



Sermon – March 13, 2022  
Dr. Phillip Bethancourt

**Verses Covered This Week**

*Genesis 3:14 – 24*

*Numbers 24:17*

*1 Samuel 17:49*

Let me invite you to open your Bibles with me to Genesis chapter 3. We're going to start in verse 14 this morning. And if you're a guest, whether in the room or catching us online, welcome home. And I want to say a word of welcome to any of our church family that might be travelling for spring break and jumping in online. We're going to finish off Genesis 3 this morning by talking about the curse of sin. It seems like it's fitting, on the day we lose an hour of sleep we think about the curse. But as you turn there in the text, we notice that over the last few weeks, we've been talking about this sin cycle that is so often at work from Eden onward. And I just want you to see it again on the screen up there. We've talked for the last few weeks about how suspicion can lead to seduction, seduction to submission, and then submission brings about shame. And that shame sabotages our relationships and the world around us. And the last, last week, we've been seeing both the cause and the cost of sin. And then this morning, what we're going to find is coming out of the cause and the cost of sin, we're going to see the rest of Genesis 3 showing us the curse of sin and the cure for that sin. What is the hope that we have in the midst of the darkness? Well, we're going to find it right here in the text. So if you'll follow along with me beginning in verse 14 of Genesis 3.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” <sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” <sup>17</sup>And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Let's turn to the Lord now in prayer as we set our hearts on Him this morning.

Father, we declare in this moment we need You. We're asking You, Holy Spirit, to move in this place. Lord, if there are weary eyes from losing sleep, if there are hardened hearts because of the weight of anxiety or the curse of secret sin, Lord I pray that You would meet us in this moment. That You would fix our eyes on Your truth and You would enable us to follow You more faithfully by the power of Your Spirit. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

So the year 1986 was a year filled with catastrophe. And for you baseball fans, I'm not just talking about that moment where the Red Sox were in game 6 of the World Series and that ground ball goes right between Bill Buckner's legs and cost them the World Series and the Mets win. The catastrophes weren't even marked by the fact that that was the year of the debut of two TV shows, Alf and The Oprah Winfrey Show. Those three things would be reason for 1986 to be catastrophe enough. But there were actually more significant moments that happened in that year. That was the year of the Iran Contra scandal. In January of that year, was the Challenger space shuttle explosion. But even if you weren't alive in 1986, perhaps the most enduring catastrophe that happened that year is one that you'll recognize with just the mention of one word. Chernobyl. Chernobyl. The location of the greatest nuclear disaster in the history of humanity. And if you're not familiar with how it unfolded, in April of 1986, they were going to do some tests to make sure everything was functioning well in one of the reactors. And when they, whenever they were about to embark on that testing, they began to lose power. And because of that power loss, it caused for the systems to, to begin to devolve into chaos. And through that, a massive explosion took place. This nuclear radiation went everywhere. There were people right there in the blast sight who lost their lives instantly. The ground around it was contaminated. Bodies within multiple mile radius were corrupted. The nuclear fallout spread to even portions of Europe. From this one moment brought chaos and corruption that affected everything. What we're going to find this morning in Genesis chapter 3 is a moment even more costly than this. One that doesn't just have ripple effects for a region but for the entire universe. One that doesn't just affect us physically, but impacts us spiritually. Because what Genesis 3 is showing us is that a spiritual catastrophe occurs that carries consequences even 'til today. The ground is corrupted. Our bodies are cursed. Our hearts pull away from God. That sin cycle brings us further and further from Him. And as we look at this text, we're going to see the end of the beginning. Genesis 3 marks this moment of the shift from life before sin, now to after it as brokenness overtakes the world. But even in the midst of that brokenness, we find in Genesis 3, life in the midst of darkness. Hope in the midst of hardship. And I hope what we'll see this morning is that if we want to find freedom from this sin cycle that we've seen over the last few weeks, what it's going to take is for us both to understand the curse of sin and to embrace the cure for sin. So let's start beginning in verse 14.

