

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Between Two Trees | Part 1: The Tree That Took Life

BIG Idea: Life was freely given—but humanity chose independence over trust.

Application: Trust God’s boundaries as invitations to life, not limits on freedom.

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Life was freely given – but humanity chose independence over trust.

1. God planted life before He gave rules.

Genesis 2:8-9, 16-17 (NLT)

⁸Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁶But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— ¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

The enemy wants us to remember the one “no” of God and forget the many ‘yeses’ of God.

James 1:17 (NLT)

¹⁷Whatever is **good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father**, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

Psalms 16:11 (ESV)

¹¹You make known to me the path of life; in your presence **there is fullness of joy**; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Deuteronomy 10:13 (NLT)

¹³And you must always obey the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.

2. The temptation was autonomy, not appetite.

Temptation works by distorting the character of God.

Genesis 3:1-5 (NLT) *The Man and Woman Sin*

¹ The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

The bait was not fruit. The bait was self-rule.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.

⁶ Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.

Isaiah 53:6 (NLT)

⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God’s paths to follow our own.
Yet the Lord laid on him
the sins of us all.

Judges 21:25 (NLT)

²⁵ In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

Romans 1:21-25 (NLT)

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. ²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. ²⁵ They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

The first temptation was not mainly appetite. It was autonomy.

3. Disobedience fractured life at its roots.

Genesis 3:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Sin promised enlightenment, but delivered estrangement.

Romans 5:12 (NLT)

¹²When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

²It's your sins that have cut you off from God.
Because of your sins, he has turned away
and will not listen anymore.

At that tree, life was fractured at the roots.

Life was freely given – but humanity chose independence over trust.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (NLT)

²¹So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. ²²Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

Romans 5:12,18 (NLT)

¹²When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

¹⁸Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

His boundaries are invitations to life, not limits on freedom.