

If you have your Bibles, why don't you go ahead and grab them? We're going to be in Genesis 1 through 3. We won't read all of that. In fact, we'll spend the bulk of our time in Genesis 3, which is the least happy of those three chapters. My hope and prayer is this series should be pretty spectacular for us, as we begin to kind of reorient around the idea of the gospel and what the gospel is.

We use that word a lot, so let me just flat out define it. The word *gospel* is from the Greek word *euaggelion*, which means the good news, but here's something to consider if we're talking about good news. For news to be good, it has to invade bad spaces. Are you tracking with me? For good news to occur, it has to invade places where there's some anxiety or some fear. Maybe there are some bad things going on so, "Oh, that was good news."

When you get the report from the doctor that you're healthy, woo! That's good news. If you ask somebody to marry you and they say yes, that's good news. Right? It's good news because there's a chance something could go nasty there. In order for us to fully understand the good news, we have to first understand there's bad news.

Just FYI, so we can adjust everybody's expectation, today is bad news day. If you came in going, "I'd really like to leave happy and chipper," wrong weekend. We're going to just lay down what the bad news is, and then from the bad news I think the good news will look all the more glorious. Plus, the reality for everyone, where we actually live, is in the bad news.

The world is busted up, man. Some people are really tuned in to this, primarily because of what their jobs are. I'll give you some examples. Three weeks ago my wife and I went and visited a covenant member of ours named Dan Leal, and Dan Leal works at the Denton County Children Advocacy Center. All day long, five days a week, they counsel, interview, and work with law enforcement around sexually and physically abused kids. Every day, eight hours a day, for his job. His whole staff, this is what they do. Do you think they're not dialed in to how busted up the world is in a way you and I aren't?

What about parole officers or social workers. On and on I could go. There are people who are really attuned to, "Man, it's a mess out there." Then if you want to get out of just men and women being depraved and get into just the brokenness of the natural order, can I tell you guys a crappy job? If you have

kids, I apologize. A *crummy* job. Oncologists. I don't care what they get paid, and I personally know they get paid well. It's an awful job. Here's how I know.

After my surgery I go out of rehab into a meeting with an oncologist. There are other brothers and sisters there with me who have just as much spunk as I have, just as much vitality as I have. They have families like I have families. They have a will to live like I have a will to live. Most of them over the last four years have wasted away and have died. I haven't, but I'm an outlier.

Listen, their job is awful. To see someone full of life with all these things going for them and then to fight with them, for them, and to watch that person deteriorate, the oncologist has to decide whether or not to detach and not have good bedside manner and not actually care for people or to actually care for people and just know we're going to lose a lot. It's a terrible job. You don't think they're dialed in to the brokenness of the world?

Listen. Cancer doesn't care how much spinach you eat. You get that. Right? We're all cramming our faces with blueberries, hoping it works. You have to know our oncologists know this. They know there might be... Yes, it's better than a Big Mac, but ultimately, it doesn't have the ultimate authority over disease. The world is broken. Oncologists are dialed in. Detectives are dialed in. Undercover police officers are dialed in that the world is dark.

For most of us, we're not dialed in like that. We have two things that work for us in regard to the brokenness of the world. Every once in a while, there'll be an event that makes the fog lift. Every once in a while, somebody will go in and shoot up a school or shoot up a theater, and we'll go, "Oh my gosh, it's awful out there." Every once in a while, somebody we love will get sick or we will get sick. The fog lifts, and we're like, "It's busted."

Primarily, how we operate in regard to the world's being broken is we have this kind of low-grade gnawing in us, this desire for more while not quite being sure what that more is. So there's something deep in all of us that's kind of, "There has to be more than this." If you're saying, "That's not true, Matt," if you've severed that and not satisfied it, you've simply served to damn yourself, because that anxiousness, "There has to be more," is God-wrought and a gift from God to lead us ultimately to what God would have us have in him.

The world you and I are living in is not the world as God created it. Look at me. I'm not talking about dinosaurs. The world you and I live in is not the world as God created it to be. In Genesis 1 and 2, we find the triune God of the universe, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, in perfect contentment in

the Godhead overflowed in their love and affection for one another onto the canvas of creation and then created all that was.