The first thing you'll notice here is the curse of sin. Look back at what it says there. God is speaking a word of judgment that comes after the sin that has taken place. There is a curse rooted in the judgment of God. And that curse, we signs of it all around us right now; in wars and rumors of wars, and global pandemics, and the fact that gasoline costs more than queso. It just ought not be that way. The mark of the curse is everywhere. And it starts right here in

Eden. But the problem we face when we look at the life around us and the curse of sin amongst us, is we have lived with it for so long, we become used to it. It feels normal, as if this is the way things ought to be. But we get a different picture here in the text. You see, what happens is that in the midst of the curse, the mission isn't over, it just becomes more difficult. There is more resistance that takes place. And you need to see as this text plays out, as the mission continues, there are several aspects of the curse that continue to front creation. And you'll notice right there in verse 14 the first one of them is the curse of sin impacts our enemy. So look at verse 14. It says:

<sup>14</sup>The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, curse are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field;

Now how many of you are like me and have a fear of snakes? This is a safe place to be honest about that. I mean, why is that? We have that revulsion to it. I mean, I was looking at the news this month and there was a story out of southern California. An American had been in Mexico and he was coming back across the border crossing with Mexico and the border patrol stopped him. Something seemed suspicious. And they discovered this guy was trying to smuggle over 50 reptiles into the United States. And the way that he had done it, 52 reptiles, including 9 snakes, he had sewn pockets into his shirt, into his pants, even into his underwear, to try to hide these serpents from others. I mean, it's just revolting. And why is it that we have such a revulsion to this idea of snakes and serpents? Well, there's this Edenic rage that's bound up in each one of us that's rooted here in the curse. It's highlighted here in Genesis 3:14 that there is now a curse upon the serpent. And what is it there? You'll see it at the end of verse 14. It says:

<sup>14</sup>....on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

It's a curse promising humiliation and defeat. So you'll see later on in Leviticus chapter 11 that any animal that goes along the ground on its belly is cursed. And this idea of licking the dust, it's not, that's what the diet of the snake will be from this point forward, it's a sign of defeat, of humiliation. That you'll be brought low in subservience to something else. But here's something important to notice before we move on. The curse that we see that comes following this upon the ground and upon humanity, there is hope for a reversal. But right here, this curse against God's enemy, there is no promise of reversal. Only the promise of judgment. So there's first here this curse upon our enemy. But look down in verse 16. You also see how the curse of sin impacts the family. So notice what it says there.

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.

So notice this curse upon the woman comes right to the heart of her calling in the home. This, this tension, this animosity that occurs both in the giving of birth and in the relationship in marriage. Both as a mom and in marriage. And what happens right here? What would have been joyful, what would have been life-giving now becomes difficult. But notice the nature of the curse that comes upon the woman. God doesn't curse her to a barrenness, an absence of children. There is the bearing of pain, but not the barrenness of no children. Why? Because we know that God's promise of deliverance, His promise of salvation depends on the offspring of

the woman. And so it is necessary for her to continue to have this ability. But now we see this reversal happen. Where we, between the man and the woman in marriage, rather than building one another up, they tear one another down. Rather than supporting one another, they subvert one another. They use their power to lord over one another rather than build one another up. The curse extends to the family. But then look down at verse 17. You also see how the curse of sin impacts our work. That's why it shows us several ways that plays out. In verse 17 you'll see how the curse of sin impacts where we work. Notice what it says at the end of verse 17:

<sup>17</sup>...cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

Now look over at verse 18.

<sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

Verse 19,

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you shall eat the bread,

See, there's a corruption that comes over the entire creation. And what humanity was called to rule, now fights back against us. There is resistance. That's why already this spring the weeds in your yard are growing faster than the grass is. There's this sense of resistance that takes place in where we work. The curse of sin affects where we work. But also you'll see in verse 19, the curse of sin impacts how hard we work. Look at what it says:

