

# Genesis 3

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well could you please turn with me to the passage that we read in Genesis chapter 3. Genesis and chapter 3. And we're reading again at verses 7 to 11 and also verse 21.

Genesis 3 verses 7 to 11 and also verse 21. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed figures together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said, Where are you?

So he said, I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. And he said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?

And then if you go over to verse 21. Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothing.

[ 1 : 08 ] Well as we enter this communion season, I want us really this evening to focus on how Jesus' death covers over all our wrongdoing. And covers us with a righteousness and with a perfection that we could never attain, that we could never merit on our own.

And we're really looking at this glorious truth under two headings from this passage. The religion of fig leaves, as we find it in verses 7 to 11. And the religion of skins, as we find it in verse 21.

The religion of fig leaves and the religion of skins. First we have the religion of fig leaves in verses 7 to 11. And in these verses we see man's inadequate attempt to cover his sin, cover his guilt, cover his wrongdoing, cover his shame.

In verse 7 we read about the need for a covering. You remember the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to obey him in every aspect of their lives. And the focal point of that obedience was found in the Lord's command, not to eat any fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2 verse 17. And Adam and Eve disobey the divine directive. They refuse to obey the Lord. They are lacking in covenant commitment as they listen to and as they obey the four-tongued words of the serpent.

[ 2 : 37 ] They think that the Lord's character and commands are flawed and unfair and unjust. They think the Lord cannot be trusted. That he is withholding good from them.

That he is not on their side. That he is restricting their joy and their freedom. And so we read in chapter 3 verse 6. They look at the fruit. They then take the fruit.

And finally they eat the fruit. It is a natural progression of sin. Looking. Taking. Tasting. And then they are cutting their allegiance and their association with their creator and their king.

And they choose to identify with a creature that is both an animal, a serpent, and the antichrist, Satan. And as soon as the fruit touches their lips, they are catapulted into this world of sin, shame, guilt, wrongdoing that leads to death.

We read in verse 7. Their eyes are opened and they realised they were naked. Now this refers to more than simply physical nakedness. This also refers to spiritual nakedness.

[ 3 : 47 ] Adam and Eve see the happiness that they have fallen from and the misery they have fallen into. They see that they have been disrobed of all their honour, all their beauty, all their sinlessness, all their perfection.

They see that their actions have displayed a betrayal, a denial, an abandonment of their true king. They see that they are now open to the contempt, the reproach, the judgment of heaven.

They are naked and they are ashamed. It stands in stark contrast to chapter 2 verse 25 where before they disobeyed the divine directive, they feared no one's criticism or condemnation.

But now they feel exposed. Now they feel unclean. Now they feel unpresentable and they see they need to hide. They need to cover up. They need to self-protect.

And we read about their attempt at a covering in verses 7 and 8. They take some fig leaves. Now these were the largest leaves in the land of Canaan. And they sew together some coverings.

[ 4 : 52 ] Now the word covering in Hebrew refers to a skimpy garment, a loincloth. But Adam and Eve think that this skimpy garment, this loincloth, will cover their spiritual and physical nakedness.

They think it will cover their shame. They think it will make them clean and presentable before God. And as they're engaging in this cover up, they hear a terrifying sound. Verse 8.

The sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Now that was once a sound that lit up their days. This was once a sound that filled them with joy.

They would once run in the direction of this sound. But now this sound fills them with fear, with fear, with terror, with nausea. And they decide they'll not simply cover their sin, their shame, their guilt, their wrongdoing with loincloths.

No. They'll go a step further. They'll also hide behind some trees. It's ridiculous. But Adam and Eve's guilt and desperation blinds them to any spiritual common sense.

[ 5 : 54 ] And they're willing to try anything and everything to hide their shame from the Lord and escape his just judgment. But in verses 9 to 11 we read about the inadequacy of the covering.

Here's the Lord God walking through the garden in the cool of the day. And he calls out, Where are you? Where are you? Now this isn't the Lord struggling to find them and win this strange game of hide and seek.

No. The Lord knows their exact location. He knows the exact tree that they've chosen to hide behind. This is the Lord saying, Where are you spiritually, Adam? What's happened to you, Adam? Why are you no longer lying to me with joy and gladness, Adam? What's going on with you, Adam? The Lord is wanting a confession from Adam. And Adam comes to the Lord with a confession of sorts.

Verse 10. I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid myself. Adam admits to hiding from God.

[ 6 : 57 ] And Adam admits to hiding from God because he's afraid. And Adam admits to hiding from God because he's afraid because he's naked. But note what Adam doesn't put in his confession.

