



# gracefellowship

Whispers of Christmas  
December 6, 2020  
Whispers of...HOPE

This morning we are beginning a new teaching series, while we take a break from the book of Daniel, so we can focus in during the Christmas season on some specific things that will help us understand the activity of God in history to bring His Son into the world.

Throughout the Old Testament we hear whispers of Christmas. In other words, there are things God does and says that point forward to the idea He is going to send a Savior into the world. As you read the Old Testament these things are not big and bold and flashy. It's not always overt, so you might miss it if you don't have your ears tuned to the whisper. We are so blessed to have the full revelation of God as we have seen His Son, Jesus and have the completed Word of God to read and study. But it wasn't always that way! In the Old Testament we find something called progressive revelation. In other words, God revealed more of His big picture plan to people little by little over a long period of time.

This morning I want us to see the very first whisper of Christmas and how it plays out as God brings the whisper to fulfillment.

The first whisper of Christmas comes to our first parents- Adam and Eve. God created the world and put Adam and Eve in charge of His creation as stewards of all He made. There was one rule for them to follow in the garden of Eden: don't eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil that God placed in the center of the garden.

**:: Genesis 3:1-15**

**1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"**

**2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,**

**3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "**

**4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.**

5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

**When Adam and Eve were enticed by the serpent to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they immediately experienced hopelessness.**

Everything they had ever known had been good and pure and innocent and bathed in the light of God’s glory. But upon eating the fruit they had been told not to eat, they had their eyes open to the fact they were living in open rebellion to their Father. Instead of the serpent’s promise coming true that they would be like God, the opposite was true, they were farther from being like God than they knew was possible.

Notice what two things get broken immediately because of sin...

**Sin breaks...**

1. **Their view of themselves.**

All of a sudden they realize they are naked and nakedness suddenly becomes shameful. The image of God that they bear is distorted. So what do they do? They cover themselves because they feel shame. They are exposed physically, but they are also exposed spiritually and mentally and emotionally. They had their eyes opened and rather than being more like

God, they realized they didn't like themselves.  
(Sin breaks...)

## **2. Their view of God.**

Every day of their lives God had come to walk with them in the cool of the day. But on this day, when God arrived in the garden, they were nowhere to be found. They hid. Why? When God calls out, asking where they are, Adam replies, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

When sin came into the world God was no longer someone Adam and Eve could enjoy spending time with because they became afraid of Him. Their view of God shifted to seeing God as someone to be afraid of because they had broken their relationship with Him and disobeyed Him, inviting punishment.

These exact two things remain in our world today. Sin has distorted how we see ourselves as image bearers of God and it has distorted the glory of God in this world and how we see Him. For Adam and Eve they began to feel hopeless. Why? Because the punishment for breaking God's rule about the tree was death. I can imagine they may have thought that meant immediately being put on trial, convicted and taken to be executed. Thankfully, God had other plans.

- Death did enter the scene: they immediately had experienced spiritual death and were cut off from enjoying relationship with God in the same way they always had.
- Physical death would come, but it would not be immediate. At the end of the story, God removes them from the garden and places an angel at the entrance with a flaming sword. We are told the reason for this is so they will not have access to the tree of life and live forever in their sinfulness (vs. 22).

Here's what I love about this story though- we see the grace of God as the very first response to sin because God showed up in the garden on the day they sinned! God knew Adam and Eve had disobeyed Him. God knew they had embraced sin instead of faithfulness. But He came down to the garden anyway! He walked in knowing exactly what He would find- His prized creation hiding, trying to cover their nakedness with leaves.

When God walked into the garden that day He called out, "Where are you?"

We need to understand something- God knew exactly where they were! This wasn't a question of physical location so much as it was a question of spiritual condition. This would be the equivalent of you daydreaming during a meeting and your boss looking at you and asking, "Where is your head at right now?" Or you trying to talk to your spouse or child where there has been emotional drifting and you ask, "Where is your heart right now? It doesn't feel like it's with me."

God is asking them, "Where is your heart?" Where are you?

We need to hear this from God today as well. The sin of Adam and Eve has been passed down to all of us and because of sin, even as Christians, we often stray from God. You need to know that when you have sin that you feel like is unforgiveable, God comes to you- He comes looking for you. And it's not harsh and judgmental; He comes with grace asking, "Where are you right now? I want you to be back with me."

In fact, look again at how gentle God is with them. He doesn't come in a rage and thundering loudly into the garden. He asks them questions.

