

## Greater Pain and a Greater Promise

Series: Baptism

Gen 3:8-21  
ESV

To The Village Church, May 18, 2008

Main Idea:

The fall of Humankind multiplied the pain of raising children, but along with it came a promise that Christ will crush evil, so baptize your children and have hope in your childrearing.

Meditation:

“So far as I know, childbirth is generally painful in only one of the millions of species on Earth: human beings.”

--Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden*

Post-Sermon Song Theme: The Promise has come.

Benediction:

May the Lord God Almighty make garments to cover you through the sacrifice of His own Child.

Charge:

Go forth, baptized in the name of the man, Jesus Christ, Who has crushed the head of evil, with great assurance for yourselves and your children.

# Greater Pain and a Greater Promise

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## I. A Greater Pain

### A. The Pain of Childbirth

1. I've had kidney stones.
  - Similar pain level.
  - After I became a pastor.
2. Difficulty in birthing
  - Sarah's friend grabbed her husband's shirt: We are not having another baby!
3. How come?

### B. Origin of the Pain of Childbirth

1. Gen 3 cute children's story or profound commentary on origin of human condition
  - The more I live, the more meaning I find in these deceptively straightforward narratives.
  - In this book about origins, Gen 3 describes the origin of the human condition. And how the pain in many areas of our lives got there, the sense that there is something awry in our existence.
  - In the misty reaches of pre-history, something happened that set this world on a course that was desperately wrong.
2. The pain is due to something quite evil.
  - Whereas, for someone like Carl Sagan, for whom the development of pain in childbirth was caused by something good, the development of intelligence (from an enlarged neocortex),
  - the Bible says that it was due to something not good at all, the seeking of knowledge (and with it sustenance and security) apart from God.
  - Walking in His Garden without Him.
3. Christians are realistic—there is really a curse.
4. **Vv15-16**—God's merciful response is not to do away with childbearing.
  - We learned, ahead of time, their transgression deserved death. "In the day you eat, you shall surely die."
  - Instead there is a limiting of the curse of death. There is a sorrowful working out of death, a prolonging of life, albeit with tears.
  - God could have said, you have brought a cancerous nature into the world. No more of your kind.
  - Instead He curses to sustain life: You will toil in your labor. You will have tears in bearing life. But you *will* live. You *will* have sustenance. You *will*

have children. Eve would still be the “mother of all the living.”

- His mercy is evident.
5. We’ll see why God did it this way,
    - why He laid the just curse in a way that sustained life.
    - But to see it, we need to first look at the depth of the pain.
    - Even with the mercy, the pain of childbearing is great. It is thorns and thistles.

### C. Childbirth is Only the Beginning of Pain

1. More than just childbirth, but bearing children.
  - The pain will be “all the days of your life” (v17-said of Adam’s labor, but it is also true of Eve’s).
  - More than just childbirth, but bearing children. The birth pangs, in a way, are symbolic of all the pains of raising children, the beginning of the pains.
  - **Job 5:7** For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.
2. So with Thomas and Beatrice.
  - Difficulty eating. Difficulty in settling them down.
  - Even though, Annie and Meg would say that they love being mothers, it has still been difficult.
  - Harrowing experience. If your baby cannot or will not eat, and you cannot figure out why, there isn’t much else but panic. And the feeling that, “this isn’t how it is supposed to be.”
3. So with these babies, The pain goes beyond the pain of childbirth.
  - a) The pain of messing up your body. Messing up your sleep.
  - b) The pain when you find out the child isn’t perfect. Will defy you. After all you’ve done. He will turn on you and, at times, despise you.
  - c) The pain of decisions you will see the child make. Even after your most diligent parenting.
  - d) The pain, just as bad, caused by failures in your parenting. Sometimes realized by parents years after the fact.
    - My mistake, in Florida, of taking the kids out to see some gators.
    - Oh, yes, our pain in bearing children in this world as it is, is greatly multiplied. “All the days of our lives.”
4. Surely we feel the truth of this passage.
  - But if that is the case, and you believe that this passage speaks the truth about the greater pain than should be in our lives with our children, you should believe the whole passage.
  - Need to believe other things in the passage, about a greater promise.

## II. A Greater Promise

### A. The Promise Came in the Midst of the Curse

1. **V15**—The serpent and the woman.
  - More import than just, girls are afraid of snakes.
  - The offspring is important. The Offspring of the woman will crush this evil.
  - God will preserve life to bring the answer for the curse.
2. **V21** He made garments of skin for them.
  - He clothed them as He cursed them.
  - He clothed them by means of a sacrifice. An animal, in this case, but the action spoke of what was to come.
  - God would make a way to reverse the curse by a sacrifice Himself. A sacrifice of Himself.
  - In the very midst of the curse, He was making them a promise of the Christ to come. He is a gentle heart.

Promise in the midst of the curse.

### B. The Promise came

1. The Promise had to come through a baby
  - **V15**—“the woman’s offspring.” The answer is going to come through the cursed childbirth.
  - And it did through another woman, named Mary, who had a lot of trouble during her pregnancy, let me tell you.

#### 2. Matthew Henry:

How admirably the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus, by his death and sufferings, answered the sentence passed on our first parents!

Did travailing pains come with sin? ...the travail of Christ’s soul...and the pains of death he was held by...

Did subjection came in with sin? Christ was made under the law, Galatians 4:4.

Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, he died a cursed death.

Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us.

Did sweat come in with sin? He sweat for us, even great drops of blood.

Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows; his soul was in...agony...

Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death.

Thus is the plaster as wide as the wound.

3. This is why He cursed in a way to sustain life.
  - Because He had to prolong life to send the promise of salvation to us.
  - His mercy had a plan of even greater mercy.

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ provides the way through the pain and eventually the promise to end it.

### **C. Why We Baptize**

1. That is why we baptize.
  - Friends, this is not a game. Nor is it a nice ceremony to let us go goo-gah at the babies.
  - And give parents a chance to dress them up.
  - These are matters of death and life. That is why we baptize.
2. What we are doing in this ceremony
  - In this covenant sign, is marking the child with the covering of Christ's sacrifice. Just as Adam and Eve needed a covering, needed a sign to mark them, that they could still be in community with God, these children need a sign to say the same.
  - We are putting him and her in the community of the Serpent-Crusher.
  - Because only Christ's work is powerful enough to overcome the greater pain which these parents, like all parents, will face.
  - In this sign we as parents pledge to pursue our children with the character of God. Revealed in this passage. And Revealed even more fully in Christ..
3. Last week, for Mother's Day, I told several mothers—"Thank you."
  - They all said the same thing: "It's my pleasure."
  - This is the work of Christ.

### III. The Sacrament to Seal the Promise

#### A. The Introduction of Beatrice Frisbie and Thomas Brown

1.

- And in this sign we will be urged in our roles as parents:
- **V9**—“But...God called...” out to the man. Seek out, continue to love in the midst of pain caused by children. Continue to open our hearts to them.

2.

- **V11**—Who told you...? The Lord knows, but still counsels. Because He cares about the heart.

#### B. Baptismal Questions

1. To Parents

2. To Congregation

#### C. Baptism and Prayer

Appendix I: Gen 3:8-21

Delineation of the text

Though v8 onward does not include the offence, it begins a new scene with the entrance of God in the garden.

V21 concludes the initial curse scene, and ending there also focuses us on the promise God is making in the midst of the curse.

Passage in context of the book

In this book about origins, Gen 3 describes the origin of the human condition.