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HCC Sermon

Genesis 3:20-24

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: The father of Viggo Mortenson never forgot the time that let the pigs out of the pig pen.
2. Need: Sin causes peoples to treat us differently. [Maybe interact…?]
3. Subject: How does God treat with those who sin? [Those who sin exist in two categories: sinners and sinners saved by grace]
4. Text: Genesis 3:20-24
5. Preview: God treats those who sin graciously in three ways.

BODY

1. God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in his plan of deliverance (3:20). God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in him.
2. Adam believed that God would provide salvation through his wife Eve.
3. God promises that the seed of the woman will overcome the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15)
4. Adam renames his wife from woman to Eve
5. Canonical Development: God unfolds his plan of salvation through the Old Testament.
6. Salvation will come through specifically the family of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3)
7. Salvation will come through the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10)
8. Salvation will come through the line of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13)
9. God provides salvation through Jesus Christ if you believe.
10. God graciously provides a costly covering for sin’s shame (3:21)
11. God provides costly garments of skin to completely cover Adam and Eve’s shame.
12. Adam and Eve’s fig leaves did not cover enough (3:7)
13. God’s covering of skin is costly because it required a life
14. God’s covering of skin is complete because it covers the entire body.
15. Christ’s atoning work on the cross is sufficient to cover the shame of your sin (5:1-5).
16. God graciously provides an end to our sojourn in sin (3:22-24)
17. God expels Adam and Even from the garden of Eden so that they would not sojourn forever in a state of sin (3:22-24)
18. God recognizes the danger of man existing forever in a state of sin if he eats from the tree of life (3:22)
19. God expels man from the garden of Eden to the East (3:23-24a).
20. God stations a cherub to guard the way to the tree of life (3:24b)
21. The Bible depicts cherubs as guards to the presence of God.
22. The flaming sword represents the wrath of God that attempts to return to the tree of life (Deut 32:41-42)
23. Canonical Development: God reminded Israel of its sojourning as his people.
24. God commanded that the entrance of the tabernacle and temple face eastward.
25. Solomon decorated the temple with imagery of gardens and cherubs.
26. God set up the priest to guard the way to his presence.
27. We become sojourners in our sinful state when we place our faith in Christ awaiting the return to paradise
28. Faith in Christ dealt with the penalty and power of sin, but the presence of sin remains.
29. Our sojourn in a sinful state will end (Heb 9:27-28).
30. It will end at our death.
31. It will end at the return of Christ.
32. But we will return to paradise regaining access to the tree of life (Rev 2:7; 22:1-2)
33. If you fail to place your faith in Christ, then you will sojourn forever in a state of sin separated from God.

CONCLUSION

1. Summary: God treats those in sin with grace. (Repeat the three ways)?
2. Closing Image: Let me close with a stanza from our response song: Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me:

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

MANUSCRIPT

 **I read an article this week about an interview the actor Viggo Mortenson, the actor who played Aragorn in the Lord of the Rings films**. He talked about his father suffering dementia. His father kept sharing with his caretakers about a strange incident from childhood – the day he forgot to close a pig pen.

 Everyone thought that the old man was spouting nonsense. But they discovered the truth behind the story. Apparently, when he was a boy during a time when food was rare. He left the gate open. The pigs got out and ransacked the family garden. He never admitted the mistake as a boy. But the guilt had buried itself within his subconscious. He still remembered his mistake as his memory faded.

 It prompted me to think: Why did he not confess to the mistake? Why did not confess to the sin? Maybe he constructed a lie to avoid getting punished. Maybe he feared his father administering physical discipline. Maybe he worried that his parents would never trust him to watch the pigs again. Maybe inside, he knew that his mistake would cause people to treat him differently. This sin would change the way that people perceived him.

 **Sin causes people to treat us differently**. If the IRS audits our tax returns and discovers we fudged the numbers intentionally, then they’ll demand payment of lost taxes and scrutinize future tax returns. If we “conveniently” forget to send payment to our friend to pay for our portion of dinner the other night, then we may not receive a future invitation to dinner. If a friend discovers that you disclosed their secret, then they probably will not share another secret with you. If you demand that your adult children obey your every instruction because your pride insists that you know best, then you might experience estranged relationship with them. Sin affects our relationships with people. It causes people to treat us differently. The relationship changes.

