**Genesis 3:1-7 (Our text is the very familiar story of the Fall into Sin. The congregation may remain seated.)**

 Trouble, grief, hardship, sickness, disasters, death. Those are not very pleasant words yet such words and many more like them can be found in our English language. In fact, every language of the world has such words. Have you ever wondered why?

 The answer to the question why most people consider simplistic and not very intelligent, but then as Christians we are not concerned with the way the world thinks. We are concerned with what God's Word reveals. God's Word reveals the real reason the world has the many problems that it does. The answer is sin.

 What is sin? Well, to accurately define sin we actually need to consider two things. First we need to define sin from the perspective of man's relationship to the Lord. In this case sin would be defined as: "a failure to obey the Lord." There are sins of omission. Those take place when we fail to do what God wants us to do. Then there are sins of commission. Those take place when we do things that God forbids us to do. In the relationship of man to the Lord any time we fail to perfectly obey the Lord in thought, word or deed, we are guilty of sin.

 Now at this point most people would stop. Yet there is another side of sin that we need to define to clearly understand what has happened to our world. We need to define sin in regard to the physical world's relationship to the Lord. This second definition of sin is this: "the failure of the physical world to function and operate the way God created it to." Instead of things living forever, they die. Instead of perfect health in a germ free world, there is sickness and deadly disease all over the place. Instead of the created world operating in perfect harmony, there are the many "natural disasters" of the world: earthquakes, volcanoes, eroding rains, destructive floods, and the like. These too are the result of sin. The result of the fact that the physical world does not operate the way God intended.

 It is the world that cries out again and again "Why?" The world does not understand. The world does not grasp the horrid, destructive truth of sin in our world. They don't understand it in the physical world. They surely don't understand it in the life of man, especially in regard to the soul of man and his spiritual life.

 We do! God's Word clearly reveals what happened. God's Word reveals the horrid truth of sin through the account of the Fall of man. When you understand what happened during that Fall, then you understand what has happened to the world and man. Let's consider our text then under this theme: **THE REASON WHY. 1st. THE SERPENT DECEIVED. 2nd. THE MAN BELIEVED. 3rd. SIN WAS CONCEIVED.**

 When God created the world He created a world that was utterly perfect and without any defect of any kind. It was a world of perfect harmony and bliss. A world where not a single nasty or bad thing could be found. God created a perfect world where man, beast, plant, yes even the earth operated in perfect accord. Yet built into this world was also the perfect test of the love that man had for God.

 That test was found in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One tree that God had placed in the middle of the Garden of Eden served as the test. Concerning this one tree God had commanded: **YOU ARE FREE TO EAT FROM ANY TREE IN THE GARDEN; BUT YOU MUST NOT EAT FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, FOR WHEN YOU EAT OF IT YOU WILL SURELY DIE.** Think of that for a moment. One tree they should not eat of, thousands, maybe millions they could eat of. It was a test. A test of whether or not man's love and obedience to God was a free choice or a simple result of the way things were. It was the perfect test for perfect man.

 Don't forget that. Man was perfect. Man had been created in the image of God. Man was free from sin and evil. Man had a perfect knowledge of God and what God's will was. All man had to do was remain in the perfection God had given. It was a time when man truly had a free will. He could freely choose to do what was right or he could choose to do what was forbidden. One tree, one command, one choice to make.

 The problem was that into this perfect world of God came the serpent. We learn from God's Word that this serpent was the Devil, the leader of a group of angels that had rebelled against God. Evidently they too originally had a free will but a group of them was led astray by the Devil. The Devil is described as being a liar and the father of lies. The Devil is described as being an enemy of God who desires nothing, since his fall, than getting even with God and destroying that which is of God. This devil came into the Garden and brought before Adam and Eve the greatest test of their love there would ever be.

 How clever the Devil is. Read that history and see how he operates. First he gets man to question what God said: **"DID GOD REALLY SAY..."** The next step the Devil uses is to call into question God's intentions and God's goodness. **"YOU WILL NOT SURELY DIE. FOR GOD KNOWS THAT WHEN YOU EAT OF IT YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED AND YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL."** It is such a simple temptation, but how well it works. For the end result is sin.

