

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

# The Gospel in Genesis

## Chapter 2

# GOD AND THE IDEAS OF MAN



*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?*

G E N E S I S 3 : 1

There is no doubt at all that judged from almost any angle you like, Genesis 3 is one of the most important chapters in the entire Bible. That may seem strange to some. Many Christians have felt that surely the whole Old Testament is unnecessary, that as Christians we need nothing but the New Testament. But the early church, which by then was mainly Gentile, decided that the Old Testament should be incorporated with the New Testament in this book that we call the Bible. And undoubtedly these early Christians were guided by the Holy Spirit to do this. They had prayed for guidance, and they believed they had received it. So they said that a Gentile who became a Christian needed the Old Testament just as much as a Jew did. And the reason is that the whole Bible is the history of God's dealing with men and women. It is the history of redemption. And what gives this third chapter of the book of Genesis such exceptional importance is that we are given here the history of how man first fell from the good estate in which God had originally placed him. In other words, it is the beginning of human history.

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I say again that I am calling attention to this chapter because we are concerned about a very practical issue. There may have been a time when the preaching of the gospel was a kind of hobby. Some perhaps might even have regarded it as a sort of a luxury. But I do not think anybody can take that view at the present time. Life has become desperate. It is very easy to understand the mentality of our forefathers [in Britain] a hundred years ago. The *pax Britannica* was in vogue. There seemed to be no dangers at all; life went on, and you could make basic assumptions. But it is no longer like that. We in this century and in our generation have come to learn that life is a very critical matter. We have had to learn this, whether we like it or not, and we are concerned about it. We find ourselves surrounded by problems and often overwhelmed by them, and we want to know where we can find relief. What can we do? Is there a way of escape?

Now I was indicating last time, in a very general manner, that the Bible deals with that very situation. There is no more up-to-date book in the world than this old, old book that we call the Bible. It is concerned about men and women. It is concerned about you. It is concerned about all of us just as we are and where we are. It speaks to our very condition and holds before us a way of life. And here in Genesis 3 it tells us why we are in this condition, why things are as they are in the world in general and in our own individual cases. That is the special message of Genesis 3. Let me just remind you of what we have said about this already.

The Bible presents us with a definite, concrete, comprehensive worldview that is absolutely different from anything you can find anywhere else. The great marks, I said, of its message are these: it starts with God; it tells us that he has created everything; it tells us that man is not merely an evolving animal but a special creation of God; it tells us how Satan and evil came in, how man fell, how man is utterly helpless and under the judgment of God. But it tells us also how God in his infinite love and mercy and compassion has intervened and has provided a great and a grand way of salvation, which is preached and offered to the human race.



That is our general statement, and we are given all that in just one chapter. But the point I want to make now is that this is actual history. This is something that literally did happen. I must not dwell on this subject too long, and yet it is very important. **There are people who say, "Yes, I'm interested in Christian doctrine, but I'm not interested in those early chapters of Genesis." That is an utterly illogical position.** I cannot see how anybody can believe in the Christian salvation taught in the New Testament without believing these chapters of Genesis.

One of the greatest exponents of the Christian faith that the world has ever known was the mighty apostle Paul, and he tells us that we are as we are because of the sin of Adam and that we all sinned with him and we all fell with him. And Paul says that over against Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). The first man did this; the second man did that.

It is very important, therefore, that we should be glad that this is history. This is what makes the Bible such an extraordinary book and fills it with such fascination. I repeat that Genesis 3 is first of all history. But in addition to being history, it is an actual account of what every one of us does. According to the Bible, the remarkable thing about men and women in sin is that not only have they been taken down, as it were, by Adam, but they do the very selfsame thing themselves. They go on repeating the action of Adam. So here we have this amazing history, and at the same time we are given an analysis of the very thing that we do ourselves.

**Let me put it like this: we find Adam and Eve becoming desperately miserable, filled with a sense of fear, and hiding, not knowing what to do with themselves.** We find them condemned to a certain type of life, with the woman told that she will have to bear her children in sorrow and in pain, and the man told that he must work and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. There they are in that condition. Now the question is, how did they ever get into that state? Remember, they were not always like that. Go back to Genesis 2,



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and you will find there they were in a condition that is described as paradise. Yet now here they are in this abject misery. What produced this tremendous change?

