

97-10-26a Genesis Custom

So for our scripture reading again, if you'll turn to 1 John chapter 3, as we approach the study of the fall in Genesis chapter 3, this is a passage of scripture that keeps us from sinking too far into despair and reminds us that all of these things have happened not without God's foreknowledge and not without God's purpose, working everything together for good. John chapter 3, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us because it did not know Him.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure. Now this is a reminder of something very important that we're going to see this morning, and that is what kind of perspective do we have in our life? Do we have a short-term perspective or a long-term perspective? Are we looking at the immediate or are we looking at the eternal? It is one of the three major virtues of the Christian life, hope.

First Corinthians chapter 13 talks about many of the other aspects of life that exist for a time and then pass away, but that chapter concludes by reminding us that these three things remain, faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love, and we're going to see the love of God this morning just as John has spoken of it here in chapter 3 verse 1. God's love is unconditional. It's a terrific aspect of God's character to meditate on because God's love for us does not depend on us.

It doesn't depend on who and what we are. It doesn't depend on what we do. It doesn't depend on maintaining a certain standard of behavior or integrity or having some inherent quality within ourselves that qualifies us for God's love.

God loves us not based on who and what we are. He loves us based on who and what He is. And because He is omni-everything, because He is infinite, because He is eternal, and because He is perfect, His love for us is also infinite and perfect and eternal.

And it does not change based on what we do or who we are. The only thing that changes is the expression of God's love. In the same way that parents who love their children sometimes express that love in physical affection and in doing special things, other times that same love is expressed in discipline and in denying privilege.

But it doesn't come from vindictiveness or a sense of revenge or some need for control or whatever. At least it should not. A good parent does everything that they do concerning their children out of love.

And sometimes love has to be tough. Sometimes it has to look at the long-term benefit, even though there is a short-term interruption in the happy climate of the household. It's

never pleasant to discipline your children.

It's never pleasant to deny them things that they want. But we endure that short-term disruption and that short-term pain even in the light of the long-term. That's one of the reasons that faith and hope and love are so closely connected.

Love abides in hope. Love expresses itself through faith. You have those three aspects.

One way of organizing them is to think of hope as the motivation. Why can you, as a believer, love someone who in the human realm might not look like they merit love? How can we have a love that transcends the love of the world? Well, it has to be God's love and it has to be powered by God. That's where faith comes in and that's where hope comes in because hope looks at the long-term.

Hope looks at what pleases God. Faith trusts God and trusts that even if you seem to be having to sacrifice or even if you seem to be taking a loss in expressing love, that's something that's in God's hands. God accounts for that.

God takes care of that. And it isn't our place to try to look out for number one and achieve justice and so forth. So, it is a fruitful endeavor to look at the manner of love the Father has bestowed on us.

None of us were worthy of salvation. None of us, God didn't look down and say, you know, I see some people down there on planet earth, even though they're depraved and totally sinful and hell bound, I see some of them I kind of like. They've got some nice qualities.

That isn't the reason that God sent the Lord Jesus Christ. His love is based on who and what He is and His compassion and His grace extend to all of us equally. The thing that differentiates our experience of God's love is what our response to it is.

The worst person you can think of that ever lived, if you want to think about somebody in the Old Testament, if you want to think about somebody in World War II history, which is everybody's favorite mean old Adolf, Hitler, anyone you want to think of, God had just as much love for that person as He does for any one of us or for Billy Graham or for the Apostle Paul or for Moses. Because, again, it depends entirely on who and what God is. Why is it that some people have a different experience of God's love? It is all based on their response.

Is there a faith response? As believers, if we have expressed faith in God, what is our hope? Because hope is the thing that shifts our perspective from the short term to the long term. We're going to see that very graphically this morning in Genesis chapter 3. But we find ourselves in 1 John 3, verse 3, hearing John tell us that everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself. How do we purify ourselves? How do we cleanse ourselves from the things that corrupt us, the things that drag us down, the things that

keep us from experiencing the fullness of God's love? It is hope.

It is a shift in perspective. As we're anticipating this morning, why is it that temptation gets a hold on us? Why is it that we bite the fruit like Eve and Adam are going to? Because something in the short term is more appealing and more immediate and more real than the reality of the long term. And it fills our vision.