 If we know that people treat us differently when we sin against them, then how does God treat sinners? How does God act toward those who rebel against him? What is God’s response when we disobey his commands? **How does God treat sinners?**

 We know that there are consequences to sin. In our series in Genesis, we learned that Adam and Eve’s sin resulted in the curse. Women would experience pain in childbearing. Men would have to work the cursed ground so that it would yield some fruit. Conflict would exist between men and women as they attempt to assert their dominance over one another. The world got turned upside down. This is the result of sin. This is God’s justice. Man disobeyed. They paid they price.

 But this morning, I want to focus on God’s grace toward the sinner. **God acts graciously toward the sinner**. He gives sinners what they do not deserve. God could have immediately executed man and woman for their rebellion. But he doesn’t. He allows them to live. God acted with grace toward them. How does God respond toward the sinner? **He acted graciously toward them.**

 We’ll see this in this morning’s text. Genesis, chapter three. Please turn there with me if you missed the reference earlier. Genesis, chapter three. We’ll look at the verses immediately following the curse. Genesis, chapter three.

 In this section of Scripture, **we’ll see three ways God graciously provides for sinners**. There are three things that God does that demonstrate his gracious nature. The texts us shows us three actions that God takes. God graciously provides for sinners in three ways.

 Let’s look at the first way God graciously treats sinners. First, **God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in him**. God has a plan to save sinners if they trust him. If they would believe in God’s provision of salvation, then they would be saved from their sin. Salvation from sin comes requires belief in God. **God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in him**.

 Let’s review what sin is. Sin as you remember from pastor Jason’s message last week finds its origin in archery. When an archer lets loose an arrow and misses the bullseye, this is sin. Often, we apply this imagery to our failure to act morally. And it’s true. If we have a moral code by which we ought to follow, then we will find that we ourselves have a hard time following it. We believe that we should always treat people courteously. But you wait in line at the local Texas DMV to get your license renewed and someone cuts in line. Your courteous nature may go out in the window because you can’t wait another fifteen minutes for the next attendant. You have places to be. We fail to follow any moral code perfectly whether it be God’s or our own because of sin.

 Jason turned the image on its head because it’s not complete. Sin is not just a failure to uphold a moral code. We sin because we take our bow and let arrows fly toward God. When we look at God’s design for human flourishing, we decide: “Thanks, but no thanks.” We shake our fist at God because we believe him to be a harsh and cold ruler. We prefer to rule ourselves. Hence, sin is ultimately rebellion against God.

 Let’s go back to the idea of God graciously providing salvation. While it would be appropriate for a king to execute a rebel, God gives people another chance. He gives people an opportunity to confess their rebellion and trust in him to provide salvation. It’s a return to living under his rule.

 Let’s turn our attention to the text. **Adam believed that God would provide salvation through his wife Eve**. After hearing the curse, Adam knew that only God could rescue him. God’s plan for salvation involved his wife, Eve. Look with me at Genesis, chapter 3, verse twenty. *The man called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all living.*

 There are two things to note in this verse. First, Eve already had a name. It was woman. Remember when God created woman, Adam sees her and says: “She will be named woman because she was taken out of man.” **Adam renames her Eve.** This new name means mother of all living. From her would come other human beings. But Adam anticipated that from these human beings would come one who would deliver them from sin’s curse. This descendant would return life to cursed humanity. He would reconcile God and man.

 This brings me to the second thing to note. The reason for the second name. Adam knew that a savior would come from Eve’s womb because of what God had said earlier. In Genesis, chapter three, verse fifteen, God said: “*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.*” This future child of Eve would be the serpent slayer. **God promised that the seed of the woman will overcome the seed of the serpent.** Adam believed in this promise. This prompts him to rename woman Eve. This verse demonstrates that Adam believed God. He trusted God to provide salvation through a future descendant.