I've heard many evangelicals say they believe God created mankind for fellowship. I have monumental problems with this, primarily, the Bible and what it teaches. Here's what I mean. Is fellowship a component of God's creative will? Absolutely. Is it why he created? No. Think about what that means about God. You would change Genesis 1:1 to read, "In the beginning there was God, and he was kind of bored. He was all alone. There wasn't anybody to talk to. It was just kind of lacking, so in God's loneliness, out of the overflow of his power, he began to create." That's ridiculous.

Our God is triune, and the triune God of the universe in glad, perfect contentment within the Godhead overflowed out of that contentment onto the canvas of creation, and he began to create. What we know is God the Father is the Author of creation. "Let us," God the Father says. That means there's more than just... He's not talking to himself. It's not a mental disorder.

We know God the Son is the active force of creation. We find this out in John, chapter 1, starting in verse 1. It says, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."** So you have God the Father who is the Author. You have God the Son, Jesus Christ, who is the active force.

We'll read later on in the book of Colossians that all things were created by him and for him and through him and to him, so Jesus is that active force. Then you have the Holy Ghost, who shows up early. Genesis 1:2 says, "And the Spirit of God was hovering about the waters." That's not some sort of ethereal, weird, impersonal force.

It's the personal presence of God that brings life to where there is no life. We know this because the word *Spirit* is the same Hebrew word for the word *breath*, and if you follow that throughout the Old Testament and into the new, you'll find verses like Job 33, verse 4. It says, **"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."**

What brings life to the lifeless? The Spirit of God, the personal presence of God Almighty. To this day the Holy Spirit brings life to where there is no life. How are we born again? Does not the Holy Spirit inhabit us, bring our hearts to life, take what's dead and make it alive? That's the Spirit of God that does that. When God forms the man and he does...what? He breathes into him, and he lives. So God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, out of an overflow of their own gladness and contentment, begin to paint on the canvas of creation. Here's what we know. It's good. They nail it. Laced it up and nailed it.

So there's a rhythm that's established in Genesis 1 and 2, and it goes something like, "God created this, God created this, God created this, and it was good." It literally reads rhythmically in the Hebrew, but you know that. So ultimately, you have this triune God on the canvas of creation, painting a world that is not the world you and I are inhabiting. In the middle of this spectacular creation, creation is at perfect peace. The Hebrew idea of *shalom* means perfect peace.

I like to think of it in regard to rhythm. If you like music and you listen to live music, if everybody is playing what they should be playing, it should be nice, but if some dude gets off, you kind of know somebody is off. Even if you're not musical, you're trying to figure out who is off. "Is it the drummer? No, he looks on. Is it the bass? Oh gosh, it's the electric guitar guy again. He's just such a diva." So you can kind of spot when music is off.

The Bible puts this in rhythmic terms. It helps me to think God created everything in harmony and in rhythm. He takes the man, he takes the woman, he puts them in the garden, and he gives them one rule. Think how hard that is, and it's not even like an ambiguous rule. It's not like, "Show respect," like there are a billion ways to do or not do that. It's kind of a clear-cut, "Don't do this." It's just one rule. Here's the rule. Genesis, chapter 2, verse 15. Look at it.

**"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"**

Let me lay this out. That's one rule. That's not complex. God has created this rhythmic, beautiful... If we had time to dig into the story, here's what you have. You have a naked man and a naked woman, put into a perfect world. There's no death, no disease, no pain, no shame, no sorrow. **"Be fruitful and multiply...."** Thank you, Lord. Then, "Be my viceroys. Be my icon. The whole world is yours, just don't touch that tree." That's not heavy-handed. That's a pretty sweet deal.

I had a man over lunch ask me one time, "Why would God even put the tree in the garden? That's the equivalent of me loading and chambering a round in my pistol and setting it on the coffee table and going, 'Don't touch that, kids. Get in the pantry if you want. Hop into the fridge, but don't touch the pistol.' Doesn't that make me a bad father to put the pistol on the coffee table?" So I said, "What type of pistol is it?" No, I'm kidding. It's sort of like, "Oh my gosh, this *is* Texas."

