



Series: Created | Sermon #7

Text: Genesis 3.15; Romans 6

Sermon Title: New Creations

Introduction

Today is our last message in the Created series. Next week, as crazy as it is...we start our celebration of the Christmas season! And we celebrate the season here. We'll be looking at Philippians, a letter the apostle Paul wrote to a young church about JOY in Christ. I want to put this on your radar right here before thanksgiving. We believe here that the message I'm sharing with you today is the greatest hope for mankind. **That God loves you, that he wants you. And you can find true life TODAY in the great love of God for you.**

Now, to the Christians in the room: You've found that hope. And you've got people in your life that need it. They need it. All year we've been saying "who is your one?" Your one person you want to find the hope in God that you have found. Here's what I know: For right now here in the bible belt, Christmas and Church are still a packaged deal. By that I mean it is culturally normative to go to church as a part of

celebrating Christmas. Whether you are a believer or not. And THAT means friends and family members of yours, co-workers of yours, are more likely to accept an invite to church. But you are going to have to offer it. So I'm saying it today, right here before thanksgiving, to encourage you to use the whole month! They may go out of town at Christmas but they are around in December. Start praying, start inviting. Listen: I want to believe that Christmas is when the power of God to give new life came to earth. So we aren't going through the motions ok. We are believing that power is now at work in and through us and we believe the one who saved us WILL DO IT AGAIN! It happened last weekend right here in this room with multiple people that I know of and I believe he can do it again. So I'm asking you to be here and believe with us.

Now, We launched into the CREATED series with the simple goal to try and get a clear understanding of what we are created for. What is our purpose in life? Because purpose, when you are confident in what you are supposed to do with your life...man that drives you. Decisions are still hard sometimes but there is a consistency to your life because there is a clear direction you are pointed towards and a motivation to go get it. And we said there is a difference between purpose and passion. **Purpose is what you are created for. Passions are things you get excited about.** Things that are fun or interesting or even important, but not core purpose-type things. And often times, in the absence of knowing what your purpose in life is, passions can take over. And where purpose keeps you moving on a steady course, passions pull you all over the place.

If you need examples of this, just watch food network. Food is great. And you can have a passion for baking. But when your life's purpose becomes making a better yule log than your competitors...you will LOSE it when the fondant doesn't hold up. And if you get to the place in your life where FONDANT controls your emotional well being...well, you've reached an unhealthy place in life. But that's what happens when passions get in the driver's seat and starts pulling us all over the place. A sign is that we are oddly triggered by things that really shouldn't knock us so hard.

For me for a LONG TIME my passion for Carolina Basketball would get in the driver seat every December to March. And my mood for 2 days would be determined by the outcome of the heels game. My purpose in life wasn't supporting the tar-heels though. It was a passion. And since I wasn't really embracing my purpose, my passion was running the show. And you say that's silly, but we all do it. Fondant, Favorite Teams, intramural flag football, working out, vacationing, Call of Duty...we give our time, talent, treasure to these things and eventually they fail us. Because we were CREATED for something MORE than that.

And that "MORE" that we are created for is laid out in Genesis 1-3. We've seen this glorious creation account. And our PURPOSE revealed in it is two fold. To know God...to have that close intimate relationship like a child does with a father. Before God was a creator he was a father. Loving the son. And that love spilled out into creation and here is God creating people to experience that same love that the eternal son has experienced. And THAT love...that's the love we were created

for. That's the love that fills our souls. That's the love that never fails. Our passions, even good passions. Work, Children, Friends, Romance...they will fail us. But...God's love will never fail us. 157 times in the Old Testament God's love is described as FAITHFUL love. It is abounding which means it is way more than you need AND it will never fail you. **Our first purpose is to make his love our home.**

AND THEN it's to represent God to the world around us. He created us in his image. So that the people around us would see him, his love his goodness his provision his faithfulness his kindness...would be seen in us. So our first purpose is to know God and our second purpose is to show God.

