

Sermon to the Saints of God which are at Topeka – Sunday, July 23, 2017

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. – Gen. 2:16-17

Today, beloved, I would like to speak to certain aspects of the fall of Adam and Eve ('original sin') in the garden of Eden, the resulting curses pronounced upon them (and all mankind), and what they signify for us. For purposes of brevity, and to get right to this sermon's focus, I won't spend much time in describing the pre-fall Adam and Eve found Genesis chapters 1 and 2 (although I'd highly recommend reading them afresh after digesting this sermon). My focus today is on how the fall occurred, the specific elements of the curse that God pronounced upon Adam, Eve and the serpent, and how the elements of God's pronounced curse impact us on both practical and spiritual levels.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Ro. 6:23

When we preach that the default 'long home' for all mankind is hell, this is what we are saying. The wages of sin is eternal death – damnation – the second death. And since all men sin, then all men will earn the wages of that sin – the amounts, frequency, and variety of sin make no matter. The gift of eternal life, being clothed in the imputed righteousness of a suffering Saviour who was obedient unto death and bore our sins in His flesh, is all that spares any man from his wages, or just rewards.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. – Ro. 5:12-19

And while the introduction of sin into the totality of mankind through the sin of one is a great mystery, it is important for us to glean what we can from the words God gave us, and ask for more light on those aspects of His revealed will of which we have no current firm grasp. So, back to the garden.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. – Gen. 2:16-17

Certainly, the Lord did not mean by this that Adam would die a physical death, on the spot, on the very day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Otherwise, that's exactly what would have happened, and it didn't. And if He didn't mean that, then it is inferred that if Adam didn't eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he wouldn't die (at all). And since Adam and Eve were commanded to be fruitful and multiply *before the fall* (at Gen. 1:28), it can further be inferred that, in the absence of eating of that tree, Adam's progeny (or the other men) would not die either. On one hand, it is an exercise in futility to look at those inferences, as the transgression did occur, so the point becomes moot. However, knowing the nature of Adam's existence, in the manner which God fashioned him prior to the fall, can tell us a lot about the fall and the consequences to both our first parents and us.

At Gen. 2:17, if you examine the Hebrew at the phrase that is rendered in English 'thereof thou shalt surely die,' you will see something peculiar. I expected to see a Hebrew word that signified something like 'of a certainty' (for the English phrase rendered 'thereof thou shalt surely'). That's not what's there. The Hebrew word that got translated into the English 'thereof thou shalt surely' is <04191> *muwth* (mooth), and it means: to die. Next to the carrot-bracketed Strong's word number, there is sometimes another number in regular parentheses – that number signifies linguistic information about Hebrew word roots and verb tenses. In this case (8800), the verb tense used is the 'infinitive.' Now I don't mean to turn this into a linguistics lecture – but just bear with me. In the English language, the simplest way, if not the fullest, to explain the infinitive verb tense is to add the suffix '-ing' to a verb (without supplying any other context). Think 'drawing,' or 'eating' or 'thinking' – it is the doing of the thing in the abstract. Now for the last English word in the last phrase of Gen. 2:17, or 'die,' the Hebrew word is ALSO <04191> *muwth*, or: to die - but this time it has a roots/tense parentheses number (8799), which is the imperfect verb tense (which in this case, would be the future imperfect, as it expresses a biconditional, or 'if/then' type of statement where the 'if' condition hasn't yet occurred. In the Hebrew, from what I understand, the future imperfect expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete and ongoing. So, in the Hebrew, the phrase expressed in Gen. 2:17 would be more precisely rendered: 'for in the day that thou eatest, in dying you will begin to die.' Now if that doesn't quite make sense to you at first blush – it didn't to me either. But I believe what

that blessed word of God is expressing there is both an immediately-pronounced, eternal, spiritual death sentence as well as the further punishment of losing his immortality and eventually dying a mortal death, complete with all the pains, sorrows, afflictions and burdens that accompany that process toward mortal death. The more literal Hebrew phrase that means 'in dying, you will begin to die' expresses both the immediate (and eternal) spiritual death in the first part, and the eventual mortal decay and death in the second part.