And the answer is given in the first verse of Genesis 3. It was because man ceased to listen to God and to what God said. There is really nothing more to say than that. That is the proposition. There is only one explanation as to why the world is as it is at this minute and as to why every single individual is as he or she is at this second. It is that the man and the woman listened to that question of the tempter: "Hath God said . . . ?" That is, "Do you really believe that? Are you really being bound by that?" The Devil came and said, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And because they accepted that question and acted upon it, they brought ruin upon themselves and upon all their posterity.

And this, I want to show you, is the perfect picture of every one of us. There you see Adam and Eve confronted by God's way—God had made them; God had blessed them; God had surrounded them with benefits and put them in the garden, in paradise. They simply had to pick the fruit, as it were, and enjoy themselves and enjoy their communion with God. Yes, they did all that. But God added something to that. God added a law. God said to them in effect, "You can go on living this sort of life endlessly—on one condition." And the condition was that they obeyed God, that they recognized the supreme authority of God, that they recognized that God had a right to do with his own as he chose and that God really, even in giving his law, was concerned about their well-being and happiness. That was the position. The blessings were being showered upon them, but there was this law, this condition, this demand for obedience. But they rejected that. It was just at that point that they went wrong and brought all that misery upon themselves.

Now the whole case for the gospel of Jesus Christ today is just like that. I preach because God has spoken. He has spoken to the world. He has sent his only Son into this world to speak to us and to give us a message. What is it? Well, God offers to take us



as his children, to make us his heirs. He offers all the fullness of his own blessed Son and the blessings of the gospel, which Paul describes as “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). He offers us the kind of life that Christ himself lived, a life of joy and peace and many wondrous unmixed blessings. But he adds to it the same demand, the same request. He would have us live as the Lord Jesus Christ lived. He would have us be holy. He says, in offering us all these blessings of the gospel, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

The gospel of Jesus Christ, in other words, is not just some pleasant message that says, “Go and do anything you like; God loves you. It will be all right at the end. Receive all these blessings, and there’s no more to say.” God does not stop at that. “Ye that love the LORD,” says the psalmist, “hate evil” (Psalm 97:10). If you want to love God, the gospel tells us, you cannot love mammon at the same time. If you want to walk along the narrow way, you cannot continue on the broad way. If you want your house to be on a rock, it cannot be on the sand.

Always coupled with the blessings, there is this demand. The gospel is not just a statement that God is benevolent and loving and that it does not matter what we do, that everything will be all right at the end because God is love. And because it is not that, men and women still object and still go on repeating exactly what was done in the garden at the beginning by Adam and Eve.

I want to try to show you, therefore, as we look at these first verses in this third chapter of the book of Genesis, what exactly we do when we reject Christ. There is something almost unbelievable about this story, is there not? As we look at it in terms of Adam and Eve, we find it almost incredible that they could have done such a thing. But they did. I say again that this is history, and all the consequences have followed. And I am holding the picture before you, I repeat, because it is an equally true portrayal of what every one of us has done. Oh, that we may have grace to see it! If we could only see ourselves as we are in sin, I do not believe we would stay there

another second. And God, in his grace, has given us a picture so that we may see exactly what we are doing.

The first point that I observe as I look at this picture is the way in which this rebellion began. What was it that made Adam and Eve behave as they did? What was it that led them to eat of that prohibited fruit? Well, the astounding thing is that they did it simply on the strength of the dogmatic assertion of the Devil, and because of nothing else whatsoever. I wonder if you have ever noticed that as you have considered this chapter. Have you seen that the Devil did not give any reasons at all? I see it all in the original question: "Yea," he asked, "hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And you hear the sneer in his voice. His whole philosophy comes out at once. He is raising a query. "Poor innocents," he seems to say, "do you really believe that?" He does not provide any proofs at all. He simply asserts certain things. He puts it still more specifically later: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). And that is all there is to it: "I say so!" And they listened.

Now it is at that point that I find it rather difficult at times to understand Adam and Eve. And yet the moment I begin to think, I understand them very well because I know that everybody who is a sinner—and we are all sinners by nature—and everybody who remains in sin is in that position in exactly the same way.

Now this is rather striking, is it not? Have you ever realized that people who are not Christians are really basing their whole position simply upon nothing else but a dogmatic assertion? There is no proof whatsoever. Of course, I know that people say, "*Science* proves . . ." But does science prove? "Of course," they say, "no sensible person, nobody who has any learning, especially any scientific knowledge, believes that today." And because somebody comes to me with that assertion, I am expected to say that I had better not believe. But nothing has been proved at all. And yet we say, "All right, we will turn our backs and say we no longer believe."