And the first is the fuel for the second. The closer you are walking with God...the more visible God will be through you. *It's like the more time I spend with Pastor Rashard, the better my shoe game is getting.*

And then MOST of last week...like 90% of the sermon...was looking at Genesis 3 and why the world doesn't work that way. We are supposed to be in good fellowship with God and others but we aren't. The world is messed up. Right? I mean this is the one thing you can agree on regardless of whether or not you believe the Christian message. Each one of us, at some point or another, has FELT this. Every time you've found yourself saying "that just isn't right." "That's not the way it should be." And you are right! Things are messed up. Fires & Hurricanes aren't the way it should be. People are messed up. School shootings AREN'T right. Shouldn't be that way. And what we said is that at some point...every single belief system

has to figure out how to explain evil. And to IGNORE it...that's an answer too. AND THAT'S THE ANSWER OUR WORLD HAS.

And so we looked last week and said the reason there is evil in the world is because of one word: sin. Sin corrupted the world so the created world doesn't function right anymore. And Christianity says yes, its true. sin corrupted our world and sin corrupts each of us. And we said the only way we can really make sense of that is by understanding that before we think of evil as something "out there" we need to realize that there is evil "in here." That each one of us are messed up. And last week as we looked at the first sin, we took a deeper dive into how sin deceives us and destroys us.

And so today we pick up the story in Genesis 3 and Adam and Eve are standing before God now fully exposed in their sin. And God issues devastating consequences of their sin.

16 He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

Physical pain is amplified. Pain in more areas than labor but certainly this one rises to the top. But there is also relational conflict. Because our desires are corrupted we experience what the bible calls idolatry. We experience unhappiness, bitterness, anger...and these emotions, Augustine said, are like smoke from the fire of idolatry.

For example if you are someone who believes you need romance to be happy, to be content, then when someone you know finds that romance...gets engaged...you can't not hate them, at least a little. That's because your idol is

romance and in that moment you feel like its failing you. My pastor used to say "you show me hate, worry, despair..." I'll show you smoke from an idol.

17 And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust." -- Genesis 3:16-19 (CSB)

Real quick the consequence of sin we saw from sin last week here is death. And eternal separation from God. They didn't drop dead on the spot or anything BUT it was kind of like a ball that glows in the dark. You cut it off from the light source and the glow slowly fades away. That's now what happens with us. Our bodies and our world decay. And our two purposes now are totally lost. We lose communion with God:

23 So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. Genesis 3:23

The eternal presence with God is gone from us. Our father, our companion, our friend, our shepherd...is gone. And now left to ourselves with our corrupted desires we are left to wander the earth. Instead of reflecting the image of God in a way that loves people, we use people. We oppress the weak and we are selfish. Sin's consequences were unbearable and

unspeakable and we brought them on ourselves and we continue to do it eagerly to this day. See in their sin they thought happiness was found in trying to be God. But all along true happiness was found in being WITH God.

And we said until you get to this point right here...the point where you NEED saving from your sin...you have no use for Jesus. But if you believe you need some hope today, some help because you can't fix yourself, today is going to be awesome for you.

I want to show you the great hope in this otherwise dark story. God looks at the snake who deceived Adam & Eve. The snake who we said last week the bible identifies as satan himself. And God says this to the snake:

15 I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. -- Genesis 3:15 (CSB)

This verse, verse 15...is what sets the rest of the bible into motion. The offspring of the snake and the offspring of the woman will be in conflict with one another. But interestingly look at the verse. A little forensic analysis like we did last week.

He...the offspring of the woman...will strike YOUR head. Whoever this offspring is...his actions will crush the head of the serpent itself, not the serpents offspring. You see that? And the serpent will strike the heel of the offspring of Eve. The plot for the bible is now set into motion. In the rest of the

bible there is a battle between these two. And it is a battle we each feel right? The good and evil waging war inside of us. Wanting to do good, but constantly giving in to evil and realizing we need to be saved even from our own selves.

Well some point one of Eve's offspring is going to come along and get final victory over this enemy. But the enemy will wound him in the process.

So the questions this verse raises is "who is this offspring" and "how will he defeat the devil?" The old testament is filled with people who seem like saviors. They seem like the Messiah, but then the enemy gets them. They fall short.

- The great Moses is just like Adam. Experiences God's faithfulness first hand in the plagues and deliverance of Israel. But then later he chooses to reject God's word and trust in his own strength. Couldn't pay for our sins because he was a sinner.
- The great David is just like Adam. He experiences God's faithfulness in victory over Goliath & the philistines. But then chose his desires for pleasure and power instead of trusting God's word. He wasn't the messiah. Couldn't pay for our sins because he was a sinner.
- Each of the judges we looked at earlier this year were, in one way or another, like Adam. Weak, unable to save God's people because they were sinners just like God's people.

