

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

“BUILDING BLOCKS: BAD BITE”

Sin. We have all committed it. All of us are under the condemnation of it. For the wages of sin is death. It is not the easiest topic to approach but a vital one for our awareness and understanding. We need to be aware of the potential to sin and understand the cost to our Lord to keep us from the eternal penalty of sin.

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:
Genesis 3:1-6

The Word

Sin is tragic. The beginning of sin is the biggest tragedy of all. Imagine having lived time in perfection and then experiencing the loss of your innocence, the loss of your relationship with others, and the loss of your relationship with God. Adam and Eve went from paradise to being cursed because of one bad bite.

Genesis 3:1-6

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Verse 1-6: We will be breaking up this story, but I wanted you to get the full picture of what happened. As we study this passage, I want us to look beyond Adam and Eve to see ourselves. How do we carry on the sin cycle that began that day? How can we learn from their mistake so that we may make righteous choices in the future? First of all, we must recognize the enemy.

Genesis 3:1

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Verse 1: The serpent invaded the garden. Why was he allowed to stay? Before the serpent spoke, Adam could have exercised his authority to have the enemy removed. Adam was given the responsibility to care of the garden. He should have made sure the “garbage” was taken out!

Genesis 2:15

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Verse 15: Adam was responsible to cultivate the garden. God had given him authority over it.

Genesis 1:28

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Verse 28: If Adam had the authority over every living thing, then he could have told the serpent to go and the serpent would have had to go. But he did not use the authority he had, thus he did not uphold his responsibility before God. This opened the door for the enemy to attack. We, too, have authority over the enemy but we must choose to use it.

James 4:7

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Verse 7: Adam was called to care for the garden; we are called to live for God. All of us are to submit to God in our calling. Submitting to God requires us to resist the enemy for we can only submit to one master. The enemy will then leave. If Adam had submitted to God in caring for the garden, the enemy would have fled. Unfortunately, Adam did not carry out his responsibility before God and the enemy came into the garden. Once the enemy had access to the people, he began working a devious plan.

Genesis 3:1-5

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Verse 1-5: The question here is, “Why is she talking to him?” Eve does not need to justify, rationalize, or draw conclusions with the enemy. He draws her into a debate and then confuses her reasoning. Satan is known as the “accuser of the brethren”. He wants to bring charges against us. He is a lawyer who wants to condemn everyone. This makes him a slick debater. Do not try to wrestle with him with your words. He will win. The only word that you need is the name of Jesus. For He alone is greater than the evil one of this world. When you take on the enemy with your own power and wisdom, you will fail.

Genesis 3:6

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Verse 6: She had probably passed this tree a hundred times. But with the help of the enemy, she viewed it differently. What once did not matter to her all of a sudden became an all-consuming passion. The enemy got her with the same things he gets us:

1 John 2:15-16

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Verse 15-16: Lust of the flesh: “Tree was good for food”
Lust of the eyes: “Delight to the eyes”
Boastful pride of life: “Desirable to make one wise”

The same tricks the enemy used in the garden, he uses today. Be on your guard.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Verse 8: Beware. He wants to devour you. Resist him by submitting every part of your life to God.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord if there is anything that you need to submit to Him. Ask for His help in resisting the attacks of the enemy.

What area of your life is prone to attacks by the enemy?

In what areas are you the most vulnerable: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or boastful pride of life?

Based on the area that you are most likely to be attacked, in what way do you need to submit to God?



Today's Scripture:

Genesis 3:6-13, 16-19, 22-24; 1 John 1:5-9

The Word

Sin always has consequences. We never get away with sin. In one way or another, we will bear the burden of our actions. Adam and Eve were the first to experience this bitter reality.

Genesis 3:6-7

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Verse 6-7: The first consequence for their sin was a loss of innocence. They were pure, now impure. They were righteous, now corrupt. They were holy, now defiled. In a futile attempt, they tried to cover themselves with sewed leaves. Their covering was inadequate, for when God came, they hid.

Genesis 3:8-10

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Verse 8-10: Another consequence to sin is having our relationship with God broken. Adam and Eve had enjoyed sweet fellowship with their Creator. They would walk with Him in the garden. Yet, after sin, they hid from Him. How often that is true today. We sin, so we hide from God: avoid Bible study, quit coming to church, stop praying, or abandon Christian friends. We hide just like Adam and Eve. It breaks the heart of God.

I think the question of God is being said to us today. "Where are you?" God knew where they were, hiding in the garden. He was not referring to their physical location but their spiritual one. Before, they had shared fellowship, now the relationship was severed. The same can happen to us.

1 John 1:5-7

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Verse 5-7: Are you walking with God? If so, then you are in the light; you are not hiding in darkness. You can claim to be in the light even if you are not. You may fool others, but God knows. He is asking, "Where are you?" If you are hiding from God because of sin, there is only one remedy. You must confess it.