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground,

Now clearly, Adam hadn't experienced yet a Texas summer in August. He didn't know what sweat of the brow was like when labor occurs. But now there will be this difficulty, this hardship that takes place in his labor. And we feel that even today. Where what can happen over time is that our dedication can lead to difficulty. Our efforts can lead to exhaustion. Our busyness can push us to burnout. And I wonder how often, and perhaps how many of you right now feel yourself right on the edge of that burnout. Burnout can show up in all sorts of different ways. Maybe it's from an exhaustion that says, "I can't do this anymore." Maybe it's a frustration that says, "It's not worth it." Or maybe it's out of obligation that you feel like you have to instead of you want to. There is this sense where just like there's curse upon Adam, there is this sweat from the brow, there is this hardship taking place, the curse of sin affects how hard we work. But notice also there in verse 19, it doesn't just affect how hard we work. The curse of sin also affects how long we work. That's why it says in verse 19,

<sup>19</sup>...till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; and to dust, you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

There is this promise of death. Remember, God had warned Adam and Eve if they'd eaten of the fruit, it would bring about death. And even though it doesn't happen instantly, there is still death in front of them. Though they are brought up from the dust, to dust they shall return. And so what that means is that the pain in childbearing, the strife of marriage, the hardship of work are

all deeper symptoms of a greater effect of the curse of sin which is the power of death over you and me. The wages of our sin is death. We are worthy of judgment. That is the power of the curse of sin. It touches every part of our lives, from our closest relationship to our deepest responsibilities, to our greatest fears. And you can just imagine Adam and Eve in this moment. Their defiance now leads to a brokenness as the weight of this judgment, as the weight of this curse falls upon them. Imagine their despair. But even in the midst of their despair, God meets them with a promise. A promise of hope. And that hope is grounded in what will come as a cure for the curse of sin.

That's why I want to point your attention back to verse 15 and then we'll pick up onward in verses 20 through the end of the chapter. Because what we'll find in Genesis 3 is not just the curse of sin, but now we'll also find the cure for sin. And look at how it's described there beginning in verse 15.

**[15I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.](#)**

The man called his wife's name Eve, look down in verse 20, because she was the mother of all living. 21And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. 22Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also the tree of life and eat, and live forever – 23therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

So over these last two weeks, we've seen the cause of sin. We've seen the cost of sin. We've seen the curse of sin. And right here, we find the cure for sin. What is our reason for hope? How might we find deliverance from the curse of the sin that weighs us down. We'll see right here at the end of Genesis 3 we see several aspects of this cure for sin that God is laying out for us in the garden. So if you look back in verse 15, you'll see that the cure for sin defeats our enemy. That's why we find there in Genesis 3:15 the first promise of salvation. And it's a promise of salvation through spiritual warfare. That's why verse 15 begins by saying, I will put enmity between you and the woman. There will be this hostility, this rivalry. Genesis 3 is the opening salvo of the spiritual conflict that rages from Genesis through Revelation, between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. As Charles Spurgeon once said, Genesis 3:15 is the first gospel sermon that was ever delivered upon the surface of the earth. And every passage of Scripture is transformed by the promise here in this text. So let's think about this reality. How will this battle unfold? Well, notice right there in verse 15, it tells us. Between your offspring and her offspring. In other words, God is making this promise that one day he will raise up a seed from the woman who will defeat the seed of the serpent. That there will be a child who comes who brings about rescue. Have you ever notice how common the theme in literature or TV shows or children's books are about the damsel in distress? You know how the story goes, right? So there's this lovely lady who's enjoying life and then this dangerous dragon comes onto the scene. He captures her. All is lost. It seems as if there's no hope. That the dangerous dragon will prevail until one moment an unlikely deliverer comes on the scene. And through a moment of courage and heroism, he conquers the dragon, he rescues the woman. The

central theme of that damsel in distress imagery in our literature today is; kill the dragon, get the girl. I had a friend that came through Texas A&M who's now a seminary president. And he said to me one time, "If you want to look at the entire story of Scripture, it can be summed up in the exact same way." Genesis 3:15 is telling us God will kill the dragon in order to get the girl. Think about it. Jesus, the most unlikely of deliverers, slays the serpent. He destroys the dragon so he can get the girl. The bride of Christ, His church, can be rescued to Himself. And right here in the text there is this promise of deliverance that will come through this seed of the woman. And it doesn't just stay here in Genesis 3:15. We see it escalating all through the Old Testament. Example after example after example unpacking what you find here in the middle of Genesis 3:15. Look back at how it describes the nature of this victory.

