



Echoes of Eden

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temptress How many of you love the TV channel. HGTV. Okay, anybody you love a class for HGTV? Come on. We love HGTV because it's a ton of shows about house renovation in 2018. It just boomed. It became one of the most watched and most popular TV channels with over 44 million viewers. I think we love HGTV. And all these shows are good. But here in Texas, we know who the real king and queen of house renovations are, of course, Chip and Joanna Gaines, yep, they've taken over Waco and over targets and maybe even your house. And maybe you're not even thinking you weren't even thinking about doing a rental project until you saw a fixer upper. Now all the sudden you want to renovate your entire house. And then you're thinking it looks so easy on TV. Surely, this is a good idea. Now, I think who we love home renovation shows, partly because of the before and after. And we love the before and after pictures and images, that there's something incredibly sensational about when that bus gets pulled away, and you see the final product, or that poster gets torn. And you see this incredible, extreme Moke makeover in the house. And those are amazing moments. But you know, what happens between the before the after a whole lot of this, okay. And a lot of this. And even this, there's a lot of mess. In the middle, there is debris, and maybe some arguments between husbands and wives, you got some neighbors who aren't all that happy, because all the trucks that have pulled up to your house. And it's taking longer, and you're spending more than you need to or want to. And you may even need some counseling sessions after this project is over and done with there's a lot of mess. We love the after picture. But the mess in the middle can be discouraging. And it can even be devastating at times. And that's what I want to talk to you about. last seven weeks, we've been looking at the bookends of God's story. And we know the beginning is good and Genesis one and two is beautiful. And the revelation is amazing, this new Jerusalem, this new kingdom, that we're going to be living out physically experientially with God here on Earth. Those two moments are amazing eternity past that turn in the future. But today we find ourselves in the middle of God's project in the world. And in the middle of our wars, brokenness and justice, pandemics, hatred, violence. And unlike HGTV where things toward the end of the show just gets better and better, better. You kind of see it anticipating. Sometimes in our life, when we look around us things may seem to be getting worse and worse. So you wonder where is God in the middle of all this? What's he up to in the world. God made the world beautifully in Eden, it was perfect just as it needed to be a home for us. But sin demolished the world God created one by one. Sin and its consequences and its effects begin to unravel the beautiful design of God in the world. In fact, Genesis three you begin to read some of the conditions that came from a merely from the fall, and you meet shame or Adam and Eve. Their eyes were open just like the serpent said they would be when they ate of the forbidden fruit. But their eyes are open not to know good and evil. Their eyes were open to realize their own shame. And to know their nakedness and their shame, there is separation. Before God even finds Adam and Eve they're already hiding from God. This is a first time God's created beings his image bearers are hiding from him and shame and fear. There's blame. Adam blames his wife. And he blames God and says the woman you gave me by the way, made me eat the fruit. Eve blames the serpent the serpent made me do it. So rather than admitting they're wrong, they're deflecting their blame. There's incredible pain of all sorts that now enters the equation of humanity. The women who

