

It's impossible to sneeze with my eyes open. It's impossible for me to drink a gallon of milk in an hour. I'll admit I've never tried either one. But I know the strength that I sneeze with and I'm pretty sure my eyes are never open when it happens. I also lived in Wisconsin long enough to not be fooled into trying to drink a whole gallon of milk in an hour. The attempt wouldn't be pretty. Oh, the other thing that's impossible for me is I'm pretty sure for everyone. No one can lick their own elbow. It's not only impossible but I also added that one just to see who would try.

Things once possible for Adam and Eve after God created them perfect suddenly were impossible after they fell into sin. Once they doubted God's love for them and took the fruit things collapsed quickly. Getting to spend time in the presence of their heavenly Father, once a very positive experience, now was traumatic. Being under the loving and concerned gaze of God never bothered them before. Now it was beyond bothersome. These became impossible because of sin.

Their beautiful relationship with God over, Adam and Eve may have wondered how things would be now. With justified anger God banished them from the Garden of Eden. It seemed impossible that they would have any kind of relationship with God going forward. As we learn in the first lesson though, that's not what God had in mind. Sin may have ruined what he created perfect. It was impossible for his two human beings to overcome. Yet...

**Nothing is impossible for God**  
**He overcomes a sinful nature**  
**He overcomes death**

If you have children you probably remember every special miraculous detail of your first child's birth. That child represents you. A little piece of you will continue for as long as they are alive. Adam and Eve's first child was no different. In fact, it may have even been a little more miraculous feeling. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve against God they may have figured that was it. No lineage, no children, no continuation. God wouldn't want sinful humans spreading sin. But God wasn't about to let human beings be snuffed out of existence.

Remember Adam and Eve heard God's promise regarding their sinfulness. **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."** This promise from God spoke of offspring. Now they had offspring. See it from Eve's perspective. God created them perfect, they broke that perfection with sin, God promised he would set things right again with one of Eve's offspring. It isn't too much of a stretch to think that Eve was especially hopeful and joyful at the birth of this first child. Eve may have thought this son was the one God promised to send. Maybe with this in mind she named him Cain, which means to receive. Adam and Eve may have thought they had received their salvation from sin.

Cain was anything but a savior. He was opposite in every way. Cain demonstrated just how far sin had already pulled the human race. Two wrongs don't make a right. Two sinful people who make a baby will never make a baby that's perfect. It's impossible. Cain was sinful and he quickly showed just how sinful. **"Now Cain said to his brother Abel, let's go out into the field. And while they were in the field Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."** No question Cain was sinful. He came from Adam who was sinful and Eve who was sinful. He killed a brother who was sinful too. Because of their choice to sin against God, Adam and Eve's children were born with their sinful nature.

Whenever I visited my grandma and sat in her living room talking we never talked about how she passed on her sinful nature to me. But it was true. Through her to my dad and through him to me. Of course my grandma could look to her mom, my great grandma and blame her. That sinful image of Adam and Eve has traveled, from generation to generation, through parents to children right into us today. With our sinful natures come desires to do sinful things. Little things like white lies. Bigger things like cheating. Even bigger things like abusing alcohol. What about the biggest of things? Could you steal? Kill? Cain killed his own flesh and blood. That's how far sin drags sinners down. You bear that same sinful nature. Have you ever surprised yourself with the depth of your sin? Anger that escalated to hatred that escalated into thoughts of violence? Lies that compounded and eventually hurt someone? Given the right circumstances it's possible for any sinner to commit any sin.

Overcoming the sinful nature was impossible for Cain. But what Cain called impossible God called possible. Nothing is impossible for God, even overcoming a sinful nature. God wanted it for Cain. He called out to him with the gospel. **"Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."** God spoke to Cain's unbelief. God told him not to try harder, not to work on his own to accomplish this, but rather trust in God who had already in his grace accomplished it. Cain would never overcome his sinful nature alone, but God could and did.

Jesus was born without the sinful nature you and I have. Without that sin living perfectly was possible. Every law and command from God was easy to keep because his nature was right in line with God's nature. Jesus was holy and perfect. He was pleasing to God. Jesus was sent as the Savior. Living as we do in every way except that sinful nature, Jesus came to give himself as our substitute. He gives us reasons to trust in him with his perfection. He shows his love by being our substitute. He overcomes our sinful nature because nothing is impossible for him.

What was probably most heinous about Cain's action was it had to be preplanned. God warned and called him to repentance. God called him to turn and God would help him master his sin. Instead he lured Abel where no one would see what he was planning to do. Adam and Eve were told by God that if they ate the fruit they would die. When they ate it they didn't immediately die. But their relationship with God died. Just one physical blow from one brother to another brought about the death God warned them about. These parents who were responsible for sin in the world now were responsible for death in the world too. They buried their own son. They felt the loss, the hopelessness, the regret. Adam and Eve probably never felt worse. They weren't the first to die. Far worse, their son was all because of their sinful choice.

Abel's death wasn't the end. As the history of Genesis and the world unfolded death became a common theme. Adam and Eve had more children and each was destined to die. After living centuries, after seeing probably seven or eight generations of his family tree, after sharing with each reminders of the perfection, fall into sin, and promise of restoration by God, Adam too succumbed to the consequence of his sin. **"Altogether Adam lived 930 years, and then he died."** Just like that, after a long long life, Adam was gone.

Death is the grim ending you and I face. One out of every one person after Adam died just like he did. Because of Adam, evidenced by Cain, and demonstrated in every person before us we know it will happen. It's the terrible consequence we don't want to admit is true. And it's our fault because of our sins. The horrible things we've done. The material on TV shows we've become engrossed with watching, the questionable content in movies we've subjected ourselves to, the quick judgments we've made on people knowing nothing but how they look. It's all proof of sin inside us and proof we'll die for that sin.

Never skip over the dark consequences of sin. It's all the better to realize it isn't the end of our story. Without notions of our sin and consequences we wouldn't realize just how great God's promise of a Savior is. We know what God rescued us from. God prepares our hearts for the arrival of that Savior in just days. Quickly we will be talking about the work he came to do. One payment, one death, one Jesus undid all the death of the earth. Our death can't be avoided but because of Jesus its eternal effects will be. Death is no longer defeat, but victory for the believer in Christ. With one resurrection Jesus conquered death. Jesus was the Savior God promised to Adam and Eve. Jesus was the Savior no human being could be. Nothing is impossible for him. Jesus was raised to life to save you and me from our sins and from death.

Live during this Christmas remembering Christ being born and remembering Christ dying and rising. Live with that resurrection in mind. Live with the promise of his return in mind. Look forward with confidence to an eternity in heaven. Live focused on Christ as the Savior. He was born, he had to be and was, and he won. Now we have the victory because nothing is impossible for God. He overcame death.

Just like there are some things that are impossible for me there are also things impossible for you. Every human being finds it impossible to free themselves from the chains of their own sinful nature. No one can rescue themselves from death. But nothing is impossible for God. Christ Jesus overcomes a sinful nature in you and me. Christ Jesus overcomes death for you and me.