

Impact of One: Evil

Our world is a mess.

You don't have to look past the curb.

Our world is littered with debris and debauchery.

It sure wasn't like that in the beginning.

Everything God created was declared good.

God didn't make garbage.

God made good.

God didn't make mess.

God made masterpiece.

God didn't make parasites.

God made paradise.

After He created Adam and Eve everything was very good (Genesis 1:31).

When did the world change?

Did it gradually slide into degradation and decay?

I hope we know the story behind current conditions.

But to be safe, let's read our scripture.

Our scripture reveals the impact of one choice.

It was a choice of disobedience.

And that choice of disobedience has had catastrophic consequences ever since.

The choice to eat the forbidden fruit has impacted my life and your life.

It has impacted your neighbor and neighbourhood.

It has impacted the fields worked by our farmers.

It has impacted the air that we breathe.

It has impacted the construction of our homes.

How many of you do not have locks on your doors?

In many communities it is not just locks on doors but bars on windows.

We have an alarm system on our church.

We need to protect ourselves.

What are we protecting ourselves from?

The consequences of one choice!

And it is a choice that every one of us has repeated.

We are not dealing with ancient history alone.

We are dealing with the current events of my life.

I made that choice.

And whether you care to admit it or not, so have you.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

**"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way."
(Isaiah 53:6a)**

"Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep." (Nehemiah 9:32-34)

"Do not bring Your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before You." (Psalm 143:2)

"Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins." (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

That is God-inspired brutal honesty.

Do you get the picture?

Paul certainly did, as he wrote to the church in Rome.

"Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned-." (Romans 5:12).

We have to guard our choices.

You have heard this quote;

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

(Edmund Burke, 1729-1797)

Adam's and Eve's one choice to dabble in disobedience delivered death.

How did this happen?

It all started with Satan.

Satan wanted to be God.

Satan was an angel of great power.

He generated a rebellion in heaven against God almighty.

He was defeated in the rebellion along with a third of the angels.

You can read that story in Revelation 12:7-17; 2 Peter 2:4.

And now the battle rages in God's creation.

Satan could not defeat God.

So he set out to destroy God's creation; you, me, this world.

He shows the impact of one for evil.

But there are some tells.

We can know when Satan is trying to impact our life.

We can see the approaching impact with predictable signs.

I The first predictable sign of evil's impact starts with DOUBT.

The serpent tempted Eve to doubt that God really meant what He said.

Whenever you are faced with doubts it should be an alarm.

If we are tempted to doubt God, evil is approaching the shores of life.

It is like the early signs of an approaching tsunami.

Extra low tides come before the surge.

Those low tides pull people towards the danger.

That is what doubt does.

Satan dangles the forbidden tree in front of us.

God isn't going to do anything harsh over a tree.

Did God really say there is certain fruit you shouldn't eat?

We are especially vulnerable to doubt now.

We don't live with a fresh image of God walking with us this morning.

If we have dealings with God it is through faith.

Doubt undermines faith.

Doubt and faith cannot co-exist.

We either believe or we doubt.

If Satan can generate doubt we have lost the faith that connects us to God.

Doubt is deadly.

Doubt is the first sign of Satan's impact.

We could stop him there and defeat his temptation.

That is the best place to end the temptation and impact of evil.

But the impact of Satan does not stop there.

He is just getting started with doubt.

If you do start to doubt God another tell emerges.

II The second predictable sign of evil's impact is DECEPTION.

The serpent deceptively twisted God's words as he spoke to Eve.

This is harder to deal with because how do you know you are being deceived?

We joke about this with each other.

We try to "pull the wool" over each other's eyes.
And the other person says, "You're joking right?"
Has that ever happened to you?
You aren't sure if the person is leveling with you.
You aren't confident that you have been told the truth.
Maybe we are just being teased.
But we can't be sure.

Doubt leaves us vulnerable to deception.

God didn't say you would die if you touch or taste the forbidden fruit did He?
God wouldn't do that over just a nibble.

In fact just the opposite will happen.

Nothing bad will happen, you'll become like God.

Can God die?

Well if you are like God, then you won't die either.

God's just trying to keep you ignorant and human.

God doesn't want to share His position with you.