1 John 1:8-9

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Verse 8-9: Confession gets us out of hiding, out of the darkness, and brings us back to fellowship with the Light. We must stop rationalizing our sin or blaming others for it. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did not do this.

Genesis 3:11-13

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

*¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Verse 11-13: Sin bred more sin. Often the consequence of sin is that it leads to more sin. It is a vicious cycle that destroys your relationship with God as well as others. The relationship Adam and Eve shared with God, walking in the garden, would never be the same. The perfect harmony between Adam and Eve was now gone. The consequences would not end here.

Genesis 3:16-19

¹⁶To the woman he said,
 *"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;
 with pain you will give birth to children.
 Your desire will be for your husband,
 and he will rule over you."*

¹⁷To Adam he said, *"Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'
 "Cursed is the ground because of you;
 through painful toil you will eat of it
 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*By the sweat of your brow
 you will eat your food
 until you return to the ground,
 since from it you were taken;
 for dust you are
 and to dust you will return."*

Verse 16-19: Painful childbirth, toiling at work: we can thank Eve and Adam for this. Their sin has affected every person ever born. That is another consequence of sin, it always affects others. Our sin is never committed in a vacuum. Someone or many people will be adversely affected by our sin. We were all affected by Adam and Eve before we were ever born. Because of them, none of us were born into paradise.

Genesis 3:22-24

²² *And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."* ²³ *So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.* ²⁴ *After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Verse 22-24: Their sin cost them everything. Their sin cost all of humanity everything. Sin has consequences, devastating consequences. We cannot minimize sin. We must face it for what it truly is and confess it to God. To confess means “to agree”. We need to agree with God that what we did was wrong. No more excuses. No more rationalizations. Nor more blaming. No more hiding. Confess it.

Up Close and Personal

Confess your sin to God and ask for His forgiveness.

What other ways, besides the ones mentioned in this study, do people hide from God?

Why would we choose to hide instead of confessing the sin?

How does sin lead to more sin?

How is sin minimized in our society? How about in the church?

What is wrong with the notion that “this sin only affects me. I’m not hurting anyone else”?

DAY
3

Today’s Scripture:

Genesis 3:13-15, 21; Revelation 12:7, 9, 13:8; 2
Corinthians 2:11, 11:14; Colossians 2:13-15

The Word

Adam and Eve were not the only ones who were punished for sin. The serpent was cursed as well.

Genesis 3:13-14

¹³*Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

¹⁴*So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life."*

Verse 13-15: The serpent receives his curses before Adam and Eve. They will be punished as well but God goes directly to the source first. It was the very source of evil. Please do not get the idea that this was some snake hanging in a tree. My niece has a book of a cute orange snake lounging in a tree by Adam and Eve. This is not it at all. This was not only some animal, but satan himself.

Revelation 12:9

⁹*The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

Verse 9: Remember that Eve said that she had been deceived by the serpent. This same serpent tries to deceive the whole world. In what way does he deceive them? He deceived Eve into not trusting God. She thought God was trying to hold out on her by not allowing her to eat the fruit on that one tree. His deception is the same today. He wants to deceive us about God. He may try to get some to believe that there is no God. Others he convinces to believe in a false god. And for those who know the true Lord, he tries to get them to not fully depend upon God. The serpent that deceived Eve, deceives others today. We must be aware of his game.

2 Corinthians 2:11

¹¹*in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.*

Verse 11: To be aware of his schemes, we must realize the fact that he is not harmless. He is not a tiny orange snake hanging from a tree. He is a vicious being, wanting to destroy us. His hatred for us stems from his disdain of God. The serpent cannot harm God so he does the next best thing: he attempts to harm those whom God loves.

Revelation 12:17

¹⁷Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Verse 17: Who is the devil at war with? He fights those who keep the commands of God and hold onto the testimony of Jesus! If you are a believer, he is at war with you. Think of the word “war”. This is not a water gun fight. This is serious business. We must be aware of the fight. When you are at war, the enemy does not come up to you and say, “I’m the enemy. I wanted to give you fair warning before I attacked you.” Instead, he camouflages himself to try to get you. The serpent in the garden was not a hideous beast. Instead, in some way, it must have seemed harmless to Adam and Eve. The enemy continues this “harmless” tactic today.

2 Corinthians 11:14

¹⁴And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Verse 14: Satan came to Adam and Eve as a creature of the earth. Adam had named all the animals and had been given dominion by God over them, why would he be guarded against this one? His lack of wisdom proved his downfall. The same is true for us. Not everyone or every situation is as innocent as it seems. Even the enemy will pretend to be an angel of light. He will use whatever it takes to gain access to our lives.

While the enemy is a formidable foe, we do not need to cower in fear. He is under a curse.

