

Our Warrior

[Announce Text] Please Open your Bibles to Genesis 3- a nontraditional Advent text

[Scripture Introduction] Good morning, my name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here at Grace Christian Fellowship where we exist to glorify God through gospel-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community. This morning marks the beginning of a three-week sermon series celebrating advent.

The word "advent" comes from the Latin word "adventus" which means "coming." Advent is the celebration of Christ's first coming.

Celebrating advent began well over a thousand years ago. Many protestant denominations today observe advent including Methodists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, the Reformed churches, and Episcopalians.

We celebrate advent because the birth of Christ is one of the most important and exciting events in world history! To find out why, come back the next three weeks.

During the next three weeks, you will hear from all three of our campus preaching pastor's including myself.

[Prayer for illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] Here's a Bible verse you won't put on your Christmas card. Matthew 10:34, Jesus says this:

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

That sounds like a declaration of war. Those are the words of a warrior. Put that under the picture of your smiling family surrounded by the Autumn colors. Baby Jesus holding a sword. The ancient warrior culture of Sparta had five officials examine every child at birth. They decided if a child was healthy enough to bother raising. If a warrior baby was born, no doubt there was rejoicing in the family and community. But if the baby wasn't deemed fit by five city officials, the child was abandoned in the mountains to die of exposure. Their whole culture depended on having warriors.

Your life feels like a war sometimes doesn't it? You are battling sin and sometimes it seems you are losing. In your job, you are seeking success but it's a battle. In your relationships. Conflict within your family. And for many of you, God seems hostile rather than an ally. If we are at war, we need a warrior. We see the origin of this battlefield in Genesis 3 which prepares us for our key verse- 15 promising the coming of baby Jesus. Sleeping peacefully among the livestock has come to be our warrior. And that should make us rejoice- which is the application from this sermon-

[Proposition] Rejoice! Our warrior has come!

Genesis 3:15 prepares us to see that Jesus is our warrior. And we can say what Adam and Eve couldn't- Our warrior has come. To see this we're going to look at four things: Our enemy. Our battlefield. Our warrior. And the strategy.

Let's rejoice! Our warrior has come! But let's see that by first seeing

[Main Point 1] Our enemy

Read Genesis 3:1 with me

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

Adam's enemy is our enemy. Satan. He is a liar who wants us to not trust God's Word. He is at work in our culture and sometimes in our hearts. Did God actually say we should only sleep with our one husband or one wife of the opposite sex? That seems intolerant. Did God actually say that He created the universe out of nothing? That seems unscientific. Did God actually say I should love my enemies? I get more attention if I make them look like fools. Did God actually say the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil? We have an enemy and he is very powerful and persuasive with his lies.

[Application] I'm here to tell you that if you have Christmas lights. And ham. And presents. And vacation time. And gingerbread. And the Christmas Eve service. And family unity. But you do not have Jesus as your warrior you have no shot of defeating our enemy. You have no reason to rejoice! You are defeated! You are a sinner obeying the very enemy of your soul and Christmas is nothing more than a

distraction. A short rest stop on the Highway to Hell. Merry Christmas. But oh the rejoicing we should have if our warrior has come!

We've looked at our enemy, now let's look at

[Main Point 2] Our battlefield

If we look out from a vantage point at the battlefield below we will see a variety of things that appear in Genesis 3. We see first the worst thing a battlefield commander could see. Mutiny.

[Subpoint 1] The mutiny of sin

Let's read vv. 2-6

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate.

Sin is treason. It is mutiny. It is disobeying Our loving Father's commands. Adam and Eve committed mutiny on the battlefield. Everything bad flows from this. They faced the enemy and they became traitors to his side. And we are just like them. We inherit Adam's corrupt nature and follow his example. We are mutineers. Apart from our warrior we are traitors committing mutiny- the mutiny of sin.

[Illustration] My dirty clothes basket is divided by lights and darks. Sometimes the top of both stacks is something dark. How did a black T-shirt end up on top of a pile of white socks and undershirts? As I dig through the layers of strata I always find a culprit that moved me from white to dark. Guess what color it is? Gray right? Wrong! It's light blue! Every time. Seemed light and okay on that day, but now I've drifted full blown into the dark.