 Do you know what really fascinates me about this? It's the fact that the Devil still uses the same ploy against man and man still falls for it. We are still people lead to question God. Did God really say not to do this or do that? Is God just trying to stifle us, to hinder us from reaching our best potential? Is God really acting for our good or is He just trying to Lord it over us? In almost every instance of sin today such is the very way the Devil still works. You would think that man would catch on, but we don't. In today's world the commands of God are easily cast aside because we think we are wiser and can do better without the Lord. And if your religion teaches you that someday you will become a god…people run! That is the first false religion established and promised by the Devil to Adam and Eve! And yet that lie still works!

 I wish I had time to tell you why I think Adam and Eve ate of the fruit. I wish I could tell you why I think Eve ran when a snake slithered up to her and spoke. Snakes weren't created to talk. She knew something was amiss? Surely when the snake questioned God and then called God a liar she grasped that this wasn't a good thing. I believe they spoke with God about all of this. I believe it awhile, how long I don’t know, before the Devil won them over. All I can tell you is that they were deceived and somehow, in some way they believed the lie.

 That's the sad fact. Listen to what happened. **"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."** They thought about it. They looked at the tree and began to think, "It looks good and tasty." They looked at the fruit and began to believe that by eating it they would have real wisdom, they would be like God. So it was that they took and ate the fruit. And with that eating, sin came into the world.

 They believed the lie. They believed they would become wise and be God. How wrong they were. They did gain wisdom. Unfortunately it was the wisdom of how destructive and damning sin was, just like God had told them. They lost their perfection, the image of God. They lost their free will and now couldn't be perfect, they couldn't be right with God even if they tried. I think worse yet is that their whole attitude and grasp of God’s love and care, his compassion and grace was now gone.

 Thus sin came into the world. The destruction of sin is attested by everything around us. The world went from a valley of life to the valley of the shadow of death. For me the most telling moment is when Adam and Eve would hide from God when they heard Him. God had not changed. He was still the loving, caring, gracious and just God they had known. Yet they ran and hid. They hid because they had changed. They had become sinful. Now instead of God being their friend and loving creator, their minds thought of God as a terrible tyrant, an enemy they had to hide from. Their love and awe for God now became hatred and fear! How very sad.

 One of the things I have learned from the study of this text is to never under estimate the power of the Devil. Adam and Eve were perfect, yet he got them to sin. If he could do that to those who were perfect, what chance do you and I have? We are sinful from conception. We don't even know what perfect is. We are inclined to evil and because of that the Devil seems mighty wise to our human nature. That lesson helps me all the more stick to God's Word and what it says. I hope that I am never so foolish as to declare "Don't worry about me, I know what's right." So did Adam and Eve more perfectly than I ever did. Still, sin was conceived and became a part of this world.

 There is so much that can be learned about the world just in this chapter of God's Word. However, I don't want to leave an impression of hopelessness and despair because of the horror of sin. Yes, sin infected the world. It is a destructive force in man and the world but that is not the end of the history of man. From there we go to the promises of God. The promises of a Savior and deliverance from the destruction of sin. God not only promised, He brought deliverance.

 Jesus is all about, our deliverance from sin. He came and He did not give in to Satan. He remained perfect and then became the sacrifice that brought an end to sin and its horrid partner death. Mind you, not physical death, but the torment of eternal death in hell. This is what Jesus really delivered us from when He rose from the dead. Because of what He did we have the forgiveness of sins and we have the gift of eternal life. Only when He returns again will the grief of physical death end.

 It seems, when we read this chapter that the Devil won. That's why it is so important to go on. Go on and learn of Jesus and what He is all about. He is about deliverance. He is about forgiveness. He is about the victory of eternal life and once again having the image of God restored to us. I can’t emphasize that enough. The story of Jesus, the Gospel message of the Christian faith is that Jesus took care of the problem of sin. He paid for our sins. He serves as our substitute in damnation and offers all believers forgiveness and eternal life. He did not come to show us how to be better or live better or even to be perfect in this world again. He came to pay for our sins and then rise from the dead to show us absolute proof of his victory over that which Satan got Adam and Eve to bring into the world. The only thing Jesus asks of us is faith. To believe his work of redemption is sufficient, totally sufficient for our eternal life and salvation. Now, I do believe when you grasp this wonder of Jesus, you will want to please Him, but that is not the measure of what we are. The measure of what we are is always the perfect life and victory of Jesus! His payment for our sins. Give freely by grace through faith. That is our Christian faith.

 So, sin is in this world. But the victory is ours through Jesus. Forgiveness is ours through God's grace and the redemption of Jesus. Know that this is true. Believe in what God has done and it is so. God help us in this endeavor of faith. Amen.