He doesn't admit to doing anything wrong. There's no mention of eating the forbidden fruit. He's still covering his traps. He's still hiding.

He's like a child who brings back a disastrous report card to their parents. And they'll blame their poor grades on the teacher. Or they'll blame their bad grades on the test conditions.

Or they'll turn to their parent and say, Actually, my grades and my behavior are much better than the rest of my classmates. They're covering. They're hiding. They're self-protecting.

That's what Adam's doing here. But the Lord sees through this covering. And he tears through it. The Lord reminds Adam of the command he had given him. He says to Adam, Have you disobeyed my command?

[ 8 : 15 ] And it's a rhetorical question. Adam doesn't need to give an answer. The Lord already knows the answer. So we see in these verses man's inadequate attempt to cover his sin, cover his guilt, cover his shame, cover his wrongdoing.

And you know today, friends, we all need a covering. You see, we have all said things and thought things and done things that cause us to feel shame and guilt and remorse.

We have all said things and thought things and done things that cause us to squirm in the presence of others. We have all said things and thought things and done things that make us aware of just how far short we follow the standards of God.

We have all said things, thought things, done things that shout to us we are under God's divine displeasure. And we all face a temptation to cover ourselves.

Maybe we're tempted to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of good works and we say to God, But I'm a good moral person. I'm a good person within the community. Maybe we're tempted to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of religious practice.

[ 9 : 27 ] And we say to God, I've been baptised. I've been through the Sunday school. I go to church. I even attend the midweek meeting. Maybe we're tempted to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of others.

And we say to God, But look at how much better I am than so and so. Look at how much better I am than the person in the pew next to me. I may be no Mother Teresa. But I'm no Adolf Hitler either. Maybe we're tempted to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of corporate sin. And we say to God, Shouldn't you be more concerned about what governments are up to? What armies are up to? What dictators are up to? What North Korea and the Islamic State are up to? Maybe we're tempted to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of time. And we say to God, But it was a long time ago. You're not going to keep holding my past against me. Dragging my past up against me. It was a long time ago. But you know, friends, the coverings we use are all inadequate.

[10:27] God sees behind all the masks. Sees behind all the coverings. And we can try saying to him that I'm a moral person. I go to church.

I'm better than so and so. My wrongs are pretty trivial in the grand scheme of things. It was a long time ago. We can try saying it all to God. And God says, I'm sorry. But it's fig leaves. It's not good enough. It doesn't make you clean. It doesn't make you presentable in my eyes. Could you imagine going to Tesco? And you buy a loaf of bread. And a pint of milk. And you go up to the cashier. And you smile warmly at the cashier. Hand over your milk. Hand over your piece of bread. And the cashier asks you for the sum of money. And you hand over £4,000 in cash. The only problem is it's £4,000 in monopoly money. And the cashier will turn to you and say, I'm sorry.

[11:26] But that's not good enough. That is inadequate. Friends, there is nothing that we can do that adequately covers our sin. Our shame. Our guilt.

Our wrongdoing. God sees through all our things. He sees the very best that we do. And he says it is as filthy rags. The apostle Paul gave his spiritual autobiography to the Philippians. And he reminded the Philippians that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He reminded them that he was a zealous Pharisee. That is the kind of person you would expect the living and true God to welcome with open arms. Saying, well done. Good and faithful sound. Well done, Paul. Enter the joy of your master. That Paul says that his very best was simply rubbish. It was simply refuse. When it came to being presentable and clean before a holy and just God. Friends, I want to put it to you tonight. That the religion of fig leaves.

[12:29] The religion of human works. The religion of human efforts. Is inadequate. It brings no true lasting peace. Because it doesn't truly cover our nakedness.

That's the religion of fig leaves. This brings us second to the religion of skins. Verse 21. The religion of skins. And we see in verse 21 that God provides a perfect covering for his imperfect people. God provides a perfect covering for his imperfect people. In verses 7 to 11 we have seen Adam and Eve's inadequate covering. Adam and Eve need a covering. And Adam and Eve try to cover themselves. And the Lord sees through their coverings. And he says to them, I'm sorry. But it's not good enough. It is inadequate. And in verse 21 we see the Lord providing a perfect covering. Now I just want to note some aspects regarding this covering. First, note it is the Lord who provides the covering.

[13:34] As soon as Adam and Eve felt that sting of shame, guilt, remorse. They should have thrown themselves on the mercy and grace of God. And cried out to him, Lord be merciful to me a sinner.