The Old Testament ends crying out for a messiah. Israel is just lost in the land and in their sin. And that's where, spoiler alert, Jesus comes in. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear

that Jesus is the offspring of Eve who will finally bring victory over this ancient enemy. In fact, Luke's genealogy traces Jesus' lineage all the way back to Adam. That's why. So that you know he is the offspring the people of Israel have been waiting on for so long.

The apostle Paul saw the promise of Genesis 3.15 fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He saw Adam as a type of the one who would come. A second Adam would come and he would fix everything the first Adam broke. And in doing so he would reverse the curse of sin on us.

Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. -- Romans 5:17 (CSB)

Paul is affirming we are all under the same curse of death because of Adam's sin. But we are all GIFTED righteousness and life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Let me show you how Jesus reverses the curse and in doing so, rescues us from our sin.

Adam trusted his desires, Jesus trusted God's word

There is this moment just after Jesus' baptism where Jesus goes into the wilderness. NOT in a plush garden but in a wilderness. And he fasted for 40 days. And then Satan comes along and tempts Jesus. But the temptation is more severe and there's more at stake. He tempted Adam once, he tempts Jesus three times. Jesus refutes Satan on the first two and then Here's the third and final one.

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 And he said to him, "I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus told him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." -- Matthew 4:8-10 (CSB)

See what happened? Just like with Adam, Satan tempts Jesus to believe that Jesus needs more than what he already has from God. And we said that is now the temptation each of us hear. That we know better than God. Remember Satan's first words to Eve "HAS GOD REALLY SAID?" Here he is whispering another version of that same lie. Trying to get Jesus to reject God his father just like Adam did. If he can get that, then Jesus the son can no longer be the savior. Because he will be a sinner like the rest of us. This Adam is different. He doesn't run from God's word to satisfy his desires, he runs TO God's word because he sees God's word as better for him. This is the savior we need. One who is does what we cannot do.

But it goes further. Adam's disobedience brought a curse, Jesus' obedience brings salvation.

God had told them not to eat of the tree. And remember what we said last week...that was the one thing he had told them not to do. So naturally...they did it. And so now they are destined for death. The serpent got them. And that curse is like poison that will slowly kill them, slowly kill us all. Disobedience to God is sin. And the wage of sin is death. Jesus was given a command from God as well. To get up on the

cross and die for the sins of others. And when others look to him in faith, they can be saved from death. Jesus says this in John 3:14-16

14 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

Jesus is referring to this bizarre story in Numbers 21. It's really short and you should read it. The people of Israel start complaining that Moses brought them out from slavery in Egypt and now they are hungry and they think this whole deliverance from Egypt thing was a mistake. So God sends some serpents into the camp. And the serpents bite everybody. And everyone is lying on the ground. Some are dying. And the people see what they've done. They realize they can't save themselves. And so they cry out to Moses and say we were wrong...save us!!

And God tells Moses the oddest thing. He says

8 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover." -- Numbers 21:8 (CSB)

So it goes. Out of all the ways God could have cured them, he chose this image. And Jesus knows why. It was foreshadowing his own death. Now Jesus, who was made in the FORM of sinful man though he himself was not sinful...HE must be lifted up on a cross. So that those who look to him...who are completely helpless and know there is no way to save

themselves...THOSE who desire life...all they have to do is look. And Jesus explains what it means to look to him.

16 For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. -- John 3:14-16 (CSB)

To look to Jesus means to believe in what he did for you. He reversed the curse brought on by Adam. The penalty for your sin was death...Jesus got up on the cross...IN YOUR PLACE...and he died. And PART of the GOOD NEWS is that he died for you! So you aren't under the penalty of death anymore!!

In fact that's right into our next point: Adam's sin inaugurated death, Jesus' resurrection defeats death!

