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GENESIS 1-3

The Doctrine of Creation shows where we came from and radically shapes our hope today in where we are going.

Devotional readings on Moses' oral account of God creating all things.

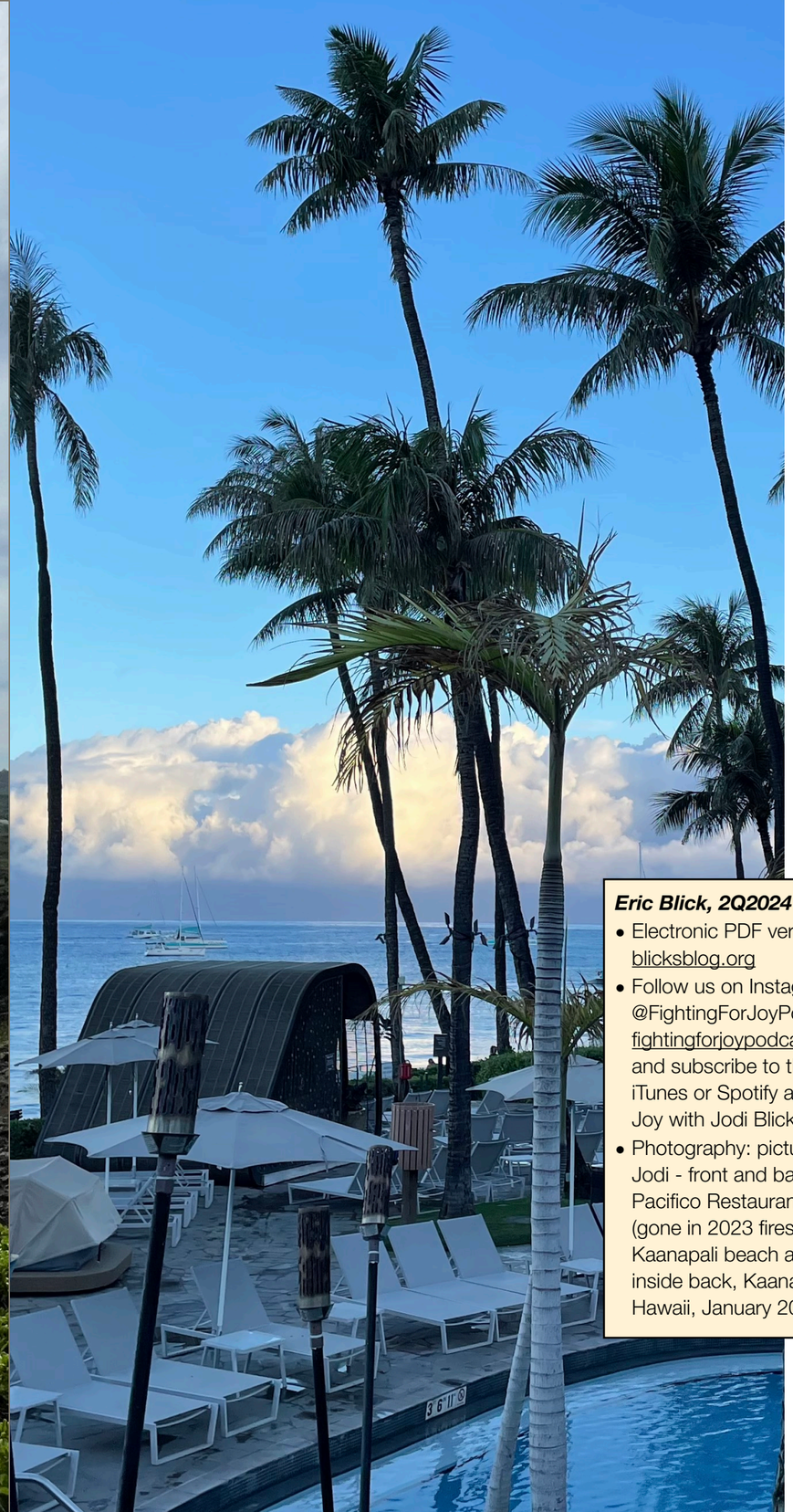
Also included: Journal Entries 2021-2023

Eric Blick



What is Genesis 1-3 about?

