

## TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

*"Tis Mercy All" Part 1 Genesis 3:20-21*

August 18, 2024

**INTRO.:** Good morning! It is great to be back once again! Thank you to Pastor Paul (our Associate Pastor) and Jonathan Ward (Missionary at the Word of Life Bible Institute in Owen Sound, Canada) who continued our series in Genesis, **Trusting God's Plan, Purpose, and Design**. They took us through the sin of Adam and Eve, how that affects each one of us, God's curse on the serpent, the woman and the man. We were challenged with the truth it is worth it to follow God, and that through Him there is a better way. Last week, Dr. Derek Webster (President of Missions Door) gave us the challenge that we are better together, which is one of the core values of Missions Door. God sees more in us than we do! We have several missionaries that we support and partner with from Missions Door. Not long after the devastating earthquake in Haiti that occurred in January 2010, we began a partnership with Missions Door missionaries Pastor Guillo and Pastor Francklin and their families to come alongside the churches and people in Haiti to help their recovery and to share the gospel. This church fellowship took 13 trips there and many went and many more gave sacrificially to allow those trips to happen. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, we are unable to take teams to Haiti because of the violence and unrest in the country. Every time Pastor Guillo walks out of his home he faces danger. We need to be praying for the people of Haiti, the government, for the believers, pastors and churches. We need to pour our hearts out to God for Him to work, people to come to know Jesus, God's hand of protection, and restoration of order. In the meantime, we have been looking to connect with other missionaries, to develop a partnership like we have had in Haiti. Frank Auker (chairman of the Mission Board), Gary Lewis (past chairman of the Mission Board), and myself have had a Zoom call with Mark Jones (short-term missions trip coordinator for Missions Door) and a Zoom call with Mark Jones and Pastor Arnold Linares & his wife, Julia who are ministering in Honduras. We have scheduled a trip for December 7-14 not only investigate the possibility of partnering with churches in Honduras but also ministering while there on this first trip. This team will hopefully involve a construction project (constructing a kitchen and dining room for children at one of the churches); a medical project (two days of clinics for the Honduran people); and a children/youth activity for a day. We ask that you begin praying about the possibility of being on this team and/or helping to support the trip prayerfully and financially. I firmly believe that one of the reasons God has blessed First Baptist is because of the vision and passion for missions. We also believe the best days are still ahead! Let's take a few moments and pray for this trip to Honduras.

Over the next two weeks we are going to finish Genesis 3: *Tis Mercy All*. Following that we are going to kick off the fall season, students returning to school and family vacations coming to an end, with a 4-week series entitled **But God** where we will look at 4 different Bible characters, and how God changed the course and direction of their lives. During that series we are hoping to have at least one person each week share their testimony as to how God did this in their life.

We love you and thank God for you and for the privilege to serve here. We miss this fellowship when we are away. We had two weeks' vacation (several home projects), and a trip to Virginia to help our son Jack settle into his new position as Associate Pastor with emphasis on Youth at Spring Hill Baptist Church. That was followed by a restful ministry week at Cross Country Camp where Jeff Brandt and I slept in a cabin with 10 senior high boys. We had two clinics and two workouts a day, and a chapel every night. There were around 100 students attending from around 15 different schools, including 16 students from Danville High School. I woke up in the middle of the last night with some sort of intestinal/stomach bug which is why I wasn't at church last Sunday.

Now to this morning. As I mentioned at the beginning, I haven't preached for the past four weeks. So, as I told the men at ARMS this past Thursday, you all might want to sit tight. When a preacher has gone that long without preaching, he could be a little long-winded. Somebody even suggested that I introduce myself again. So, as I start, I ask you this question, "Have you ever formed an opinion or conclusion at first glance and found you were very wrong or that there was far more to it than you originally thought?" How about your first impression when introduced to someone for the first time. Brenda and I were newly married when I accepted the call to be the youth pastor at a church in Maine. Soon after arriving I went and visited Fair Haven, a Christian camp only 7 miles from the church. The church was, and still is, very involved in the camp. It's founders included folks from the church. It is a great camp that God has used for many years, seeing many lives radically changed by the gospel. At that time, the director and his wife were members of the church. Some of our folks, who were youth leaders at the church, worked in the kitchen at the camp. So, I thought I'd drop by for a visit, chat with them, and check out the camp some more. So, I stopped by the kitchen before lunch and visited for a bit. I didn't know until much later what the first impression one of them had of me. They told me, and we laughed about it, that they wondered how I would ever relate to young people since I seemed so soft spoken and shy. They soon found out that I was neither of those and was, in fact, very much the opposite. Shy is one thing I have never been! How many people here have found their first impression of someone was totally wrong? I think we can do the