will now have to bear children through painful labor, through labor pains, and Adam and men wouldn't have to listen Genesis three, God says to the man you will eat of the fruit of the ground through painful labor, toil, hardship, meaning more work and less reward. There is subordination. until the fall, men and women equally created by God lived in this mutual equal relationship with one another perfectly one with him and one with each other. But now part of the curse is that Eve finds herself in a new kind of relationship and God says as part of the fallen nature, Adam would rule over Eve. There is fruitless labor, fruitless labor. until the fall the ground naturally produced fruit and vegetables of all kinds after its kind But now the ground will need to be cultivated and the natural product of the ground are thorns and thistles. How many of you have weeds in your yard? No matter what you do, right? Natural Product is thorns and thistles more work less reward. Death is now part of the human story that tells Adam and Eve from dust you came and to dust you will return you will return to the ground for which you are taken. Death enters. Lastly, there is banishment or exile, an act of kindness really got banished, he removed Adam and Eve out of the garden into the dust. So they would not forever live in this condition. That's the beginning of the middle. Genesis three, one and two are beautiful. It's perfect. But Genesis three reminds us of all the different conditions that came about, because of our sin because of the curse of humanity. And ever since then, generation after generation, we are all vulnerable to the same conditions shame, blame, pain, subordination, separation, death, fruitless labor, it has gripped the humankind. It's part of our story. But the amazing thing about the gospel, the wonder of the Gospel is that though we demolish the house God made, God enters into it. And God goes not to repair the house, but to recreate the house. God is not in the business of refurbishing. He's not into patch up jobs. In fact, he's that refurbishing. He is recreating, he's making all things new. And when God gets done making all things new, we won't even see a trace of the conditions of the fall. It's going to be that good. He's perfectly redeemed, recreate renew the earth. And the new creation won't have a single trace of the brokenness of humanity. Revelation 21 John gives us a vision of the after picture of Genesis three is a brokenness that debris, the mass. Revelation 21 is the moving of the bus and we get a full view into the story God is writing. So notice what John says in Revelation 21, verse one to four, then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea was no more. I also saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband, that I heard a loud voice from the throne. Look, see, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them, and will be their God, she will wipe away every tear from their eyes, deaths will be no more grief, crying, and pain will be no more why? Because the previous things are the old order of things. The previous order has been passed away, it's been removed, every trace of it is gone. Aren't you longing for that moment of the new heavens and the new earth. This is after picture, what the world is moving into. But if you notice here in relation, this description of the new heavens and the new New Earth, it is the exact removal of every bit of the curse from Genesis three. It is a reversal and more it is uplifting of the curse that we see in Genesis three. So in Genesis three in the fall, there is separation between God and humanity, human revelation, God is dwelling with people with us. He's not dwelling with them vicariously or through some agent. No, no, he is face to face with all humanity. He is living one with a citizen send an angel. He in all of his visible glory is dwelling physically here on the earth. The curse brought about shame. In the Garden of Eden here The shame is removed. Why? Because no more nakedness the bride is adorned, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. If blame was the results of the curse here blame is lifted. Why? Because this is a holy city. We're only righteousness and justice will reign forever and ever. The pain that entered the story in Genesis three and the pain that has been perpetuated since then in every time period and every generation is finally done away with and the tears we cry. The pain we feel the grief we experience. Jesus Himself leans in with his nail pierced hands and he wipes those tears away. And death is no more no death of a child Have

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no adults whose life is taken too soon. Why? Because the old order, the previous things that hold away, the conditions of the fall, are completely done away with. This is the after picture that God is leading the universe into? How do we get if this is the after picture? How do we go from Genesis three to Revelation 21? What happens in the middle that promises us this? And how do we live in the

