

When an entire society believes a lie... the results can be disastrous.

You have probably heard about the Opioid crisis that America currently faces. Ten years ago... probably none of us knew what an opioid was. But in 2017 (the last year to compile the data) the United States government (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) published that nearly 30,000 deaths occurred in 2017... all from over-dosing on this dangerous Dr.-prescribed pain killer.

Carelessness with the truth is apparently at fault. ... Journalist Sam Quinones points to one paragraph of false information that helped pave the way for the surge in addicts to the highly addictive opiate OxyContin.

Before 1980... the rule for prescribing narcotic painkillers was: "as little as possible - for as short a time as possible." ... Doctors were taught that the risk of addiction was simply too high. ... But as Mr. Quinones recounts... this thinking changed... when Dr. Hershel Jick and a colleague submitted a (now-get-this!)... a one-paragraph letter... to the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. In their extremely brief summary... they wrote... that according to their data of 12,000 patients... who were treated with opiates at their Boston hospital... "only four had grown addicted."

That was all that it took. There was no careful study... noting how often... how long... or at what dose these patients were given opiates. But the word spread quickly about the observation of this doctor and that the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine had published it. Pharmaceutical companies were happy to cite this uncaredful one-paragraph summary... as

they tried to persuade doctors to treat their patient's pain more aggressively... by prescribing opioids to their patients.

By the time the pharmaceutical company *Purdue Frederick* introduced a time-release painkiller called OxyContin in 1996... the accepted wisdom was that opiates were nearly non-addictive. The Purdue Frederick Pharmaceutical Company set about promoting their OxyContin as virtually risk-free... and a solution to the problems patients presented doctors with every day.

The results have been disastrous. While still prescribed for cancer pain... OxyContin was now also offered for the sorts of aches for which one might have previously taken an aspirin. ... Because of this... on average... 130 Americans die - every day - from an opioid overdose.

... .. [ PAUSE ]

Choosing to believe a lie can have horrible consequences. Trusting a reliable source... or the fact that so many up-standing people seem to believe it... only leads to a more devastating effect.

May I tell you that millions and millions of Christians are choosing to believe a lie... that also has horrible consequences. These followers of Christ may be trusting a reliable source. And many well-thought-of... (up-standing)... believers seem to believe it. ... But it is a horrible... life-altering lie.

It is the lie called "cheap grace." It goes like this: "*Go ahead and commit that sin. You can ask God for His forgiveness afterward...*" ... "*Go ahead and give your mind over to lust for just a little while. Once your lust has been satisfied... just tell God you're sorry...*" ... "*You know what? It is just a little*

*lie... It is just a little dishonesty... Someone wealthier than I am can absorb the cost... and I can ask God to forgive me later...” ... “Gossip isn’t like adultery. I don’t need to do any radical surgery in my life to rid myself of such a minor sin... as gossip... It is just who I am... Besides... plenty of other people here in the church do it” ... All of this is all called “cheap grace” – and it is a devastating lie!*

Cheap grace has a very high price tag. It will cost any believer a great deal. Your heart will progressively grow more and more calloused... and your fellowship with God will suffer. A persistent holding onto “cheap grace” might even be an indication that a person has never ***had*** a relationship with Christ.

Our passage of study this morning in Genesis ought to have an effect on any believer who struggles with “cheap grace.” ... A thoughtful study of this passage will confront such a way of treating our sin. Once we contemplate how serious our sin really is... we will want to do away with our notions of cheap grace.

Now... here is where we are in our study of Genesis... The first judgment has just been pronounced upon Adam and Eve (who is only known as “woman” up to this point) ... Adam... woman... and their world have been judged to suffer under the corruption of imperfection. Our first parents... tragically... are to be struggling for survival in a hostile and evil world... a world that will eventually snatch their life away. They are condemned to the most awful fate imaginable... the doom of death and eternal separation from God.

God created man to bless him beyond all imagination. But man turned away from God and rejected Him. ... What was God to do? ... Was He to let His purpose for man be defeated? ... This was impossible — absolutely impossible — for He is God... and God's purposes can never be defeated. ... Therefore... God did exactly what He had told man He would do if man rebelled against Him. God judged man.

But... (as we will see in today's passage)... God also put His purposes back on track. God worked out a way for man to still receive life... and clothing – clothing that would cover their shame (in other words... God provided “clothing of righteousness.”) ... This all took a costly price. It was no doubt... quite a shock to Adam and Eve. ... But they would receive a strong message about a costly grace... (the message we need to confront our ideas of “cheap grace.”)