That's what sin does. It doesn't seem like a big deal or noticeable to us. But it always ends in darkness. Because it's mutiny against the God in whom there is no darkness at all.

Our view of the battlefield reveals the mutiny of sin. It also shows

[Subpoint 2] The canyon of guilt

Look at v. 7

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

Right down the middle of battlefield is a canyon that is deep and impossible to climb out. It is guilt. By sinning we are guilty. If our eyes are opened to see it, we all recognized that our sin leads to guilt- before God's eyes and within our own feelings.

This is a horrible battlefield with many dangers. A mutiny- of sin. A canyon- of guilt. Now, if we lift our eyes, we notice another danger on this battlefield

[Subpoint 3] The prison camp of shame

Let's read vv. 7-10

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Sin eventually leads to shame. What if people really knew what you said? Or did? When you were in college? When you were at your friend's house? When you had access to the company's money? What you texted your friend? The calls you should have returned! Oh the shame! You would hide yourself wouldn't you? You would erase it from history if you could. You certainly don't want God to bring it up. At times the battlefield of life has shackled us all in the prison camp of shame hasn't it? If only there was a warrior who could free us! But we still haven't seen the whole battlefield.

The mutiny of sin is horrible. The canyon of guilt is deep and dark. The prison camp of shame is harsh. But if we gaze upon the battle we see

[Subpoint 4] Conflict among the allies

If mutiny against a commander weren't bad enough, there's conflict among the allies as well. Look-

[Conflict #1] Conflict with the ally of the opposite sex. Verses 11-13, 16

He (God) said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, the serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Skip down to v. 16

To the woman he (God) said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

The opposite sex was meant to be our ally on the battlefield, but now there's conflict. Relationship breakdown. We hear it through George Michael's sweet voice every December-

Last Christmas I gave you my heart, but the very next day you gave it away!

Couples that pledged to love one another for better or for worse can't live in the same zip code. Men abusing the women under their care and authority. Women manipulating men. A lack of equal pay. Conflict among the allies.

Conflict with the ally of the opposite sex.

[Conflict #2] Conflict with the ally of nature.

Verses 17-19

And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the

field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Nature was our ally. Because of sin- it's all cursed. Work went smoothly. But now it's a battlefield. Our ally has been turned against us for our sinful mutiny. Supply chain issues. Viruses. Businesses fail. Houses and cars breakdown. The job is a dead end. Instead of helping us, now the natural world only seems to open itself up to us by swallowing us in a grave of dust. We are in conflict with the ally of nature. But let's notice the last thing about the conflict among the allies we see on this battlefield.

[Conflict #3] Conflict with God our ally

Verses 22-24

Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever-“ therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

God was our ally. Our friend. We should be walking with Him. But because of our mutiny we are in conflict with our ally. He has to commission an angelic fire-sword wielding warrior against us.

Can you imagine a worse battlefield? A horrible enemy. The Mutiny of sin? The canyon of guilt? The prison camp of shame? Conflict with our allies? But this is our lives isn't it? How could we possibly rejoice in the midst of a war like this?

[Illustration] Buddy the Elf does not rejoice at the birth of Jesus. Why? Because he lives in a land of happy elves. He walks through the seven levels of the candy cane forest and past the sea of twirly swirly gumdrops. There is no reason for Buddy to rejoice in a warrior. He's not on a battlefield. But we are on a battlefield.

We can rejoice at Christmas because our warrior has come! We've seen the enemy. We've seen the battlefield. Now let's finally meet

[Main Point 3] Our warrior

Let's read vv. 14-15

The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

When we see how bad the battle is in our lives and in this world. When we see how strong our enemy is and how treacherous the battlefield really is. When we really despair of the darkness and danger and death we can't help but rejoice when we hear of the coming of our Warrior- born in Bethlehem long ago. Our promised warrior has come to deal with the enemy and the damage from sin. In the battlefield of life, our warrior has finally come! Our warrior is here! The baby is the warrior. What a wonderful Savior.