And we go for that. And you cannot be sucked in by that if you have your eye on the long term. But the long term reality has to be real.

It has to be tangible. It has to be concrete in your soul. Or it has no hope of winning out over the immediate thing that we can reach out and pluck off the tree.

How do we make eternal things more real than the immediate gratifications of this life? Well, it isn't a lightning bolt that strikes you on the head in a random fashion. It comes by cultivation. You choose those things and you cultivate those things by a pattern of life that reflects faith and hope and love.

Spending time in God's Word. We talked Friday night about the need to refresh that reality in our souls because we forget. Wouldn't it be great if we could hear a Bible lesson and have it be fresh and alive and have the impact on us every day that it has when we first hear it? But we know those things fade.

New experiences come up day by day. And if we don't go back and review and refresh in our minds the true and eternal things that God presents in His Word, it fades. And the human immediate experiences take their place.

That's why we regularly meet for Bible class. That's why each of us should regularly stop and spend time in whatever fashion we choose meditating on the things of God, spending time in communion with Him, in prayer and in fellowship and in meditation on what we have learned from His Word. You can do that driving a car.

You can do it with your Bible open in front of you in the early morning. You can do it with another believer in a devotion time or a Bible study. Whatever works for you.

But that has to take place. If we don't want the eternal things that constitute our hope to be obscured and to disappear in the face of immediate pressures and immediate concerns and immediate temptations, that's our insurance. That's our protection.

That's our armor that keeps us from being pierced by the devil's arrows. And we have to want it, and we have to pick those pieces of armor up and put them on every day or we're going to be vulnerable. And this is what John is encouraging us to do here in his epistle.

And when he says, Behold, in verse 3, we think, well, that's just one of those Bible words

that kind of gets the chapter rolling, kind of gets the speech going. Behold! This in Greek is *idou*. It means look at this.

Think about this. Let this make an impression on your mind. So when he says, Behold, in 3.1, the manner of love that the Father has bestowed on us, he doesn't say, Behold the love.

He says, Behold the manner of love. What kind of love is it? It's love that loves in spite of who and what we are. It's love that lasts.

It's love that acts. It's love that makes a difference. It's love that holds out a hope when otherwise there would be no hope.

Behold the manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God. There is nobody more undeserving in the entire universe than us as a fallen, corrupted race. You compare us to the angels, like the psalmist says in Psalm 8, when I look up in the sky and I see the sun and the moon and the stars, what is man that you think anything about him or the son of man that you come down and visit him? We are the most minor of God's creation in terms of sentient thinking beings, and yet the angels are not called the sons of God in the sense that we are.

We are his heirs. We are in union with Christ, his beloved Son. It's an incredible thing to think about.

We don't know what things are going to be like in the future. We have no ability to comprehend what the resurrection is going to be like, as he says in verse 2. It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, and that's faith. Whatever it's going to be, it's going to be great.

If we're going to be like Christ, whatever that means, that's good enough for me. That's my hope. Look at verse 4. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

Why does it talk about lawlessness and sin? Well, lawlessness means disobedience. There is a standard. There is a desire that God has expressed, and we violate that, and that's what sin is.

But look at verse 5. And you know that he, Christ, was manifested to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin. That goes back up to verse 2. We know that we will be like him. We will be sinless.

We won't have this problem of corrupt nature like we have now. And we can experience a foretaste of that glory now through faith. And that's what he's talking about in verse 6. Whoever abides in him does not sin.

If you want to not sin, how do you do it? Do you grit your teeth and say, I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin? It doesn't happen through willpower, but there is a means of avoiding sin, and that is abiding in Christ. How do you abide in Christ? Well, he spends an entire chapter on that in John 14. It's having his words, thinking about his words, thinking about him, having the priority of pleasing him in everything that we do.

Deciding that he's more important than our personal gratification requires self-sacrifice. It means that we deny ourselves whatever real or imagined pleasure we think is coming up because there is a long-term goal, and that is the return of Jesus Christ and wanting to be pleasing in his sight. That has to be real to us, and that comes by immersing ourselves in his Word.

Sometimes we get a little impatient if we hear truth of God's Word several times. We hear the same principle or the same doctrine taught many times, and we think, well, I've heard that before. Let's move on to something new.

