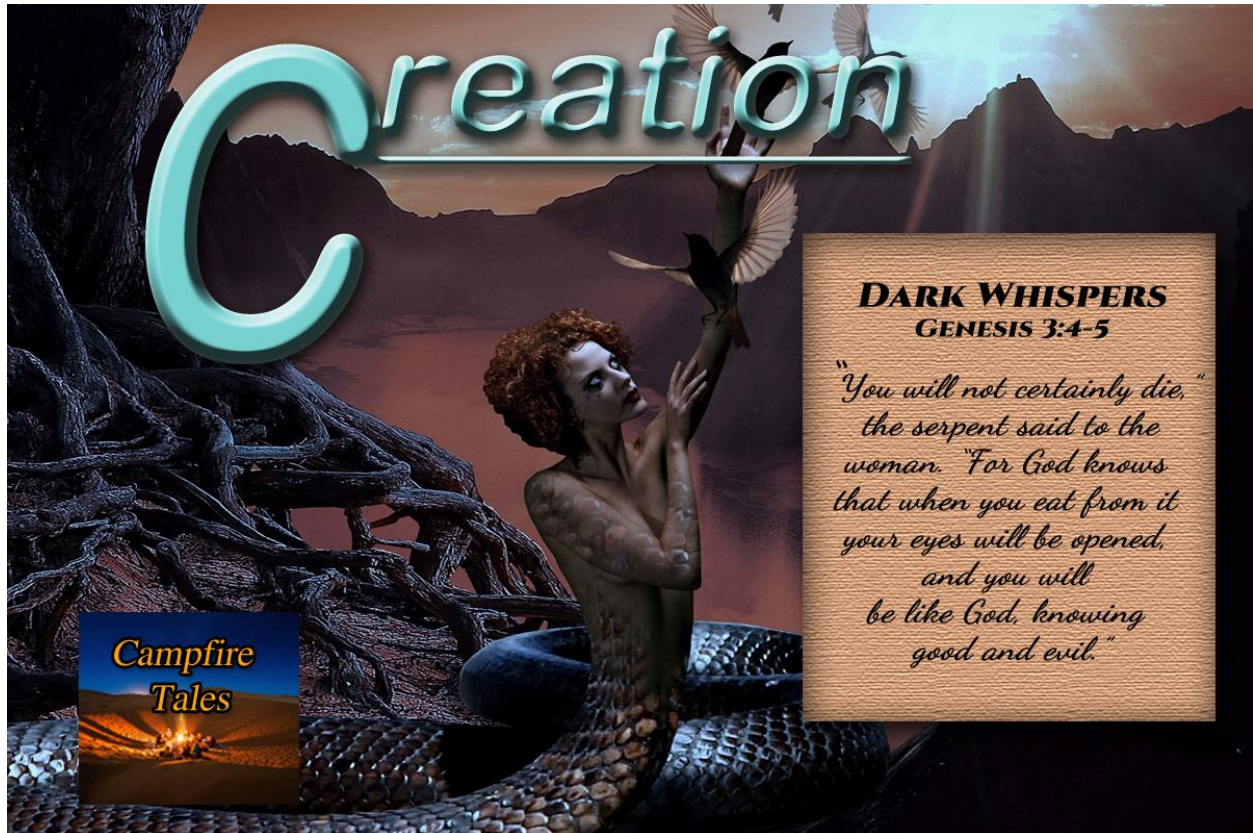


DARK WHISPERS

June 19

The whispers of the Serpent

Genesis 3:4-5



Special Music: "The Father's House"

Cory Asbury

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9aFWGR52Ng>

### **Genesis 3:4-5**

**"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.**

**"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

## **DARK WHISPERS**

**Deceit hissed among  
The Shadows,  
Whispers...  
Like a breath  
Of hot air  
Covering the brain  
With fog and humid mist.  
A prefabricated  
Overstated  
Ill-fated deception,  
Seasoned sparingly  
With a dash of truth,  
Just enough to  
Fling a question mark  
Into the stark, dark,  
Grey-matter of the mind.**

**It takes so little  
To believe a lie,  
And let it satisfy  
Our hunger for truth.  
We want to believe  
What isn't so,  
Watch the untruth overflow  
And give us a  
Fill-in-the-blank**

**Clankity-clank  
Obnoxiously rank  
Septic tank  
Of values.  
It allows us  
To circumvent  
And break and bend the facts,  
Or the lack thereof.**

**A serpent's hiss  
With just a kiss  
Of honesty.  
Shades of gray  
In heresy  
Make all the fruit  
Appear more pleasant  
To our senses  
Undermining our defenses  
And begging us  
To steal a taste  
While laying waste  
To our welcoming souls,  
Covering our children's eyes  
To hide the gates of heaven.**

**However,  
Truth be told,  
Grace tastes better**

Than unfettered fruit.  
It also shines brighter  
Than silver or gold.  
I'd rather have grace  
Than the kisses and hisses  
From a serpent's face  
Pretending to speak for God.  
God grant me discernment.