But they think they can remedy the situation by their own works. Their own cleverness. Their own wisdom. Their own power. Their own intellect. And God turns to them and says, your very best isn't good enough. And now God takes the initiative in verse 21. And he sovereignly and he graciously provides tunics. Now the word tunic in Hebrew means a piece of clothing covering the neck down to the knees. What a contrast with the skimpy coverings that Adam and Eve made for themselves. This is an adequate covering. And it's the Lord who provides it. But note also that the covering is the shed blood of an animal. The text doesn't say that God found the sheep. And that God sheared the sheep. And God wove some garbage and clothed Adam and Eve.

[14:41] No, not at all. The text says that God covered Adam and Eve not with the wool from an animal. But with the skin of an animal. Which means the animal had to what?

The animal had to die to cover the shame, the guilt, the wrongdoing, the sin of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve deserved to die for breaking God's covenant commands. And an animal died in their place. And the first drop of blood which stained the soil beaten. The first expiring groan that that animal let out.

Proclaimed to Adam and Eve without the shedding of blood. Without sacrifice. There is no forgiveness. There is no covering.

There is no atonement for sin. For shame. For guilt. For wrongdoing. But note also that the covering is received as a gift.

[ 15 : 40 ] What do Adam and Eve need to do to receive those skins that will cover their shame? Does the Lord say to them, I want you to memorize the Westminster Confession of Faith? Does the Lord say to them, I want you to attend a certain amount of prayer meetings?

Does the Lord even say to them, I want you to take the Lord's Supper? None of it. They receive these tunics as a gracious gift from God.

Resting on the fact that an animal's blood has been shed instead of theirs. And this alone makes them clean. This alone makes them presentable in the eyes of God.

Now this scene really gives us the framework for sacrifice being a covering for God's people in the rest of the Bible. Here an animal is slaughtered for two individuals.

In Exodus, an animal is slaughtered for each family. In Leviticus, an animal is slaughtered for the nation. And from Matthew to Revelation, we see that Jesus is the Lamb of God who is slaughtered, not simply for a family, not simply for a nation, but for the world.

[ 16 : 48 ] He is the supreme sacrifice. And all the other sacrifices were simply foreshadowings and glimmers of this ultimate divine provision for sin.

All the other sacrifices were simply proclaiming the best is still to come. The perfect, the eternal sacrifice is still to come.

Look at Genesis 3 verse 21 and it's saying to you, Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming. God so loved the world that he gave, he provided his only son.

And God so loved the world that he slaughtered, he sacrificed his only son on the cross. And the death, the sacrifice of this son declares that the debt of his people has been paid.

Their sin, their guilt, their shame, their wrongdoing is covered over. And the very righteousness of Jesus is now counted as being the believers.

[ 17 : 57 ] The believer is clothed with Christ, hidden in Christ. Friends, through our union by faith to Jesus, where we simply receive Jesus and his work as a gift, we are counted by God as being as righteous as the very son of God.

That is staggering. That this evening, if you are a Christian, this evening, if you're holding on to Jesus by faith, God looks at you and doesn't see your imperfections.

He looks at you and sees the perfection of his son. It means that through Jesus, there is nothing that we will do that will make God love us more.

And there is nothing we will do that will make God love us less. Jesus, in his amazing grace, has taken his people's shame.

And Jesus, in his amazing grace, has removed his people's stain. So God provides a perfect covering for his imperfect people.

[ 19 : 01 ] And the encouragement that you and I are given this evening, as we begin this communion season, is to put on Jesus and to rely on him and his finished work, his sacrifice, his righteousness.

He is the perfect covering for his imperfect people. You know, friends, we don't proclaim a system of religious rules in the free church. We proclaim a risen saviour within the free church.

We proclaim a redeemed saviour within the free church. We proclaim a sufficient saviour within the free church. We proclaim a sacrificial substitutionary saviour within the free church.

Not a system of do's and don'ts, but a glorious gospel that says it is done. And so I want to ask a very personal question.

As we enter this communion season. Do you know the love and acceptance of God? I'm not asking this evening, do you feel loved and accepted by God?

[ 20 : 08 ] I'm asking this evening, do you know that you are loved and accepted by God? You see, we so easily fall into the trap of trying to gather as many fig leaves as possible to earn God's love and acceptance and feel God's love and acceptance.

And we look at all the good things we may have done. We look at all the good things we're currently doing. We think about all the good things we hope to do. And we hope that God will be pleased with that.