That is the very thing that Adam and Eve did. They listened to a dogmatic pronouncement unaccompanied by any proof whatsoever.

And this is where the contradiction emerges. People are never tired of speaking of the dogmatism of the pulpit—the dogmatism of the preacher, the dogmatism of the church—and they do not like it. But I want to ask you a simple question: if you are not a Christian, if you do not believe the Bible and if you do not believe in God, on what grounds are you not believing? What are your reasons? What is your argument? Where is your proof? Can you prove to me that there is no God? Can you prove to me that Jesus of Nazareth was not the only begotten Son of God with two natures in one person? You say you do not believe it. You do not believe in miracles either. Does that prove that he never worked a miracle? Can you prove it? Do you have anything beyond a dogmatic assertion?

I have often quoted a famous statement made about a hundred years ago by Matthew Arnold, a very literary man, but I want to quote it again because I think it is a perfect example of the attitude to which I am referring. He put it like this: “Miracles cannot happen. Therefore, miracles have not happened.” There is no more to say, in his view. And people listen to that, and they still believe it. Matthew Arnold says it all: “Miracles cannot happen. Therefore, miracles have not happened.” Of course, if the first statement is right, the second is right, and the “therefore” is perfectly legitimate. But the vital question is, what about the first statement? Who can establish the fact that miracles cannot happen? Nobody can. It has never been done; it never will be done.

Now I must not stay with this preliminary method, but, my dear friend, I do trust that I am opening your eyes to this position. What are the grounds of your unbelief? What is the basis for your rejection of the gospel? What do you really have to substantiate what you say you believe and what you do not believe? On what is it actually based? Do you have anything to say except “So and so does not believe . . .” or “I read an article” or “I heard a man say . . .” or “Nobody any longer believes . . .” or “Science says . . .” and so on and so forth? I suggest to you that when you analyze your unbelief, you will find that it just comes to that. It is a tremendous hoax.



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I take the view of those who say that the greatest hoax of the last hundred and fifty years has been the theory of evolution. It has hoaxed the vast majority of people. It was originally a theory, but it has been turned and twisted as if it were a fact that everybody believes. But it is pure dogmatic assertion. It is nothing beyond a supposition.

That happened at the beginning, and it has been happening ever since. On the basis of a pure bit of dogmatism, man has brought upon himself the misery and the wretchedness that he is still enduring. Let me appeal to you in the name of Christ and of the gospel, begin to think. Think! "That's all sob stuff," you say. This is not sob stuff. The great appeal of the gospel is to men and women to think. They have been duped by the Devil. They are living in darkness.

When the risen Lord commissioned the apostle Paul to go out preaching and to be a witness to the people, he said, "Open their eyes . . . turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). Go and enlighten them, said Christ to Paul. Open their eyes. Teach them. Instruct them. Make them think. Tell them how to think. Men and women are deluded by a prejudice; they are silenced by a dogmatism that comes from the archenemy. It began like that, and it has continued like that. That is the trouble.

But now let us observe some of the steps of the process, the stages through which the man and woman went after they were bemused by the dogmatism of Satan, this shining personality who came in the form of a serpent and dazzled them by his authority, just as so many are dazzled today by the authority of big names and science and other abstractions.

First, as a result of listening to the serpent, the man and woman began to doubt God's power. The Devil said:

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. (Genesis 3:1-4)

“Don’t believe it,” said the Devil. “When God spoke to you like that, it sounded very powerful, but you need pay no attention. You can eat of that fruit, and I assure you that you shall not die. God can’t do anything about it. It’s an idle word. Don’t listen to it. Don’t be frightened. Don’t be tyrannized. Stand up against him. It’s not true.”

So they began to question the power of God. That was the first step. And it is always the first step. If we just realized the power of God, we would not continue defying him for a second. It is because of this doubt, this unbelief, that people still continue in sin. The Bible states the alternative like this: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10). “It is a fearful thing,” says another Scripture, “to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). Remember, too, the message that was given by the prophet Daniel to King Belshazzar at his feast. Daniel pointed out that not only had Belshazzar desecrated the vessels of the temple by drinking from them with his concubines, but even more serious, said Daniel, “The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified” (Daniel 5:23). The moment Adam and Eve began to doubt the power of God, everything else followed.

