

Text: Gen. 3:14-24

Title: "The Curse of God's Judgment"

Time: Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Last Wednesday Brian Ross of ABC News ran a story on Good Morning America that he entitled "Huckabee's Pardon." As the story ran a graphic with the word's "Huckabee's Pardon" appeared.

Mike Huckabee is the former governor of Arkansas that is running for the Republican nomination for president. It was Ross's goal to discredit Huckabee by accusing the governor of pardoning a man who had been convicted of a crime, who then after his release when out and committed the same crime again. It turns out that Ross's story was full of factual errors and misconceptions, the most blatant of which was the fact that the convict's release had nothing to do with a pardon. His case was actually handled by a parole board who allowed the convict out on parole. Huckabee agreed with and to some extent influenced the decision to release the convict, but he did so because the evidence of his conviction was troublingly weak.

How a governor has handled a convict can be important in presidential politics. As with the ABC News story, often the truth of the judgment rendered gets lost. The passage we studied last week, Gen. 3:1-13, ends with the confessions of the parents of the human race who are convicted of the fall of man. The passage before us this morning, vv. 14-24, tell us how the Governor of the universe handled their judgment. Lies abound in our world today about the judgment of God. I want us to see three things about the curse of God's judgment this morning.

I. The cause of the curse of God's judgment (3:14, "Because you have done this"; 3:17, "Because you have obeyed the voice of your wife . . . Cursed is the ground because of you"; 3:22, "Behold, man is become like one of us").

A. Man's sin is the cause of God's judgment.

Illustration: The parole board members who worked with Governor Huckabee on the parole of this criminal are now coming forth and blaming the governor for their decision. They are Clinton and Tucker appointees who oppose the candidacy of Huckabee and desire to discredit his reputation by blaming him for a decision they made.

Application: Adam tried that in the previous passage, didn't he? We have the blame game going on there, and ultimately the blame attacks God the Judge: "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate" (v. 12). God makes clear in this passage that the sinner is responsible for his own sin. It is because of the sinner that the curse of God's judgment falls. Blaming someone else is not going to alleviate or help us avoid the reality of God's judgment. The first truth we need to embrace about the judgment of God upon us is that it is our fault. Ezekiel 18:1-4 provides a relevant contrast: "The soul that sins it shall die" (v. 4) vs. "The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge" (v. 1).

B. God's judgment is His strange work.

Illustration: No gubernatorial candidate runs for election on his ability to execute convicts. Governors would rather do other things: balance budgets, enhance services, lower taxes, lead in times of crisis. Making a decision about the destiny of someone on death row is a part of governing that is somehow alien to the rest of what a governor is and does.

Application: The Bible teaches that the curse of God's judgment is His strange or alien work. Isa. 28:21 makes this point: "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange [alien] work; and bring to pass his act, his strange [alien] act." As we study the curse of God's judgment, we are studying a work of God that is in some sense foreign to His nature in the same way that sin was never a part of His original design for creation.

A popular evangelical author named John Piper wrote a book entitled, *The Pleasures of God*, and in that book he organized theology around the idea that God always enjoys His work. Yet the Bible clearly indicates that this is not the case when it comes to the curse of God's judgment (Ezek. 18:32): "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the Lord God. Therefore, repent and live." The God of the Bible is a good God, whose work of judgment is one that is strange to Him, yet one that is very real. The cause of the curse of God's judgment is never that God is unjust or cruel; it is always that God is holy and that man has sinned.

II. The consequences of the curse of God's judgment (vv. 14-19, 23-24).

A. General consequences mentioned by Paul in Romans.

1. Suffering and corruption afflicts nature (Rom. 8:18-22).
2. Death enters the world (Rom. 5:12).

Application: The doctrine of evolution denies both of these important truths. Rather than seeing nature in bondage to decay and corruption with a need for redemption that was caused by man's own need for the same, the doctrine of evolution teaches that nature is progressing from original chaos to increasing order.

In addition, rather than teaching that death came into the world through the sin of man, the doctrine of evolution teaches that man came into the world through a mechanism requiring a lot of death – genetic mutations and natural selection.

These two cannot be reconciled, because to say that God used evolution to create the universe is to leave unaccounted for the Bible's teaching about where its groaning has come from, and to make death, disease, and decay the centerpieces of His creative power and majesty. God's ability to create life and the reality of death are always on opposite sides of every biblical equation. One must be chosen. Evolution is at odds with the truth of bibli-

cal creation. They cannot both be true, and we ought to avoid trying to make compromises between them.

Application: Just as sin and suffering and corruption and death entered the world through one man, so also salvation and redemption and restoration and eternal life come through one man, and this man is Jesus Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is the Lamb who will some day make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

B. Specific consequences mentioned by Moses in Genesis.

1. The snake (3:14).

Application: The curse upon the snake teaches us an important lesson about the relationship between God and Satan. We do not speak of two equals engaged in a cosmic battle when we speak of God and Satan. To the contrary, God is in complete control when it comes to His war with Satan. He completely restricts the activities of Satan according to His will. Remember that when Satan attacked Job, he had to ask God for permission first. God is always in control when it comes to this battle. As Martin Luther's great battle hymn of spiritual warfare affirms, "The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure, for lo his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him."