middle waiting for that day? We love this. But what do we do today? What did God do in the middle to get us to this moment that's awaiting us. I want to show you what God did. See right after Adam and Eve commit their sin. God promises to cross right at the onset of their sin. God promises the cross he has a conversation with the serpent. And here he gives a serpent what he's already planning to do. He didn't devise the plan with a cross at the moment of our sin, he had already thought of it. And he now disclosed as he promises the serpent how he is going to write every wrong. There's a 315, sometimes called the first gospel says it like this, I will put hostility between you and the woman between the serpent and the woman. and between your offspring and her offspring. We know her offspring, but consider the phrase between your offspring serpent, it's an interesting phrase, we'll come back to that between your offspring and her offspring, he will strike your head and you will strike his head right at the face of our sin. God promises the cross. He says, between the offspring of the woman and of the serpent, there will be hostility, enmity, until the cross, and the cross Satan, the serpent will strike the heel of Jesus, the offspring of the woman, meaning Jesus will be crucified, he will die on a cross. But the story isn't over because Satan thought it was. But he will come back from the death he will be triumphant and crushed, or strike the head of the serpent how, through the resurrection, He will defeat sin, He will defeat the grave, He will be victorious over the serpent over Satan himself. So God's right at the onset of the fall, he promises that there is coming one day, one who will defeat death and sin and shame. Here's what's amazing. God doesn't just say the promise, he shows the promise in Genesis three. He does just so it doesn't just make the promise. He in fact, illustrates the promise to Adam and Eve. Right after their sin to Adam, and he realized they were naked, and they sewed together fig leaf to cover their shame. But God had a better idea. He had a lasting plan. Notice what God does right after they realize their nakedness. Genesis three goes on in verse 21, to say, The Lord God made clothing, from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them. He clothed them recognize the significance of this moment, Adam and Eve have blown it. Like they had one thing not to do, and they did it, and then messed everything up, not just for them. But for every single human being which has ever been in the Universe since then. They send their community huge failure that is now leading the world in this downward spiral of sin and its consequence. But here, God comes to them in the midst of their greatest failure. And he cares for them. He closed them, the living and the shame of their action, but a God who is so much bigger than their failure, a God who was so much bigger than the mistakes they've made, he comes he literally close them the garment of a skin of an animal. He shows him that his covering is better than theirs. And here's why the significance why this moment is so important. What does it teach us about God's covering for us? It tells us that we need covering for our sin. We have sinned, all of us, every one of us, we are unrighteous before God and we need a covering for our sin. And oftentimes, just like Adam and Eve, we make our own coverings, but our own attempts to cover our sin are inadequate. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaf together. Look, fig leaves aren't all that big. It's not a good look, no matter how many put you put together. Those still shame even if they're covered by fig leaves. God says I've got something better for you. Let me cover you. fig leaf represents our own efforts to cover our shame and our sins. And it could be man made religion, trying to cover our own shame. It could be what it's called Moral therapeutic deism, which says, let's just do enough good moral things. Let's get around the latest cause, and great humanitarian things, let's do enough of good moral things, to where we feel good about ourselves. And we think doing enough of those things, will appease God, that it makes us more presentable to God. A lot of people try to dress themselves with good works, and good deeds. That every bit of it no matter how much we do is inadequate. Because creating a covering on our own isn't enough. Only God can provide the covering we need, only he can. And here God makes the covering and Adam and Eve had nothing to do with it. God does it all on his own. And what is His covering his covering, is an innocent substitute. His covering is an innocent substitute. This is the first death recorded in Scripture. And it's the death of an innocent animal that sacrificed on account of Adam and Eve. Just imagine this moment, this is perhaps the first time Adam and Eve are seeing the shed blood of something or someone else. This is their first witnessing, of a sacrifice, a sacrifice for them. And God slays an animal and clothe them with the skin of that animal. blood is shed, perhaps the first time never here in Genesis three, on account of somebody else. I imagine for Adam and Eve in this moment, as they're watching the killing of an animal so that they could be close. They are one feeling the severity of their sin, the weightiness of their sin, but to their experience of

the grace of God, which is providing for their shame, and providing for their sin. And that's exactly what God does. He says to the serpent, what he's going to do, and he shows Adam and Eve, how he's going to do it. And then 4000 years later, from this first sacrifice that was slain for Adam and Eve, Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God enters our story, and he fulfills what was promised to the serpent and what was illustrated to Adam and Eve. Healing the cross perfectly provides not just a covering for our sin, but the removal of every bit of the curse we brought onto ourselves. Here's Paul records that in Colossians, two, verse 13. And when you were dead in trespasses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations that was against us, and opposed to us, and has taken it away. by nailing it to the cross, He disarmed the rulers and authorities. I think that's the offspring of the serpent, not just saying himself, but every ruler, every authority, every demonic principle in high places, passes, Jesus disarmed, not just a serpent, but everything that comes from him. Every activity, every principality from him, he has disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgrace them publicly. Why? Because he triumphed over them in him. This is the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 When he crushes the head of the serpent, publicly triumphing over him, and them. On the cross, Jesus fulfills the promise and the illustrations of Genesis three. On the cross, Jesus lives the curse that fell on humanity. In fact, Paul was saying, Galatians three, verse 13, that Christ became a curse under the law to redeem those under the law. He hung on a tree considered curse. So to redeem those under the law, he became a curse for us. Put To The thing for a moment, all of the parallels that exists between the condition of humanity since the fall and the condition of Jesus on the cross, to condition the condition of humanity because of our sin, the condition of Jesus on the cross. Adam and Eve felt shame privately. But Jesus was humiliated publicly. Adam and Eve deflected the blame that they were rightfully theirs. But Jesus willingly received blame for things he did not do. He allowed it for crimes and for sins he did not commit. He took it all on himself. I mean, he felt the pain that came from Genesis three. And Jesus felt the pain of the crusade. fiction unlike anything we could ever imagine.