I want the stimulation of a breakthrough in my understanding and a fresh insight into some part of God's Word. We forget that it is necessary to us to do like Jesus said a good teacher of the Scriptures does where he is like a steward who brings out of the treasury things both new and old, and we go back and rehearse the old things and refresh them in our minds because they are living truth, and they keep us abiding in him. We hold fast to what we have.

Whoever sins, and this is talking about a pattern of sin, a habitual lifestyle of sin, whoever sins has neither seen him nor known him. This tells us that to know Christ is like the old song from the 50s, to know him is to love him, and to spend time thinking about his life or reading through the Gospels, looking at the nature of his work on the cross for us and the place he holds in God's plan. I developed great appreciation reading about some of the Civil War generals like Thomas Jonathan Jackson or Robert E. Lee who were believers and who lived out their faith in the face of great stress and great conflict.

I read about Theodore Roosevelt and the way that he lived his life and the vitality and the 110% that he poured into everything that he did and the vision that he had that led him to become such a great president and a great statesman and a great diplomat. How did I come to those appreciations? How do we come to appreciate anybody whether it's any figure in history or in literature or in art or whatever? How do we come to appreciate someone? Well, we learn something about them. It's so much more enjoyable to listen to a song done by a quartet.

It can be a great song and musically very valuable, but if you know something about the four men and the pianist and that to my mind is a genuine quartet, four men and a piano, if you know something about them, if you know that what they're singing is meaningful to them and it reflects in their lives and in their families and in their

operation as a group and so forth, then when you hear that song it has even greater meaning. You appreciate it more because you know something about them. Well, how do we come to love Christ? How do we come to abide in Him? How do we think about Him? Just like we come to love and appreciate anyone else.

Verse 7, Little children, let no one deceive you. Deceit is going to be one of the major issues in our passage this morning. Somebody is going to be deceived.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous just as He, Christ, is righteous. You can either practice sin or you can practice righteousness, but you wake up every morning with that choice.

Where am I going to spend my time? Where am I going to spend my thought life? What am I going to focus on? It's easy to look around and see things that are wrong. It's easy to see where someone got a better deal. It's easy to see where the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

Well, we have a choice. We can dwell on that or we can set it aside and say my hope is in God. God knows where I am.

God knows what I need. And if I need something, I have a loving Heavenly Father who will provide it. This is going to be the mistake that Eve makes this morning.

Verse 8, He who sins is of the devil. Now, what does that mean? Of the devil? The spawn of the devil? The seed of the devil? That movie series that came out and had five sequels to it of the Omen. That ilk of movie where Satan supposedly comes and has an actual begotten child in the physical universe.

What does this mean to be of the devil? Jesus said this of the Pharisees, didn't He? Who were, by the way, believers in God and students of the Scripture. And Jesus said you are of your father the devil. What does that mean? Does it mean you're an unbeliever and you're hell bound? Not at all.

It means you are like Him. You are making the mistakes that He makes. You are going to suffer much of the misery that He suffers and experiences and all who follow Him.

You are of Him. You're participating in His fate, His lifestyle, His problems. This is not a commentary on eternal destination.

There are many Christians who are of the devil just like the Pharisees in the same way that not all of us are of Christ. They like to translate this belonging to Christ but that's not what it means at all. It means partaking of in the real sense.

You can be a believer and be partaking of the things of Satan and you can be an unbeliever and fail to partake of the things of Christ. He who sins and this again is a

present tense habitual pattern of life. He who habitually or regularly as a pattern sins is of the devil for the devil has had that pattern from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. How is it we break a pattern of sin or a pattern of failure? Well, it doesn't say for this reason I have called you to holiness that you might destroy the works of the devil. We don't have that ability.

We don't have that power and nothing on earth does. There's no system. There's no program.

The only thing that destroys the works of the devil is the Son of God and you either have Him or you don't and you either partake of Him or you don't. If you do not partake of the Son of God you have no power over the works of the devil. It's just that simple.

Whoever has been born of God does not sin. It doesn't mean he doesn't ever sin. It means it's not a habit.