In the end, hear me say here's what I *think*. I always want to try to separate when I'm going, "This is conjecture. It's not the Word of God." Here's why I think the tree is there. The tree is there to weave into us from day one that obedience to God brings joy, that submission to the commands of God are a good thing. Think about what has happened. "You're my viceroys. Here you go. Helpmate. All the trees are yours, all the mountains, all the rivers. It's all yours. Be my viceroy, but don't touch this."

Obedience brings joy. Today that holds true. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve have the attention span and/or ability to obey about like a 2-year-old hyped up on Pixy Sticks, because we don't get but a few verses later until this thing just absolutely unravels. We don't have time to read it, but I'll encourage you to dig around in Genesis 1. We'll read Genesis 3 together.

In Genesis 1 and 2, you have Eve walking in the garden. Her dumb, passive husband is with her. He is an idiot. I'm not saying all men are idiots. I'm saying passive men are idiots. Ultimately, they walk into the garden. The Serpent starts lying to Eve and presents the lie that to this day we all buy into. "Did God say you couldn't have the fruit on that tree?"

"Yeah, he said we can't eat it or even touch it, or we'll die."

"Man, that's not true. He just knows if you do that, you'll have the knowledge he has, and you'll make a better god than he will. You're a better sovereign. You're a better ruler. You would make a better god."

By the way, Adam is right there. It's like, "What's that dude doing?" Seriously, what's he doing? He's like, "Look at those. I named those. I called that one a pigeon, that one a dove. Eve, I named these." What is this guy doing? His wife is being lied to. Everything is at stake, and that moron is staring into the clouds. So when Eve sees it's pleasing to the eye and good for food, she takes it, and she eats it. She hands it to her husband. There are no questions out of this moron. He's like, "Oh, here you go." He gives it back.

At that moment, outright rebellion is declared against the King of glory, and the cosmos fractures. All that *shalom*, all that peace, all that rhythm at every level of the universe fractures. We'll read about that.

Genesis, chapter 3, starting in verse 8 says, **"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."**

There's not a more heartbreaking verse in all of Scripture than what you just read right there. Before sin enters into the world, you have no shame, nothing to hide, outright joy in the presence of God, and now what has happened? There's shame, there's the understanding of nakedness, they run, and they hide. It

also made them dumb because they hid in the trees from the Creator of everything. "Here he comes!" To the trees? He has created everything, and you know that. Sin just makes you dumb. Let's keep reading.

**"But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said..." This is gold. "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."**

We'll get to this. That's just awesome. "That woman you gave me. I was just minding... That woman. It's the woman's issue. I was chilling. I just ate. I didn't know what was for dinner. I just showed up. I'd been working all day in the garden. I don't know." We don't have time for this.

**"Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 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.'**

**To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"**

What we're reading in this text is a complete reordering of creation from how God designed it to be into what you and I currently live in. Here's what you have: creation itself reordered and fractured. "Snake, onto your belly. There is now strife where there is peace. You're going to bruise his head. He's going to strike your heel. Livestock is going to trample on him. You're going to eat the dust of it all the days." Where there was rhythm, was *shalom*, was peace, now you have a cosmos that's in chaos. Now you have unbelievable violence where there was no violence.

In fact, we know this to be true because Romans 8 says all of creation was subjected to futility. We also read in Romans 8 all of creation is experiencing the pains of childbirth. Now, straight... I have never

experienced the pain of childbirth. I have been in the room. It looks awful. Ladies, thank you. My beautiful bride said things I didn't even know were in her. So in the end it looks like a significant kind of pain.

The Bible says all of creation has been subjected to futility. That means hard-pressed. It's not what it used to be. It used to be full, and now it has been hard-pressed. It has been pressed down into futility, and then it's experiencing the pain of childbirth. It's in pain. It's why when the prophets tell us of creation restored, creation renewed, it says the wolf and the lamb lie down together. They dine together.

