

Genesis 3:1-24**The Fall**

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ 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. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

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.

Luke 15:11-32**The Parable of the Lost Son**

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Sermon: “Fallen Condition Focus”

There is an outline if you would like to take some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Intro (Fallen Condition Defined)

This morning, we are beginning a **six-part series** on **Advent**

[Slide-Advent]

The **Dictionary Definition** is *the arrival of a notable person or thing*.

In Christianity: It is the **arrival of our Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the World**.

In the Church, it is the **first season of the Church Year** (not the calendar year) and is **the lead up to Christmas**, marked by the **four Sundays preceding Christmas Day**. Although our series will also cover **Christmas Day and 29th December**.

[Slide-Why Advent?]

So why do we need Advent?

Advent is important because without the Birth of Jesus – we do not have a Saviour to fix the punishment for sin – we do not have forgiveness and eternal life – we can't have Good Friday and Easter Sunday; unless Jesus is born first!

[Slide-fallen world]

We live in a **fallen world** and we all have a fallen condition (**sin and death**) which we **inherited from Adam and Eve**, because of their sin and rebellion against God.

God gave us His Word to complete us for the purposes of His glory.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15:4 - “*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope*”

[Slide-Fallen Condition Focus]

This morning, I want to introduce a **concept** called “***fallen condition focus***”.

It may or may not be a **new concept** for you!

The concept is that our fallen world and our fallen condition **cries out for God's help** and God responds to this fallenness with the truths in His Word and gives us hope through His grace in sending Jesus.

[Slide-Fallen Condition Definition]

So, a definition of “**fallen condition focus**” (FCF) is: “*the common problem of sin and rebellion (fallenness) that people today share with the people in the Bible passage and how the solution to this common problem points to God's grace in the*

Gospel of Jesus – i.e. Jesus’ life, death and resurrection as the remedy to this fallen condition.”

So, **the idea is** - as we look at ANY Bible passage - **if we have a “fallen condition focus” (FCF)** -

- a) we will see the **fallen condition of the original recipients** of the passage (e.g., what fallen condition did the Israelites have); and **how we share that fallen condition with those original recipients**;
- b) we will see **how God’s Word and the Holy Spirit addresses that fallen condition**; and **how we gain hope and a remedy for this fallen condition through God’s grace in sending Jesus.**

[Slide-FCF Example]

For example, if we read Romans 6:23 which says, *“**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”*

[Slide-FCF shared]

The **fallen condition we share** with the original recipients of Paul’s letter to the Romans is that, just like the Romans, **we all sin and the punishment is that we die** (both spiritually and physically)

But in that verse – **we also have the solution - God’s grace – the gift of God in sending His Son Jesus so we can have forgiveness and eternal life.**

If we look at EVERY Bible passage like that; we will hopefully get much more out of the passage.

Fallen Condition Introduced (Genesis 3:1-24)

So, let's see how this **fallen condition** was introduced – from **Genesis 3:1-24**.

[Slide-Fallen Condition Introduced]

We've probably read Genesis 3:1-24 **many times before**; but this morning we are going to look at it with a **fallen condition focus** and see what we **share** with Adam and Eve and the serpent.

1st - The fallen condition of temptation

The **temptation** to sin often comes through doubt, deception, and misrepresentation of God's intentions.

The serpent (Satan) entices Eve by casting doubt on God's command

V1 - Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'

Then, when Eve says she will die if she eats the fruit

The serpent sows more doubt – vv4-5

"You will not certainly die - For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The serpent makes Eve believe that disobedience would bring greater benefit.

Adam and Eve then give in to their **desire** for knowledge and power, leading them to sin.

We, too, face **temptations** that distort the truth, make us question God's goodness, and appeal to **our desires for self-interest**. Our fallen nature then leads us to make choices that go against God's will.

We might also tempt others – by trying to get people to bend God's rules – 'it's okay, everyone does it' – 'it's only a small lie' – 'no one will know'

2nd – The fallen condition of shame and hiding from God

After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve immediately realize they are naked (v7) and they feel **shame**. They then hide from God, showing how sin creates **a separation between humanity and God**.

In the same way as Adam and Eve tried to **hide** from God, we also experience feelings of **shame, guilt, and alienation from God when we sin**. Often our fallen condition leads us to attempt to hide from God rather than seeking reconciliation.

But as we learnt from Jonah recently, we can't hide anything from God!