Out of overflow, the Triune God creates all things good over six days and sets the patten of rest for day seven. Mankind is created in his image for deep communion with him, and they are vice-regents with the mandate to make the rest of the world like the Garden of Eden. Where the first Adam failed, Christ, the promised “Seed”, is making all things new.



Eric Blick, 2Q2024

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Introduction to the Devotional Readings

The book of Genesis means beginning. It answers the question, "How did 'here' get here?" Answer: God created the heavens and the earth. Even if we do not consider ourselves high-end philosophers, everyone is living out a belief in an answer to each of the big five questions of life. In reading Genesis, I normally rush to the third great question, "So, how did 'here' get broken?" I understand and feel the brokenness of the world around me and in me. I feel the sadness and utter helplessness of not being able to un-cross the line crossed to death to bring our oldest son Jackson back from the dead. I feel the brokenness of physical suffering all around me, relational suffering, emotional disasters, and people not right with their Creator. So, how did 'here' get broken? Sin.

But why is 'here' here? Why did God create the material world? That is great question number two. And until we understand the beauty of what's in this answer, we cannot fully feel the depths of hope and joy of great question number five: "Where is here going?" As Kelly Kapic writes in his book, You're Only Human, we tend to have low understanding of creation. He writes, "Many of us North American Christians have a very weak and underdeveloped doctrine of creation… What I mean is that we must rediscover that being dependent creatures is a constructive gift, not a deficiency" (Kapic loc 239). There is deep beauty in WHY God created the material world. He could have just created spirits roaming a fourth dimension somewhere. But he created 'here' for his glory and our joy, and its material.



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Genesis tells us why God created the world. It was to display the glory of his power, to show how great and special he is, and, as C.S. Lewis has written, he created man to enter into the "dance" of the trinity to experience deep fellowship with him. This was done as overflow of his joy and not in order to get something he was lacking. God loves his material creation. I forget that. I think this material world is only broken and only to be endured until something better is next. But it's

designs are good. It was created for good. God himself says after each day of creation, “This is good,” and on the seventh day, “This is REALLY, REALLY good!”

Our place in creation was to be vice-regents with God, stewards of this cosmic gift to further his creation work in imaging his creative power. The great “creation mandate” to mankind was, “Make the rest of the world like the garden of Eden.”

And we were built gloriously dependent on him. Mankind was not built as another Trinity. There is only one Independent Being who is infinite. We were built to rely on him, on creation, and on others. That is finitude. Kapic continues: “[This book’s focus is on] good, created human limits: all creatures are limited by space, time, and power, and our knowledge, energy, and perspective also have always been limited” (Kapic loc 274). Before sin enters, we have limits. We are not God. And that is good too, and this is not sin to have these limits. It is what it means to be human. It is embedded in the Doctrine of Creation.

But Satan told us to hate our limits. “Using his words to warp his hearer’s imagination, the snake declares, ‘God knows that when you eat of [the fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God’ (Genesis 3:5). Subtly insinuating doubt and uncertainty, the serpent introduces distrust into the divine-human relationship. With these indirect tactics the serpent encourages his hearers to imagine they can and should know more. They should be more. He implies that divinely given limits are a fault to be overcome rather than a beneficial gift to be honored. This knowledge is not just about information, nor merely about morality, but as Old Testament scholar Gerhard von Rad observes, it is about ‘mastery’ of ‘all things.’ Von Rad further explains, ‘By endeavoring to enlarge his being on the godward side, seeking a godlike intensification of his life beyond his creaturely limitations, that is, by wanting to be like God, man stepped out from the simplicity of obedience to God.’ The man and woman disdained their creaturely limits as faults instead of gifts, barriers that kept them from obtaining divine qualities. Taking a bite of the fruit was only the outward sign of the terrible lie the serpent got them to believe” (Kapic p13). We want to be God instead of being gloriously dependent on him, his creation, and others.



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And this is perfectionism's root. The lie of perfectionism is that we can be more by doing more. Its the lie that we are what we do, and in striving for perfection we will have gravitas, and one day we will matter. We say, "'If only I had more time, energy, and ability, then I could get everything done, which would make me and everyone else happy.' But meeting endless expectations would require that we possess God's infinite attributes and prerogatives as our own… [It is us saying:] 'If only I were the infinite Creator, not a finite creature… In fact, the Genesis narrative appears to represent a turning from the original good ordering of creation to a disordering: shalom is disrupted. And now we all live in this disordered relationship to our limits" (Kapic loc271-306 selected). Perfectionism in this sense does not co-exist with being human, because at its core it is wanting to perform at God's level and without Him.

