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The First Sin and God's Promise

Genesis 3:1–24 · Bud · Ages 9–12

Genesis 2 ends with Adam and Eve living in Eden, close to God and at peace with each other, with no shame at all. God gave them every tree in the garden but one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eating from it, he warned, would bring death. That single limit was a call to trust him.

Chapter 3 opens with a clever, scheming serpent. It starts with a question that bends God's command, as if God had banned every tree. Eve corrects it, but the serpent pushes further: they won't die, it says. God just doesn't want them to become like him, able to decide good and evil for themselves. The lie paints God as stingy and jealous.

Eve looks at the fruit. It looks good to eat, it is lovely, and it promises wisdom. She takes it and eats, and gives some to Adam, who is right there with her, and he eats too.

The serpent promised godlike wisdom. What they actually gain is shame. They see they are naked and cover themselves with fig leaves. When they hear God moving through the garden as evening came, they hide.

God calls to the man and asks where he is. God knows; the question is an invitation to come out and be honest. Instead the blame game starts. Adam blames the woman, and even hints it is God's fault for giving her to him. Eve blames the serpent.

Now come the consequences. Relationships that were in harmony are broken: between people and God, between man and woman, between humans and the earth. Work becomes toil, childbirth becomes painful, and death enters human life. Adam and Eve must leave the garden, and the way to the tree of life is guarded.

But mercy shows up in the middle of judgment. God tells the serpent that it and the woman will be enemies, and so will her children and its brood. Her offspring will crush the serpent's head, even though the serpent will wound his heel. The Church calls this the first announcement of the Gospel: a hint of a Savior who will defeat evil, though it will cost him. And God himself clothes Adam and Eve in clothes from animal skins before they go.

The New Testament sees Jesus as the new Adam (Rom 5:12–19). Where Adam grasped, Jesus trusted and obeyed, even to the Cross. And many Christians since early times have seen Mary as the new Eve, who said yes to God.

Talk about it

1. How does the serpent change God's command, and what lie does it tell about God?
2. What three relationships are damaged by the first sin?
3. Where do you see God's mercy in this story, even after Adam and Eve disobey?

Key verse: Gen 3:15. Look it up in your Bible.