same thing with God's Word, the Bible. We read through it quickly and move on. It's why every believer needs to take some time to study and meditate on God's Word. I highly recommend that you have a good study Bible with cross references. I also highly recommend that you spend time reading larger passages of Scripture several times. Alexander Maclaren, a well-known preacher of many years ago, when asked what's the first thing he does in preparation to preach through a book of the Bible responded, "I first read it through 50 times."

I encourage you to continue to read, study, and meditate on Genesis as we preach through it. Let's read Genesis 3:20-24 in unison. As we do so, what are your conclusions?

**Genesis 3:20–24** Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 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." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 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.

It is easy to read through this and conclude that it is just recording the results of the fall and the curse. I believe that it goes much deeper than that and is a description of God's mercy on Adam and Eve that also finds a way to all of us. The title for these two weeks (*Tis Mercy All*) comes from the second stanza of one of my favorite hymns, "*And Can it Be?*"

He (Jesus) left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace!  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race!  
Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, O my God, it found out me.

Yes, these verses speak of God's judgment for sin, but in the midst of that we see God's mercy. As a side note, I would say that the part of the stanza, *emptied Himself of all but love*, is not totally accurate. Jesus voluntarily limited His divine attributes but did not give them up for He was still fully God while being fully man. I think it would do us well to remember the distinction between the terms grace and mercy. Grace is getting what we don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what we do deserve. In salvation we have both of these in effect. By providing salvation for all those who come to faith in Christ we are shown mercy, as we deserve eternal judgment for our sin. We are also shown grace, as not only are our sins forgiven but we are also promised heaven, being with the Lord for eternity. Can we take a moment and say this together, "Thank you, Lord!" In Genesis 3:20 & 21 we see God's mercy **IN LIFE** (v. 20) and **IN DEATH** (v. 21).

### **IN LIFE**

### **v. 20**

**Genesis 3:20** Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

From Arnold Fruchtenbaum:

Adam called his wife's name *Eve*, in Hebrew *Chavah*. Before the fall, she was merely called "Woman," *isha* (2:23); but now she is called *Chavah* ("Eve"), which means "life." The name comes from the Hebrew word *chayah*, meaning "to live."

Later in the verse, the word *living* is from the same root. In naming the woman, Eve, Adam is showing his faith in the promise given in God's curse on the serpent.

**Genesis 3:15** 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."

God is declaring in this curse on the serpent that Eve will bear children, there will be physical life given through her. Adam describes her as *the mother of all the living*. This is a future tense in the Hebrew, it is a prediction of what is to come. Why is this so significant? Think back to the warning God gave to Adam in Genesis 2:15-17

**Genesis 2:15–17** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. **16** And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

It is possible that one of the reasons Adam and Eve attempted to hide from God in the garden was because they feared they would die. Sin brought death into the world. It was what God told Adam would happen if they violated His command.

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

In the fall they experienced spiritual death, separation from God, and would, some time in the future, experience physical death. Sin comes with a very high price. Sin affects my relationship with God, with others, and comes with various consequences. That Adam and Eve were still physically alive is a reminder of the mercy of God and a reminder that even Adam and Eve's sin couldn't thwart the sovereign plan of God. When they sinned God didn't say, "Oh, my. What am I going to do now. It also shows that God keeps His Word. When you read it here (picture of the Bible), count on it!

How many of us here this morning, watching online, or listening on the radio are sinners? Do we realize that every breath we take is a display of the mercy of God! When you and I wake up in the morning we should say, "Thank you, God." When we go to bed at night we should say, "Thank you, God."

God's mercy is seen in life, and it is also seen:

### **IN DEATH**

v. 21

**Genesis 3:21** The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

This verse is incredibly significant. When Adam and Eve sinned look at what happened.

**Genesis 3:7** 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.

Their solution to their nakedness was to sew some fig leaves together to make a covering. This man-made covering was not adequate. Adam and Eve's sin brought death to animals for them to be adequately covered. This is the first time they would have observed physical death. How horrible that must have been!

