

Genesis chapter 3 is the most important chapter in the whole Bible. I'm not exaggerating when I say that. Because if we don't have Genesis chapter 3, we're not going to understand anything else about what God has to say to us. We won't understand why people do what they do in the Bible. And we certainly won't understand why Jesus does what he has to do. Without this chapter, none of it will make sense. It is the key to understanding everything that God has to say to us.

But it's more than that too, because it's also the key for understanding our own lives. This isn't just some information God is telling us about Adam and Eve long ago that doesn't have any relevance to our lives today. What God tells us in Genesis chapter 3 explains to us why our lives have become what they are. In a very real sense, Genesis chapter 3 answers the deepest questions that we have as human beings. And the two we want to focus on today are: why evil exists? Why is there evil at all? And what can we do to solve the problem of evil? God's Word gives us the answer to both of those questions in a way that actually deals with the problem.

But the world doesn't want to hear it. The world doesn't want to listen to the Bible. The Bible is outdated, they say. It's not really relevant to dealing with our day-to-day problems. And so the world looks for other solutions, other answers to these basic questions. It can't deny that these questions exist--why is there evil in the world at all?--but it tries to find some other way to deal with the problem. But all of those ways, as we will see, ultimately come to nothing, because they don't deal with the problem at its root. They're not getting to the heart of the problem. They're just kind of dancing around it, and for that reason they never give a satisfactory answer. But God's Word gives us the answer that we need. God's Word shows us why evil exists and what we can do about it.

So what does the world try to say about the problem of evil? We can solve this in many different ways. Maybe we will solve it, first of all, with our own minds, with our own understanding, our own intellect. That's how we're going to solve the problem. We might even say "Science" with a capital "S" will be the answer to every single one of our problems. Science will solve poverty. Science will solve hunger. Science will take care of diseases. Science, they even claim in their wildest days, will even take care of the problem of death! We just need enough learning, enough understanding, enough science in order to be able to take care of it. Because the reason why evil exists, when you think of this way, is because we just don't know enough. That's the reason why there was so much suffering in centuries gone by. They didn't know as much as we do. If they had known, they wouldn't have suffered so much. But we are looking forward to a time when we will know so much more that we can put away all of these problems which plague us. That's the claim. And this comes to you more often than you think, Christians, this claim that science will somehow take care of the problem of evil. Go listen to the news when you go home or this evening or whatever it might be. How many times do you hear the anchor say something like, "scientists say" or "the experts are agreed" or "studies have proven" or whatever the case may be? We hear it all the time. Because the assumption is if we just listen to these guys who have all of the science, who have all of the understanding, we can somehow fix every one of our problems. We just need to listen to the experts. But does that really work, Christians? Are we really going to find an answer to life's problems in that way? Does science really deliver on the things that it promises? Think of it this way. Even in the last century, yes, we had tremendous advances in science, tremendous discoveries, but that only led to two great wars where millions of people were killed. And we invented nuclear weapons in the middle of the previous century,

weapons capable of unparalleled destruction. What has our progress, has our science given to us, but a way in which we can be more efficiently evil? No, this isn't going to solve the problem either, Christians, because ultimately it's not dealing with the heart of the issue. It's only dealing with everything around it.

Okay, so maybe it won't work that way. But maybe we can find a solution in technology, right? Technology is what's going to give us the answers that we want. If we just advance enough in our technological gadgets or whatever it might be, that will somehow give us a way to solve all of these issues. Technology, they say, will solve ignorance. Technology will solve hunger, whatever it might be. As long as we can apply enough tech to the problem at hand, that will somehow deal with the issue. We'll be able to solve the problem altogether. Because the problem, the reason why we have evil in this way of thinking is that we're not far enough along. But we can advance ourselves to the point where we can deal with all of these issues. Think of it this way. Facebook, for example, is often touted as being something that brings families closer together, right? We can connect with each other. We can really communicate with each other. And it makes people feel closer together. Or you have computers in schools and stuff, and we say that this is going to help solve the education problem, that kids will be able to get the information which they need. That will make them better educated. That make them better citizens. Things will just generally be better. But does that work? Facebook, for all it claims to be, has actually driven us further apart. Because people have fewer friends these days, and in many places, people don't even know who their neighbors are. Technology, which claims to bring us together, is actually driving us further and further away from one another. And the same technology that we claim is going to make us smarter--after all, we all have smart phones in our pockets, right? We can get all kinds of information that we want--this same technology is there and it's not improving anything. People can just look it up. I don't have to learn it. I don't have to know anything. Just go to what the phone says and that's good enough. Ignorance hasn't gone away just because we have smart phones. If anything, it's even increased. So, no, technology isn't going to solve our problems either, Christians. It's again not dealing with the heart of the issue. It's not dealing with the root.