That means it's restored. Right? So right now the wolf and the lamb still dine together, but it's not pleasant for the lamb. When all things are made new, violence is gone. Creation is restored. The lamb and the wolf will lie down together. The lion will chew grass like the oxen. The prophet Isaiah said deserts will bloom like roses. Mountaintops will produce sweet wine. You have creation restored when God's redeeming work is done.

For now, it's busted. It's violent. We didn't have to read long before you saw the relational chaos that was introduced into our experience upon sin entering into the world. It's interesting to note there's not a suitable helper in all of creation found for Adam. His golden retriever was going to be inadequate. God gives him a helpmate, the greatest gift given to man outside of God himself: the woman.

What we read in Genesis is God puts Adam to sleep, forms Eve, and then Adam wakes up, rubs his eye, *bam!* There's just a fine naked woman standing there in front of him, and you get the first song of the Bible. Even what he names her is significant. He goes, "This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. I will call her *woman*." It means "out of me." It literally can be translated *mine*. I love that. He looks at everything. He's like, "Dog, cat, camel...mine."

You have this honeymoon period that lasts a chapter, because God says, "Who told you you were naked?" "That woman you gave me gave me some fruit." He just threw her under the bus so fast. Here's what I want you to notice about the nature of relationships. Notice in this narrative nobody will own it. "It's that woman you gave me." "It was that snake." It's like nobody is ever responsible. This creates havoc in relationships if no one is ever to blame. Relationships are blown up.

Pain is amplified. Do you see that? "Your pain will increase in childbirth." I don't think that just has to do with childbirth, although I've already said, ladies, I have mad respect. All pain is turned up. How about this one? Work is actually now work. Here's what I want you to know. I want to speak specifically to men, although it does apply to women.

God created men to work way before sin was entered into the world. You read it in Genesis. He placed the man in the garden to work it. So work is not sinful. Work is a gift from God. In fact, men were designed to work. There is nothing more dangerous than a man who is bored. That's why God wants to make sure, men, you don't get bored, because he makes commands of you to work hard, to provide for your family, to love and serve your wife, and to love and serve your children. When men shirk on that responsibility and get bored, they'll always replace it with things that are wicked and will destroy them.

A bored man might be the most dangerous thing on earth. "Well, what if my wife makes more than me?" Well, *cha-ching!* That still doesn't give you the right to play video games all day. You've been designed by God to work and work hard, but what happens here in this text is hard work becomes toilsome. It becomes wearying. It becomes exhausting.

Where there was a time that work wasn't exhausting, now work can be exhausting. The call to come and die, which is the call on the man's life, is now an exhausting one, and all we were meant to cultivate will now war against us. Now it'll produce thorns and thistles. There was going to be a time that work didn't produce thorns and thistles, but that day is gone. That's the old world, not the world you and I live in. The world you and I live in is all we are meant to cultivate will war against us.

Then you have the big one here. "From dust you came, and to dust you will return." Now you have the reign of death ruling over man. This is what you feel when you feel like something is not right. Maybe that's working itself out as depression or anxiety or fear or enslavement to something, but what you're feeling in that moment is there's something at the soul level, according to Ecclesiastes 3:11, where our souls somehow remember Genesis 1 and 2.

According to Romans 8, they groan in eager longing along with creation for things to be restored. We can feel this isn't right, like when someone dies early. I don't believe you can die early, but when someone dies early, don't you feel like something is not right with that? People get sick. Aren't we trying to solve these things?

Our desire to solve these things is the empirical data we're acknowledging, "This isn't right. We need to fix it." That gnawing in our guts that says there's more is what this is. So God bless us. We seek to try to redeem, to reconcile, to rescue ourselves, and we run to four different wells that will never, ever work. Here are the four places we run to try to fix this, "Something is wrong. I have to fix it." The first is the most common and, I think, the craziest.

1. *Ourselves*. That is we always run to ourselves first. Here's what we do. We have thoroughly convinced ourselves that a better version of us is what's going to finally solve all that bothers us. We have this future

version of us in our minds today that once we get there, that angst, that frustration, that, "There has to be something more," is simply going to vanish. Here's what I'd like to lay before you. Ten years ago, you thought you would be there today. How are you doing, boss? Still a little bit disappointed? This is the game. We kind of perpetually push it forward.