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Adam and Eve felt separated from God and Jesus there because of their sin and arson. In that moment of agony, he feels forsaken by the Father. Adam and Eve experienced death, but Jesus died on their behalf. And Paul says, because of his death, he makes us alive. Friends, Jesus doesn't just cover our sins, He forgives our sins, but not only that, he removes a curse. And he closes us now with the skin of an animal pretty close us with his own perfect righteousness. Aren't you thankful for the gospel of Jesus, that He clothes you Amen. Like I know, it's about to befall, and it is here, and it's fun to weave into, and you're super excited about getting all your leather coats out. But every time you wear a leather coat, remember, God has done something better than the skin of an animal. He has closed you with the beauty, the righteousness as he's lifted the curse and clothe you with the sacrifice of His own Son. That's what God does in the middle. He promises he illustrates he carries out the work of the Cross, so that the curse is lifted, and we can get to Revelation 21 One day. So what's our response? Then in the middle? What do we do? Well, the first thing we do is we believe we do what Adam and Eve failed to do, which was trust God, believe in him trust in His Word, trust in his work on the side of the cross, we place our full weight, our full trust in the work of Jesus, we believe that his work work, that his work is sufficient for us that it's enough to cover to save to rescue, and it is our only hope, we believe. But second of all, not only do we believe we participate with God, in the in breaking of his kingdom. Now. See, when Jesus came, one of his most repeated phrases was the kingdom of God is at hand. Meaning you can reach out and grab a hold of it. It's here, it's coming. I am bringing it in, I'm ushering it in. See revelation 21, we see the fullness of the kingdom of God physically, visibly here with us. But when Jesus entered our story, he brought the kingdom of God already here. We don't see it fully yet we will one day, but yet we can participate in it fully now. Meaning we can through our life and our families and our neighborhoods and our workplaces. We can bring down a slice of heaven here on earth. And we can pray prayers like God thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it already is in heaven. See people of God filled by the Holy Spirit. We are participating in the in breaking of God's kingdom, His righteousness, his generosity, His justice, His love, His compassion on earth as it is in heaven. Let me show it to you. Let me show how we're already participating. One day we will physically see the new creation. But if you're a believer in

