

**God's Prognosis for Adam & Eve-- & for Us!**  
**Sermon on Genesis 3:16-21**  
**Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI**  
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**Introduction: We're Familiar with a Doctor's Prognosis for a Patient**

Scripture says: *From God and through God and to God are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Dear fellow sick patients, whose Doctor is Christ Jesus himself:

Probably it's a fairly familiar scene for all of us. Either we've experienced it ourselves, or by way of a loved one—or at least we've seen this on tv....

A patient lies ill on a hospital bed. Her doctor has examined her, run the necessary tests, and considered all the information he has gathered. He comes to visit her with a prognosis for her health in the future.

Pretty often it happens that the doctor can say, "Well, I've got bad news for you, and I've got good news for you." Both are necessary. The bad news diagnoses exactly what's wrong. And the good news is the prognosis for treatment.

Now, suppose you are that patient. You're sick; you're scared. The doctor has examined you. And he says, "I've got some bad news for you, a little good news for you, and some really great news for you." Well, you'd probably be overjoyed.

**Theme: God's Prognosis for Adam & Eve-- & for Us!**

That is sort of what is going on in God's Word to us today. The "patients" are Adam and Eve, who have just fallen sick with the illness of sinfulness. The "doctor" is God himself, who has come to pay them a "house call", if you will. And in God's Word to us today, we read: GOD'S PROGNOSIS FOR ADAM & EVE-- & FOR US! since their disease is now an inherited one, with implications for us, their children. Basically, God gives them – God gives us! – (1) THE BAD NEWS, (2) THE GOOD NEWS, and (3) THE REALLY GREAT NEWS.

**Part One: The Bad News**

You know the background. It is at least six thousand years ago. And we are all the way across the world in that area between Turkey, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union; we're in the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve have followed Satan's temptation to sin, both in their hearts and with their hands. God has pursued them and led them to repentance. All too grudgingly, they have confessed their sin, and very lovingly, God has promised them a Savior from sin, Jesus Christ.

Now, the Lord details the results. He gives the prognosis. And essentially, he says, first to Eve and then to Adam, "I've got bad news for you, I've got good news for you, and I've got really great news for you." God's Word to us today is Genesis chapter three, verses sixteen through twenty-one. And it starts this way....

*To the woman God said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children."* A better translation? – "I will certainly increase your grief and conception; with grief you will give birth to children." You see: before this, childbearing would have involved neither physical pain nor emotional sadness. But now, with sin, the whole process would be fraught with grief—the

conception, the morning sickness, the bodily changes, the heaviness, the pain of labor and childbirth, ...and the post-partum adjustment, and the demands, and the naughtiness, and the childishness, and the rebellion, and the guilt over your own failures. Childbearing and childrearing would all impact a woman in a unique way. Even women without a husband or children would not escape, since they would be afflicted with periodic biological grief throughout their lives—simply because they are women.

Doesn't it make you just hate Satan? Doesn't it make you just want to have nothing to do with him anymore—because he brought this grief?!

And then *to the woman God said: "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."* That's well translated, by the way.

*Your desire will be for your husband.* That's true for the majority of women, who in fact get married. And that desire is good; God created it to be there. But what would have been a perfect desire, and one to which a husband would perfectly respond, becomes a desire tainted by sin. Now, woman might desire her husband too much: expecting him to meet all her needs, putting him then in the place which belongs only to God.

*And he will rule over you.* Now, the basic order there is good; God created it to be that way. In Eden itself, in perfect paradise itself: God made man to be entirely answerable to him, and God made woman to help in that endeavor and joyously to follow her man. Now, though, even the best men are too harsh with their wives sometimes, and neglectful at others. And way too many men go so far as to abandon their wives, or physically to abuse them. Men, let me be clear with you on this: If you lay a single hand on your woman, your wife, you deserve the grief, the jail sentence, or at least the absolute lack of love and respect that you are going to get.

And doesn't it make you just hate Satan, who brought that into the world?

And now: more bad news, this time for the man.

*To Adam God said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it...'"* Whoa, whoa, whoa. Before we finish that sentence: Is God really going to condemn the man for listening to his wife? – In every case: no! But in this case: yes! Adam couldn't blame Eve for that first sin. God expected Adam to be a man. So, guys, listen to your wives. Probably more often than you are right about something, your helper will be right about it. But when that doesn't happen, God is saying you are answerable to him for your family, and you're not going to be able to blame your wife for the bad advice she gave.

Okay, going on: *To Adam God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil – with "grief", there's that word again! – with grief you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you – which worthless vegetation was never there before – and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food.* Literally: with sweat on your nose, you'll eat bread. Isn't that picturesque?! So, now work – God's good idea, originally – work would bring grief. It would bring physical grief; ask any guy who has been doing a tough, physical job for any length of time at all! And work would bring emotional grief; ask any guy who has had to deal with other people for any time at all!