Here's what really is crazy about it. I've tried to say this to you as often as I can because it's true. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone who has lied to you and disappointed you more than you have, and yet simultaneously, you'll applaud your own sovereignty. Isn't that crazy? "I stink at life. Aren't I a great god? I can't figure this thing out, but my trying is better than any outside authority that might tell me how." We're really crazy.

Growing up, my parents listened to Kenny Rogers and The Carpenters. I'm still angry. I've tried to work through that. I just every once in a while start singing "The Gambler," and then I just get angry at myself. Karen Carpenter died of a disorder called *anorexia nervosa*. This is where you literally starve yourself. It's just as mental, if not more mental, than it even is physical.

Here's what happens. There's a perception of reality that's twisted that leads to the demise of the person. If you see photos of people who are close to death of anorexia nervosa, they are just bone and skin, internal organs failing, and when they look in the mirror, they think they're fat. It's madness, and there's a type of spiritual anorexia nervosa that has us looking in the mirror and thinking we're more than we are. I need you to hear me. You're not going to like this. Look at me. You will never be good enough for God. Do you hear me?

I know some of you said amen to that, and some of you gasped in shock. You will never be good enough for God. That version of you in the future you have in your head, the one with six-pack abs and cash falling out of its pockets will be just as disappointing to you as you find you right now. You will never be good enough for God. It's the wrong well. You will not be able to satisfy what has gone wrong in you with that. A better version of you solves nothing, which leads me to the second well. If we can't quiet our soul in ourselves, we'll try to get others to help us.

2. *Others*. Our culture preys on this one like an apex predator. It just works this. I can't believe how many of us think other people will complete us. The fracture in the foundation of every relationship, whether it be friendship or marriage or parent to child, is the fracture of, "You will satisfy and complete me." There is a type of romanticism that is poison if you take it.

I love my wife. She is ridiculously awesome, and she's not in here. I'm not saying that to get points. My bank account is full with love points. I'm saying she is my best friend, a gift from God on high, outside of

my salvation, the most beautiful thing God has ever given me. I love that woman, but she is not my god, she has not completed me, and she has not satisfied my soul.

Is she a good friend? Yes. Is she, when all is said and done, what I needed to do all God would have me do? Sure. Is she my god? No, she'd make a terrible god. She'd make an awful god. If you put expectations on your friends, on your spouses to fill that emptiness in you, you're just sowing conflict in your life. They can't do it. It's impossible.

So almost every divorce... In fact, I'll say it. Every divorce I've worked on with a couple has at the broken part of their foundation an expectation for the other person to be what the other person could never be. Where they should've found that in the Creator of the universe, instead they expected that to be from the other person, and it's not going to work. "What about adultery?" Adultery has at its roots, "I need this person to be everything for me," whether that's emotionally or physically.

Men make terrible gods. Women make crummy gods. Don't get me started on children. You can giggle. Just make sure you're not raising your kid and teaching them by how you're raising them that they are god. Families should not revolve around their children. There'll be a day they leave the house, and then, "Oh, who's this person?" Just be careful. Love them, yes. Serve them, yes. Let them chase their passions. Don't let them be the god of your home. That's for free. We have to get back to what we're doing.

Just FYI, I will say this to our single men. The Bible says, **"He who finds a wife finds what is good..."** Brothers, I would just take God at his word, and I'd start to hunt. I'm just saying... I'm just bothered by some of our 20-something men, maybe boys who can shave. "I just want to be established before I get married." It's much more fun getting established together, and it's also how God grows you up. Go to work, young man. Rumble, young men. You be godly. You be upright. You take care of their heart.

Men, stop this nonsense of... You don't do that in any other area of your life. "I just wish I'd find a job." What are you doing? "I'm just sitting here, waiting for the phone to ring." It doesn't happen that way. When you want a sandwich, don't you get up and make one? Yes. You say, "Oh, I wish I could really find a godly woman." Anyway... Come on, man. It's madness. Stop it! Let's move. I know some of you girls are like, "Uh-huh. 972-..." You're throwing out your digit here. Just calm down, Mama. I'm doing my part. Just wait.