3rd – The fallen condition of Blame and Avoiding Responsibility

When confronted by God, v12 - Adam blames Eve for giving him the fruit and he blames God for giving him Eve, - and v13 - Eve blames the serpent.

Instead of taking responsibility for their actions, they deflect blame onto others.

We can play the **blame game** too.

We blame God for not stopping us or blame someone else for leading us astray.

Instead of owning our sin and mistakes and taking responsibility, we blame others or make excuses: – 'I was tired', 'I was confused', 'I didn't fully understand',

‘I had a brain snap’, ‘I was emotional’, ‘I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time’, ‘God will understand’ or ‘Satan made me do it!’

4th – the fallen condition of consequences for disobedience

The Fallen condition results in **various consequences**: pain and suffering in childbirth (for women – v16), painful toil in work (for men) and a cursed ground that produces thorns and thistles (vv17-18).

Spiritual death (separation from God) enters the world, and physical death becomes inevitable; humans cannot live forever as designed! Just as Adam and Eve experienced pain, suffering, and death as a consequence of their sin, all humans are born into a world marked by suffering, toil, and death. Sin brings about both physical and spiritual death, creating a broken relationship with God and with others. **There are always consequences for sin!**

5th – the fallen condition of separation from God

After they broke God’s rule, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden and were prevented from eating from the Tree of Life (vv22-24). This is symbolic of **separation from God** and a **broken relationship** with God. It is also the **loss of eternal life** that they were designed to have. Because we inherit Adam and Eve’s sin and death (Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23), we are born into sin, which also separates us from God and leads to us dying one day. This separation cries out for Jesus to save us, redeem us and restore our broken relationship with God!

6th – the fallen condition of **desiring autonomy and rebelling against authority**

Adam and Eve's decision to eat the forbidden fruit was **driven by their desire to be like God, knowing good and evil.**

They were not content to rely fully on God; they wanted autonomy and independence from God and His authority; and they wanted to decide for themselves what was right or wrong.

Human beings still struggle today with this desire for autonomy. We often want to make our own rules and live according to our rule and our desires rather than submitting to God's authority. **This rebellion against God's sovereignty is a major part of the fallen human condition.**

(pause)

[Slide-solution]

Praise God, there is **a solution to this fallen condition** in **Genesis 3:15**

In this verse, God is dishing out the punishment for breaking the rule 'not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and He is speaking to the serpent (aka Satan). And God says:

And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your offspring [sin and evil] and hers [Jesus];

he [Jesus] will crush your [Satan's] head, and you [Satan] will strike his [Jesus'] heel.

In this verse, God reveals that there will be an ongoing conflict between the serpent's descendants (symbolizing sin and evil) and the woman's descendants (symbolizing those who follow God); **a spiritual war!**

Importantly, **God also promises a solution** - that one day an offspring (descendant) of the woman “will crush the serpent’s (Satan’s) head” even though the serpent (Satan) will strike the woman’s offspring’s heel. This offspring of the woman is referring to Jesus who would ultimately crush Satan’s power and provide a way for humankind to be right with God.

Satan thought he had defeated Jesus – when Jesus was crucified and died. But this was all part of God’s wonderful plan to allow Jesus to die to take the punishment of sin off us and on to Himself – and then to rise from the dead three days later – to show He has power to forgive sins and the power to overcome even death! In this way Satan’s power (and head) was crushed! And people have a way to be forgiven and to have eternal life, through Jesus!

As long as they come to God and repent and accept the solution!

Fallen Condition Case Study (Luke 15:11-32)

In our New Testament Passage – from **Luke 15:11-32**. Please turn there now...it’s again a story we’ve heard many times of the prodigal (wastefully extravagant or reckless) or lost son

[Slide-Case Study]

And if we look at this passage with a fallen condition focus – we find

1st – the fallen condition of rebellion and selfishness

The younger son demands his inheritance early, essentially wishing that his father were dead. He leaves home and blows all his wealth on loose living (Luke 15:12-13).

Just like the younger son wanted to be free from his father's authority, people today often seek to live their lives without God, turning to sinful behaviour, materialism and pride - in an attempt to find happiness and fulfillment apart from God. God is no longer King of their life; they are their own king! They also don't think about anyone else but themselves and forget about their family!

How many parents have felt the agony of rebellious selfish children?