<sup>15</sup>...he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

This is like that acorn that has been planted in the ground. And right here in this moment you see the first shoots of salvation budding from it. A shoot that will grow into a massive oak of righteousness providing the shade of salvation across the Old Testament as it expects a Messiah to come to bring about deliverance. There are so many examples in the Old Testament of how this language of head-crushing is picked up. I just want you to see a couple of them now. So you'll notice on the screen in Numbers chapter 24 in verse 17. As Israel is in the wilderness, Balaam, this enemy king sees them as a threat and he turns to, to this, actually, Balak, this enemy king, sees Israel as a threat and he turns to this mercenary prophet, Balaam, who he's asking to speak a word of curse and judgment upon Israel. And listen instead to the way that Balaam prophesies about a coming savior from Israel in Numbers 24:17. Here's what he says:

<sup>17</sup>I see him, but not now; I behold him, but no near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

You see the head-crushing imagery there? That one will come. A ruler with the scepter who will crush the head of the enemy. It's across the prophets of the Old Testament and their expectation of the coming Messiah. But it's not just in the prophets of the Old Testament; it's also in the patterns of the Old Testament. So I'll give you one other example in 1 Samuel chapter 17 in verse 49. You know this story well. It's the story of David and Goliath. So in chapter 16, David is anointed to become king. And in his first act as the anointed future king of Israel, he goes out to slay the giant. We won't look there right now, but 1 Samuel 17:5 describes Goliath in all his splendor; how tall he is, how mighty his weapons are. And one of the ways it describes him is that he is wearing this 125 pound coat of mail. It's bronze in color. And the way it uses it in the original language is describes this armor as if it is scaly armor. You can almost imagine the appearance of this bronze, serpent-like figure standing at odds against Israel. And David stands before him. And 1 Samuel 17:49 tells us how he slays David. And you'll see it on the screen when it says this.

<sup>49</sup>And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and he struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

Do you see yet again this head-crushing imagery that's right there in David's victory over Goliath? God raises up His anointed who crushes the head of the enemy in order to bring deliverance for the people of God in a way that prefigures exactly what he's going to do through the son of David. Jesus Christ Himself who goes to the cross. He crushes the head of that serpent in order to deliver the people of God, the church, from his deception. From his accusation so that we may find freedom. That's the kind of king we follow. That's the kind of promise that exists here. It's the kind of promise that the gospel writer John summarizes in 1 John 3:8 when he talks about the mission of Jesus. He says, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. Now what are the works of the devil? Both deception and accusation. He allures us then he accuses us. And by the cross, Jesus crushes the head of that serpent, defusing the power of his weapons against us. That's the effect of what Christ has done. And how does He do it? Remember, when Jesus goes to that cross, how is He affixed to it? They spread out His hands. They put those nails between them. They take His feet and they nail them to the cross. In other words, by the striking of that nail through His foot, His heel is bruised. Just as Genesis 3:15 speaks of here. But in the bruising of His heel comes the crushing of the head of the serpent. That's the promise that you and I have. That's the hope that we have. But even in the midst of that hope, Genesis 3:15 reminds us there will be hardship.