And this method, this process, is still being repeated. The Bible is full of it. Take even a man like Moses. When Moses was first called by God to his task, he had that great vision of the burning bush. He was about to go forward and investigate when back came the voice saying to stand back. “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5).

Oh, the power of God! Has it ever occurred to you that the very way in which we tend to talk about God is in and of itself an expression of our denial of the power of God? How fond we are, all of us, of religious debates and discussions. What is more enjoyable than to have an argument about these matters? Someone will say, “I don’t see that God can do this or that.” There the man is, perhaps standing with his hands in his pockets and a cigarette in his mouth, talking about God. But God said to Moses in effect, “Take your

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shoes off. Do you realize who I am and what I am? I AM WHAT I AM. Are you coming to investigate me? Stand back!"

He is the true God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, everlastingly almighty in his eternity and in his glory, who never knows what it is to be weary or to be tired, who never faints. And yet think of the way in which all of us have spoken about him and have argued about him and have expressed our opinions about him. There is no fear of God before our eyes. That is the trouble. We do not know what we are speaking about. We do not understand God.

And then, of course, with our characteristic modern confidence, we smile at strong biblical preaching and say, "Of course, our forefathers a hundred years or so ago could be frightened, you know. And as long as people were subject to this spirit of fear, they were Christians and believed the gospel. We're familiar with all that. Since then we've studied the science of comparative religion, and we know that all these religions are based upon fear, with God as some sort of great bogeyman in the heavens. And people are ready to believe it. Some believe the same things about the sun and others about the moon and the stars. Comparative religion teaches us all this. Today we know too much to be taken in by that sort of thing! 'Has God said?' Fancy, people being frightened in that way! Fancy, people being alarmed about hell! Fancy, people crying out in fear and trembling, 'What must I do to be saved?' We've lost that superstitious fear of God."

I am not drawing a caricature, am I? Am I not speaking the sober, literal truth? Is not that the attitude of men and women toward this almighty God at this very moment? They are defying God. They are defying his power. A man says:

*My head is bloody, but unbowed. . . .  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

William Ernest Henley,  
"Invictus. In Memoriam R. T. H. B."



*I, modern man, am self-sufficient. I will stand and defy whatever gods there may be. I cannot be frightened. I cannot be tyrannized. I cannot be alarmed. I'm not afraid of death. I'm not afraid of eternity. I'm not afraid of God.*

This attitude may not always be expressed in those words, but if your life is not entirely submitted to God, that is your position. For if you really believe in the power of God over and above you, you will fall at his feet. You will prostrate yourself. You will look into his face and say, "Have mercy upon me. Bless me." Are you doing that? Have you ever? **Who is controlling your life and your ideas? Is it God, or is it you yourself and the modern world?** Doubt came in about the power of God.

But still more serious, the Devil insinuated a doubt about the goodness of God. Do you remember how he put it? The Devil said to those first two people, "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" (Genesis 3:5).

"You know," said the Devil to Adam and Eve in effect, "I've felt sorry for you for a long time. I've seen the way God has frightened you and tyrannized over your life, and I've been wanting to tell you the truth, and I've come to do that. Do you know why he said all this about the fruit? Well, he doesn't want you to become what you ought to be and what you have it in you to be. You see, he's jealous, and he doesn't want you to become gods and to know good and evil as he does. So he told you not to eat of that fruit because the moment you do eat it, you will be like God himself. That's why he's introduced this prohibition."

And they believed it! They began to doubt the justice and the righteousness of God, the benevolence of God, the goodness of God. They began to doubt—I do not hesitate to put it like this—the very morality of God. They listened to the Devil when he told them that God was against them and that was why he had introduced the prohibition. They believed that God was jealous and selfish and small and was keeping things from them in order to lord it over them.

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I probably do not need to point out to you that this is the appalling thing that millions of people are believing about God at this very moment. In their heart of hearts they regard God as a monster, someone who is against them, someone who delights in spoiling their lives. Are those not the common grounds that are brought forward for refusing to believe the gospel?