We can see a somewhat similar example of expressing both types of death in a single phrase when we read Christ's words at Mt. 8:22:

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Prior to the fall, we see that Adam beheld Eve and said:

This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. – Gen. 2:23-25

Now to the fall itself.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Gen. 3:1-7

Gill (in part) on verse 4: *Satan's implication was that surely it cannot be true, that a God of such goodness could ever deny you such a benefit, or restrain you from such happiness; he can never be your friend that can lay such an injunction on you.*

The insinuation was to make them doubt that God, in his goodness and liberality, and contrary to His perfections, would ever deny them the gaining of seemingly valuable knowledge that they were currently ignorant of. So, she took the fruit. Notice the correlation between Eve's rationale at Gen. 3:6:

And when the woman saw that the tree was (1) good for food, and that it was (2) pleasant to the eyes, and a tree (3) to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat,

And 1Jo. 2:16:

For all that is in the world, (1) the lust of the flesh, and (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

GOOD FOR FOOD → LUST OF THE FLESH

PLEASANT TO THE EYES → LUST OF THE EYES

TO BE DESIRED TO MAKE ONE WISE → PRIDE OF LIFE

When obedience to God, in anything, is overridden by any combination of the following characteristics:

1. Appealing to the appetite
2. Appealing to the eye (or mind's eye)
3. Building a man up in his own 'self-estimation',

sin will result. All the fundamental characteristics of sin in the world are bound up in that original sin – before it, Adam and Eve were not ashamed.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. - Gen. 2:25

It wasn't that they should have been ashamed and were not, or were just ignorant about that which they should have been ashamed of – they knew not what shame was – they were not conscious of any sin, which sooner or later produces shame. After that sin, everything changed – they were ashamed. They knew what shame was, because they were conscious of sin. They covered themselves. They hid themselves. Rather than running to and relishing the close communion with God that they had enjoyed, they ran and shrank from it. The curse of God was first and foremost immediate spiritual death and the clock hands of their temporal death sentence began to move. Before you know it, the first man born into this world murdered the second – and so it began. The single transgression has involved the guilt, the depravity, and the death, not only of Adam, but of that whole race which was in him, and thus has changed the whole character and condition of mankind throughout all time.

The fall seems to have taken place early on, quickly and with no real resistance. Neither Adam nor Eve raise so much as a word of protest to Satan – they were easy prey for his cunning attack. Even in his unfallen state, man was no match for the wiles of Satan. Satan convinced Eve, and forever hence convinces men everywhere, with a favorite and effective device, that we need to

know why God calls one thing good and another evil, rather than simply who commands it. Eve's temptation is still with men, and her sin is routinely repeated. Many men say they desire to obey God, but they want to understand *why* they should obey him before they do. They want to know why God has commanded some things and prohibited others, and hold those rationales up to their own understanding. When men of feigned faith fail to understand the reason, as quickly and easily as Eve, they reject God's commandment and amend it to their liking.

THE CURSE

The central element of the curse that God pronounced upon Adam and Eve was given in the commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: their deaths – both spiritual (which was immediate) and corporeal (which began the process of mortal decay). This curse extends to all of mankind as a result – so as sin was introduced by the first man and woman, it permeates all their progeny – and carries the death sentence with it for every man. Let us now look at the additional elements of the curse that God levied against the transgressors after the fall.

SATAN'S PUNISHMENT

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this.... - Gen. 3:14

When we ask (as we should) "what is the 'this' that Satan has done?", the answer might be 'tempt Eve to disobey God' - and we would be right in saying so. But that temptation had a consequence that Satan absolutely knew, and Satan absolutely had in mind to put into effect – being motivated by covetousness and envy. He knew what God had said concerning the eating or touching of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – that if Adam or Eve did so, they would surely die. Satan knew of the power of God to perform all that He said, and that by merely saying a thing, it was so.