Genesis 3:15

*¹⁵And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”*

Verse 15: The enemy had first deceived the woman. However, it would be through a woman that the enemy would be destroyed. It would be thousands of years later when a woman would bear the Seed, Jesus Christ. This seed would crush the power of the serpent. How was this accomplished? Through the cross. On that cross, the enemy would bruise the heel of Jesus, for crucifixion is the only corporal punishment in which a heel would be damaged. But through the death of Jesus, which to the outside would have seemed like a loss, in reality it led to the ultimate victory over sin and death!

Colossians 2:13-15

¹³*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

Verse 13-15: He has triumphed over the serpent. Through the cross, our sins have been forgiven and the enemy has been defeated! All of this was promised in that garden so long ago. On a bleak day of human history, God gave hope. He symbolized this hope with the shedding of blood.

Genesis 3:21

²¹*The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.*

Verse 21: Animal blood was shed so that Adam and Eve could be covered. Years later, the blood of Jesus was shed so that our sins may be covered. The plan of salvation was in place even before the first sin happened.

Revelation 13:8

⁸*All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.*

Verse 8: The Lamb, Jesus Christ, was slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, before the first bite of the forbidden fruit, Jesus had already planned to save the world through the shedding of His blood. Before the enemy had planned to deceive Eve, the Lord had the plan to save her. Praise be to the Lamb who was slain!

Up Close and Personal

Praise God that He had a plan for salvation before the first sin was committed.

How can believers be deceived by the enemy?

How do we protect ourselves from his deception?

If the enemy was defeated at the cross, what power does he hold now?

The Lord knew how to save the world before the sin had entered the world. What does that teach you about the Lord?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 1:26-27, 2:16-17, 3:19; Romans 5:12; n 1:3; Galatians 1:10; Matthew 27:27-31; Ephesians 2:1-9, 4:22-24

People are known for who and what they are. We are defined by our looks, our jobs, our past, our finances, our families, and so much more. But imagine the honor that Adam and Eve received by being defined by God.

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

*²⁷So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

Verse 26-27: Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. That is how they were defined. Adam and Eve did not look like God for God is Spirit. However, they had a spiritual nature that was made like the Lord's. Their spirit was alive within them and that spirit was in the fashion of the Lord's Spirit. However, when they sinned, what was alive within them died, just as God had warned them.

Genesis 2:16-17

¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Verse 16-17: The spiritual nature of Adam and Eve, which had been made in the image of God, died when they sinned. This death would be passed onto every generation.

Romans 5:12

¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Verse 12: Death has been passed onto us. This death is two fold. The spiritual nature, which was made in the image of God, is dead within us. What was alive in Adam and Eve died and they pass this death onto us. Also, physical death which is the consequence of sin is also a part of every person's life. We die on account of our own sin but this consequence began in the garden.

Adam and Eve had been defined as being made in the image of God. However, after they sinned, the Lord refers to them in a different way.

Genesis 3:19

*¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."*

Verse 19: Sin redefines us. We become known for what we did. Adam and Eve redefined all of humanity by their sin. Instead of being known as having been made in the image of God, they were now known as those formed from the dust of the earth. Since their spiritual nature died, they now could only be known for their physical nature, which was from the dirt. They went from "made in God's image" to "mud". That is exactly how sin redefines us. We are no longer associated with the Lord but with the world.

But how can we be redefined? We, by ourselves, cannot. However, Jesus can redefine us. Because He died on the cross, He took upon Himself the spiritual and physical death that we had been punished with. He literally bore the curse upon Himself. In fact read again the punishment Adam was given.

Genesis 3:17-18

*¹⁷To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'
"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat of it
all the days of your life.*

*¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.*

Verse 17-18: Now compare these verses with another scene that takes place thousands of years later.

Matthew 27:27-31

²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Verse 27-31: Thorns. The curse of Adam was symbolically worn on the head of Jesus. Because He bore the punishment that we deserved, He can give us His spiritual life.

Ephesians 2:1-9

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

Verse 1-9: We are made alive through Christ. What died in the Garden of Eden can be resurrected in us by the One who was resurrected from the grave. He died so that we might have life. He restored what was lost on that fateful day when Adam and Eve sinned. Now, through Him, we no longer have to be defined as dust of the earth, or worldly in nature. Instead, our former ways are radically transformed from death to life. We are redefined by the grace, mercy, and saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ! But we must choose to accept it.

Ephesians 4:22-24

²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Verse 22-24: Our new self that we receive through Christ is created to be like God. What was alive in Adam and Eve before they sinned is now alive in us. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, we can now be defined once again as made in the image of God.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for His mercy and grace to you.

How has sin “redefined” you?

If you are in Christ, then you are new. All of the past labels on your life are gone. How does it feel to know that your spirit is alive and it is made in the image of God?

Explain the two types of death.