**8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**

**9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"**

**10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."**

**11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"**

**12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."**

**13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."**

Now, let's be clear, sin has consequences and God will punish Adam and Eve for their disobedience, but even in their punishment we will see God's grace extended. We'll look at that together in a few minutes.

The same extension of grace is not available, however, with the serpent. We know the serpent to be Satan. Satan had rebelled against God and was removed from heaven. Now he has declared war on God's creation and he's done his part to cause Adam and Eve to go against God. So when God speaks to the serpent there is no grace, just a curse.

**14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.**

**15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."**

This is the first whisper of Christmas. Did you see it? As soon as sin entered the picture God unveiled His plan to redeem mankind and to destroy the serpent once and for all. But at this moment it's just a whisper of a future reality.

There will be enmity between you and the woman: Enmity means ill will, hatred and mutual antagonism. God told the serpent this enmity would be between him and his offspring and the woman's. A better translation of the word offspring is actually seed. And here's what's really interesting about God saying the enmity

will be between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Reproductively speaking, women don't have seed. They have eggs. Men provide the seed. Yet, God says that there is one coming who will crush the head of the serpent and it will be the seed of woman. I think this points to the fact God had a supernatural plan in place for a Savior of mankind who would put an end to the destructive power of Satan.

This passage is known in Scripture as the Proto-Evangelium: The First Gospel. Charles Spurgeon said this about the passage: **“This is the first gospel sermon that was ever delivered upon the surface of this earth. It was a memorable discourse indeed, with Jehovah himself for the preacher, and the whole human race and the prince of darkness for the audience.”**

When God cursed the serpent he didn't just cause him to crawl on the ground and eat dust, he foretold his end- a crushing blow!

**This first whisper of Christmas is a whisper of hope.**

Yes, sin had entered the world.

Yes, there was a price to be paid.

Yes, relationship with God was broken.

But hope was spoken as a promise seed- a child- would come who would make all things right again.

For Adam and Eve we see once again that God moves toward them with justice, but also with grace.

**:: Genesis 3:16-21**

**16 To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”**

**17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.**

**18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.**

**19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”**

**20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.**

**21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**

Sin always has consequences, but God moves toward us instead of away from

us in order to preserve our relationship. Here again we see God act justly to punish sin, but we also see Him doing something amazing in an act of grace. What caused Adam and Eve to hide in the first place? They were naked, so they were afraid. They were exposed and ashamed and they felt they had no hope. So what did God do for them as He sent them out of the garden? He clothed them! God covered their shame and their guilt. The assumption is an animal was sacrificed in order to make clothing for them with garments of skin.

We need to see this today, it's a powerful truth: **God always moves toward us with grace to forgive our sins.**

Genesis 3 is a whisper of what's coming. The seed of a woman will crush the head of Satan once and for all. When we move to the gospels we see this miracle child revealed.

**:: Matthew 1:18-25**

**18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about : His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.**

**19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**

**21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."**

**22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:**

**23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").**

**24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.**

**25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.**

**:: Luke 1:26-38**

**26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,**

**27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.**

**28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."**

**29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.**

**30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.**

**31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.**

**32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,**

**33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

**34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”**

**35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.**

**36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.**

**37 For no word from God will ever fail.”**

**38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.**

Mary, a young virgin, would bring forth God’s Messiah promised all those years ago in the garden. Miraculously, she would give birth without the seed of a man, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would grow up to go the cross as the final sacrifice for sins. Through Jesus God covers all our shame. He literally came to be with us and show us that God is for us, regardless of our sin and to offer us forgiveness for our sins.

When Jesus went to the cross to buy our freedom Satan thought he had won! Satan struck his heel and dealt a deathblow to Jesus. But when Jesus emerged from the grave 3 days later he crushed the head of Satan. Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave in order to make the way for us to once again live in perfect fellowship with God.

There is hope for us today. The question you have to ask yourself today is the same question God asked in the garden all those years ago: Where are you?

Where are you in relation to Jesus?

If you don’t know Him and have not made Him your Savior then you are still without hope in this life. You need to know He loves you and wants you to be restored to Him. You don’t have to live hiding from God. His invitation to you is to embrace the incredible gift of grace that came through Jesus dying on the cross to pay for your sins. God took the punishment you deserved and placed it on Jesus so you can be set free from sin, guilt and shame.

Maybe you are a Christian but you are living with the shame of sin that lingers in your life, thinking that God can’t possibly still love you. The cross has paid for all your sin and through Jesus you have been given a righteousness that overcomes all sin. You need to step out of your shame and embrace the forgiveness God has for you and live in light of His abundant grace.

- Pray