You want freedom from never measuring up? You want freedom from the lie of perfectionism? Love your finitude. God does. And love his material world in a way of worship of the Good Creator. Love your dependency on him, his world, and his people. Repent for trying to find meaning and satisfaction and purpose apart from God through your work and your possessions and your relationships. But do not repent for your inability to get God-sized lists done. You are human. You will get tired. Tired is not sin. Jesus was wiped out asleep in the front of a boat - in a storm - after a full day of work and serving. Don't set unrealistic expectations that no mere mortal could accomplish in two lifetimes. That is being God. One author writes: "Think about what makes you tired at the end of a typical day. Chances are it's not the work you completed, it's the work you didn't get done that saps your mental energy. So what invigorates you then? It's what you accomplished; it's the yard you mowed. That's work, too, but satisfying and rewarding."[1] Unrealistic goals not only betray our brokenness but make us exhausted.



The world certainly broke at the fall. When Adam and Eve took of the fruit and believed this lie from Satan to be God with no limits because God was truly not out for their good, the cosmos broke. Our relationship with God was over by sin, the world broke, we broke in our relationship with others, and we broke in our relationship to ourselves. So that leads us to great question number four: How does 'here' get fixed? God forgives. He is the Redeemer. He

[1] The Supernova Advisor: Crossing the Invisible Bridge to Exceptional Client Service and Consistent Growth, Robert D. Knapp, Kindle location 1067

does something about our broken state. This is foretold in Genesis 3:15: at great expense to himself, the Infinite by becoming flesh - material - Jesus pays our infinite offense by his death and give us his merit, his righteousness by his life.

And real shalom in the best sense of the word is coming. He WILL undo all the brokenness and set all things right. God will one day restore. That is the answer to great question number five, "Where is 'here' going?" The restoration of all things is coming. It is being restored back to the garden of Eden into a city, and its material not on clouds. Jesus' kingdom has arrived as he says in Mark 1. He is re-creating all things new. He will not stop until all is restored. There is a redone, restored, re-created, new material heavens and earth coming.

In the Book of Genesis we get compelling answers to these five great questions of life. As the Bible unfolds in God's larger revelation of himself all the way to the book of Revelation, we see even more fully Genesis' compelling answers to these five questions. We now see them in more color, fulfilled in this One, Christ, who is THE Seed promised to come one day and make all things right. Knowing the weight of WHY I was made, transforms how I live today with all my good limits in this beautiful material world for fellowship with him. This side of the fall, I see and feel the power of his Spirit at work in us and among us today. His promise of full restoration gives me hope and joy to live in this material world longing for him.

A good devotional practice might be to spend two days reading and re-reading each section of Genesis 1-3 as outlined below. Layered reading over sections of Scripture is a great way to see more in the text. Pray. Don't rush. May the words of our God bring satisfaction to your soul, real answers to life's big-five questions, and may the Doctrine of Creation inspire our hope as we wait patiently for the restoration.

- Eric Blick

Genesis 1-3: God Creates the World

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[2] based on Derek Kidner's outline of Genesis

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Overview of Moses' letter: an "Executive Summary"

Section 1: Genesis Chapters 1-2

Five more reasons to study the Old Testament – why Biblical Theology

1. The Old Testament is as much God's Word just as the N.T. is.
2. To understand the context of the N.T.; it is ONE story of God's redeeming sinful man from cover to cover of the Bible (Redemptive History).
3. The N.T. quotes the O.T. greater than 10% of the time - the N.T. is the #1 commentary on the O.T.
4. The O.T. is about Jesus – John 5:39.
5. We are Jews, the Israel of God – Salvation is of the Jews, John 4:22.

Theme: God is an eternal and self-sufficient God, who by sheer verbal fiat has sovereignly created the universe and all that is in it, in order to display His glory. The crown of His created order is mankind, the only creature created in God's image. Human beings are created in order to specifically display God's glory as they obediently govern the earth while enjoying loving fellowship with God and each other.