 **God unfolds his plan of salvation through the Old Testament**. Later, we discover that this serpent slayer will come from the family of Abraham (12:1-3). At the end of Genesis, we discover that the serpent slayer will come through the line of Abraham’s great grandson: Judah (Gen 49:10). God then discloses that the serpent slayer will come from a descendant of Judah, king David (2 Samuel 7:12-13). The rest of the OT, Israel is left wondering: “Who is the future serpent slayer who will come from the line of David to save us from sin?”

 We discover that the serpent slayer is Jesus Christ in the New Testament. **God provides salvation through Jesus Christ if you believe.** You may know Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You may know what Jesus said. “Love your neighbor as yourself” You may know that Jesus is a moral teacher. You may know that Jesus Christ died on a cross. You may know that Jesus rose from the dead three days later. You may know that Jesus ascended into heaven. You may know that Jesus will return one day.

 But if you do not believe that you are sinner. If you don’t believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to die the death you deserved for your sin. If you don’t believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead proving his victory over sin and death. If you don’t believe these things, then you are still lost in your sin. You may know the gospel. But if you don’t believe the gospel, then you are still shaking your hand at God. You are still firing arrows at him.

 I remember a conversation with a friend. She shared with me that the gospel gripped her heart. It prompted her to even shed tears when she heard how it saved one of her friends. But when I asked her: “So do you believe in the gospel?” She replied: “No. To believe in the gospel would require me to admit that I’m a sinner and I need God’s help. I can’t do that.” That conversation that still echoes in mind because that might be some of you. Will you transition from knowing the gospel to believing the gospel? Will you be willing to stake your life on what God has done? This may mean taking steps toward baptism. Baptism serves as a public demonstration that you identify with Christ’s death and resurrection. Baptism also allows the church to affirm your profession of faith. If you have professed faith in the gospel but haven’t taken steps toward baptism, then I would encourage you to think about it. Talk to someone about it.

 First gracious provision. God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in Him. Let’s talk about God’s second gracious provision.

 **God graciously provides a costly covering for sin’s shame**. God gives clothing to sinners to cover their shame. He provides a new outfit. He gifts new garments. This garment is expensive. It costs something. **God graciously provides a costly covering for sin’s shame**.

 In the text, **we’ll discover that God provides costly garments of skin**. God provides costly garments of skin to completely cover Adam and Eve’s shame. Look at verse 21. *And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin.*

 Why did God make Adam and his wife a new wardrobe? After the fall, remember that Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves to make loin cloths (3:7). Loin cloths is the equivalent to a person’s underwear. It only covers the private areas of a person. Adam and Eve’s fig leaves didn’t cover enough. They provided inadequate coverage for their bodies.

 It serves as a metaphor for their inability to cover their own shame. Their effort and work could not hide their feelings of guilt. It couldn’t properly pay the penalty for their sin.

 We often try to cover our sins, don’t we? We think to ourselves: “Yes. I may gossip about other people. But I attend church. I go to Bible study. I don’t swear. I do my work on time. My virtuous qualities cover my sin.” We may justify our sins. Yeah… I may badmouth my boss when he’s not around. But he’s a hard boss. He always calls me at night asking me to work on a project. He takes credit for my work. He requires me to come into the office when I told him that I’m vacation. His bad deeds deserve my scathing critique. We try to justify ourselves. We try to cover up our sin.

 Note the material of the covering. Adam and Eve used fig leaves. They must have thought: “Let’s choose a material that could grow back. We’ll choose leaves.” But God chose a different material for their outfits. He chose skin. This meant that an animal had to die for their shame to be covered. It would always serve as a reminder of the death that would await them because of sin. But it also reminded of the need of a life to atone for their sin.

 God made Adam and Eve’s garments not loincloths. Note the word: garment in verse 21. Unlike their original loincloths, these were garments. This word connotated a robe. We know it’s a robe like garment because Moses uses the same word to describe the ornate “garment” slash robe that Jacob gives to Joseph. This outfit would cover their entire physical bodies. It would also help them deal with the harsh environment outside of the garden. God’s covering is complete because it covers the entire body.