And for a while it may seem that we've got everything under control. And we aren't broken. We aren't guilty. We aren't in need of grace. We're all right. But at the end of the day, those fig leaves will never adequately cover our shame, our guilt, our nakedness.

In Shakespeare's Macbeth, you see Lady Macbeth, who is so burdened by guilt over the murders that she and Macbeth have committed. She's then obsessively and compulsively washing her hands every 15 minutes, saying, Out, spot!

Who would have known the old man to have so much blood in him? Will these hands never be clean? Here's the smell of blood still. Will not the perfumes of Arabia sweeten the smell? She is burdened with a guilt she cannot rip herself off.

[ 21 : 25 ] But you know, friends, the gospel shows us that Jesus who went to the shamed, went to the guilty, went to the wrongdoers. He was called the friend of what?

The religious? The church boars? The good people? He was called the friend of sinners. The friend of people everyone gossiped about and thought really bad and beyond redemption.

The friend of people who had gotten themselves into a hopeless and helpless situation and whose only hope was now God's sovereign intervening grace. He went to these people and he said, I've come to cover over all your shame, all your guilt, all your wrongdoing so that you may know and enjoy with full confidence the love and acceptance of my father.

He went to these people and said, I know you're spiritually sick. And I've not come to diagnose your problem. I've not come to put you in isolation. I've not even come to patch you up.

He said, I've come to heal you freely, fully, finally. He went to these people and said, I know you're weary. I know you're heavy laden. But come to me and I will give you rest.

[ 22 : 41 ] This is our Jesus. The Jesus we trust in. The Jesus we follow. The Jesus we proclaim. The Jesus we remember. The Jesus that we worship this evening.

A Jesus who stands before his father as our great priest. Making intercession and saying, Father, I died in their place. That their guilt may be pardoned.

And their shame taken away. A Jesus who stands before his father as our priest. Making intercession and saying, Father, there is no condemnation for them.

I've taken their condemnation. They're a new creation through me. A Jesus who stands before his father as our great priest. Making intercession and saying, Father, don't look on them as guilty, sinful, shameful wrongdoers anymore.

Look on them and accept them and love them. As those who have been washed and cleansed in my blood. It's all about Jesus, friends.

[ 23 : 46 ] And his perfect life and perfect death. Which is a perfect covering for his imperfect people. He is the sole basis for our being accepted and loved by God.

And so for those of us this evening who are leaning on this Jesus. And I hope that is true for each and every one of us. For those of us leaning on this Jesus.

You can leave this building. And you can go to the Lord's table this coming Sunday. Not feeling exposed. Not feeling unclean. Not feeling unrepresentable.

You can go to the Lord's table rejoicing that you are wearing the robes of Jesus' righteousness. You can go to the Lord's table rejoicing that through Jesus you are a child of the King.

What a status. And so when you look in the mirror. And you are reminded of all your past faults. Just remember nothing and no one can take away from the fact that you are a child of the King.

[ 24 : 50 ] And when you lie awake in bed at night. And you remember the things you've said. The things you've thought. The things you've done that make you feel so ashamed. Remember nothing and no one can take away from the fact that you are a child of the King.

And when others remind you of your mistakes. When others point out your wrongs. When others might even say to you. You have no right to go to the table. Remember nothing and no one can take away from the fact that you are a child of the King.

And when you look at other Christians. And you wish beyond anything else. That you'd lived your life a little more like them. Remember nothing and no one can take away from the fact that you are a child of the King.

And when you survey the narrative of your Christian experience. And when you think to yourself. I wish I had a significant testimony. I wish my testimony was more like another person's. Remember nothing and no one can take away from the fact that you are a child of the King. And when you eat the bread. And when you drink the wine on Sunday. You can do so rejoicing. That you are a child of the King.

[ 26 : 05 ] And all we can say in response. Is hallelujah. Praise the Lord. That we are such a sufficient saviour tonight.

And so friends let's daily put on Jesus. Just as the Apostle Paul did. And let's daily put on Jesus. And consider everything a loss. In comparison to the surpassing worth of knowing Him. And let's daily put on Jesus. And seek to be found hidden in Him. Not having any righteousness of our own making. Not having any fig like righteousness.

But our righteousness it is ours that comes from God. And is given freely as a gift. When our confidence. Our dependence. Is on this Jesus.

And this Jesus alone. I want to ask tonight. Which religion is your religion? Is it the religion of fig leaves? Or is it the religion of sick leaves?

[ 27 : 08 ] And I hope and pray that every one of us this evening. Would it be bad seen in the glory. Of knowing. What it is to be covered in Christ. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.