I. Genesis 1:1-2:3 - The telling of the seven days of Creation: Emphasis on God's word, sovereignty, lordship, and the order and goodness of the created order

Four things that we learn about God:

1. He is eternal. Gen. 1:1 – "Daddy, who made God?" He has always been.
2. He is sufficient - He didn't make the world because He was lacking something but as an overflow to display His glory Ps. 19:1-2, Rom 11:36; but why did God create the world? Answer: to show how special He is (the #1 answer is not ultimately because He loves us, though He does).
3. He is sovereignly over and above all Ps. 135:4-7; He did not use some pre-existent materials or molecules to create the world – just His voice. Therefore, ALL is His and He is King over all because He made everything.
4. He is good – Genesis 1 repeats the phrase, "and God saw that it was good."

II. Genesis 2:4-25 - A retelling of the creation story: This time with emphasis on mankind's special relationship with God, the created order, and each other

Three things that we learn about man:

1. We are made in God's image. Gen. 1:12 – Everything was created "after its own kind", but man was created "after God's kind" or image.
2. Our purpose in life is to reflect back to God His worth, holiness, and glory - Rev. 4:11; our purpose is to be like a mirror, as it were, perfectly reflecting back to God His own worth and glory as in a reflection; however, when sin entered the world, our mirror has been "smeared with mud", no longer able to reflect; in Christ and in His blood, those who believe on Him are in the process of their "mirror" beginning to reflect again (sanctification), though not perfectly here on earth, the worth of God (Rom 8:29).
3. We are created to reflect God's rule, authority, and care over the earth.

Key Texts:

- 2:1-3: Rest is good for us; God rested after the 6 days of creation.
- 2:18-25: We see rest (or peace) between man and God, man and woman, and man & creation.
- 2:15-17: We will return to this kingdom – Christ is restoring a kingdom even higher than the perfection of the Garden (the "already, but not yet").

Application (James 1:22 let us be doers of the Word not merely hearers)

1. How are we doing at reflecting back to God His glory and worth? Do we live in such a way by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit in us to make God appear to the world as the rich and splendid Treasure that He is?
2. The world does not acknowledge this Creator God (Rom 1:25). Are we letting the world blind us too? Are we living as if this God and creation is all true and really exists? It <u>is</u> true! Live with faith (Heb 11:1)!

Section 2: Genesis Chapter 3

Intro: What is "redemptive history"? It is the story of a Holy God redeeming for Himself sinful man. What happened that we moved from the beauty of creation in Genesis 1:31 to the ugliness of sin and corruption seen in Genesis 6:5? A better question to ask might be, "What is God going to do about it?

Theme: Mankind's first parents decided to set themselves up as equals to God, and have disobeyed Him. In doing so they have incurred the just wrath of God and have been expelled from that pristine created order, where they will no longer enjoy that perfect fellowship with Him nor each other, nor rest and peace on the earth. However, this is not the complete wrath that they deserve, for God has already established a way by which the curse of sin will be overturned and the universe re-created to its original state!

I. Genesis 2:4-4:26 - The Dawn of Humanity – 2 Seeds

- **<u>2:15-17:</u>** <u>The tree of the knowledge of good and evil</u>: "This is actually what it means, in this context, to "know" good and evil. It doesn't mean to simply be informed about, but to take the prerogative to determine what is good and evil: the right to become the judge and to have the final say on what is good and what is evil."[3]
- **<u>3:1-24:</u>** <u>The "three stranded rope" of the tug-of-war throughout Scripture:</u> (especially 3:15 the Gospel) 1. Enmity between **Satan and man** (Satan wanting to destroy man as God's image bearers); 2. Enmity between **Satan's offspring** or seed (unbelievers–John 8:44, 15:19, 1 John 3:8, 13) and **Christ's offspring** (believers); 3. Enmity between **Satan and Christ** (John 12:31-33, 1 John 3:8b, Heb 2:14-15)
- **<u>3:8:</u>** <u>God makes the first step to pursue sinful man (not vice versa):</u> When Adam and Eve eat of the tree, they realize they are naked. God doesn't then give them more fig leaves to cover-up themselves. He gives them what He requires: animal skins for better covering. Sin is bondage and shame.

[3] Ibid, Mark Dever

John 1 is meant to mirror Genesis 1. It is repeated.