Jesus, you know what the Bible calls you. The new creation. You're already the new creation. One day we will physically see the removal of physical death for the planet. But the New Testament teaches as soon as you place your faith in Christ, you've already crossed over from death into life, like ETERNAL LIFE has already begun. One day we will see the full removal of pain and sorrow. But in Jesus, as we experienced His kingdom, we receive His joy, His power, His grace, one day we will be seated with Jesus shoulder to shoulder in the new heavens on the New Earth. But today Paul says You and I are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies not yet shoulder to shoulder but today heart to heart. We're united meaning every single day we're spiritually active and awake and alert in the kingdom of God already here as we inch our way to the full visible physical reality of the world is here and it's coming. So between Eden Eden and New Jerusalem we don't just sit silent we don't stay passive. No, no, no, we actively participate in the arrival in the ushering in of the already but not yet kingdom of God. When a believer in Jesus in death by the Holy Spirit of God sees herself or himself as that, what we began to see through our life is the unraveling of the very condition of the curse, through the kingdom of God in the kingdom of God but power of the Holy Spirit. So the curse brought curse the ground. The Church of Jesus filled with the Spirit can cultivate the ground, ground, cultivate the earth, and care for our world and see life again out of ashes comes back Ready. If the curse brought shame, that means we can meet people you can meet somebody this week who is still living in shame. And tell them about the offering of full acceptance because of who Jesus is. The curse brought pain and sickness, those filled with the Holy Spirit can be used by God as He wills to bring healing to the sick and freedom to the captive, good news to the poor. If the curse brought about hostility and wickedness and inequality, we the Church of Jesus can be about bringing together equality, oneness harmony, to the power of Jesus, Jesus Himself said, or Paul said and Galatians in Christ, no more male or female, Jew or Greek, slave or free, we are one in Christ, that means that the walls of hostility can come down in the kingdom now, that means to the church through a message through our influence, even nations can experience the peace that comes only through Jesus Christ and those on the margins of society, brought to the core of the heart of God. What I'm saying is, yes, Revelation 21, we were fully going to see that one day. But today, you have a part to play in God recreating the world, in it through our own life. Yes, we're in the middle of Eden and new Jerusalem, were invited to believe and participate in the in breaking of his kingdom. The last few weeks ever since October sevens, when we saw horrific, horrific, act of terror, barbaric, senseless for Jewish people, we began to see a role rise to a whole new level of wickedness and alertness. Grief. That moment has started an all out war in Israel. What about you, but I've been in a lot of crying and grieving and praying. And in this moment, I think as we live in the middle, we can do two things that are acts of worship, we can lament, and we can trust. We need to limit and we need to trust. So I was thinking about I'm lamenting what why do we feel sort of universally there's an agreement of lament and grief and in a sense, there are there is a universal agreement that things should not be this way. Why is that? People from different countries and even religious backgrounds, there is an inner cry that says things should not be this way. I think those cries, what are they? I think those are echoes of Eden. Echoes of Eden meaning we know the kind of world God made an Eden and we know the kind of world God is recreating in the New Jerusalem. And when we see a disconnection between the two. When we see a disagreement within the two, there are laments of grief and pain inside of us, echoes of our soul echoes of Eden, a Christ of disagreement in our soul when we are met with the realities of the world. And we know inherently this just shouldn't be this way. So you need and God created life. So when we face death, there's a cry that says This shouldn't be an Eden. God created peace. So when we see hostility and violence and vengeance, as a cry, in a sense, this shouldn't be this way. In Eden, God created peaceful relationships. So when we see nation against nation and acts of terror and pure evil, and hostility among people, groups and racism on the rights, we lament, this shouldn't be the it's the echo of Aiden. It's amazing is when we grieve, I believe those of us, all of us were made in God's image as we're tuned to the Spirit of God. When we grieve, we are actually feeling the grief of God who sees the atrocities of the world more than we do 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from the beginning of time, he feels it man we grieve, we are stepping into the grief of God. God's not distant. He's not aloof from the pain that we feel, as in 53 describes Jesus as a man of sorrows. One who is acquainted with our grief, Jesus will stand in John 11, at the tombstone of Lazarus, who he's about to resurrect, and still weep. Not just over Lazarus, but any person who has died because he's saying this

is not what my father created. This brokenness this hostility is not what the Father had in mind, and it's not what you will see one day but I grieve in the middle. It's lament, and trust.

