

You Asked For It! Heavenly Mercy

As far as I can determine, there is only one thing that God ...
It's like He quit right ...

We think it important to know what God's ...

When Adam and Eve were sinning in the Garden of Eden ...

God made up His mind that Adam and Eve ...

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone who ...?

Have you ever said, "If you ever speak to your mother like that ..."?

"That hat she was wearing ..."

"I think you should, so yah ..."

"I can't stand it when ..."

Have you ever used an incomplete sentence?

When we do we trust the person to accurately complete it for us.

Often it works out OK.

Try to complete the following sentences.

For God ...

So faith, hope, love ...

"In the beginning God ...

"The wages of sin ...

"Let him who is without sin ...

"If my people who are called by my name ...

"Even (Yeah) though I walk ...

"It is easier for a camel ...

We can complete these sentences because we know what the Bible says.

But often incomplete sentences leave us confused or uncertain.

Incomplete sentences leave us with questions that go unanswered.

That is the case in our second sermon in the "You Asked For It" series.

Someone wanted to know, "What if Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life?"

That is almost a trick question.

This isn't supposed to be like sermon in a bag where you try to stump me.

The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with trick questions.

They tried to put Him on the spot by addressing grey areas of life.

If there was ever a grey area, this would be one of them.

What if Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life?

There is no hard and accurate answer for that question.

And I am not going to take responsibility for that.

I'm going to blame God.

It is God's fault there is not a definite answer to that question.

In our text this morning we find God doing something He rarely does.

In Genesis 3:22 God starts a sentence but doesn't finish it.

Read that verse again.

"Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever -"

That is as far as God went with the thought.

There is something amazing about that verse.

It is a verse that gives great credibility to creation.

There are many in the world who dismiss the creation story.

They feel it is a story made up by simple-minded folk.

It was their unscientific attempt to explain the beginning.
But if I was making the story up I wouldn't leave it incomplete.
I would explain it in great detail to give it credibility.
I would make it this nice neat package.
I would want it to be indisputable.
But God did not finish the sentence.
He wasn't worried about leaving things open-ended.
Only the Creator could risk that kind of vulnerability.
Moses wrote only what he was inspired by God.
And he was faithful in leaving the sentence unfinished.

This is one of the few incomplete sentences in the Bible.

God does not complete His thought.

I can only speculate as to why God never finished the sentence.

God saw a world so catastrophic that He could not bring Himself to describe it.

He envisioned a bulging world of humanity that was horrible and hideous.

Adam and Eve had already sinned.

If they ate from the tree of life they would live eternally in that sin.

Sin would continuously ravage all of God's creation.

Day in and day out the battle would rage.

There would never be any peace.

There would be no hope that life would improve.

Every day would be spent face to face with the enemy.

Every sinful person born would make this world an eternal hell.

Every generation would add their own brand of evil and violence.

The sin of one generation would be fuel for the sin of the next.

There would be no such thing as healthy marriages and homes.

There would always be tension between neighbours.

There would be no honest business dealings.

Life would be filled with treachery and cheating.

No one would be reliable or trustworthy.

Someone else would be blamed for their repulsive condition.

Suffering would be continuous.

There would be nothing pleasant or beautiful.

Eternal separation from God.

Humanity would live forever lost in sin.

That is what God envisioned if Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life.

Maybe you think the world is like that now.

Even with all the atrocities caused by sin today we are nowhere near that.

God knew He had to save Adam and Eve from an existence of perpetual sin.

So He graciously prevented Adam and Eve from living physically eternally.

Physical death is one of God's great responses to sin.

Alexander Maclaren says, **"Look the condition of the world: its degradation, its savagery - all its pining myriads, all its untold millions who sit in darkness and the shadow of death."** (Eden Lost and Restored)

And that is just one generation.

Imagine a world filled with every person that ever lived in that condition.

Imagine a world in which perpetual torment is inflicted by sinful people.

What I have described is only a fraction of what God would have seen.

He saw beyond Genesis 6:5-6.

"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to His heart."

Perhaps He could not bring Himself to complete His sentence.

But there is something we can say for certain about God's incomplete sentence.

God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us."

Was that a thought that sent chills to the core of God?

Did God say that because He was now afraid of His creation?

Did God think He was going to lose His monopoly on divinity?
Not at all!

Nor did He make this statement in judgment or condemnation.

God commented on Adam's condition out of deep compassion for him.

Now Adam was bombarded with a reality that God had wanted to protect.

God wanted to spare Adam and Eve from the burden of good and evil.

That is why He told them not to eat of the fruit of knowledge.

But their disobedience opened the door to resident evil.

God literally said, "What has become (by sin) of the man who was as one of us?
Adam was formed in the image of God.

Now that image was distorted because of sin.

So God's plan of redemption began immediately.

God's first act of redemption was to remove Adam and Eve from the Garden.

God's first act of mercy was to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden.

By removing them from the Garden, they could not eat the fruit of life.

God spared them from an eternity of sinful existence.

He did not want Adam to be like the rebellious angels.

God did not want Adam to become fixed in his rebellion.

The consequence of sin was the loss of physical immortality.

Satan had deceived them saying they would not die.

They believed his lie.

Death resulted from their sin.

Paul rightly says, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23a)

But he goes on to say, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus
Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b)

Genesis 3:22 is a glorious display of heavenly mercy.

It was not God's punishment.

It was God's protection and the start of His plan of redemption.

If there was no possibility of death, Jesus could never have become our Saviour.

The forgiveness of sin can only be offered by the shedding of blood.

That is always God's desire when He leads us.

We all discover there are some things in life that God says "No" to.

What is God doing by saying "No!" to us?

Is He trying to ruin our fun?

Is He trying to make our lives miserable?

Is He afraid that we might become too powerful?

To the contrary, God is protecting us.

God is liberating us when He says "No".

It is a part of His saving work being displayed in our lives.

Not everything we desire will be good for us.

God protected Adam and Eve from building their hopes on a wrong
foundation.

In the Garden lay the thought, 'We can save ourselves'.

The tree of Life is waiting for our picking.

It would have made their ruin undoable.

So since You Asked for It here are 10 truths from Genesis 3:22:

Adam and Eve were sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment.

Adam and Eve were sent to the ground, not to the grave

Adam and Eve had to put their trust in God not in God's creation

Adam and Eve were free to die

Adam and Eve received eternal life through God's gift of death

God is merciful

God takes sin seriously

God protects us from ourselves

God takes upon Himself the burden of our sin

God alone can save us from the sinful condition