The gospel message says that Jesus didn't just die for our sin. He went beyond that to DEFEAT death itself. That's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15

55 Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57
But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! -- 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 (CSB)

See Paul says death still happens, because our mortal bodies are still corrupted with sinful nature. BUT, the penalty for our sin is taken by Jesus. And in the verses right before this he says we will not face eternity apart from God but eternity WITH GOD! And listen this is what the new testament authors cling to. Their lives on earth were pretty awful. From a comfort

standpoint. They were being persecuted, ostracized, killed...all for believing this gospel message. Nowhere did they say "Oh man if I just believe more, God will INCREASE my physical comforts and pleasures." ON THE CONTRARY. The one thing scripture guarantees us is that in this life there is much suffering. Jesus said it to his disciples:

33 I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." -- John 16:33 (CSB)

Why should they be courageous? Why should they face the CERTAIN trouble they are about to face with joy? It's that Jesus has won the victory over the powers of this world. He's defeated death, he reigns as king and he promises that we will share in his resurrection. Listen we need a better theology of suffering. Especially for us who live fairly comfortable lives. We are starving for a theology that understands GOD, not ourselves, as provider. As redeemer. As the one who will give us ultimate justice one day for the wrongs we've experienced. And listen any preaching that tells you if you just believe more God will free you from physical or financial suffering...is nothing short of a lie from satan. Twisting God's words once again to tickle your ears and stoke the flames of your sin nature. Run from it. JESUS has conquered the world. And you will reign with him in eternity. Even if it means poverty and grief and agony in this life. And should you go through these things you will gain a deeper, sweeter experience of God's love and comfort than most of us get. So James says count it JOY when you experience troubles.

The Gospel Says your sin has set you on a course for death and eternal separation from God but Christ took sin's penalty on the cross and defeated sin's power in the resurrection. And for those who believe that Christ died for them, and rose from the grave...God says you will be saved.

Responding to the gospel

1. **Repent** – Nothing is less sexy in our modern culture than this word right here. Admit you are wrong and turn from it. But the gospel is a message for sinners. You have to own your sin and that you need someone to save you from your sin.. When I first heard this: I felt a weight on me during a worship service like this. And I realized the weight was me fighting against God. I didn't want to give up control. I didn't want to admit I needed him. And there that night in tears I just said God, I can't do this anymore. I need you to save me. And so I surrendered. Repentance is a lot like holding your hands up in surrender and saying I can't do it.

2. **Believe the gospel** – Belief is extending those hands out to God and saying YOU do it. Nothing else, you do it. And WON'T HE DO IT! Romans 10.9 – If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead...you **WILL** be saved. There is no question. There is no one whose sin is too great. Who has done too much. Who has run so far away from the heavenly father that he won't bring you back. No one can outrun the love of God.

Thank God there is more mercy in Christ than there is sin in us – Richard Sibbes.

Today you need to believe. And listen here where we live there is an odd, very dangerous possibility you could think you are a Christian and not actually be one. And I gotta address this because Jesus says there will be some who die and expect to get into heaven and he's going to say "depart from me because I never knew you." So let me be clear about 2 things:

- First: You are not born into the Christian faith. You are RE-BORN into it. You are born a sinner. We've talked about that a lot. So just because you've been AROUND church and around the Christian faith...Just because you've heard bible stories and know some bible facts. None of that makes you a Christian.
- The ONLY way you become a Christian is YOU realizing you are bitten by the serpent and YOU looking to the one held up on the cross. Last week a young man went through this. Grew up going to church with his family. He realized Attendance doesn't save you. So he came down here we talked about it and he surrendered.
- On the other hand: There are some that have had a moment of surrender, but NO life change. Maybe you had a moment like I did but then you just kind of go through the motions. You may not be a Christian. Because to be saved by Christ is to be changed by Christ. And to be actively surrendered to Christ. And I don't mean to scare you with that. So the easy way to know is simply...are you resting in Christ's work for your salvation...today? If not turn to him today!

3. Live the gospel.

8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. -- Ephesians 2:8-10 (CSB)

See that? You are a new creation in Christ. And you have a purpose. Good works. You are called to bless the world around you with the love you've been given in Christ. And he's wired you for it. Question for the car ride home: If I believe the gospel, how can I live the gospel this week?