 Again, this garment serves a metaphor for how only God can cover a sinner completely. Only God can give a sinner sufficient covering. It will be God’s work not our own that will remove our shame and give us new outfits.

 **We see this idea of God providing outfits through the Old Testament**. After the Levites offered the atoning sacrifice for Israel, the Levites would receive garments of skin (Lev 7:8). The high priest would put on a garment to minister before the presence of God (Exod 28:42). The prophet Zechariah receives a vision of the high priest Joshua receiving a new garment (Zechariah 3:3-4).

 For us believers, we know that Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to cover the shame of our sin. The apostle John in his first letter talks about how the blood of Christ purifies us from all our sin (1 John 1:7). This is why Paul talks so much about putting off the old self with its practices and to put on the new (Col 3:8-10). God calls us to remove the garments of shame and sin and to receive the garment that he provides us in Christ.

 To put on the garment of Christ means that we no longer need to fight to justify ourselves. We can confess that we are a sinner. We accept that we are flawed people. But we our significance is found in Christ. We put on our “in Christ” identity. We gossip because we believe that we think we know best. But putting on the garment of Christ means we acknowledge believe only God knows best. This prompts us to talk less about people when they’re not around. We don’t bad mouth our employer. We put on Christ realizing that our ultimate employer is God. We work for Him. We don’t need to justify ourselves because God will vindicate us.

 God graciously provides salvation to those who believe in Him. He also provides costly covering for sin’s shame. Let’s move on to God’s last gracious provision.

 **God graciously provides an end to our sojourn in sin**. We will not live in the state of sin forever. Our days in a cursed world are numbered. This world. This body. These things are temporary. We are all passing through. **God graciously provides an end to our sojourn in sin**.

 After God clothes Adam and Eve, he expels them from the garden of Eden. God expels Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden so that they would not sojourn forever in the state of sin.

 **God recognizes the danger of man remaining in the garden in their fallen state**. If man continued to eat from the tree of life, then he would remain forever in the state of sin. Look with me at verse 22. *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 of the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”*

 Remember the idea of knowing good and evil. It’s not about discerning right and wrong. Adam and Eve already knew prior to the fall what is right. Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The concept of “knowing good and evil” refers to living one’s life according to one’s own design rather than God’s. To know good and evil is to determine for oneself what is right in their own eyes rather than God.

 Recall that in the garden of Eden, there existed another tree near the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is the tree of life. God created the tree so that if man ate of it, then man would live forever. But if man in the state of sin ate from the tree of life, then they would be in forever rebellion against God. Any chance of reconciliation with God would be lost because a holy God could never coexist with a sinful man.

 This prompts God to expel man. **God expels man from the garden of Eden to the East**. Look with me at verse 23. *Therefore, the LORD god sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man.* I grew up learning that the Eastside is a bad part of town. In the San Francisco Bay Area, we never went to the east side of Palo Alto. I don’t know if it’s true of Houston. Someone will have to tell me after service. Note that any time a person heads eastward in the Bible, he heads away from God. After Cain kills Abel, he heads East (Gen 4:16). Humanity builds the tower of Babel in the East (Gen 11:2). Lot separates from Abraham and heads to the East (Gen 13:11). If you are to sojourn, then you would never sojourn in the East. That would take you far from God.

 After God expels man from the garden, **God stations a cherub to guard the way to the tree of life.** Look at verse 24. *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.* The Bible depicts cherub as guards to the presence of God. God’s footstool would be held up by a cherub’s wings. On top of the ark of covenant, there were two cherubs. God’s presence dwelt above their wings. It’s no surprise that God would station a cherub to guard the way to the tree of life. Note also the weapon. He holds a flaming sword. In Deuteronomy, Moses describes God’s wrath as a flaming sword (Deut 32:41-42). Anyone who re-enters the garden to obtain fruit from the tree of life would need to first face God’s wrath.