It's not a pattern of life. Whoever has been born of God does not sin for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God nor is he who does not love his brother. Have you ever run across believers or have we ourselves ever been a believer who did not love the brethren? All of us have been guilty of this at one time or another and there are people who make this a forte, who make this one of their outstanding characteristics and as a believer they are exceedingly unloving. Does this mean they are not saved? Does this mean they are not of God in the sense of salvation? Not at all.

This is talking about partaking not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brothers were righteous. Not because he was an unbeliever.

I fully expect to see Cain in heaven. I don't think Cain was an unbeliever at all but he was of the devil in terms of his lifestyle. He was rebellious.

But you have to ask yourself some questions which we will ask when we get to the story of Cain. If you find it surprising to suggest that Cain is a believer we will address that when we get to that chapter shortly. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

We know that we have passed in verse 14 from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. What kind of death? The same kind of death that Jesus talked about in John chapter 14 when he talks about abiding in the vine.

If you don't abide in the vine you are like a withered branch that doesn't bear fruit and you are snapped off. And that is operational death. Fruitlessness.

Death in the sense of no production. Death in the sense of no connection, no beneficial connection with God and the things of God. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Once again, people say, no, that sure sounds like salvation and so forth. Does that mean that it is impossible for anyone who has ever committed a murder to be a believer? You know, you wind up with all kinds of practical problems in taking that view and that should tell us something. That view needs a second look.

We know what eternal life is. Eternal life is the knowledge of God. Now Jesus spells that out in the Gospel of John.

By this we know love because he laid down his life for us and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren. Verse 17, Whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him.

And look at verse 20, For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. God has an answer when we find ourselves in need, when our heart condemns us and we know it. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God and whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

How can we arrive at the point where our heart does not condemn us? It's abiding in Christ. It's taking advantage of the cleansing and the love that God has expressed toward us so that we know that even when we have failed and even when we have committed mistakes, we have taken hold of the solution through faith. And when we do that, genuinely, whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And this is the commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment. Now he who keeps his commandments abides in him and he in him. This again is a reflection of the doctrine of the indwelling of Christ which you see in John chapter 15.

By this we know that he abides in us by the Spirit whom he has given us. This is talking about the active ministry of the Spirit which leads us into all truth, which activates the Word of God in our soul, calls it to our mind when we need it, and so forth. It's not a reference to the sealing ministry which every believer has.

So this is a powerful reminder to us that God has provided a wonderful grace remedy for

the things that we are going to see in Genesis chapter 3 this morning. And as we turn now to Genesis 3, we will fortify our souls with the knowledge of God's answers as we see the origin, the Genesis, of our problem of sin. We've seen Adam and Eve in the garden.

We have seen God create for Adam a help meet. He is accompanied now by his perfect completing opposite number. We saw the story of the rib and the creation of the woman from the rib last time.

Why did God pick a rib, by the way? Have you ever thought about that? Why didn't God just make... He could have used any body part. He could have taken his head or could have taken his heart and divided his heart or some such thing. Matthew Henry in his commentary... Matthew Henry was a wonderful student of the Word of God in the previous century.

He wrote extensive commentaries. If you've ever seen Matthew Henry's commentaries, they will easily fill a complete shelf. And he takes a devotional approach.

If you want grist for your mental mill in terms of reflection and meditation on God's Word from something other than a real academic expository point of view, you can go to Matthew Henry. He has a lot of good thoughts. This is what Matthew Henry says about God taking the rib to make Eve.

He says, "...not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." I think that's a nice thought. Everything that God does has significance and the creation of Eve is one of the great truths that transcends even the situation of the human race and our need for companionship and need for fulfillment in the life of another. It also, as we have seen, is reflected and illustrated ultimately in the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church.

And even in perfection, the last Adam will not be alone. He will be accompanied by his bride. And we, of course, are a part of that wonderful destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in chapter 2, verse 24, "...that is the reason that a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Then in verse 25, where we left off last time, "...they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Now, this whole nakedness status is kind of an interesting situation. They paint pictures. You look at the Sistine Chapel and Michelangelo's work and Da Vinci and some of the other classical painters.

You have angels and cherubs. You get the little fat naked babies flying around with wings and these are supposed to represent angels and so on. But in Scripture, do you ever see a naked angel? You don't.