As part of His grace... God must deliver and save man from living forever as a sinner in a fallen world. So in the final verses of our study... we will see God take drastic action... but it was action of grace... for the benefit of Adam and his wife.

God expressing His love and compassion... is just as essential to who God is as expressing His justice and holiness. That is what we find in our passage today. (LISTEN!) Knowing God's rightness for judging and condemning us... because He is so holy... as well as... His love and tender kindness - is essential for our putting away cheap grace from our life. We need a balanced understanding of God's love and compassion... with His justice and holiness.

It takes the eyes of faith for us to realize this. ... Adam expressed his faith in God... and God seems to respond to it. ... God revealed His love and compassion – ***in the midst*** of His administering ***judgment*** and ***condemnation***.

The mortality of all humans had been firmly established. Genesis 3:19 (where we left off last week)... *'...for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'*

How bleak! ... There must have been quite a gut-wrenching blow from this announced judgement... and I'm sure they must have wished for a way to re-gain their breath...

From the pronounced curse that we studied last week... we are left to ask... how are Adam and his wife going to cope? They know they will die. They don't know when. How will they respond?

Furthermore... must depend on a new way of relating to God. They used to have a unique relationship with God... where they easily heard and understood His Word. Now... they no longer have such a vital communion... and ability to understand. ... They are now in a position where they must exercise ***faith*** in His Word. ... They must ***work*** at keeping faith in the Word of God... and live by ***that*** confidence. ... It is the only kind of relationship with God that is now available to them.

So the issue is... as we ***now*** turn our attention to verse 20... in Genesis chapter 3... *'will they do it? "Will they turn back to God and chose Him... now having to exercise faith?"* ... The answer is a clear "Yes!"

## Genesis 3:20

The name *Eve* (chavvah) means “to live”... “to give life”... or “the mother of all living”. ... (Different commentators give the Hebrew word different shades of meaning... such as “to breathe”... but the fundamental meaning of the name is “to give life”... “to spring forth life”... “to propagate life.”) This is exactly why Adam named his wife Eve. ... He confessed his faith by calling his wife the mother of all *living* - not the mother of all dying.

This is very significant. When Adam named his wife *Eve*... he was acting in faith. Remember: Eve had no children (no child was yet born.) ... Adam did not even know what pregnancy and giving birth involved - not yet. ... By naming his wife *Eve*... Adam was showing that he accepted and believed God's Word... (God's promise.) ... What Word? ... What promise?

First... there was God's promise made in Genesis 3:15-16... (the promise that Eve would *bear offspring and bring forth children*).

The promise made in Genesis 3:15 is where God is judging *Satan*. God says there will be enmity (hostility)... between the devil's offspring (his followers) and the woman's offspring (who are believers). ... (You see)... God clearly said that the woman will be giving life to children.

Second... there was God's promise made in the latter part of Genesis 3:15... the promise that Eve would bring forth *a* seed—one *particular* child (the future Messiah) — who would crush the head of the serpent or Satan.

We also see God promise that Eve will give life to children in Genesis 3:16. (This time... it is not Satan receiving his judgment. In verse 16... God is

judging the woman.) God clearly says that she shall conceive and "bring forth children in great pain." He said that she would conceive.

The point is this: The only way Adam could know his wife was going to bear children was for God to tell him. ... And God did! This is clearly stated in Genesis 3:15-16. ... Adam believed God... believed the Word and promises of God. Therefore... he named his dear wife "Eve." His wife was to bring forth children... and more importantly... she was to bear the promised seed (or Savior)... Who would save them and their children.

All Adam had was the sheer Word and promise of God... that God would give life to the world... both the life of other human beings and the life of one particular person... the Savior.

The same promise is given to us. We already have life upon earth as human beings... but just as Adam and Eve were condemned to die... so we are doomed to die. ... However... we do not have to die. ... We can have the life of the Savior. ... We can be saved from the judgment of death just as Adam and Eve were. ... We can live forever through the cross of the promised seed... (the Lord Jesus Christ.) ... How? ... By doing what Adam did - believing and accepting the Word and promise of God. ... We have the very same thing Adam had... (God's Word and promise of life.) ... All we have to do is believe — truly believe — and commit our lives to God's Word and promise about Jesus Christ.

That is the basic ingredient... which has always been... the foundation of human responsibility for our being rightly related to God. ... We see it (here!) in the Garden of Eden! ... It is all through the Old Testament... as

well as the New. ... The Old Testament prophet (Habakkuk) stated it succinctly, '*...the just shall live by his faith*' (Habakkuk 2:4).