And God said, let there be light: and there was light. - Gen. 1:3

Satan knew that the death of Adam and Eve would result from their eating of the tree, and that excited him to persuade them to do it. The 'this' that Satan had done...is murder. He shared culpability for their deaths. Consider the scripture:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. – Jn. 8:44

He was a murderer from the beginning – he desired their death, knowing it would ensue and working with all craftiness and subtlety to encourage and secure it. Ushering sin into the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve wickedly fascinated and drove Satan. The highly

keen, adaptable, subtle, breathtakingly wicked mind of Satan thinks to usurp God's authority not merely by disobeying him, but ultimately by displacing him from his throne.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. – Rev. 12:1-5

The woman is the good woman – the Church (universal – not in any age or place – all of God's elect from Adam to the last man) – the Bride of Christ, whose travails and pains are: the shame for her own sin, the afflictions put on her for it, including the corruptions of body and mind (namely, the curse of original sin), and the afflictions and persecutions she suffers at the hands of wicked men. The child is Christ, and ruling all nations with a rod of iron is His millennial reign. Satan worked feverishly to devour Christ. He worked in ungodly men to have Christ murdered without cause. He still works to war against Christ at the last time, more feverishly than ever – knowing his time is short - and to usurp His authority at every turn, working to draw men into greater and greater disobedience, and to work to have God's people become entangled with the affairs of this life and thus drawn away from our trust in and reliance toward God, and toward our own understanding and the work of our own hands.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. - Gen. 3:15

The enmity is not just between the serpent and Eve, or even all women who were to follow - it is that implacable and irreconcilable hatred, and a perpetual war, between Satan and the Church of God in all ages. The phrase 'between thy seed and her seed' means, in general, ungodly men (whose father is the devil – Jn. 8:44) at enmity with the Church; and specifically, Satan's seed - being Antichrist, and the woman's seed - being the Messiah, the eminent seed of the woman - who should bruise the head of the old serpent the Devil. That is, Christ will destroy him and all his principalities and powers, break and confound all his schemes, and ruin all his works, crush his whole empire, strip him of his authority, and particularly of his power over death, and his tyranny over the bodies and souls of men. And the final putting down of Satan is yet to come at the end of the millennial reign of Christ (Satan being put into the bottomless pit during the reign, there being no satanic influence over men during that millennial reign, and then Satan is loosed for a season).

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. – Rev. 20:7-10

THE BALANCE OF EVE'S PUNISHMENT

Here I say 'balance' because the main curse, or punishment for their disobedience, was death (spiritual immediately, and gradual mortal death that resulted from sin).

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. – Gen. 3:15

This is not merely the woman - mankind suffers through the appearance of sin across the entire Adamic race - and the great enmity put between God's sheep throughout time (the Church universal) and Satan.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. – Gen. 3:16

On a practical level, this sorrow seems to extend to two main notions: (1) the pains and travail that attend the pregnancy and birth, and (2) all the mother's pains and anxieties concerning her offspring. On a spiritual level, this is a metaphor for the multiplied sorrow and travails of God's people in having their vile, sinful selves quickened by the spirit of God and mourning and grieving for their sins, as well as the afflictions and persecutions they shall experience, endure and persevere through, by God's grace. The strength of the metaphor (which is particularly strong, and which many women can strongly attest to) must be potent enough for us to see the potency of what it is a metaphor for.

Matthew Henry offers this help here:

1. The sorrows are here said to be multiplied, greatly multiplied. All the sorrows of this present time are so; many are the calamities which human life is liable to, of various kinds, and often repeated, the clouds returning after the rain, and no marvel that our sorrows are multiplied when our sins are: both are innumerable evils. The sorrows of child-bearing are multiplied; for they include, not only the travailing throes, but the indispositions before (it is sorrow from the conception), and the nursing toils and vexations after; and after all, if the children prove wicked

and foolish, they are, more than ever, the heaviness of her that bore them. Thus, are the sorrows multiplied; as one grief is over, another succeeds in this world.

2. It is God who multiplies our sorrows: I will do it. God, as a righteous Judge, does it, which ought to silence us under all our sorrows; as many as they are, we have deserved them all, and more: nay, God, as a tender Father, does it for our necessary correction, that we may be humbled for sin, and weaned from the world by all our sorrows; and the good we get by them, with the comfort we have under them, will abundantly balance our sorrows, howsoever greatly they are multiplied.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. – Rev. 12:1,2

There is a passage of scripture that is highly relevant to our current topic, the understanding of which, I believe, is greatly aided by context and exposition:

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. – 1Tim. 2:9-15

The context of these verse is the Holy Spirit, through Paul, giving Timotheus instruction as to the proper practical doctrine, order and discipline in the formation of the New Testament churches - as Timotheus was charged with ministering with Paul in that capacity. Paul was making it clear why the woman was not to usurp the authority of the man, and that (properly qualified) men were to tend to ecclesiastical affairs and oversight within a congregation (to be elders or bishops, which begins the next chapter of the epistle), pointing back to practical evidence of the fall of original sin and the universal fallout.