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Scriptures are filled with moments of lament. In fact, there are laments over personal distress the psalms are filled with laments and tears of anguish personally, there are laments over communal calamities, communal things, a whole community suffers together. The book of laments is a series of laments when Jerusalem was destroyed and 586 BC by the Babylonians and they are crying out of anguish and prayer and a pleading for mercy and finding hope and God, lament. And today Jerusalem again is weeping, crying, lamenting, and I just use them for all of Israel and even those in Gaza, millions lamenting out of fear. It doesn't matter where we are politically on any of this. We can unite our hearts around the lament of humanity. And we ought to lament over the anti semitism that is creeping up all over the world. It ought not be this way. Yesterday morning. In Detroit, a president of a Jewish synagogue in Detroit was stabbed to death light death right outside of our home. We'll admit that a few days ago, last week, a six year old Palestinian American boy with the Alfa Umi, stabbed 26 times just because he was muscled. That's not okay. It's cause for lament, praying tears for all people. We lament over sin and its consequence. Because any moment and groups of people who have rejected the offering of Jesus when we offer his gift of forgiveness and His covering, it always leads to more hostility, hatred, violence, vengeance, it leads to death. When there is a presence of sin that celebrated and a lack of repentance. We need a limit. It can be across the wall or in our own communities. Sin has a way of dishonouring God and dehumanizing people. So we join in on this call to limit why because lament is a plea for God's inner vention. It's not just a sappy sad story, it is a plea to God saying God without you, there is no hope. Without Jesus ruling and reigning without his kingdom here on earth, will never experience peace, because He alone is the prince of peace in our lamenting, we recognize our human limitation, and we plead for divine intervention. Nothing I could do nothing no one can do can actually make the world of a difference, because we are limited in our resources and influence. But oh God, would you intervene in the world in the middle, we need you so desperately, it is a cry, asking God for His intervention in the world. So we can lament together in the middle. But not only do we lament, we can also trust God in the middle. are lamenting doesn't lead to despair, it actually leads to deeper trust. And I would argue, you can get to a confident place of trust without limit. Because it's trauma met, you recognize our need for him. And I love this moment, I'm gonna end with this verse right after the fall, there's an incredible moment that I was blown away by this this week that I didn't really recognize before. Do you know who named Eve? It's not God. It's actually Adam. And do you know when Adam named his wife, Eve, it's not before the fall, it's after the fall. In fact, he names the woman II, right after the curse of death is pronounced. Right after they're told you will return to the dust and you'll return to the ground. Right after this announcement of death is given. Adam chooses to name his wife. And do you know what he named her? Genesis 3:20, the man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. He didn't name her the mother of all the dying. Because they had just received the word of death. He chose in that moment to prophesy over his wife and said, You're not the mother of all the dying don't we're going to die. Don't we're going to be returning to Deus don't we're going to return to the ground, and death is sure I am choosing to name you and not the mother of all the dying, but the mother of all the living. Eve the mother of all the living why is because just a few verses ago, Adam heard before he heard the promise of death, he heard the promise of a savior, given to the serpent out of you evil come an offspring who will defeat satan. Two promises are given one of death and one of life. And Adam chooses right now to hold on not to the promise of death, but to the promise of life. And he says even though we're going to die, God's going to be true to his word. And you're going to create life and out of you will come on to living and not just all the living out of you will come the one the one living one. Cool destroy the very death we brought into Kadam chose to respond to his brokenness, not in view of the curse, hear me not in view of the curse, but in view of the promise. So I'm asking you, what are you naming? What are you choosing the name? The scenarios around you the situation around you, you can choose will you name it after the curse? Will you name it after the Promise? Promise? And the promise is Jesus, the one who is coming back the one who will write every wrong, the one who will bring into all wars, the one who will create justice out of injustice, the

one who will wipe away every tear, he is a promise for your family, your marriage for your kids. He is the only one that can be the hope of the nation's So yes, we hear the nightly news on our years. But here his good news on your heart. Because we live by faith and not by sight would you stand with me? Who want to end our service both lamenting and trusting? Here's what I want to ask you. Which echo of heat and it's most Roberto Roberto reverberating in your soul. What are you lamenting? What is the echo of Eden that is saying to you, it should not be this way recognize it, recognize it, and lament over it. lament over the condition in the Middle East and Ukraine and Europe and even our nation and our own communities lament because this is not what God created and designed, but in the midst of all unmet Don't be found in despair. Choose to name our cities, our families, our global world, not in view of the curse, but in view of the promise. So would you just eat online and in this would you just extend your hand out loud and what I would love for us to do for just 30 seconds 90 seconds. We're going to sing in response of worship but I want you to just out loud offer to God laments and trust. can kneel if you want you can if you came with a family or friend just you can link up and pray together at home you can pray hard, but I would love it if for just a few seconds. We could lament out loud the echoes of Eden in our soul. But in doing so we're agreeing to the promise that God has made. So we're going to sing but before we do would you begin to pray out loud Come on church. Let's pray out loud. hear the echoes of heat and let this room lay your living room at home. Let it be filled with the echoes of Eden oh god how we long for this how we long for peace how you want for righteousness? Come on let's let's let's actually vocalize the laments we've been hearing there's power in that we are disarming the powers of the evil one. As we feel this room and your room with songs and prayers of lament and trust. Would you pray that we're going to sing in trust of who God is?