If Adam and Eve would accept God's judgement... and demonstrate faith in God's Word... there is hope! ... It must be through faith in God - not through one's own effort. (Which is what we see in the next verse.) The curse will continue to manifest itself... but faith in God offers the way to cope. It is the only way we can relate to Him.

Following Adam's act of faith... the Lord acts immediately in behalf of the vulnerable couple... by providing adequate protection to cover their embarrassment... and to preserve them... in the new hostile environment to which they will be banished.

### **Genesis 3:21**

Note that God Himself makes the clothing for Adam and Eve... and that He Himself actually clothes them. ... This verse... shows the enormous love and care of God for man and woman. Notice exactly what God did. I want to show you four things.

**1.** God Himself met the need of man and woman for the raw... basic necessities of life. ... The world had been corrupted by sin. It was now afflicted with the disorder and confusion of nature... with harsh and dangerous weather. ... Man and woman were soon to be expelled from the Garden of Eden out into the world. ... The only clothing they had was made of fig leaves... and fig leaves would never last nor protect them from severe weather.

They needed one of the very basic necessities of life... but they had no idea how to secure heavier clothing that would last... and be more protective... against the now harsh elements of nature. They had been living in a perfect world where there was no severe weather nor any need for heavy clothing.

But God knew. ... God knew that fig leaves would never last... nor provide the protection Adam and Eve needed. Therefore... God Himself made clothes for man and woman... and God Himself put the clothing across their shoulders. ... Imagine this tender act... (actually laying the skins upon their shoulders.) ... God showed man and woman both how to make clothing and how to clothe themselves.

A question needs to be asked at this point: Why did God do this?

God wanted to show His great love and care for man and woman. God loved and cared for them. ... Adam and Eve needed to know this great lesson as they stepped out and began their journey together in the harsh and violent world of sin and evil.

This is the same lesson **we** need to learn. God will meet our needs... our necessities — always — just as He met Adam's and Eve's. But He can help us only if we let Him... (only if we trust and follow Him.)

**1.** God Himself met the need of man and woman for the raw... basic necessities of life. ... **2.** God taught man and woman that sin causes the most terrible things imaginable - even **death**.

God used the skins of animals to clothe man and woman - the skins of animals !!! Imagine Adam and Eve standing there as the animals were slaughtered. ... They had never seen blood... nor the agony... pain... and suffering of death before. (Think about it)... They must have stood there in shock... stricken with the horror and devastation of sin. ... When the animals were slaughtered... Adam and Eve learned the terrible results of sin. ... Adam and Eve learned that sin had caused terrible suffering and pain for the animal world of the earth. ... Sin is a radical disease... and it calls for a radical cure.

Adam and Eve learned what death meant. An awesome fear must have gripped their hearts. (You see)... God had warned them... if they sinned... they would die. ... Now... Adam and Eve knew exactly what death meant. Every death they witnessed in the future would forever remind them... that they too... were soon to die.

The clothing which God provided was vastly different from what man had thought of. ... Adam took leaves from an inanimate... unfeeling tree. God deprived an animal of life... that the shame of His creature (Man) might be relieved. ... This was the **last** thing Adam would have thought of doing.

To us life is cheap and death familiar... but Adam recognized death as the punishment of sin. And he had to learn that sin could be covered - **not** by a bunch of leaves snatched from a bush as he passed by... but only by pain and blood. ... Sin cannot be atoned for... by any mechanical action nor without expenditure of feeling. ... From the first sin to the last... the track of the sinner is marked with blood.... It was made apparent that sin was a real and deep evil... and that by no easy and cheap process could the sinner be

restored.... Men have found that their sin requires the intervention of God Himself. (And this takes us to the third thing I want to bring out of this verse.)

1. God Himself met the need of man and woman for the raw... basic necessities of life. ... 2. God taught man and woman that sin causes the most terrible things imaginable - even death. ... 3. God met the need of man and woman - to cover their shame.

When Adam and Eve sinned... they were immediately affected emotionally and spiritually. (They immediately felt guilt and shame.)

Before they sinned... they were perfect. (They had no sense of guilt... shame... sin... evil... wrong... or nakedness — no sense of anything negative whatsoever.) ... But sin changed all this. Sin corrupted man and woman. ... They became conscious and aware of sin... that they had done wrong and were guilty of wrong-doing. They felt guilt and shame... they became aware of their nakedness.