Well, maybe we'll say, okay, fine. Maybe the way to solve the problem of evil, then, is if we all band together. If we all work together, we will find the solution to our problems. You might call this the political solution. The way that if we just have enough of some sort of government or some sort of political program, that will somehow solve our issues. Politics claims to be able to solve poverty. It claims to be able to solve ignorance. It claims be able to solve anything, really. And it doesn't matter what system you're arguing for--capitalism, communism, socialism, whatever the case may be--they're all claiming that when we just band together and work together, we can somehow overcome the problem of evil. I thought it was very telling this week in the news when Beto O'Rourke, who is down in Texas, said that the reason why Texas was suffering so much because of the snowstorm and because of the power grid going out was because his opponents "didn't believe in government." That's a very telling way of putting it, isn't it? You "don't believe in government," as if government is something that will come down and will be able to solve all of our problems. That as long as we're working together, that's the way we will solve these issues. But does that work either, Christians? Can you honestly look at the division in our society and say that we are solving the problem of evil? Or even if we did get along, look at the past. There are been all kinds of governments, all kinds of political systems

and programs that have come and gone. They're not here anymore, because political solutions do not last. The kingdoms of this earth rise, but they also fall. We're not going to find a solution that way either.

Okay, so we might turn then to what we think, the things that we believe, right? Maybe we'll deal with the question of evil in that way. We'll be able to solve it in some other way. But this has so many different approaches to it that it can be very difficult for us to actually pin one down. People will say evil just exists and there's nothing you can do about it. People will say evil is just something you make up in your head. Or people will say evil exists because you exist. Existence is evil. Or people will even say that you can overcome evil in some way. There's so many different ways that we try to answer this question by false religions or false philosophies that it's hard to be able to say something about all of them. But in reality they have one thing in common, Christians. And that is, in the end they try to deal with the problem of evil by yourself. The world is just evil, so "be the good you want to see in the world." How many times have you heard that? I'm sure you've heard it said more than once. Or people will say evil is just what you make of it, so you can decide for yourself what is good and what is evil. That's another way they try to deal with it. Or they'll say that evil is just what it is and you can overcome it. So you just do what you can. Be the good you want to see and in that way we'll finally overcome the pain of evil. Or if evil is just existence, then when we become one with the universe, as that false religion says, then we won't have evil anymore. It all comes back to what I'm doing. But have you looked within yourself recently, Christians? Do you really think that we're going to solve the problem of evil by looking within? From this heart which is so wicked, this heart which brings forth so much evil? Are we going to solve the problem of evil in our lives simply by our own strength? I don't think so. It's not going to be a good solution either, because it hasn't yet dealt with the heart of the problem.

But maybe we'll just say, fine. As a last example, we'll just ignore it. We just won't even think about the problem. We'll just enjoy life and get the most out of it that we can and let evil be someone else's problem. I can just scroll past it. I can just ignore it, and I will be as happy as I can be. This is why people turn to entertainment. As long as I have something going on in front of me all the time, then I can forget the fact that I feel this void within. I might even turn to drugs as a way of filling up that void, as a way of trying to find some kind of pleasure. There is an opioid crisis going on in our nation, Christians. Millions of people who are turning towards these drugs and even dying from these drugs, all because they're trying to escape the problems of life. But that doesn't solve the problem at all, does it? Because it doesn't answer anything. It's simply trying to ignore it. It doesn't deal with the heart of the problem.

But that's ultimately the problem with all of these answers, Christians. They don't deal with the root. They cut the plant away, but it springs right back up. The world tries to answer this question, but it can't because it's not facing the reality. It's not facing our real problem.

But God tells us in Genesis chapter 3 our actual problem. He leads us to see the reason why we suffer with all of these things. Evil exists, Christians, in this world, because we have been separated from the Lord our God. Adam and Eve, who were created perfect and in perfect communion with the Lord, fell into sin. And because they have fallen, we also have fallen with them. Evil exists because of us, because we have ruined God's perfect creation. And that gives us

the very heart of the issue: this separation which we have from God. It's dealing with the root of the problem.

But God also shows us the solution to that problem, the solution that he himself gives: our Lord Jesus Christ. Because as he says in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15: "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." Jesus Christ, Christians, is the answer to the problem of evil. Jesus Christ and his death and the shedding of his precious blood has brought us who were separated back together with God. God has dealt with the problem of evil in his own Son. And because we have been brought together in him, God will solve all of the other problems of evil too. And God will solve those issues now in this time through his Church, and he will also solve them in the future when God will come again to judge the living and the dead, to set right everything that has gone wrong. That's why this chapter is so important, Christians, because it shows us not only our deepest problem, our separation from God, but it also shows us the solution to that problem in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So don't look to the world for answers, Christians. You're never going to find them there. The world tries to deal with evil, but it will never succeed. But God has dealt with the problem once and for all in our Lord Jesus Christ. So turn to him when facing the evil in your own lives, because in him we have been brought near to God.

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have sent to us your Son Jesus Christ to deal with the problem of sin and evil forever. Forgive us our sins for his sake, so that we may ever be united with him to be with you forever; in his name we pray. Amen.