



The Shadow of the Tree

The Lie: Unmasking Evil

Text: Genesis 2:25—3:7

OPEN

What comes to mind when you think of *evil*?

How are you witnessing the effect of evil in the world...or perhaps the world outside your front door?

What are the big questions you hear people asking in the face of evil?

INTRODUCTION

Evil is a problem. It plagues life and creation. It destroys, is never satisfied, and cares nothing for anyone. And so we ask *Why?* We may find ourselves discouraged, sometimes angry, sometimes defeated, sometimes discovering victory, sometimes not really knowing what to think of evil.

In this sermon series we will explore that nature of evil and how we can overcome evil in our lives as we journey toward the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ this Lenten season.

REFLECTION ON SCRIPTURE

Read Genesis 2:25—3:7.

- Genesis means beginnings or origins. In the opening chapters of Genesis we find creation and the fall of humanity. What do you notice about creation before chapter 3 of Genesis? What do you learn about humanity?
- Reflect for a moment on Gen 2:25. What do you think this verse means?
- Read again Gen 3:1-7. What do you notice about evil and the road toward sin?

- What do you think was the root cause of sin entering into humanity?
- What are the consequences of *the fall* with God, humanity, and creation (you may need to read the rest of Genesis 3)?

DISCUSSION

Although humanity is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27), we are NOT God. We are to submit ourselves to something (someone) greater than ourselves...but then that is the rub isn't it? We are not good a living within boundaries...we often crave more.

Evil can be defined in several ways. Which of the two most resonates with you?

- An act or event that is contrary to the good and holy purposes of God.¹
- The abuse of things made good.

What do you think about the quote below from Walter Brueggemann:

"There is something about life which remains hidden and inscrutable and which will not be trampled upon by human power or knowledge. There are secrets about the human heart and the human community which must be honored, bowed before, and not exposed. That is because the gift of life in the human heart and in the human community is a mystery retained by God for himself. It has not been put at the disposal of human ingenuity and human imagination. (Genesis Commentary, p. 52)

In the sermon it was said that the Properties of Evil are:

1. Evil is universal and impacts everything
 2. Evil can be a teacher
 3. Evil can and will be defeated
- Take a moment and discuss each of these within your own experience and offer any biblical understanding you have that may speak to these properties.

NEXT STEPS:

- Read and reflect on the Scripture passages and your group conversations this week.
- Recite the Lord's Prayer when you wake up, when you go to bed, and several times throughout your day. Pray especially that God would *lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil.*

¹ *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, InterVarsity Press, 1999.