How does someone go from spiritual death to spiritual life?

DAY
5

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 3:22-24; Psalm 107:1-32; Revelation 2:7, 21:3-5

The Word

Paradise. Travel agencies use that word to beckon us to go on vacation. Hawaii is considered “paradise” yet it has experienced damaging hurricanes. Others have claimed the beaches of Indonesia as “paradise” yet recently it experienced a typhoon

that killed over a hundred thousand people. Vietnam used to be the place of “paradise” until it suffered the effects of war. Jamaica has been said to be a “paradise” yet the majority of its people bear the weight of poverty.

The word “paradise” is used so loosely in our culture that none of us really know what it is. All we know is that we want to experience it. We long for the perfect place where we are sheltered from heartache, pain, and death. We desire what we were made for. We want what God originally intended. We want the Garden of Eden that was created for us. But our right to this perfection was lost when sin entered the world. All that had been rightfully ours was forfeited. With the introduction of sin came the introduction of suffering, evil, toil, and so much more. All the horrors of history can be traced back to sin, to paradise lost.

Genesis 3:22-23

²²And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

Verse 22-23: Adam and Eve were kicked out of the house that their Heavenly Father had created for them. But like any good parent, it was because of love. If they had eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever under the penalty of their sin. They would have always been separated from God without any hope for redemption. The Lord, longing for relationship, knew that it would only be possible outside of the garden.

We all long for paradise, but if we lived in it would there be any need of God? It is suffering, pain, heartache, and guilt that often drive us into our relationship with God. We experience a need and that need longs to be met. We must go to One greater than ourselves and greater than our pain in order to find the answer. The paradox is that in the Garden we would never come to God. It is outside of the Garden that we run to meet Him.

Psalms 107:1-32

*¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.*

*² Let the redeemed of the LORD say this—
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,*

*³ those he gathered from the lands,
from east and west, from north and south.*

*⁴ Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.*

- ⁵ *They were hungry and thirsty,
and their lives ebbed away.*
- ⁶ *Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.*
- ⁷ *He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.*
- ⁸ *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for men,*
- ⁹ *for he satisfies the thirsty
and fills the hungry with good things.*
- ¹⁰ *Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom,
prisoners suffering in iron chains,*
- ¹¹ *for they had rebelled against the words of God
and despised the counsel of the Most High.*
- ¹² *So he subjected them to bitter labor;
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.*
- ¹³ *Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.*
- ¹⁴ *He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom
and broke away their chains.*
- ¹⁵ *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for men,*
- ¹⁶ *for he breaks down gates of bronze
and cuts through bars of iron.*
- ¹⁷ *Some became fools through their rebellious ways
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.*
- ¹⁸ *They loathed all food
and drew near the gates of death.*
- ¹⁹ *Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.*

- ²⁰ *He sent forth his word and healed them;
he rescued them from the grave.*
- ²¹ *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for men.*
- ²² *Let them sacrifice thank offerings
and tell of his works with songs of joy.*
- ²³ *Others went out on the sea in ships;
they were merchants on the mighty waters.*
- ²⁴ *They saw the works of the LORD,
his wonderful deeds in the deep.*
- ²⁵ *For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
that lifted high the waves.*
- ²⁶ *They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;
in their peril their courage melted away.*
- ²⁷ *They reeled and staggered like drunken men;
they were at their wits' end.*
- ²⁸ *Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.*
- ²⁹ *He stilled the storm to a whisper;
the waves of the sea were hushed.*
- ³⁰ *They were glad when it grew calm,
and he guided them to their desired haven.*
- ³¹ *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for men.*
- ³² *Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people
and praise him in the council of the elders.*

Verse 1-32: When did the people cry out to the Lord? In the midst of their pain, suffering, and sin. It is the loving kindness of the Lord that allows us to experience these problems for without them we would never turn to God. His love allows the pain so that we might come to Him for salvation. He allows us to experience temporal heartache in order that we might come to eternal salvation. That is why the way to paradise is denied to us right now.

Genesis 3:24

²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Verse 24: We are barred from the tree of life, from the Garden of Eden, from paradise for now for our own good. But our Father knows the perfect time to restore what was lost for us.

Revelation 2:7

⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Verse 7: For those who overcome this world, the tree of life will be given to them. Paradise will be restored to us one day. The heartache and pain will disappear and we will live eternally in the presence of God.

Revelation 21:3-5

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Verse 3-5: Everything will be new. All that was taken from us due to the consequences of sin will be restored. The pain and suffering which drove us to our Lord will no longer be needed for we will be in His midst. Just as He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so He will walk with us. The relationship for which we were made will last forever. Paradise. It is waiting for us.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to speak to you.

How does pain and suffering draw us to the Lord?

How is the loving kindness of the Lord displayed by allowing difficult circumstances in our lives?

Why is the knowledge of heaven helpful to us now?