So, if you rewind the clock two years ago, this Sunday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of March, was the first time that our church could not meet in person due to the pandemic shutdown. Just a month later, you brought me in as your new pastor. But just a month later in late May we were preparing the plans to reopen this place so we could start meeting together in person. And we had a test group of volunteer leaders who were willing to come and help us practice through that. And on this particular Sunday morning, just like happens every Sunday morning, our band and our praise team were up here rehearsing before the service. And I think it was somewhere about right over here on these steps, one of the praise team members noticed something moving in the shadows of the darkness. And as they took a closer look, they discovered that there was a snake on the stage that morning. Now, if you're a first time guest, we've been here 20 years, that's the only time that's ever happened. Please come back. A serpent lurking in the shadows while we are preparing to do the work of God. They were able to take care of that snake, move it out of here so we could worship safely that morning. Trust me, you don't need to look around your seats right now. Everything is safe and secure in here. But think about that picture. When the people of God are preparing to do the mission of God, you have a serpent lurking in the shadows, waiting in the wings, seeking to disrupt that mission. And that's precisely what we should expect according to Genesis 3:15 when it says there, there will be enmity between you and the woman. We should expect that same hostility, that same difficulty, that same hardship still to show up today. So to all our students that are gathered up here for Jerusalem Project this week. As you go out in our community to spread the truth of Jesus and show the heart of Jesus to our community, don't be surprised when you face spiritual resistance this week. Or for those of you that are volunteering this week in our Beloved & Beyond Base Camp to serve dozens of special needs kids and adults this week, don't be surprised when you face spiritual resistance. Or right now, we've got a group of our college students over in North Africa on a mission trip. They should not be surprised if they face spiritual resistance. But that doesn't just happen in the moments when we are locked in doing the Lord's work. It happens in every crevice of our life. Satan is constantly resisting, constantly subverting, constantly undermining, constantly leading us astray, deceiving us, devouring us, alluring us, accusing us. He comes at us relentlessly because he knows his time is short. That's exactly why in two weeks from today, we're going to

be turning our attention from Genesis for a short season to an Easter series. In those four weeks leading up to Easter, we're going to be focusing on some Easter messages during the sermon. But in addition to that, we're going to be inviting you as a church to journey with us through a devotional. And I'll talk more about that in the next week or two. But a devotional wrapped around God's heart for prayer. And that heart for prayer that we want to see permeating our congregation, especially during this Easter season is because we know the threat that Genesis 3 puts in front of us about the serpent. That he still rages. That he still is at work. And unless God moves in us and through us, all that we do is for nothing. That's what this cure for sin reminds us of. It, what that happens, Genesis 3:15 tells us, is that the cure for sin destroys our enemy.

But now, if you'll look down in verse 20, we see a second effect of this cure for sin. It doesn't just destroy our enemy, it also disarms our shame. So look at verse 20 again. It says:

<sup>20</sup>The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was mother of all living.

And right there we see in this new name a first glimpse of the symbolism of hope that is captured in this Genesis 3:15 promise. This mother of all living. Adam knows when he names her that the promise of Genesis 3:15 will stand. That there is hope in the midst of the wreckage. That their identity as humanity doesn't have to be defined by a shameful past but instead by a hopeful future. And you'll see the way that God disarms our shame in salvation right there pictured in verse 21 when it says:

<sup>21</sup>The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife Eve garments of skin and clothed them.

Remember, in the aftermath of their sin back in verse 7, Adam and Eve had already attempted to cover the shame of their sin. Remember how they did it? What did they sew together? Those fig leaves. They were ill-fitting, unfit for their role, and God takes those away; our own attempts to hide our shame. And instead, He replaces them for Adam and Eve with these coverings that come from the skins of animals. And now how would He have gotten those skins? Those skins would only be available to cover the shame of their sin if there was a shedding of blood that had taken place. Sacrifice for the sake of overcoming our shame. Or as the New Testament authors tell us, without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin. God sheds the blood of animals. The first glimpse of the sacrificial system that will unfold in the Old Testament and find its fulfillment in Jesus. And in that moment, through the shedding of blood, He sets us free from our shame. Think about how that guilt weighs you down. That humiliation. That embarrassment. That shame that keeps driving at your heart. We find here in Genesis 3 the same reality that is true for us today. That if the blood that God provides for us covers over our sin, we can find in our life that the shame that weighs us down has been disarmed by the power of the Gospel. But that's not the only truth that we find here. You'll notice the way this text ends in verse 22 is that the cure for sin delivers us from our exile. So look at the way this exile takes place here. It says:

<sup>22</sup>Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and live forever" – <sup>23</sup>therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.