God is loving, endorsing, and re-creating his material world through his Son.

- Imagine sitting beside a campfire warming yourself; you are excited by what is about to happen. It's the early part of what will eventually be known as the second century. You have grown up in a devout Jewish home where one of the great comforts you have always enjoyed is spending evenings at a fire listening to the elders quote vast passages of the Torah…

Gently coughing to clear his throat, the man motions for silence, and then begins: "In the beginning . . ." What is this? You know these words, and you know them well. This will be nothing new! Here are the very first words of the Hebrew Scriptures. Rather than becoming unnerved, you instantly start to recite the text in your own mind: "In the beginning . . . God created the heavens and the earth. . . ." But "God" is not the next word the man says. Rather, what began as familiar turns strange and unexpected: "In the beginning . . . was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This Word (Logos) was uniquely identified with God: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Has blasphemy just been uttered? "All things were made through him," the man continues. This Word was none other than the Creator himself, somehow fitting within the one divine identity. Your head spins, moving from Genesis back to John, wondering how these two stories might fit together.

Through your distraction you hear the man continue speaking. Then, when you can focus again you hear what you had never even dared to imagine: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." Wait, how could this be? How could the Word, who was with God and is God, "become flesh"? That is scandalous. God is the Creator. He can't also be created, can he? This Word of God was even given a historical name, identified as a particular person: Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah. Amid all these unfamiliar ideas, you start to make connections that are deeply uncomfortable, maybe even offensive, but also possibly the most beautiful claim about the transcendent and holy God that could be made: the eternal I Am has become one with us, distinctly entering into solidarity with his human creatures. Somehow God "became" man in Jesus. What could this possibly mean? This oral recitation was sure to be followed by a long evening of lively discussion and debate.

- These ideas, that Jesus the Redeemer is also the Word of the creation; that the Word through whom all creation came into being has taken on human flesh and walked among us; that, from the beginning, God in Christ has always looked out for us, made a place for us, pursued and caught us: all these explosive ideas show that we cannot truly understand either Genesis 1 or John 1 if we separate them. Separating these passages undervalues both creation and redemption by blinding us to what the Bible tells us about the Christ.

- Jesus the Messiah is both Creator and Redeemer. Only by seeing the links between creation and re-creation, between Genesis 1 and John 1, can we understand how the lordship of Jesus liberates us. Only in that way can we see and appreciate God's love for us in our creatureliness rather than in spite of it. In his incarnation, the Creator Lord did not come to destroy his creation but to enter it, to love and heal it.

- Tertullian [an early church father] doesn't want us to miss the wonder of divine humiliation, for this points not only to the path of spiritual salvation but also to God's affirmation of our created materiality. To miss this is to miss God's plan for human flourishing.

- God loves his world. In Jesus, God incarnate (en-fleshed), we encounter God's resounding Yes! to his creation. Taking on physicality as a genuine baby, the Word of God takes us back to Genesis and forward to the new creation.

- The fact that the Son became incarnate in Mary's womb and grew to a man reminds us that our bodies and this world were made for good.

- Here is God's great Yes! to his creation, even his fallen creation. Rather than turn from it, rather than reject its existence, the Son of God is sent by the Father and empowered in the Spirit to enter into it, becoming human, with full physicality and creaturely need.

- God's concern is not to erase or destroy our humanity, but to renew it.

- Strangely, without ceasing to be divine, the Son assumes a genuine human nature. He doesn't pick between the divine and human. Wrapped in finitude—within the limits of the creaturely experience—the Son paradoxically comes as the divine embrace of the creation. He comes to draw near and renew. In this coming we discover the heart of God. And his coming links human flourishing to our creaturely limits."[4]

Our bodies matter. The physical world matters. That is why there are four chapters to history: creation, fall, redemption, RESTORATION. One day Jesus, the true and second-Adam will present to God what the first Adam failed to do: he will make the whole world, extended from the start we were given in the garden of Eden, to be a perfect city, the restoration of all the material world set right in worship of the Living God.

We know there's an "ocean now": Salvation's theme from Adam's death to now.