2nd – the fallen condition of empty and destructive pursuits

The younger son spends all his money on wasteful (prodigal) living! He is eventually left with nothing and ends up feeding pigs. People today often seek satisfaction in material possessions, relationships, or pleasures that promise fulfillment but ultimately leave them feeling empty and unsatisfied. Overspending, alcohol, drugs, casual sex and partying – lead to making a mess of our lives. This will happen when we only think of ourselves and not about God and others.

The younger son in the story is not the only one with a fallen condition though – the older son has fallen conditions too!

3rd – the fallen condition of pride and self-righteousness.

The older son, when he hears that his younger brother has returned and there's a celebration, he becomes angry and refuses to join the feast. He expresses his frustration by telling his father "*all these years I've been slaving for you*", and he feels that his loyalty and hard work have not been properly rewarded (Luke 15:25-30).

But how much does the older son really care for his younger brother; he didn't try to stop him or go after him and bring him back!

There are two lost sons in the story; not one!

People today can also struggle with **pride and self-righteousness**, thinking that their own good deeds or moral behaviour make them more deserving of God's favour than others, especially those who have lived in rebellion. This can lead to a **lack of empathy** and a **judgmental attitude toward others**.

4th – the fallen condition of the lack of compassion and understanding.

The older son is focused on his own sense of fairness and refuses to show any compassion or understanding toward his brother. He even refers to his brother as "*this son of yours*" (v30).

He cannot understand why his father would celebrate the return of someone who had wasted his inheritance (Luke 15:28-30). People today can be similarly **self-centred** and **unable to rejoice in the redemption of others** because **they are consumed with their own grievances or sense of fairness**. We saw this with Jonah recently – he couldn't understand why God would show the Ninevites mercy!

But by definition, God's grace and mercy is unfair and undeserving!

5th – the fallen condition of **self-deception and pride**.

At the beginning of the story, the younger son's **self-deception and pride** kept him from recognizing his need for repentance until he was in dire circumstances.

Often, people fall into sin because they are blind to the consequences or think they can handle things on their own. People today often continue down a path of sin, deceived by their own pride, thinking they can fix things – or stop when they want - or they don't see a need for God until they reach a point of crisis or despair.

[Slide-solution]

Praise God, again there is a **solution to the fallen condition** in this passage.

The first step to addressing this fallen condition is **repentance**. The younger son recognizes his sin – he's sinned against Heaven and against his father, he acknowledges that he is unworthy to be called his father's son and decides to go back and seek forgiveness (Luke 15:17-19).

The **father's response to the son's return is key to the solution**. The father runs to the son, embraces him, and forgives him completely (v20). This is **a great picture of God's mercy and willingness to forgive those who repent and return to Him, regardless of their past failures.**

There is also the **opportunity for reconciliation and celebration**. The father pleads with the older son to join the celebration, reminding him that everything the father has is already his. The father says that it is right to rejoice because the

younger son was lost and is now found, and that there is a need for compassion and reconciliation.

God always leaves room for reconciliation; the older son had that opportunity; sadly, it seems, he might not have taken it; we're not told in the passage for sure?

Our Response to the Fallen Condition

What will our response be to this **concept of the fallen condition**?

[Slide-Response 1]

1. 1st - As we read the Bible from now on - **read it with a fallen condition focus** - **ask ourselves what fallen condition we share with the people in the passage and with the original hearers. Also ask what solution (God's grace) is there to the fallen condition.** **We will get much more from the Bible if we do this!**

[Slide-Response 2]

2. 2nd – In Matthew 6:33 Jesus gives us our response – ***But first seek His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***

As we approach Christmas and the Birth of Jesus - the **King of Heaven and Earth** – **Jesus directs us to seek God's Kingdom**

In other words, to seek God's will for our lives – not our will.

He also directs us to God's righteousness (to be right with God and approved by God) – this is only possible by believing in King Jesus – and His death and resurrection.

So, when Jesus says first seek God's Kingdom and righteousness – He is saying **prioritize God's kingdom** (His will, His righteousness) over our own personal desires and earthly concerns. **By making God's work and righteousness our first concern**, we align our hearts and lives with His purpose. We ask ourselves **WWJT WWJS WWJD**.

When we stop focusing on ourselves and our worries, and instead place our lives in God's hands, we experience His peace that surpasses understanding
(Philippians 4:6-7)

Let's pray...

Father God, we thank you for your precious Word which shows us both our fallenness and also the solution to this fallen condition, through your grace in Jesus. Help us as we approach Christmas, to seek first Your Kingdom and Your righteousness – and point others towards Jesus! In His Name, we pray. Amen.