Right here, the first exile in the Bible. That God brings judgment upon the people of God and removes them from the presence of God. And this pattern plays out over and over again in the Scriptures. And why does God do it here? Because He knows if he leaves Adam and Eve in the garden, and in their fallen sinful state they partake of that forbidden fruit, that fruit from the tree of life again, then they will live for eternity in this fallen condition. And the exile is not just for our judgment, it is for our good. To protect us from that reality. But you'll notice that the exile also comes with opposition. That's why verse 24 says,

<sup>24</sup>He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

So God raises up these warrior angels with these flames, these swords of flame to defend and to protect the garden. And these same warrior angels are the ones that were captured when Solomon rebuilt the temple. 2 Chronicles 3. It tells us that as they constructed the veil that separated the rest of the temple from the Holy of Holies, one of the depictions embroidered on that veil were pictures of these cherubim. These flaming swords, these warrior angels signifying the way that there at the temple, God was protecting His presence from the rest of the temple and protecting that Holy of Holies. So right here in this text in Genesis 3, you see a pattern begin to emerge. It plays out throughout the Bible. That God fights for us in our faithful obedience and He fights against us in our sinful rebellion. And right here with this exile, He removes us in order to protect us. He casts us out so that one day He might welcome us back in. He fights against us in judgment so that one day He might fight for us in salvation. I've had Chernobyl on my mind over the last few weeks as we watched this conflict in Ukraine unfold. Maybe you heard, but one of the first things that the Russians did coming in from the north through Belarus down into Ukraine is they overtook the Chernobyl power plant. And that sent shockwaves through the world nuclear community. Because they know that there is still a danger and a threat there. Even though all of the reactors have been shut down. The best available data tells us that until at least 2060, we will not be able to fully eliminate the invisible effects of that radiation and the danger of contamination that's played out there. In fact, in that time period right after the catastrophe happened in April of 1986, within the next 6 months they built what has been known as the sarcophagus around this power plant. Where in a combination of steel and concrete, they did their best to cover the contamination. To contain the contamination. The problem is that over time, human efforts on their own were unsuccessful. That radiation began to leak out again. And now they've built a new containment even over the top of that. And what you find in that effort to contain the consequences of that catastrophe is just a small glimpse of what you and I face on our own in our sin. Sin occurs. The curse takes hold in our life. And what do we do? We try to cover it on our own. We try to contain it ourselves. But it keeps leaking out. The radiation of sin that seeps out, that invisible effect keeps influencing and impacting every aspect of our life. And that might mean for some of you this morning, you find yourself exactly where Adam and Eve were in this moment in the garden of Eden. Maybe you're hiding from God with Adam. Maybe you feel like you've been cast out of Eden by God. Maybe you feel as if your shame is overwhelming you and there is nothing you can do. Maybe you feel as if you are a prodigal who God will never receive back home. But the promise of Genesis 3 is this. That no matter how great the curse of sin, the cure for sin is greater still. That in God's work, He has given us His Son. And think about what Jesus does through His death and resurrection. He takes every dimension of the curse upon Him. The curse of sin begins in the garden of Eden but it is overturned beginning in the garden of Gethsemane. When Jesus is there He is sweating

drops of blood. They are coming from His brow as He works. He is surrounded by vegetation as He is taken to the cross. A crown of thorns is thrust upon His head. He is stripped of His clothing, exposed in shame on that cross. And He dies for you and me. What happens in that moment? What happens to that temple veil? That same veil that had those cherubim, those flaming warrior angels represented on it. What happens to the veil? It's torn in two. God's judgment is reversed. His curse is cured. The way back to Eden that has been closed for eternity has now been opened. And the invitation to you and me is to receive that gift by the power of His Spirit.

Let's pray together.

Father, we are nothing but sinners deserving of Your judgment and condemnation. And yet in Your kindness, You have made a way for us in Christ. He took our penalty so that we could be made new. And I pray that as we see this familiar passage in a new way this morning, God, You would use it to shape our hearts, Lord. I don't know if there are people wrestling with the hardships of life right now under the curse. But I pray that You would bear them up on Eagles wings. That You would sustain them. That they would run and not grow weary. That they would walk and not be faint. Not because of their own strength, God, but because of Your work in their hearts. And I pray for those that have been carried away by the curse, who have given themselves over to their sin. May today be the day you set them free. That they experience the cure. And that You'd help them walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel. And that's why we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.