I don't usually bring phrases and scenarios from Star Wars or Star Trek into my sermons, but sometimes the best examples are lurking there and worth exploring. In this case, I want to talk a little about the **Kobayashi Maru**, an often mentioned scenario in the Star Trek series and movies. I know that most of you are probably not Star Trek fans so I will need to explain a little. The **Kobayashi Maru** was training scenario for officers at Star Fleet Academy. It involved a no-win scenario which tested how a Star Fleet officer might react in an unwinnable situation. The only Star Fleet officer to ever beat the **Kobayashi Maru** was, of course, Captain Kirk. His defeat of the **Kobayashi Maru** was legendary making him a hero among Star Fleet officers. While Captain Kirk did many heroic things, it was his defeat of the Kobayashi Maru scenario that brought Kirk the greatest admiration from both Star Fleet and the fans of Star Trek.

However, here's the thing, the praise that Kirk received became split among the critics and fans alike when they discovered how the well-liked courageous captain of the Star Ship Enterprise had accomplished this momentous victory. He won because he cheated the system. The night before he took the test, he rewrote the program in the simulator to allow for him to win. He changed the rules. Since the original program left no room for a win, he just rewrote the program so that it would allow him to win. Some people thought this was ingenious. Others cried foul. Either way, it defeated the reason behind the scenario.

When faced with unwinnable dilemmas in our lives, we as humans do not have either the expertise or tools to rewrite the program so that we can win. We

quickly come to realize that we are not God. In such cases, win or lose becomes a test of our character. Wouldn't it have been convenient to write out the German army in Normandy on D-day. Maybe change things so that John Kennedy or Martin Luther King were never assassinated. Rewrite the program so COVID never happened. Fix the programming so that the doors at Robb's Elementary in Uvalde were locked so that Salvador Ramos was unable to get into the school. If we could know when bad things are going to happen, we could just step in with a few good programmers and fix the problem before anyone gets hurt.

When we ponder this as Christians, it gets even more difficult as we realize that God could do just that, step in before something bad happens and change the programming so that it doesn't happen. Wouldn't it be wonderful if God would just keep us from making mistakes, prevent us from having bad thoughts, remove all of our prejudices, and force everyone to become a Christian and remove the boundaries of denominationalism? He could just snap his fingers and the entire world would be Christian. Wouldn't that make all of our lives so much better?

When we are honest with ourselves, we behave like it is God's responsibility to do that very thing. As a matter of fact, wouldn't it be prudent to go back and rewrite the programming in the Garden of Eden so that either the snake did not show up or that Adam and Eve would be forced to resist the temptation of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil? Wouldn't that fix everything? And who would know?

**Somewhere in our insignificant human brains, we feel that we know better than God, that we have the answer. God should just fix it so that there isn't any more death, or pain, or hunger, or strife, or prejudice, or hate. A good God would do that, wouldn't He? That is what our brain tells us. Boy, if we could wield the power of God for just a few minutes, we could fix everything. We second guess the way God does things because we think we could do it better. It's relatively simple when we get to the root of it all. We don't believe that God knows what He is doing. God is not living up to OUR expectations.**

**We are such a stiff-necked people to believe such a thing. There is no sense of humility when we think that way. We've may have never flown a plane before, but hey, we are ready to jump into the cockpit and take over because we don't think the pilot knows what he is doing. We are not and never will be God, but we believe that we can do a better job of running the universe. Doesn't that sound silly when we say it that way? WE would have done things differently.**

**As humans, we often armchair our way through life. Doesn't everyone agree I would make a better president than Joe Biden. I would have done a much better job than Donald Trump. Tom Brady should retire, and Aaron Rodgers should think faster on the field. The Supreme Court is all messed up and doesn't have a clue about what they are doing. What does Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch, or Richard Branson think they are doing? I'm a better actor than Sean Connery ever was, and I sing better than Frank Sinatra. We provide opinions on Kamala Harris, Ivanka Trump, Kim Kardashian, Sarah Palin, and Angela Merkel. It is so easy for us to pass judgement when we aren't the ones in the hot seat, when our**

**lives and careers are not on the line the way these leaders in their fields. Our armchairs are pretty cushy, and we feel somewhat protected from public pressure. We can shout at the television and rant and rave on the internet knowing that no one can hear us or cares much.**

**Let's take our USB camera and focus it someplace else for a minute. Take it all in. We are looking at the lush, green forest of The Garden of Eden. Everything is in harmony. Adam is off doing whatever Adam went off to do, and Eve is leaning up against a tree. She doesn't know or care that she is naked. The world around her is innocent. She has a good life going for her. God expects little from her. She has her husband. She gets to talk with God at times. She lives in very pleasant surroundings. She never experiences hunger. She has no fear. She doesn't even fear death because death is not part of her language yet. She has no experience with death. Her life with Adam is extremely... uncomplicated.**

**And the rules for continuing to live this wonderful life are pretty simple. Rule 1: Don't eat the fruit from the tree in the center of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Rule 2: When tempted to eat the fruit from the tree in the center of the garden, return to rule 1. You can eat anything else in the garden, plants, berries, fruit, roots, leaves... anything. Just don't eat the fruit from the tree in the center of the garden.**