This is one of the reasons we celebrate the coming of Christ each December! He is the warrior offspring of the woman. He was born in this dirty, messed up battlefield of the fallen world to go to war for us. Our warrior is God the Son Himself. Eternally existing as Spirit He took on human nature. Rather than inheriting the sin and guilt from Adam like we have, He was born of a virgin with a type of interruption. He isn't plagued by the internal mutiny and conflicts that we experience. He can overcome the enemy.

Our enemy, our battlefield, our warrior and now

[Main Point 4] The strategy

Let's read v. 15 again

"I will put enmity between you (Serpent) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The battle strategy for our warrior is to suffer with humility. He entered the battle as a baby. Offspring of the woman- but He's the great warrior in a great battle. He will be victorious. The strategy is to be a humble baby to young couple- dirty and poor. Our enemy can wound our warrior. But our enemy is no match for our

warrior. While Satan may be able to give the equivalent of a foot wound to Our warrior, Our warrior was promised to give a fatal headwound to our enemy. The strategy is to live on this battlefield. Take the hits. Take the shots. Take the betrayals and friendly fire. And that's how He wins.

He suffers what we should suffer even if that means going to the cross. Taking the wrath of God that we deserve for our sin and guilt. Defeating Satan. That's one of the reasons baby Jesus was born. Listen to 1 John 3:8

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning (Genesis 3!). The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Our enemy is being destroyed. That's a reason to rejoice! And look what else Our warrior does! There is the mutiny of sin. But an angel describes the birth of this baby. This offspring of the woman with this language in Matthew 1:21

"She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

If you are one of Jesus' people you are freed from the mutiny of sin! That's a reason to rejoice! You are no longer a traitor. And that deep canyon of guilt? The cross is a ladder! Listen to Colossians 2:13-14

...having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

What about the prison camp of shame? What's God's strategy for that? We see it in v. 21

And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

God killed something and used the hides to cover Adam and Eve's shame. The same thing has happened for us. Our warrior went into battle for us. Was killed by God the Father for us. So that robes of His righteousness can cover our shame and free us from that prison camp forever. That's a reason to rejoice! But Our warrior didn't stay dead! He defeated death for us! That's a reason to rejoice.

What about the conflict among our allies of the opposite sex or nature or God? Colossians 1:20 tells us that through the warrior child God is

reconcile(ing) to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Our enemy defeated and in Hell forever. Rejoice! Our battlefield transformed into a New Heavens and New Earth with no curse. Rejoice! Our warrior reigning. Rejoice. All through a strategy of humility. You need to get in on this. Don't assume. Abandon all hope in yourself. Seek God until He gives you faith to believe this. You- free from sin and guilt and shame. Your relationships can be transformed. That is the working out of the promise in Genesis 3:15. The offspring of the woman.

[Conclusion] NYPD Captain John Sweeney got news at 3:30am. Unless an officer was in the hospital, he was to come in to work. The Armistice was signed. The World War 1 was over. The warriors were coming home. Here are his words:

At 4:15AM the first steam whistle was going, to be followed by another, first from one section of the city and then another, then the church bells to peel out the wonderful news, heads began to appear from the windows and people would say, "Hey Cop, what is it all about?" And if I answered one, I think I answered 150- that the war was over. Then the crowds began to appear in the street and peace seemed to breathe in the very atmosphere. It all seemed so beautiful to see everybody rejoicing. The bells and whistles kept on increasing until 7am. Everything seemed to be blowing, whistling, rattling, everybody had some sort of an implement to make a racket with and it seemed as if about a dozen New Year's Eves and election nights were rolled into one.

His account continues about the crowds filling the streets. Confetti and paper flying. Impromptu bands marching. Finally. Peace.

Our warrior has come! He was even more successful than the allies of World War I. Because our warrior has come, victory is assured. And peace always follows victory. It may seem strange, but it's because Jesus, the offspring of the woman came as the warrior that the angels could sing at the birth we love to celebrate:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!"