And this sweaty labor and grief with work will last *until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust – dirt! – you are and to dust – to dirt! – you will return.*" And so – sadly! – ends every individual's life. This is true for women, too, as well as men. But it's all the more especially true of men, since they die on the average a few years earlier than women.

So, that's the bad news. That's what happens when sin enters the world. It brings sickness. It brings sadness. It brings death. Doesn't it make you hate sin? Doesn't it make you want to have nothing to do with sin?! Isn't it all just so very tragic...?

## Part Two: The Good News

It makes you wonder whether a person can find any good news in God's prognosis for Adam and Eve—and for us. Well, Adam finds a little good news. The second-to-last verse says: *Adam* – literally, “the man” – *named his wife Eve* – literally, “living” – *because she would become the mother of all the living*. And that's true. Every living soul would have a human mother, like Eve. Not every living soul would have a human father. There would be one very extraordinary – and saving! – exception.

So, Adam had stumbled on to some good news. Consider those previous verses again.... *With pain you will give birth to children*. The bad news? – Pain. But the good news? – Children! God had not revoked that blessing.... *Your husband will rule over you*. The bad news? – Sometimes now, husbands wouldn't be nice at all. The good news? – Women would still have husbands. The blessed institution of matrimony was still intact...! And to Adam: *By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food*. The bad news? – *The sweat of your brow*. The good news? – *You will still eat food!*

And so, despite some very bad news, Adam discerned some good news. God had graciously left intact the basic institutions of this world: marriage, parenthood, labor. God had not decided to blow the whole thing – or at least all mankind – to smithereens.

## Part Three: The Really Great News

But there was still one piece of bad news that remained unmitigated. *Dust you are and to dust you will return*. After God's very wonderful blessings of work and marriage and parenthood, there was still death to contend with. There had to be—because: *the wages of sin is death*. Because there was still sin in the world, it had to result in death.

Now, did God do anything about that? Did God do anything about sin, which leads to death? Yes! Yes, and it comes up in the very next verse—our final verse: ***The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.***

Wait a minute! Wait a minute.... What does that have to do with solving sin? – Everything! That has everything to do with solving sin!

*The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.* Adam and Eve were now guilty sinners. A holy God's righteous anger over sin demanded that he exercise punishment. So, an execution takes place. But graciously, God does not execute Adam and Eve. He executes a substitutionary animal instead.

Or look at it this way. Here are Adam and Eve, sinful Adam and Eve, and they are naked. It's not right. It's offensive. It does not look good. It still doesn't.

They knew that. And so, they had sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. And fig leaves don't last. They don't last a week. They don't last well for even a couple of days. And it's the same thing with our feeble efforts to cover our sins: by running away from them, or minimizing them, or blaming somebody else for them. We can't cover our sins that way.

But God steps in. He makes garments of skin – leather garments! – for Adam and Eve. Now, that effectively clothes them! I mean: How long do leather garments, how long does a leather jacket, last? Well, with good care, it lasts a lifetime.

And so, God had effectively covered humanity's sin. But what did that require? What was the cost? Death! God executed an animal, God killed an animal; that's how you get the leather for garments like these. You see: *the wages of sin is death*. But God did permit a substitute, a sacrifice, to die in place of Adam and Eve.

And so started the entire Old Testament sacrificial system. From Abel on, animals died on altars in place of people because of people's sins. It happened, literally, billions of times. But the sacrifices still never exactly took sins away, because the next day there was still always the need for another sacrifice....

...Until, until nineteen and three quarters centuries ago, during a springtime midday, whose bright light was turned to night, on sacrificial wood, on an altar-like hill, just outside Jerusalem: where God provided a sacrifice – whose value is inestimable! – a sacrifice who covered all our sin with his own skin. And we've never had to sacrifice again.

### **Conclusion: We Rejoice in God's Prognosis for Us**

You see, fellow sick patients: our doctor has arrived!

"I have bad news for you," he says. "Your life will be filled with grief and sickness and sadness."

"I have no little good news for you," he says. "You will still, for some time, enjoy employment and marriage and parenthood."

"But I have some really great news for you," says our good doctor. "I have personally handled your medical situation. Your sickness will not end in death. You see: my blood matches yours. I am ordering an immediate transfusion. I may not survive. But you will be doing better in no time. In fact, you will be doing better than you've ever done before. And there is no possibility of relapse into this sickness of yours. You are cured! You're going home soon! Eternal life is yours!"

... "Doctor," Christ, "Thank you!!!" Amen.

Scripture says: *To that King: eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory for ever and ever!* Amen.