Hope [of salvation], at this stage [of the Bible in Genesis], was God-directed towards the growth of the chosen family, the possession of the land and the blessing of the nations. If death was taken calmly meanwhile by the patriarchs, it was largely because burial in the family tomb anticipated that family's entry into its inheritance (cf. Genesis 47:29f.; 50:24f.); for the promise and mission were vested in the chosen 'seed', not in any of these individuals as such. 'God will surely visit you' (Genesis 50:25): that was hope enough. From its fulfillment there would open out, in time, the fullness of salvation as the New Testament knows it. Genesis is content to see this from afar, and meanwhile to concern itself with the early flow of this river, rather than its distant estuary and ocean" (Kidner p41).

What was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Matthew 18 says, "1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

It is important to grasp what the idiom "knowledge of good and evil" meant in the language convention of the original readers of Genesis and to the Hebrew people of the Old Testament. By no means does it necessarily represent evil, for God himself possesses such knowledge (Gen. 3:22) angels have it (2 Sam. 14:17); and God gladly gave it to Solomon in answer to his prayer (1 Kings 3:9). But young children do not have this knowledge (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15), and the very old have lost it (2 Sam. 19:35); hence it is adults in their prime who in some sense do have it. So when the original readers of the Old Testament encountered

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[4] Kelly Kapic, You're Only Human, Selected quotations from chapter 3, "Are the Limits of My Body Bad?"

the expression "to know good and evil," they understood such knowledge to be what mature adults possess – a maturity in which they were independent and therefore responsible for the decisions they made.

Understanding this term in Genesis 3:5 in this way coheres well with the way Genesis 2:4-3:24 has been expounded thus far. The command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would then mean that Adam and Eve were not to aspire to the maturity possessed only by God, whereby they might consider themselves to independent of him and able to enjoy a fulfilled life by taking matters into their own hands and making their own decisions for their future welfare. Genesis 3:6 indicates that the author construed this idiom in this way, for it says that Eve regarded the fruit of the tree as being able to make her wise in herself and therefore able to shape a fully happy destiny without any need for God's help. A contemporary scholar agrees with this interpretation. "[Here] man takes upon himself the responsibility of trying apart from God to determine whether something is good for himself or not."

So Eve and her husband cast off all dependence on God, thinking they would then have the wisdom and power in their pathetically finite state to provide for themselves a permanently happy life. No longer worshipping him, they now broke his command and ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree.

But how very different the result that ensued! Suddenly Adam and Eve felt the horror of being cut off from God's loving care for them and found themselves left only to their greatly limited, distorted wisdom and power to provide for themselves an eternally happy future. Now they saw themselves as no more qualified for this task than are little children to fend for themselves in society. This sense of total inadequacy then aroused an overwhelming sense of shame, and so they tried to cover up their obvious limitations by making a patchwork of clothing out of fig leaves – something to help them project the personage of independence they had hoped to gain by ceasing to be dependent on God. They, like all their sinful posterity, wanted to cover up, even to themselves, how very much they were in need of God to find the happiness their God-shaped vacuum craved.

…Such an interpretation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil links up with Christ's command to 'change and become like little children" in order to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 18:3). It indicates that the essential way in which people are rebelling against God is that they are assuming that, like him, they can make the decisions necessary for enjoying a fulfilled and happy future. The folly of this rebellion is that people think that they love themselves more, are wiser, and thus better able than the all-loving, omniscient, omnipotent God to provide for themselves the fulfillment they crave. Thus conversion, according to Jesus, reverses the act of the Fall and makes a declaration, not of independence from God, but of dependence upon him. Converts thus become little children, who gladly confess that only their heavenly Father knows the niche into which they should fit in order to enjoy permanent fulfillment.[5]

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[5] Daniel Fuller, The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity, p182-184, Zondervan Publishing House, 1992

I. THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY (chapters 1-11)
A. THE STORY OF CREATION (1:1-2:3)
1. God's creating framework is summarized in two verses (1:1-2)
Sermon: In the Beginning

Pastor Ryan, the, 1/29/23, listened to on balcony at Westin, Maui. Intro: The leaning tower of Pizza is a 1,000 year old building that illustrates the importance of a firm foundation. The first two verses are likely the summary of all things that are then unpacked in detail for the next 7 days of creation.

HEADLINE: GOD IS THE CENTER OF THE STORY AND CREATOR OF ALL THINGS.

