

Broken

On Sunday we explored the famous story of the fall of Adam and Eve.

1. Warm-up question: On Sunday Pastor Jeff tried to tempt us with Twizzlers. What kind of candy or junk food most tempts you?
2. Genesis tells us that, “Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. . . . The Lord God said [to Adam and Eve], ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 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.’” Genesis 2:9, 16. This forbidden tree, Jeff suggested, reminds us of the importance of having healthy boundaries. Like Adam and Eve, we have been placed on this garden-like earth and given the gift of life to freely enjoy. Living in that fullness, though, requires self-discipline. There are lots of things that look good to the eye and feel good in the moment, but ultimately bring harm. Hence, the need for healthy boundaries.
 - a. Once when Jesus disciples were accused of being too flexible in their observance of the Sabbath rule, Jesus defended them, saying, “The Sabbath [rule] was made for humanity, not humanity for the Sabbath [rule].” Mark 2:27. What point is Jesus trying to make here about the rules/boundaries God gives us?
 - b. The Apostle Paul said, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.” I Corinthians 6:12. What point is Paul trying to make?
 - c. An anonymous author once said, “Being lost is living by a set of values that systematically dismantles your life.” Have you ever known someone who lived that way? What did you observe?
 - d. Jeff said, “Rules are our friends. We should keep them not out of compulsion, but out of enlightened self-interest.” Name a healthy boundary that you’re trying to observe in your life, not out of obligation, but because it’s good for you?
3. Even when we know healthy boundaries are good for us, we still experience temptation to trade off long-term benefit for short-term pleasure. Read Genesis 3:1-10.
 - a. Eve’s experience here is a case study in how temptation works. Based on what’s said here, describe the thought process that convinced Eve to eat of the forbidden tree?
 - b. Adam appears to be right beside Eve the whole time. He says nothing, but he too eats of the apple. What might his thought process have been?

- c. Name an area in your life where you struggle with temptation. Describe what that feels like.
4. Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Like Adam and Eve, every single one of us has made tragic mistakes in life. Jeff gave the example of John McCain (who hid his true feelings about the Confederate flag to curry favor with voters) and Gene in the novel *A Separate Peace* (who in a moment of jealousy caused his friend to fall, resulting in injuries that led to death).
 - a. Jeff said, “We are all broken.” Does that statement resonate with you? Does it feel true of you? Why or why not?
 - b. When in your life have you experienced a moment like Gene or John McCain – something terrible that you deeply wish you could take back?
 - c. Re-read Genesis 3:7-10. When we do something bad, our natural tendency is to want to hide from God, ourselves, and others. Adam and Eve had been naked all along. But now suddenly their nakedness unnerved them. Why?
5. God could have responded to Adam and Eve by destroying them or abandoning them. Instead God searches until finding them, then proceeds to help them rebuild their lives by providing quality clothes (vs. 21) and relocating them to a place where they could make a new beginning in life (vs. 23). That’s grace!
 - a. When Adam and Eve were hiding from God, what do you suppose they feared God might do to them?
 - b. When God called out to Adam and Eve, saying, “Where are you?” What tone of voice do you imagine God using?
 - c. How do you imagine Adam and Eve felt when, instead of abandoning or destroying them, God made provision for them to build a new life? Do you believe God does that in our lives too? When has God done that for you?
 - d. Although God graciously helped Adam and Eve make a new life, God did not magically reverse the natural consequences of their tragic choice. Adam now had to work by the sweat of his brow, Eve had to experience pain in childbirth, and the snake had to crawl on its belly (Genesis 3:9-19). Why didn’t God just magically reverse things, as if it never happened?
6. Genesis 3 delivers a message of *painful self-awareness* coupled with *amazing grace*.
 - a. Jeff said, “When we stop trying to pretend to be something we’re not. When we, like John McCain, stop lying to ourselves, others, and God about our profound flaws, when we confess our sins, it sets us free.” How and why?
 - b. Why is grace so critical to our ability to get up when we fall? What, if anything, do we need to do to access God’s grace when we fall?