If you're engaged, let me say this. God bless you. If you're going into this relationship thinking this person is going to satisfy all the cracks and crevices of your heart, you are moving toward conflict that ultimately will create a lot of pain and a lot of loss for you. We find the fullness of life in Christ, not in others. The expectation that others become that for us puts an impossible weight on them, whether those are our

friends, whether those are our spouses, or whether those are our children. We can't go to the well of others and satisfy our souls.

Can we numb the anxiousness for a while? Yeah. People don't like love. They love kind of that flirty, flirty feeling. They don't love love. Love is sacrificial. Love is ferocious. It's not emotive. It's in. Our culture doesn't love love. It loves the idea of love. It wants the emotion without paying anything for it. It's ridiculous. So you have the well of self. That's not going to work. You have the well of others. That's not going to work.

3. *The world.* The world is tricky because the world kind of feels good, and here's what I mean by *the world*. What I mean by *the world* is really kind of twofold. One, there's the stuff the world can provide. Have you ever thought about how really silly this is? I taught this back when we were walking through the book of Ecclesiastes.

Isn't it interesting how new stuff makes us feel like better human beings? We're not. We just got a new watch, but that new watch makes us *feel* better. Have you thought about how crazy that is, that new stuff has a drug-like effect on us? You get a new ride, and you think you're a better human being. No, you're just the same human being with debt. You're not any better. You just have new stuff. A new home makes you feel better about yourself. It's still you. It's just a new house, but it has that effect on us. It's dangerous.

You can numb that angst with trinkets and toys. Oh, that I might ever love you enough to lay before you everything you own is going to go to the garage sale or the dump. Eventually, it's going to be buried under a mountain of dirt with a bunch of other rubble. Everything you own is transient, here for but a season. None of it makes you a better person.

Then there is this aspect of the world I want to throw out to you. There's a thing called *common grace*. *Common grace* is God's good gifts to all. Let me throw some of those out there. Food is good and can be enjoyed by the believer or the unbeliever. If you ate it in the car, that's not good food. There's good food out there, and it's awesome.

There's good wine out there, and that can be enjoyed by those who are believers and those who are not believers. Sex is a good gift from God. You know that. Right? These are gifts from God. God did that. God created food. God created wine. He created sex. Sex is not a pagan thing. It's a gift from God, given to his people.

God, despite the bad press, is very much pro-sex. "Eat and drink your fill, you lovers." God said that. "**Be fruitful and multiply...**" That one is procreation, but "Eat and drink your fill, you lovers," is not

procreation. That's, "Enjoy yourself." I don't know if you read the narrative closely, but at no point does the Devil run in and stick anything on anybody. Physiologically, God made all of you, which means sex is God's idea. That's not a part of the fall. It was a good gift from the beginning.

Here's the thing about the world. When we use common graces outside of the good, right boundaries God has placed, a type of destruction replaces where life would actually flourish if we stayed within the bounds. Anybody who has children knows boundaries are good things. This railing against authority is madness in our culture.

How many of you have two-story houses? If you have stairs, are you a cruel dad or mom if you put that little gate thing that keeps your kid from plummeting to their death on your stairs? Are you a bad parent if you set up that boundary? No, you're an awesome parent. Do you plug up the electrical outlets? Because that's like a tractor beam for your kid. He's going to find something metal and stick it in it. I don't know what's wrong with those little things, but that's what they're going to do.

Does it make you a bad parent to protect and set boundaries around your child? No, it makes you an awesome parent. In the same way, when God says, "Use food like this. Enjoy wine like this. Enjoy sex like this," God is not after begrudging. He's not trying to take anything from you. How would God be glorified if God's big plan was, "You're going to follow me because I have hell, but I'm going to make you miserable while you do it"?