But God Himself needed to clothe their shame. You know... in the exact same way... the New Testament makes it very clear... that you and I also need to be clothed by God Himself. We must be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ... if we wish to become acceptable to God. Jesus called it “the proper wedding clothes” in a parable He told. The Apostle Paul wrote about being clothed in the righteousness of Christ in Ephesians 6:14.

The only way a person can have his guilt and shame covered is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Jesus Christ

alone... can cover the guilt and shame of sin... can clothe a person with the righteousness that God accepts.

1. God Himself met the need of man and woman for the raw... basic necessities of life. ... 2. God taught man and woman that sin causes the most terrible things imaginable - even death. ... 3. God met the need of man and woman - to cover their shame. ... 4. God taught man and woman that the sacrifice of life was necessary to clothe their shame.

The life of animals had to be sacrificed in order to clothe the shame and guilt that man and woman felt. ... Adam and Eve were bound to grasp this fact as they stood there witnessing the slaughter. ... Adam and Eve were certainly able to see and reason about what was happening - a life was being taken in order to clothe them. A life was being substituted in order to cover the shame and guilt they felt... in order to reconcile them to God.

Certainly... this is a repulsive act to anyone's sensibilities. ... The nakedness of the man and woman is covered... but at an ugly price. But it reflects the vivid horror of the consequences of sin. ...

C.S. Lewis once wrote:

*We have lost the invaluable faculty of being shocked--a faculty which has hitherto almost distinguished the Man or Woman from the beast or child.*

Perhaps this is why cheap grace abounds so heavily in believer's lives. We must come face to face with the vivid horror of the consequences of sin... if we want to put to death in us... the concept of cheap grace.

God established the slaying of animals as necessary for providing human need.

**Hebrews 9:22 (ESV)**

*Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

It is repulsive... and that is exactly the point! ... All sin is abhorrent and requires repulsive action. Lust... cheating... lying... gossip... there are no small sins! ... And as a follower of Christ you have something that is even more abhorrent... that you are required to look at (the most repulsive act of all - the slaying of God's innocent Son... Jesus!) An innocent animal is bad enough... but how much more repulsive is it... that the God of Glory left His majestic throne in Heaven... suffered the humiliation of becoming a man... being rejected... spit upon... tortured... and murdered. He did all that to make us right with God – but NOT so that we can run right back to sin... over and over... telling ourselves... It's OK... I can commit all the sins I want... and have Jesus make me right with God when I'm ready to return. That is a total disregard for Christ. What kind of faith is that...? What kind of relationship with God does it betray...? It most certainly disregards the relationship that God wants to have with us.

The next verses show us how much God desires a good relationship with mankind (with you and I.)

**Genesis 3:22-24**

All I can say to this is... thank God that He did not let man live eternally in sin. That is really a blessing! It was grace for God to banish them from the Garden... so that they would not eat from the Tree of Life.

If Adam and Eve... in their fallen condition... had eaten of that tree... they would have lived forever in their sins. They would have become like the fallen angels... incapable of death and forever locked into the guilt and penalty of their sin. It would be forever in a state of death and alienation from God like Satan and his demons. An eternal life in a state of sin would mean forever trying to hide from God.

But God does not want that. He desires to have an eternal relationship with us.

There was one way – to give man another chance. ... God had to place man in a different environment... and put him on another period of probation and give him new terms. This is what God did. God drove man out of the Garden of Eden—forced him to go out into the world... out into a new environment — and God put man on probation with new terms and conditions.

The new conditions focused upon *the promised offspring* of the woman... the Savior of the world... that God had just promised in Genesis 3:15.. Adam was now required to trust *the promised seed*... to focus faith upon the future Messiah to make everything as it once was. If Adam and his descendants wished to be saved and restored to perfection — if he wished to be accepted by God... and be reinstated with the right to live in God's presence forever — Adam and his descendants would have to trust in *the promised seed*.

Adam and all the other Old Testament believers looked ahead to *the promised seed* (the Savior of the world)... whereas we look back to Him.

They believed in the coming Savior... We believe in the Savior who has already come. They believed in the promised ed Savior. We believe in the promises of the Savior.

What grace! What an expensive grace! Please consider it's cost to you. Bring to the Savior what you may have considered a "small" sin. Bring to Him your "large" sins. Agree with Him that they are wrong.

Ours is a God who expresses His justice and holiness... while at the same time expressing His love and compassion. ... This is what we find in our passage today... and all the way through (consistently) in Scripture.

We serve a God who created our humanity... weeps at the fall of our humanity... became our humanity... and is redeeming our humanity.