We see two themes in these first two verses that are the foundation of all Scripture:

1. God is the center of the story. He is the first subject with the first verb: God created! It is not a story first and foremost about man or about raising morality. When it says God created the heavens and the earth it means all things.

2. God is the majestic creator of all things: He is triune with the Spirit waiting to spring into action over the expanse. He created all out of nothing. He knows all things.

Implications - if these two truths are real, how shall we then live?

A. If God is at the center of the story, then we are not. We are not the center of the universe with God or others around us. We are more dispensable than what we want to admit. We get to be apart of something that matters, something bigger than ourselves. We are a people on mission, his mission! Live for the kingdom of God!

B. If God is the creator of all things, then we owe him our allegiance. We owe it to live to honor him. Sin is rebellion first and foremost against God. We are the creature not the Creator. We need to repent of our perceived self-sufficiency, and run to him.

C. If God is the center of the story and the Creator, the gospel of Jesus Christ is even better news than we thought. Instead of destroying us justly for our sin, he enters our world and dies to redeem us, forgive us, and impute his earned righteousness into us. In Jesus Christ, God is for us. He will restore all things to himself one day.

Notes & Quotes:

V1 - God is THE first subject doing the first action verb of Scripture: "It is no accident that God is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible, for this word dominates the whole chapter and catches the eye at every point of the page: it is used some thirty-five times in as many verses of the story. The passage, indeed the Book, is about Him first of all; to read it with any other primary interest (which is all too possible) is to misread it" (Kidner P43).

V1 - God is proclaimed in this passage as transcendent yet personal: "From the outset, Genesis confronts us with the living God, unmistakably personal. The verbs of the opening chapter express an energy of mind, will and judgment which excludes all question of our conceiving God in the category of "it" instead of the "Thou" (to borrow E. Brunner's phrase); and the book continues to make this emphasis in its account of man's constitution in God's image, and of God's persistent concern for a personal relationship with His servants" (Kidner p32).

Arcing:		Passage: Genesis 1:1-2
Idea: God is the first subject in all Scripture, and he created.		[1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Explain: Creation included three descip-toons.	Series: void earth	[2] The earth was without form and void,
	Series: dark waters	and darkness was over the face of the deep.
	Series: HS as agent ready to pounce	And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.





Castello di Amorosa, Napa Valley, February 2023

2. God creates all things (1:3-25)

Sermon: And God said…

Pastor Ryan, 2/5/23 - Intro: Don't miss the main point of the passage for the debates about creation.

HEADLINE: GOD IS THE POWERFUL CREATOR, AND ALL HE MAKES IS GOOD.

I. The controversy - did God really create in six days? How does this align with modern-day scientific discovery? The key question is what do we do when there are apparent contradictions between the Bible and science? We treat them as apparent contradictions. Copernicus taught the sun at the center of the solar system not the earth and was condemned as a heretic. The young-earth view and literal 24 hour days make the most sense in this oral account passed down. However old you believe the earth is, we must hold to these two teachings here: God is the creator, and there really was an historic, real people in Adam and Eve. At the end of the day, there is no ultimate contraction between the Bible and science.

II. The text: Look at the repeated phrases which show what is important here:

A. "And God said" is used 7x: He creates and is followed by, "and it was so." When he speaks, it happens. It is the ultimate picture of power and strength just to speak and things come into existence.

B. "According to its kind": the earth is created with purpose and pattern and intentionality.

C. "And God saw that it was good": What he spoke into existence was not pretty good or falling short but GOOD! There are billions of galaxies and the passage throws in "and he made the stars."

III. Application: A. Stand in awe of God and worship. B. The gifts of God are to be enjoyed and thereby worship him. C. Embrace the word of God. The parallel in John 1 to Genesis 1, God is still speaking life into existence through his Son.

How Great Thou Art

V1: Oh Lord, my God
When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Chorus: Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

V2: And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

V3: When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art

written by Carl Gustav Boberg, 1885

Notes:	Passage: Genesis 1:3-25
Day 1: Light	[3] And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.
Day 2: Heaven separate from earth	[6] And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” [7] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. [8] And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.
Day 3: Ocean separate from dry land, and plant life	[9] And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. [10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. [11] And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. [12] The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [13] And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.
Day 4: Sun, moon and stars	[14] And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, [15] and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. [16] And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. [17] And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, [18] to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19] And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.
Day 5: Animals in the water and air	[20] And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” [21] So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [22] And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” [23] And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.
Day 6: Animals on land, and God made man and woman in his image.	[24] And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. [25] And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

3. God creates male and female in his image.

Sermon: In His Image

Pastor Ryan, 2/12/23 - Intro: What does it mean to be human? What makes us valuable? At this point in the creation story, the language changes, the patterns change, the pace slows down, the details increase. There is something that makes us different from all which has been created so far.