I wonder whether I am addressing any young person who perhaps has left home for the first time. So far you have been taken to a place of worship by your parents, but now you have left home and have come to London. Do you have thoughts like this in your heart? "I'm going to give this Christianity stuff up. It's held me down; it's robbed me of so much, this narrow life, chapel-going, reading the Bible, prayer meetings, and so on." Perhaps you are saying, "I've missed so much. At last I have my opportunity. Now I'm really going to start living and enjoying life."

We have all known this. We have had a feeling that the gospel is something narrow and cramped that puts fetters upon us and robs us of some marvelous life that the people who have not been brought up like us have always enjoyed. Is that not the thought? That somehow God and this Christian way of life are against us and are opposed to our best interests and to our enjoyment of life and to our happiness, and that somehow or other God does not wish us well or desire us to enjoy our lives in this world. That is still the idea, is it not? And coupled with that, of course, is the notion that God's judgment is wrong, that it is unfair, and that God has no right to speak like this to us. Why should I stand in the judgment at the end? Doubting God's goodness is the second step.

Now notice the next step—how interesting these steps are, and how we all repeat them as we go through life in this world! The next step was inevitably this one: human reason came in and substituted itself for God's way. Do you see the steps? Starting from the dogmatism, the assertion, first there was the questioning of God's power and then the questioning of God's goodness. Next came the thought, "Well, after all, there's something in this." It is put like this



in the sixth verse: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food"—she had always seen that tree, it had been there before she came there, she had often looked at it, but she had never seen this before—"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."

That is always the next step. We start with a query about the power of God. We say, "We needn't be afraid. We really mustn't be cowards. We mustn't allow these feelings and fears to dominate us. We must shake that off and stand on our feet." And then we say, "Well, let's examine this God. Is he good? No, no. Why, that religion is too small. It's too narrow. The other is so much bigger."

But the moment you get there, you begin to reason and to work out your own philosophy, and you say, "Well, of course, I've always been brought up to think that the worldly life is a very bad life. But really, now that I come to look at it, it doesn't seem to be so bad. Look at the people who are living it. They don't die the moment they sin. They seem to be able to do anything they like, and they flourish on it. They look much happier than many of those miserable Christians. My word, this isn't a bad life after all! And look at the great people who are living such a life. Look at the publicity they get!"

And then, of course, we say, "Well, we don't want to give up religion altogether. What shall we do? Well, let's make a religion that's more satisfactory." And so, by exercising our human reason and our own thoughts, we begin to create a new god. "Oh, yes," we say, "we want to believe in God, but not a God with prohibitions, not a God with a law, not a just and a righteous and a holy God, not a God who stands in judgment and threatens us with hell. No, no. The God we want, the God we believe in, is a God who is always smiling upon us and who says, 'It's all right, I'll forgive everything. Carry on.'"

Is that not what is being done? Put down on paper your ideas of God, what you think God is like and what God ought to be, and compare them with the Bible, and I think you will find that I have



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not exaggerated by a single syllable. Having come to this stage, men and women now forget God altogether and substitute their own opinions, their own philosophy. And that is what has been happening for a hundred years. **The Bible is no longer the authority. We no longer listen to God; we are listening to human beings.**

But there is something here that to me is more amazing and more astonishing than all this, and it is the fact that men and women can do this in spite of what God has done for them and in spite of all the blessings they have enjoyed. That is what I meant when I said at the beginning that there is a sense in which I just do not understand it.

Have you ever thought of it like that? Look at this man Adam. Look at Eve. Think of what God had done for them. He had made them. He had given them everything. He had made them lords of creation. He had given them this marvelous life in paradise. He would come to speak to them. He would visit them. They were walking with him. They were enjoying bliss that passes our imagination. Everything was easy. Everything was perfect. God had done all that for them. And yet they were ready and willing to believe all these lies about him, to turn their backs upon him, to disobey him, and thus to bring down all this upon their heads.

Do you not find it difficult to understand that? What is it, you say, about a man who lets down a friend? What do you say about the sort of man, let us call him *A*, who was in serious and terrible trouble and his friend *B* helped him, gave him money, allowed him to share his house, showered gifts upon him, did everything he could for him without skimping at all? What do you think of that man *A* who is ready to listen to some foul insinuation that is made against his friend *B*? Someone comes and tells him, "Look here, he did that because it was to his advantage to do it, because it benefited him. He wasn't doing it for your sake. He always thinks of himself; he's selfish and self-centered. Fancy believing that he did it out of the goodness of his heart and out of his own benevolence! Did you really believe that? It isn't true!"