Maybe there is a financial need you know of that needs meeting. And NOW you process that through: God gave me new life when I didn't deserve it but desperately needed it. He was radically generous to me. So I want to be radically generous to others. And you give...cheerfully. Not reluctantly, not out of guilt. That's not gospel living that's works-based living. Maybe its Serving someone – I don't believe you can be a healthy follower of Christ and not serve others. So live the gospel and SERVE. IN FACT THAT'S WHAT CHURCH SHOULD BE. Not just come and consume, but come and give. Come and practice those good works.

4. Tell the gospel. If this message is true, how can we not share it? If you feel awkward telling others what you believe can I make sure you have a right perspective for a second? Cause it may be awkward, but if you love someone enough to care about their eternity...you choose eternity over awkward.

Heard it described once this way & I think I've shared it before with you. There was a guy driving in Minnesota up a bridge at night... and he noticed the tail lights of the car a little ways in front of him in the left lane just disappeared. He thought it was odd but then the car in front of him in the right lane...same thing happened. Tail lights vanish. So he pulls over. He walks up the bridge just a little ways and to his horror a huge section of the bridge has fallen through who knows how much earlier and those two cars had plummeted to their deaths. Well, he goes running back towards his car to make a call and that's when he sees headlights. He starts waving. Turns flashlight on on his phone so they can see him and he's waving. Looks wild eyed. Yelling at them to stop. They don't stop. And as he screams the car goes over the edge. He's on the phone now yelling to the emergency dispatch who is hearing this guy just scream about people dying. And that's when he sees what appears to be a school bus turn and come towards him. And he knows something has to be done. NO time so he takes his phone with that flashlight and stands right in the path of the school bus...and yells STOPPP and puts HIMSELF between death and this bus. Well bus driver stops, & starts yelling at the guy. The guy shows him what's at stake and the bus driver who was confused and offended by this maniac all of the sudden becomes so grateful when he sees what was at stake. The bus driver then gets the kids off the bus and parks the bus so no more can fall in.

I'm not normally one for long stories like that. And I'm not trying to manipulate you. I'm trying to make sure you understand what is at stake. The gospel is most assuredly a life

and death matter. And you might seem a little crazy to some and yes you may have some awkward conversations. But Christian if you believe you've been saved from eternal death and given new life...and that the only way anyone can get that is Christ...then what are you waiting on? Who is your one? Tell them!

As Spurgeon said: "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for."

Repent, Believe, Live, Tell.

In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (*Chronicles of Narnia*), he tells this story about Eustace, one of the main characters, who is this young boy who has developed an **evil heart** and **becomes a dragon**. He wants to escape being a dragon so Aslan, the Lion who represents Jesus, leads him to this fountain of pure water to bathe in. (*Lewis writes this in Eustace's voice, but literary scholars say this is Lewis talking about his own experience*):

The water was as clear as anything and I thought if I could get in there and bathe it would ease the pain. But the lion [Aslan] told me I must undress first.

So I started scratching myself and my scales began coming off all over the place. And then I scratched a little deeper and, instead of just scales coming off here and there, my whole skin started peeling off beautifully. In a minute or two I just stepped out of it. I could see it lying there beside me, looking rather nasty. It was a most lovely feeling. So I started to go down into the well for my bathe.

But just as I was going to put my feet into the water I looked down and saw that (the skin on my feet was) all hard and rough and wrinkled and scaly just as it had been before.

[*So Eustace then repeats the process a second and third time, growing increasingly despairing.*]

Then the lion said, 'You will have to let me undress you.' I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly

desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it.

The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off.

Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off – just as I thought I'd done it myself the other three times, only they hadn't hurt – and there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. Then he caught hold of me – I didn't like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I'd no skin on – and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming and splashing I found that all the pain had gone. And then I saw why. I'd turned into a boy again."

See the gospel is allowing God to do the work of freeing you from your sin. And that's frightening and painful. He's ripping away skin from you..

- it's **painful**, but listen... it's **not punishment!** It's not because **God hates you**; it's because he loves you.
- The way we say it: "God is not trying to pay you back, but bring you back." It's not **retribution**; it's **restoration!**

Listen – This is the anthem of our church. GOD LOVES YOU

And we cannot fix ourselves. Since everything about us, inside and out, is corrupted by our sin nature...we can't be our own rescuers. WE are NOT strong enough to save ourselves!

And where we pick up today is the hop

45 So it is written, The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. -- 1 Corinthians 15:45 (CSB)