They are clothed and apparently even their wings, if they have, at least representatively speaking, they have pairs of wings. Four pairs or six pairs or eight pairs, however many there are. There's differentiation between the cherubim and the seraphim, different classes of angels.

But it talks in the Scriptures about how they cover themselves. They're covered by their wings. Their wings cover their feet and so on.

You don't ever see naked angels. The angelic visitations that take place in the Old Testament, it doesn't say, oh, and by the way, the messenger was stuck staring naked. It doesn't come up.

Think about the eternal future. What is our status going to be in perfection? What is the garb of the saints in the eternal future? Wearing a white robe. What is Jesus Christ going to be wearing? Is he going to go back to being represented as Adam was, naked and unashamed in the garden? He wears a white robe.

In Revelation, it's a blood-stained robe, but it's white and he is clothed. The only place you find this status of being naked is in the garden. It's at the origination of the human race.

And there is a remnant of that, and this is kind of a... I'm not one to bring up awkward subjects in Bible class, but that status is repeated in marriage, isn't it? There is a time when the man and the woman are naked together, and it harks back and reminds us of the status of perfection and completion in the company of one another that was reflected in the garden. But you don't see that coming back. It's not like, well, we're going to do like Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, and we're all going to get back to the garden, and we're all going to be naked and be unashamed.

So what is the significance of it? What is the significance of them being naked, the man and his wife, and we're not ashamed? Shame is going to come up in this next chapter, isn't it? After the fall, after they eat the fruit. Well, hold that thought, and when we arrive at the point of the fall and the fig leaf episode and the garment skins episode, we'll try to answer that question. But now we have a new... This is one of the great places for a chapter break.

Sometimes the chapter breaks are in the wrong places. We know that in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscript there were no divisions, there were no verse numbers, until later times, and scribes started inserting these things for their own aid in copying and reading the scriptures. But this is a good place because you do have a new scene.

If this were a play, the curtains would close, the backgrounds and stuff would change, and then the curtains would open again, and you have a different thing in view. Instead of the man and the woman naked and unashamed in the garden, you have... And by the

way, we talked about what the word means. That means they were not taken aback.

It doesn't mean shame in the sense of guilt and angst and so forth. It means that it didn't raise their eyebrows. They didn't say, my goodness, I wonder why we don't have clothes.

It didn't cause them consternation. But now the curtains open and we're in a new scene, and we have the serpent introduced. The serpent is a creature that God has made, it tells us in verse 1. The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, we get no introduction, we get no explanation, we don't have any details to flesh this out, we don't get any kind of a preparation for the fact that this animal is now going to speak. But we do know from Adam's experience in chapter 2 that when he was going around naming the animals, actually he didn't go around, God led the animals to him to see what he would name them. He didn't find any animal comparable to himself.

That's how he figured out that something was missing. God demonstrated his need for someone who was equal and opposite to him, as it says in the Hebrew of help me, who was like and opposite. He didn't have a conversation and say, well, hello there you skinny short-legged creature, what's your name? And the thing says, well, I'm a serpent.

It didn't speak, it didn't talk. Yet with no warning, with no kind of preparation at all, you have a talking animal. In the same way that later on when Balaam is trying to go down the road, his donkey is going to have a few words with him.

And he doesn't even immediately think, my, this is unusual. He answers back. And many of us can sympathize with that.

You kind of get wrapped up in what you're doing and you can miss the obvious and even the extraordinary. But it says the serpent was more cunning. And this is the Hebrew word arum, A-R-U-M.

And it means cunning normally in a good sense. It means you've got unusual, it can mean tricky in the sense of someone who plays a game and gets an advantage because they're very good at what they do. I think a good example of this is the problems that people have with squirrels.

Anybody that tries to put out a bird feeder and lives in an area where there are squirrels, squirrels are cunning in this sense. It doesn't mean that they have evil intent and that they're out to do somebody bodily harm. But if you put a bird feeder out, they figure that's food for them.

And they are so ingenious. And maybe ingenuity is a way of looking at this word arum. Now when it says the serpent was more ingenious or more cunning or crafty or even

resourceful is bound up in this word, than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, the implication here is this is something that Adam and Eve had noticed.

