. Rudd was to behave badly - or - say or do the wrong things – **he would bring shame on Australia and damage the relationship with the USA**.

In the same way - as Christ Jesus' Ambassadors - **we have the responsibility of representing Jesus Christ and His teachings to the world. It involves both living out the values of the Christian faith and actively sharing the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.**

In practical terms – **our response as Christ's Ambassadors should look like these 4 things:**

[Slide 7a-Responses]

1st - Living a Christ-like life: Christians are called to **embody** the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives, showing love, compassion, humility, and forgiveness.

2nd - Sharing the Gospel (Good News): Ambassadors are expected to **communicate the message they represent.** As Christ's ambassadors, this involves - **sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ** – telling people Jesus has fixed the brokenness of Creation by fixing the punishment for sin and defeating death itself.
And then **inviting others to enter into a relationship with Jesus too!**

3rd - Being peacemakers: Since the message of Christianity emphasizes **reconciliation with God,** Christ's ambassadors are called to be agents of **peace and reconciliation** in the world.

4th - Representing the Kingdom of God: Christians are considered **citizens** of the Kingdom of God, and as ambassadors, they represent the values and principles of this Kingdom in a world that may not always align with those values.

[Slide 8-Romans 5:15]

Why would we respond this way?

Well because **God has given us an incredible gift of grace**

Let me finish with this verse from Romans 5:15 that **sums up this gift of grace**:

¹⁵ But the gift [of Jesus] is not like the trespass [Adam's sin]. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man [Adam], how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we confess that just like Adam and Eve, we too have sinned and rebelled against your rules. And we too deserve the punishment and consequences of our sins. But we are thankful in your grace and mercy, you sent Eve's offspring, Jesus, to be our Redeemer and bring us back into a right relationship with you. We are thankful for the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of eternal life. Help us as a new creation in Jesus – and as Jesus' ambassadors to live: a Christ-like life; share the Good News of Jesus; to be peacemakers in all we do; and to be good citizens of your Kingdom. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

New Year Benediction (Psalm 20:4-5)

"May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests."

AMEN