**We live in a world where we get upset with the internet goes down, or we lose cell service, or the electricity is out for over a few hours, or when politicians are less than truthful with us, or when the economy struggles, or the shelves at**



the grocery store are empty, or when they cancel our favorite television shows, and so many other things. The only thing that Adam and Eve had to worry about was not eating the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden. But that was just enough of an inconvenience in their otherwise perfect lives that they were susceptible to the greatest lie ever told. Because, let's face it, they really wanted to eat the fruit and they were looking for a loophole in the Eden contract. And they thought they had one:

**“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.**

**“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

Just enough truth combined with just enough disinformation to make the lie palatable and easy to swallow. “You won't die. After all, you don't even know what death is. But look at the benefits. If you eat the fruit, you will know good from evil and you will be like God. And if you are like God, why would you fear death anyway? On the other hand, if you don't eat it, you will never know. You don't want to live to live to regret it.” This makes sense to Eve and the fruit looks so very enticing. In that moment, there were only three things in her mind, herself, the serpent, and the fruit. She wasn't thinking about God. She wasn't thinking about Adam. She probably wasn't even thinking about the tree. Because of the argument put forth by the serpent, she no longer saw a downside to eating the delicious, ripe fruit in front of her. She may even have been grateful to the serpent for showing her the out that she had been looking for. She's really

so pleased with herself, and the fact that she didn't die just encourages her to offer some to Adam, who also eats it.

But there always comes a reckoning when a lie is exposed for what it is. Adam and Eve know what they have done and try to hide from God. There we go again, thinking we can do the impossible. Why do we think that we can hide from God? He knows the number of hairs on our heads. He knows exactly where we are at any given moment. Try as we might, we will never be able to hide from God, so it is foolish to even try.

And now that sin has entered the world, we see the true nature of sin as the lie continues to grow sprouting arms and legs of blame and redirection rather than responsibility. Adam blames Eve with a hint that it might even be God's fault:

**“The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”**

According to Adam, it's Eve's fault because she offered him the fruit. But it's also God's fault for bringing Eve into Adam's life to begin with. “If you hadn't have forced this, this, this... woman on me, none of this would have happened.” Adam may feel a bit guilty but he doesn't feel that he is culpable.

And Eve, not wanting to be the one left holding the bag, blames the serpent.

**“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”**

**“If that stupid serpent hadn’t been there and if it hadn’t lied to me and tempted me, I wouldn’t have eaten the fruit, and everything would be just fine. It’s all the serpent’s fault, and it may be your fault, God, for even making such a vile creature.”**

**The very first cases of deflection. Adam and Eve did not want the spotlight to shine on them, so they tried to shine it elsewhere. There is no humility here. There is no remorse. But before we go picking on these two, I want us all to think about the fact that before this, there had never been anything to be sorry for, no reason to show remorse. This was a brand-new experience. God had never taught them how to handle this since there was only one rule. What does one do when they break the one rule? What does one do when they realize that no one has ever broken a rule before?**

**God found all three parties culpable. The serpent for the dark whispers in Eve’s ear. Eve for believing and sharing the whispers. And Adam, for listening and giving into the whispers even when he knew he shouldn’t. Everyone gets punished, including all the generations of humankind to come after them. What may seem to us to be an insignificant sin compared to the ones we have committed, was actually the lynchpin that held the future of humanity together. Out of that one,**

simple sin, all sin emerged, condemning Adam, Eve, and their children to always be slaves to their sin.

But I have good news. God knew all this was going to happen. He knew the nature of His creation. He knew that the fall was inevitable. And in His grace, and His great love for His creation, He provided a solution. God reached out and presented a blueprint of fatherhood to all humankind. God put a plan into action for the redemption of humankind, a plan of growth, sacrifice, and ultimately the gift of His son, to die on the cross to remove the stain of sin from his children. He made a way where there was no way. That love started in the Garden. After the punishments had been handed out, God makes clothes for His children and continues to care for them. In verse 21 we read:

**“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”**

That’s love. He could have just said, “I’ve had it with you. I’ll never take you back. Get out of my garden and try to make it on your own. I am not going to help you.” But He didn’t. And even after He had to remove them from the garden, God continues to care for them. And He continues to care for them up until this day. He is still reaching out to us through His son and The Holy Spirit to guide us, hold us accountable, and to provide for us.

**The serpent still whispers dark thoughts into our ears, but The Holy Spirit reveals the lies to help us avoid them. But we have to choose that path. God will not force the truth upon us. When we call upon Him, He will help us to make the right decision with regards to the path He wants us on.**

**This week, I ask that we pray for that guidance in all that we do. We are surrounded by a cacophony of lies and disinformation. Let us allow God to speak into us as a Father does, to reveal truth to us so that we can remain the hands and feet of Jesus in this world and see the world as Jesus sees it. We need to show compassion, mercy, and grace, just as God shows compassion, mercy, and grace to us.**

**God bless you all**

**AMEN**

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