As they spent their time in the garden and observed the animals. It's the same way when you look in your backyard and watch the bird feeder. It's very humorous.

My parents have had all sorts of battles with the squirrels when they put their bird feeders out and trying different, you know, you put the bird feeder on a pole and then grease the pole and watch the squirrels climb up part way and slide down. That can provide hours of amusement. But eventually they are so persistent that they will find another way.

They'll leap from a nearby tree or they'll keep trying and keep trying until they wear the grease off. Or the weather will turn cold and the grease gets sticky enough that they can go ahead and climb up. So you have to try something else.

And you see these elaborate, I think the last thing I saw at my parents' house was a long wire or rope with pop bottles strung on it. You know, the big leader bottles pierced through the center of the bottom and then through the neck. So that if they try to crawl over it, they roll.

And apparently that has also provided a lot of amusement as the squirrels have tried to traverse this obstacle course. I saw a show on PBS once where they actually wanted to see how persistent, how ingenious are these squirrels. And so they would develop these incredibly complex mazes with little things like a pulley with hand pedals.

And they would actually have squirrels get a hold of these pedals and pedal themselves with a little hand cart type of thing across and then go through all sorts of intricate maze, Chinese puzzle type of things that were doable but that had to be figured out. And they never did devise one that the squirrels could not figure out. They would ultimately, eventually figure out the trick and negotiate and spend 25 or 30 minutes negotiating this obstacle course to get at the prize.

Well, Adam and Eve in the garden had observed that this is the kind of animal that the serpent was. Now what sort of circumstance would they observe? Because obviously it isn't a matter of being tricky enough to kill and eat another animal. But they're all eating fruit and grains and that sort of thing.

So there might be an apple, we can imagine perhaps, that there's an apple or a tangerine or some fruit hanging out on the end of a limb and some animal is on his way out there to get it. And the serpent, by some devious, tricky method, beats them to it or tricks them out of it, waits for them to knock it down and then as they're carrying it off startles them and they drop it in surprise and then he swoops in and gets it. And you can imagine that Adam and Eve would have watched this and been amused and been

impressed.

Many people have pets that they believe have higher intelligence than their peers. And you can watch a cat or a dog that seems to have a little bit extra on the ball in the mental category. And this builds admiration.

You look at this animal and if it's your pet, you're proud of it. You show other people, look at what this thing can do. I remember when I was a little boy my dad used to tell about a friend of his in the Marine Corps who had a dog.

And he'd go over and visit these people and he'd bring this dog into the living room. People were sitting around, there were snacks, and this guy would hand out a piece of food that the dog loved and he would say, here, have some navy chow. The dog would put its head down and cringe.

It wouldn't get anywhere near it. And then he'd say, okay, have some Marine Corps chow. Then the dog would leap up and snap it up.

And he had taught this dog the difference between Marine Corps chow and navy chow. Of course, I wonder if he had actually experienced the quality because in my experience, navy chow was usually a lot better than ours. But you take pleasure and even take pride in an animal that is really sort of gifted in its cleverness.

And so this is the impression that Adam and Eve go into this chapter with. The serpent has already been observed to be an animal that is impressive. And they have a fondness, just like all of us do, for an animal that displays this kind of ingenuity.

And this is going to be something that Satan uses. Satan doesn't paint the door to sin and evil with black and big radioactive warning signs. He paints it pleasant.

It's the green door. There's something waiting behind the green door. It's something attractive.

It's something interesting. It's something admirable, something neat that we maybe haven't experienced that we want to. There's some pull there.

There's some attraction that distinguishes this from other things. It has a special kind of an interest for us. So of all of the animals that the Lord God has made, which one does Satan pick to be the instrument of his plot against the man and the woman? He picks the one that they admire, the one that they're impressed with, the one that they enjoy and that brings a smile to their face when they see it.

And so that's the reason verse 1 is here. Why do we need to know that the serpent was more cunning? That's why. He is more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made.

And this is cunning normally in a good sense. This adjective is used positively in a lot of other places. But then he speaks to the woman, and that's where the trouble begins.

We're going to pause and take our break, and when we come back we'll see just exactly how Satan takes advantage of this circumstance to bring about the fall of man. Let's pause here and take a break.