 This meant that Adam and Eve would live their lives as sojourners outside of Eden. Life would be different outside of the garden. In the garden of Eden, the lived on rich fertile dirt. Anything coming forth from the garden Eden would easily produce fruit. But They would work the cursed ground to produce fruit for the family. They would have to guard their fruit trees from pestilence. They would need to ensure that the tree had sufficient water. They need to care for the dirt so that it provided nutrients. Work would be frustrating. But they would long for the way when they could return to the garden.

 **Throughout the Old Testament, God remind Israel that they were sojourners**. Their place of worship would remind them of that. God commanded that the entrance of the tabernacle and temple faced eastward. Whenever Israel entered the courtyard of the tabernacle or temple, they would need to head west. This reminds them they need to journey westward to return to Eden.

 To further help remind them of this, **Solomon decorated the temple with imagery of gardens and cherub**. The doors to the temple would have depictions of palm trees and cherubim (2 Kings 6:34). When the priests entered the temple, they would see carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers (2 Kings 6:32). Before you entered the inner sanctuary, the high priest would see two huge carvings cherubim guarding the way to the presence of God (2 Kings 6:27).

 **God set up the priests to guard the way to his presence**. Moses said that only one person could enter the holy of holies – the high priest. The priesthood had the responsibility to ensure that no common Israelite would enter the temple lest they die. The priest shares commonalities with the cherub guarding the way into the garden of Eden.

 As Christians, we become sojourners as well. **We are sojourners in our sinful state when we place of our faith in Christ**. We await the return to paradise.

 Faith in Christ dealt with the penalty and power of sin, but the presence of sin remains. The penalty for sin is death. Jesus paid that penalty by dying on the cross. The power of sin held us under its sway. When Jesus rose from the dead, he broke the power of sin. But we still live in these fleshly bodies affected by sin. We sense the tension often between our fleshly desires and the desires of the Spirit.

 This life in the flesh will not last forever. **Our sojourn in a sinful state will end**. It will end either of two ways. First way. **Our sojourn in a sinful state will end at our death**. When we die, we will no longer have to deal with our sinful flesh. We await the receipt of our resurrection bodies. Second. **Our sinful state will end at the return of Christ**. When Christ returns, he will give to us resurrection bodies that resemble his own. We will finally experience full freedom from sin.

 At that point, we will return to paradise regaining access to the tree of life. According to the book of Revelation, Jesus will grant to those who place their faith in Him permission to eat from the tree of life (Rev 2:7). From the tree of life will flow a river that will heal curse of creation (Rev 22:2-3). Creation will experience a renewal where the curse of sin is removed.

 But let me give you a word of warning. **If you fail to place your faith in Christ, then you will sojourn forever in a state of sin separate from God**. You currently experience a separation from God. The divine resources of the Holy Spirit are not availed to you. You are not able to experience faith, love, and hope. But this separation will be permanent if you continue to refuse to place your faith in Christ. When you die, you will experience eternal separation from God. When Christ returns, he will cast you far from his presence. Paradise for you will be lost. What will you do? Will you continue to persist to live according to your design? As Jason asked a few weeks ago, how is that going for you? Do you experience a peace that surpasses understanding? Do you find freedom to admit your flaws knowing that God accepts you?

 And for those of you who are believers, remember that you are sojourners. Don’t settle in this world. Don’t pursue the comforts of this world. Everything in this world will pass away. Your M1 chip in your MacBook will pass away when the M2 chip releases. You will recycle your current phone when its battery dies for a newer phone. Your new sports car will be tomorrow’s junk heap. Your 401K worth millions of dollars will be turned into pennies due to a stock market crash or inflation. Your new home will experience wear and tear. Pursue the things of God. Share with people the hope that you in Christ. Care for your brother and sister in Christ. Grow in your knowledge of God. Serve one another. God will graciously bring this sojourn to an end. Until then, sojourn well.

 How does God treat those who sin? He treats them with grace. He graciously provides salvation to those who believe in him. He provides costly covering for sin’s shame. He provides an end to our sojourn in the state of sin.

 **Let me end with a stanza from our response song: Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me.** With every breath I long to follow Jesus. For he has said that He will bring me home. And day by day I know He will renew me. Until I stand with joy before the throne.