His big plan of gaining followers is, "I'm going to make you miserable people. What I'm going to lord over you is my authority over hell. You'd better do what I say, or I'll damn you forever"? That's a great plan. No, God's plan is actually the opposite of that. "Let me show you the fullness of joy." Isn't that what Jesus says he came for in John 10:10? **"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."**

So when we run to the world but we run to the world outside of the boundaries of what God created things to be enjoyed in, we hamstring and hurt ourselves. Food is good. It is to be enjoyed, but we shouldn't run there for comfort, we shouldn't run there for support, and we shouldn't make it our god. Wine is a good gift from God, even that junk in the box that some of you drink. Some of you are not in a place you can run to that and enjoy that at all or ever should. There's a way to drink wine that glorifies the Lord, and there's a way that leads to debauchery, sin, and destruction. Be careful.

Sex is good and right and beautiful, and it's enjoyable whether you're a believer or not a believer. For *dod* to occur... That's the Hebrew word for a man and woman coming together in every possible way. *Dod* translates a mingling of souls. For a mingling of souls to occur, that means we give ourselves over to one another in a way that's far beyond physical.

Jesus clearly teaches sexual sin does damage to the soul in a way other sins don't. We are careful with that one, and we line ourselves up with how God commanded us to operate in them so our joy might ever be increasing and we don't experience the collateral damage that occurs when we think we're smarter than God. The world can't satisfy you for all its trinkets and toys. It's clear if you're paying attention they can't deliver on what they're promising. It used to be, "Have sex." Now it's, "Here are sexual techniques because we're having sex and we're not being satisfied, so better sex must be the thing that satisfies us."

Do you not know you're already stuck in a cycle of what you already possess isn't making you happy so you're buying into the lie that what you actually need is more of what you already have, that's what's going to be what works, that you just get more of what already hasn't satisfied you will satisfy you? This is the madness. This is the world. This is what happens when you run to that well. It's not going to work, ever. You're not going to find it in you. You're not going to find it in others. You're not going to find it in the world. That leaves us one more.

4. *Religion*. Religion will not fix it either. C.S. Lewis was a professor at Cambridge and Oxford. He was a professor of medieval literature, so he's not a moron. In one of his biographies, there's a story told that Lewis was walking through the hallway and a bunch of other profs who weren't believers had diagrammed out on this chalkboard all the world religions and called Lewis in, kind of set a trap for him, and said, "Hey, what's different between Christianity and all of these religions?" Lewis walks in, and he looks at the board. He checks it out and says, "That's easy. Grace."

What I mean by mean by *religion* is all major monotheistic religions teach a type of appeasement of a deity. It is external to internal. It's, "I'm going to tilt the scales in my favor by being a good person. That's what's going to satisfy me. I'm going to give myself over to this list of things I must do in order to appease this God, whether that God is Yahweh or Allah. Let me obey these commandments, and if I'm good enough at obeying these commandments... I don't know how I'm going to measure that outside of just comparing myself in this herd of morons I'm running in. If I'm better than them, I know I'll be nailing it."

Religion doesn't work. In fact, religion is just as enslaving as the world ever was. If I could be straight, isn't number four just number one with an "amen" on it and church attendance? Aren't you just trying to save yourself except with external, religious practices? Number four *is* number one except with a choir robe on. It doesn't work.

The prophet Isaiah will say in Isaiah 55 to us, "**Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.**" Do you see the invitation of God? This is such a great invitation.

"Why do you keep eating bread that doesn't satisfy you? Why do you keep going to these wells? Do you want rich food? Get in here. Do you want to be satisfied? Come to me."

Redemption, rescue, reconciliation will not be found inside of you, will not be found in others. The world will not provide it, and religion can't bring it. What am I saying, that we're all just damned? Yeah, that's kind of what I'm saying today, kind of landing just right there. There's nothing in you that can bring rescue to you, nothing that can satisfy that hole of eternity inside of you. The good news is there is something that can, but that's next week. Hey, I was straight. Don't do that. I told you from the beginning bad news, then good. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these men and women, and thank you for an opportunity just to sit under your grace. I do pray where we have run to the well of self, where we have sought redemption and reconciliation in others, where we have sought rescue in the things of the world, God, for my friends in here who are just fervently doing all sorts of religious things, trying to appease you and fix what's broken in their hearts, God, I just pray that you would give us eyes to see that and there might be repentance and confession in this place in a way that's pleasing to you. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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