Arnold Fruchtenbaum: This would have been the first observation by Adam and Eve as to what physical death means. As they saw the animals being put to death, they realized it would one day happen to them. This is also the first blood-sacrifice, an example of grace in the context of judgment. The covering of animal skins, which required the shedding of blood to give them the atonement, replaced the covering of fig leaves. The use of the compound name *Jehovah God made* shows that this was a divine provision.

James Montgomery Boice:

Two thoughts must have gone through Adam and Eve's minds:

- 1) Instinctive horror of death. "So this is what death is," they must have exclaimed as they looked down in horror at the bodies of the slain animals. Sin is far worse than they could have possibly imagined.
- 2) Mingling with their awareness of sin's horror, must have been a deep and growing wonder at the mercy of God, who, though He had every right to take their lives in forfeit of His broken commandment and had said death must follow sin, was nevertheless showing that it was possible for an innocent victim to die instead.

This is a foreshadowing of the only sacrifice that would bring forgiveness and cleansing of sin, that being Jesus Christ. It also tells us that there had to be a shedding of blood.

**Hebrews 9:22** In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

What lessons can we draw from this verse? Here are some that Arnold Fruchtenbaum mentions:

- 1) To approach God, one must have a proper covering.
- 2) Man-made covering was not acceptable
- 3) God Himself must provide the covering
- 4) The proper covering required the shedding of blood

What kinds of covering or solutions has man come up to deal with sin?

1) Good works

If I just keep doing good things some day I will be accepted by God. What does the Bible say?

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

**Isaiah 64:6** All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

2) Religion

Well, I'm very religious. How many religions are there in the world? What group of people did Jesus rebuke the harshest? It was the religious people. Look at what the Apostle Paul had to say about his religious observance after coming to Christ.

**Philippians 3:4b-9** If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Christianity is about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

3) I'm better than most: God will grade on the curve

I took some courses in college, when I was majoring in political science, where people relied on the curve. One of my winter semester classes (upstate New York) was at 8 o'clock in the morning. Class attendance was very sparse until the midterm exam and then the room was full. Many just hoped they would do well once the professor factored in the curve. That's not how it works with God.

**James 2:10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

**Ephesians 2:1-2** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

James Montgomery Boice compared all these ways to Monopoly money. How many here have played Monopoly. Believing that any of the ways I just mentioned would provide forgiveness of my sins would be like taking some of this monopoly money, going to the bank, handing the teller a pile of this money and saying I want to open an account because I have thousands of dollars. Just look!

The Old Testament animal sacrifices covered sin, but people were saved in the Old Testament through faith in the coming Messiah. In Hebrews 10 we are told that Jesus Christ's sacrifice, once for all, was the sufficient payment for our sin. The covering that Adam and Eve came up with was not good enough. It is a sign of God's mercy that he provided Adam and Eve with the covering of animal skins.

James Montgomery Boice notes the following:

\*Adam and Eve needed an animal killed for each of them

\*When we come to the time of the Exodus from Egypt God commanded each family to take a lamb, kill it, spread its blood on the doorposts and lintel of the house so the angel of death would Passover them, sparing the first-born.

\*On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would kill an animal on behalf of the nation and sprinkle the blood on mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant within the holy of holies of the Jewish tabernacle

\*Look at what John the Baptist declared when he saw Jesus.

**John 1:29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who **takes away** the sin of the world!

"look:" present tense

"takes away:" present tense, participle

**SO WHAT???**

\*May we remind ourselves that every moment is a gift from God, a sign of His mercy.

**Lamentations 3:22** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;  
Thank God, worship Him with my lips and my life

\*The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, points to the Lord Jesus. Any other means to approach God, gain His forgiveness, and have a restored relationship with God will come up short.

**John 14:6 (ESV)** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Do I have the *Blessed Assurance* we will sing about?

I Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain:

This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest.  
I in my Savior am happy and bless'd,  
watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]

\*God is the author of life, both physical and spiritual

Who is the foundation of my life?

The Hymn, *The Solid Rock*

I My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:  
all other ground is sinking sand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in him be found:  
dressed in his righteousness alone,  
faultless to stand before the throne. [Refrain]

\*Whom am I praying for and sharing the gospel with that needs to be made spiritually alive?