Gill offers some words on these last two verses – 14 and 15, that may be of some help: ***And Adam was not deceived, &c.]*** *There is no need to say with interpreters, that he was not deceived first; and that he was not deceived immediately by the serpent, but by Eve; and that he is never said in Scripture to be deceived, as Melchizedek is never said to have a father or mother. The apostle's positive assertion is to be taken without any such limitations or qualifications; Adam never was deceived at all; neither by the serpent, with whom he never conversed; nor by his wife, he knew what he did, when he took the fruit of her, and ate; he ate it not under any deception, or vain imagination, that they should not die, but should be as gods, knowing good and evil. He*

took and ate out of love to his wife, (choosing her over God in the matter) from a fond affection to her, to bear her company, and that she might not die alone; he knew what he did, and he knew what would be the consequence of it, the death of them both; and inasmuch as he sinned wilfully, and against light and knowledge, without any deception, his sin was the greater: and hereby death came in, and passed on all men, who sinned in him. **But the woman being deceived was in the transgression:** and the serpent really beguiled her; she owned it herself, (see Ge 3:13). And this is elsewhere said of her, (see 2Co 11:3) which never is of Adam. She really thought the serpent spoke truth, that she and her husband should not die, if they ate of the fruit; but that it was good to make them wise; and that, upon eating it, they should be as gods, knowing good and evil; and under this deception she fell into the transgression, and was the cause and means, by her persuasions and example, of bringing her husband into the same sin; which involved him and all his posterity in ruin and destruction. The Devil could not subvert Adam, till the serpent came and turned the heart of Eve, and Eve turned his heart, and they both sinned; wherefore it is said, "the woman which thou gavest me"; The Devil had no power to turn him, till Eve came, and she was the cause of his eating."

Barnes (in part) on verse 15: The woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than he would have done, and that the temptation as actually applied to her would have been ineffectual on him. To tempt and seduce him to fall, there were needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and the example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the serpent, but through the allurements of his wife.

GILL: Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing; which is to be understood not of a temporal salvation, or being saved through childbearing, through the perilous time, and be delivered out of it; for though this is generally the case, yet not always, nor always the case of good women. Rachel died in childbed: But spiritual and eternal salvation is here meant; not that bearing children is the cause, condition, or means of salvation; for as this is not God's way of salvation, so it confines the salvation of women to childbearing ones; and which must give an uneasy reflection to maidens, and women that never bore any; but rather the meaning is, that good women shall be saved, notwithstanding their bearing and bringing forth children in pain and sorrow, according to the original curse, in #Ge 3:16. And so the words administer some comfort to women, in their present situation of subjection and sorrow; though they may be rendered impersonally thus, "notwithstanding there is salvation through the birth of a son": and the sense is, that notwithstanding the fall of man by the means of the woman, yet there is salvation for both men and women, through the birth of Emmanuel, the child born, and Son given; at whose birth, the angels sung peace on earth, good will to men; through the true Messiah, the deed of the woman, through the incarnate Saviour, who was made of a woman, there is salvation for lost sinners: he was born of a woman, and came into the world in order to

obtain salvation for them; and he has effected it, and it is in him, for all such to whom it is given; and with it all true believers, men and women, shall be saved through him. The meaning of the words is, that there is salvation through the incarnate Messiah, for all sorts of persons; for all men and women who believe in him, with that faith which works by love, and shows itself in holiness and sobriety; provided they continue herein. For there are some that profess these things, that have only a temporary faith, and feigned love, and not true holiness; and these fall away, and are not saved; but such who have these graces in truth, as they do, and shall continue in them, so they shall certainly be saved.

THE LAST CLAUSE OF GEN. 3:16, AS IT PERTAINS TO EVE

...and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. – Gen. 3:16

At first glance, it seems as if God is saying the woman will simply be attracted to her husband, and that he will rule over her. But the same Hebrew phrase is used in the same sense at Gen. 4:7, and might offer us more insight:

GOD, TO CAIN: If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. –Gen. 4:7

In this context, the sin that lieth (or crouched) at Cain's door desires to master him. God admonishes Cain that he must not let sin master him, but instead, he must master sin. God's words to Eve at Gen. 3:16 should rather be understood: "Your desire will be to rule (or dominate, or manipulate) your husband, and instead he shall rule over you." The woman's curse brings her the opposite of what she may be inclined to desire, in the flesh.