That's the only reason why He is trying to scare you.

The impact of evil begins with something as common as doubt.

Doubt leaves us vulnerable to deception.

When you hear a message that contradicts God's word, beware.

We can still resist the temptation of deception if we recognize it.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." (James 1:5-6)

DOUBT and DECEPTION are two signs of Satan's impact.

III If we are still listening, there is then a third sign or tell.

Satan is at least predictable in his impact.

The third predictable sign of evil's impact is DESIRE.

If we have doubted and been deceived we will desire evil.

We will want to sample it, taste it, experience it.

As Christians we may wonder why there is so much evil in the world.

This is why.

Those impacted by evil have become thirsty for evil.

They become fixated on the things that keep them from God.

Desire for self-gratification makes us blind to truth.

Eve saw that the fruit was beautiful.

What the forbidden tree offered appeared to be desirous.

Before the serpent's offer of doubt and deception the tree had had no beauty.

Eve had never been attracted to it.

But doubt and deception opened the way for desire.

The serpent promised her she would know the truth between good and evil.

Well that certainly wouldn't be bad.

If I knew the difference between good and evil I could always choose good.

It makes sense to eat this fruit.

I would be doing God a favour by eating this fruit.

It would make His job a lot easier.

He wouldn't have to worry about me anymore.

He wouldn't have to baby sit me.

I would live better knowing the difference between right and wrong.

I'll eat the forbidden fruit and be a better person.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted with evil and He Himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death." (James 1:13-15)

Adam and Eve yielded to their desires and ate the forbidden fruit.

And the impact of evil struck them down.

Nothing was beautiful any more.

They covered themselves with leaves because they were ashamed of their bodies.

They hid from God for fear.

And we have been hiding ever since.

We have been choosing death over life.

We have been choosing self over God.

We have been choosing sin over righteousness.

We have been choosing evil over good.

God didn't punish us with death.

Death was simply the fruit of doubt, deception, and desire unchecked.

Death came through disobedience.

And as Paul said earlier, it came through the disobedience of one.

One un-resisted temptation from the tempter has astronomical effects.

When we yield to temptation there is an exploding impact.

It impacts our relationship with God.

It also impacts our relationship with others.

Evil's impact can affect generations.

But there is more to the story.

Yes, the serpent tempted Adam and Eve and sin abounded as a result.

Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin.

"But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. ... If because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ... where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." (Romans 5:15-16a, 17, 20b)

Jesus has nullified the impact of evil.

As far reaching as sin is in this world, grace reaches even farther.

The impact of evil has been carried forward in the heart of the sinner.

But the heart does not need to remain sinful.

There does not need to be another crop of sin in your life.

Placing your faith in Jesus transforms the impact of evil.

Jesus fought the author of sin by experiencing the wages of sin.

Jesus, who knew no sin, died in our place on the cross.

Jesus endured the impact of evil so we could have a new heart.

We don't have to resist that impact alone.

Jesus is born.

Through His birth we have hope.

Jesus came to help you see the darkness of evil's impact in your life.

He exposes your doubt and Satan's deception and your desires for forbidden fruit.

These are the things that lead to sin and consuming darkness.

Jesus is the light that has come into the darkness.

And the darkness has not overcome Him.

He reveals the path that God has for us that leads to victory.

He shows us the path that brings us to fellowship with God and eternal life.

He reveals the deception and lies of Satan (James 4:1-10).

He invites us to trust God again.

Jesus has defeated Satan and sin and death.

Jesus offers to you victorious life right now.

Will you trust Him to end the impact of evil in your life right now?

Bring to Jesus your doubts, your deceptions, your desires.

"We can reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."

"Where sin has increased in your life, God's grace abounds all the more."

Benediction: "You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You're blessed when you follow his directions, doing your best to find him. That's right—you don't go off on your own; you walk straight along the road he set. You, God, prescribed the right way to live; now you expect us to live it. Oh, that my steps might be steady, keeping to the course you set; then I'd never have any regrets in comparing my life with your counsel. I thank you for speaking straight from your heart; I learn the pattern of your righteous ways. I'm going to do what you tell me to do; don't ever walk off and leave me." (Psalm 119:1-8)