2. The woman (3:16).

a. Pain bearing children.

Illustration: I can remember the birth of our son Brandon. His birthday was February 15th, and his mom was in labor all day on Valentine's Day the 14th. Maureen had a very tough time giving birth to our firstborn. I cannot describe the incredible joy we both felt at his arrival, but neither are there words that can adequately describe the pain that this process involved for Maureen.

Application: God had brought His offspring into the world by a supernatural act of creation, and yet because of sin, that which ought to have brought Him unmitigated joy brought with it unimaginable pain. In spite of the goodness of God to Adam and Eve, they sinned against Him.

Now the painful work of the cross would be necessary to bring the originally intended happiness to fruition. And so the writer of Hebrews describes the work of Christ for us as follows: “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). And Isaiah describes the suffering of Christ for His offspring as follows: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring . . . As a result of the toilsome labor of His soul, He will see and be satisfied.”

Just like a mother suffers pain in childbirth under sin’s curse, so the God of heaven would learn what it was to suffer because of man’s sin to save those He has brought into the world.

b. Anger against her husband.

Two notes about the phrase “thy desire shall be to thy husband”:

1. The words “shall be” are in italics, and that means that they are not in the original. In the original, this phrase does not describe a curse that God is pronouncing, that comes in the next phrase “and he shall rule over thee.” Instead, it describes something that is now true about Eve’s condition after her disobedience.
2. The phrase refers to an adversarial relationship. It is the same phrase that describes the relationship between Cain and his sinful anger in Gen. 4:7. Here sin is described as a crouching animal desiring to attack Cain. That is the same wording that God uses to describe how Eve felt about Adam at that moment in time.

Application: And she had her reasons for being upset with Adam, didn’t she? Rather than taking responsibility for his own disobedience against God, Adam blamed his failure on his wife. He

compounded failing to provide her with the leadership she needed with then blaming her for that failure. He had forgotten the wonderful value that Eve was as his God-provided helper, and instead had cited her as the cause of his great sin. And this after all Eve had done for him.

When God says “thy desire is to thy husband,” he is saying, “Eve, I know that you are upset and disappointed in your husband.” And then comes the curse, “and he shall rule over thee.”

In a way not needed prior to the fall, an authority structure would have to be established in the home in the relationship between husband and wife, because now the husband would be a miserable leader and the wife would be a crummy helper. This curse is everywhere present where sin abounds in the home. Where sin abounds in the home, either the man rules his wife like a slave, or the home falls apart. Only Christ can change this. Only He can make the man a loving, appreciative, and responsible partner, and the wife a submissive and willing helper.

c. The man (3:17-19).

Application: It is God’s curse on man that he not eat unless he is willing to make his brow sweat. We live in a society in which people are constantly demanding a free ride – free food, free education, free healthcare. God says something very different: “If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10).

Now we ought to save and invest wisely and retire if we can. We ought to seek to lessen the burden of this curse as much as we can through education and productivity advances. But we should not seek to avoid it by stealing from others. Eph. 4:28, “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.” Here clearly, there are special times of need, special circumstances of need. But we should not as a pattern of life be on the take from others, when we are healthy enough to work ourselves.

Application 2: The sweat of the brow to put food on the table is not a curse pronounced on the woman. At times it may be necessary for the wife to help out in this area as well as the many others where the husband needs help, but she should never be burdened with the task of chief breadwinner for the family anymore than the man should be burdened with the pains of childbearing.

We have looked at both the cause and the consequences of God's Genesis curse. Praise the Lord that our message this morning does not end there. Note with me one last detail about this curse.

III. The Christ of the curse of God's judgment (vv. 15, 20-21).

A. God's curse promised Christ (v. 15).

Application: All of Genesis is a gospel about this special offspring of Eve, promised first here in Gen. 3:15. For this reason we have the tracing of descendants in the book of Genesis. The line of descent is traced from Adam to Noah, and through Noah's son Shem on to Abraham; and then from Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob, and then finally to Judah.

At the end of the book of Genesis, we are told how the promised ruler was going to come from Judah (Gen. 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.") From Judah would eventually come David, and from David Jesus Christ. And so this Christmas season we celebrate the baby who was born of a virgin in a manger in the town of Bethlehem, Judah. And right here in the third chapter of Genesis, God promised that Christmas would happen.

B. God's curse crucified Christ.

Application: The seed of the serpent are those who desire to kill the promised seed of the woman (John 8:37, 44). Jesus Christ became the curse for us by hanging on the tree (Gal. 3:13). In promising Christ, God's curse also crucified Christ, and it does that so it need not happen to us although we were the deserving ones.

Conclusion: Christ is the object of Adam's saving faith (vv. 20-21). God's curse was death, but because of this promised Seed, Eve could be called the mother of all the living. As animals give their skins for coats, the symbols that teach of the sacrifice of a coming Lamb, whose heel would need to be bruised by the serpent, begin. Adam trusted this victory over his sin. Will you?

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*