Matthew Henry on Gen. 3:16: *This sentence amounts only to that command, Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; but the entrance of sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy. If Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to eat it, she would never have complained of her subjection; therefore, it ought never to be complained of. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence.*

ADAM'S PUNISHMENT

In Adam's case, the corporeal death component is explicitly stated, as the commandment was given specifically to him (prior to Eve's formation at Gen. 2:22). God also makes clear that Adam defiantly chose his wife's counsel over God's commandment. To regard the persuasion of his wife and neglect the clear command of God is a great aggravation of such neglect.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. – Gen. 3:17-19

Work is not at the essence of Adam's punishment – prior to the fall, Adam had much good work to do:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. – Gen. 1:26-28

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. – Gen. 2:15

None of this work, though, had to do with a struggle to sustain himself. It was all comfortable work for the Lord – in constant, comfortable communion with God. And no toil, affliction, dearth, failure or simply striving for survival!

But now, he has no comfortable communion with God. He was terminated from the work he had specifically been doing for His Maker, prior to his fall. He must scrounge and till and toil and in sorrow eat from a cursed and unyielding ground. What before his fall he did with ease and pleasure, would never again be accomplished after it without painful and persevering exertion. No rest, but work and toil and sorrow. Beloved, this isn't just a description of sustenance farming during the dust bowl. None of us are farmers (sorry Brent, gentleman farmers don't count here), and yet this curse of sin extends to us. It's hard to relate to the literal language of having a sweaty face, in sorrow eating from a cursed ground with thorns and thistles being brought forth unto us as we sit in an air-conditioned cubicle. The toil and sorrow are because of man's sin – his very nature is wicked and disobedient. The interaction with the men of the world, being exposed to constant sin and temptation within one's own heart, strife, contention, war and all the vile motivations of ungodly men from without, makes man a creature of constant sorrow and trouble all his days. All men are cursed with this lot – eternally – the eternal divine stroke of damnation across the back of any man is more than his soul can bear, and yet it remains – just recompense from an all-knowing, all-powerful God. The Lord will not remove the chastening

curse from any of us in this flesh – even God’s elect (as it is chastening, and for the good of his chosen people – to bring them into humility, thanksgiving, greater obedience, a greater seeking of God’s face, and a greater awareness of our absolute need of a Savior from that greater, spiritual curse. But this is not just for Adam, or for men – this curse of this vile, sinful flesh, all its trouble, as well as the spiritual benefits of its chastening at the hand of God, are for man and woman, young and old.

But the Gospel is the cure given in the curse. The woman’s curse is pain in her childbearing, but her deliverance is in childbearing, for it is her seed, Christ, who will crush the serpent’s head. Her natural proclivity to dominate and manipulate her husband is met with the cure in a type – as she strives at being in subjection to her husband, the Bride of Christ, full of folly and vanity, strives at subjection to her Husband, Christ, while in this flesh. Satan’s curse included a crushed head – that curse, when fully executed, means full deliverance from a sin ravaged world. The cursed soil means a life of trouble that will grievously chasten a man, but the peaceable fruit of righteousness is enjoyed by those who are exercised in it – having their hearts broken and brought into real submission and humility by the mercy God has manifested in the curse toward us. And the curse of death pronounced on Adam is God’s means for the cure. It is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing our sins in His flesh, which saves us from our sins and gives us the assurance of an eternal inheritance which cannot be defiled or corrupted.

When God showed Adam and Eve the door – sending them out of the garden, He replaced their fig leaves with animal skins as a proper covering, showing us the absolute need for a Saviour, in that only blood atones for, or acts as a proper covering for, sin. The blood of the Lamb was preached to them and to all their progeny in that act. This vile flesh is cursed, and the souls of the unregenerate man along with it. But the lively hope that we have, through the lively hope imparted in us through God-given, unmerited faith, serves God’s purpose to magnify His name higher than any man could fathom. So, amidst the troubles, sorrows and travail of this life, brought on and furthered by our own sin, we have the hope of the Gospel that our King will make all things new:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha

and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. – Rev. 21:1-8

Thank you all for bearing with this vile worm. I love you all.