And A believes those lies and repeats them, and he does things against his greatest friend and benefactor. What would you think of him? You would call him a cad, would you not? And you would be right.

So what do you say about Adam and Eve? It was in spite of what God had done for them and all the blessings he had showered upon them that they believed the lie and resented him and, as it were, turned their backs upon him and went their own way. But, my dear friend, that is precisely what everybody who is not a Christian at this moment is still doing. **It is God who has given you life.** It is God who saw to it that you should be born into a family with loved ones who would care for you and look after you. It is God who ordained marriage. It is God who ordained the family. It is God who ordained the state. **It is God the Father who sends the rain. It is God who gives the sun. It is God who fructifies the crops in the fields and gives us food.** Do you know that he could stop it all in a second if he chose to do so? It is God in his beneficence who does all this. It is Providence that has surrounded us with all these glorious gifts and benefits from our very birth into this life.

Not only that, have you ever stopped to think of the benefits of Christianity in a general sense that you have enjoyed? Has it ever occurred to you that many of the things you prize most of all in this world have come as by-products of the Christian faith? Your education and hospitals, for instance—Christianity introduced them. They would never have come but for Christianity and the church. The world would never have provided them. Do not believe my word; go back into history. Trace it for yourselves. And you have enjoyed them. They have come from God. He has showered them upon you.

But all this pales into insignificance by the side of something else that God has done. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God so loved this world that had rebelled against him and spat into his face that in spite of



that he sent his only Son, and that Son—I do not understand it—came and was born as a baby in Bethlehem. He humbled himself, he went to the cross, he died on a tree so that you and I might be redeemed, forgiven, and restored to God and go to heaven. And yet men spat in his face. They still do.

The old action of Adam and Eve is repeated today. In spite of all that God had done for them, they believed the lie, and men and women still believe the lie. They have looked at Calvary, they have looked at the cross, and they have said, “It’s not true. God is against us.” The God who did that is against us? There is only one thing to say about that. It is madness, my friends. You are being beguiled. You are being bemused. Dust has been thrown into your eyes. Can you not see the folly of it all? To say that a God who did that and did not spare his only Son is selfish and arrogant and waiting to crush you and is against you! Face the facts. Recognize the unutterable folly of such an attitude. If you do not realize it now, a day will come when you will know that all this is true.

The Devil looked at Adam and Eve and said, “Don’t believe it. Eat the fruit—eat as much as you like. You shall not surely die.” But they did die. Death came into the world, and it has been here ever since.

“No evil consequences will follow,” said the Devil. But they did—the man and woman were turned out of paradise; food had to be earned by the sweat of their brow. Is that not true? We do not like it. We are trying to fight against it. A seven-day week, a six-day week, a five-day week. If we could have it, we would want a no-day week! Permanent holidays! Everything for nothing.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Painful childbirth was another consequence. It all came, it is all still here, and it will all continue.

“Ye shall not surely die.” But as a result, Adam and Eve were driven out, working, sweating, bearing children in pain, murder coming in among those very children, death. How easy it is to make dogmatic pronouncements with nothing to substantiate



them, but they make not the slightest difference to the truth about God.

You and I at this moment are in the presence of this almighty and eternal God. Do you not feel that it is time to take off your shoes and to put your hand on your mouth and to be careful of what you say? We are in his hand. He has made his way plain and clear. He has shown us why the misery has come upon us, and he offers us the only way out. There is full, free salvation at this very moment in Jesus Christ. You have but to realize the truth and to acknowledge to God that all your troubles are due to your sin, your rebellion against him. Go and tell him that. Tell him that you receive his offer in Christ. If you do that, he will receive you, and he will bless you. The wrath of God will no longer abide upon you. You need no longer fear death and the grave. You need not fear God. You will know that you have been reconciled to him and that you have become his child.

**In other words, reverse the process that happened in the garden.** Then all will be well with your soul. Give up your foolish reasoning, and listen to God. **Believe his word.** Submit yourself to it. And soon you will delight in it, for you will be living the life of God himself.

Instead of asking, "Has God said?" say, "I believe what God has said. I accept it. I surrender to it." Do that and you will be blessed in a manner that you will never understand in this world. You will be blessed even in the act of death, and you will go on to be with God and with Christ throughout eternity.