HEADLINE: WE BELONG TO GOD AS CREATION AND IMAGE BEARERS.

There are two foundational truths to consider in these verses as we unpack the doctrine of man:

1. We are creatures. While we are different than the rest of the creation, we are still created creatures, and we are not God. We don't show up until day six, as it was not us and God making everything.

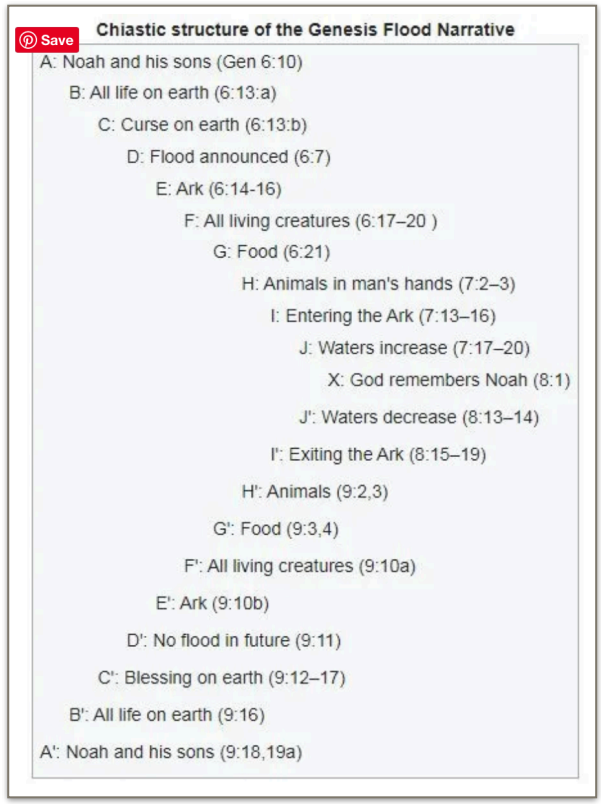
2. We are image bearers. We are like God and represent God - Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology.

Application / Implication: A. What is the significance of being a creature? 1. It means we are limited and finite. 2. It means we are dependent. B. What is the significance of being an image bearer? 1. We are valuable. There is no group of people more valuable based on the color of their skin or preferences, etc. We are equal. And you are not worthless. 2. It means we have responsibility. We are restored image bearers in Christ. What does it look like to see God at the bank? As a restored image bearer we bring his glory and presence and image his qualities.

Notes & Quotes:

V26 - We are made in God's image so we are his and belong to him: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (Matt. 22:16b-17)… Jesus answers: "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The denarius coin might have been made in the emperor's image. But Adam and Eve were "minted" in God's image and likeness — all human beings (including Caesar) have been made as icons of God, imaging the Creator and serving as his representatives in the world… Jesus makes it clear that God is not merely interested in our wallets, he wants all of us because he is the Creator of all. Since we are made in God's image—since we are imprinted with the image of God—we should render everything we have, our very selves, to him. But who has given everything to God? Who has lived a life poured out for others with a pure heart, upheld justice and righteousness, avoided sin completely, both publicly and privately? Who has loved God with their whole heart, soul, strength, and mind?.. Here we encounter the unspoken paradox of Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees. For only Jesus is able "to render to God the things that are God's." Only he can give what is required in exchange for our lives. Thus, as he offers himself, he offers himself as a substitute for us, in our place. The paradox of Jesus' response here is that we

Figure 1 - the Chiastic literary device



The chiastic structure is a story telling motif to remember the story in pattern. Repetition of any group of verse elements (including rhyme and grammatical structure) in reverse order, such as the rhyme scheme ABBA. Source: www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com

owe everything to God but we cannot give it, so God himself will give what he demands. This will be God's great gift to the world: himself… Paradoxical as it may seem, this is essentially the story of redemption—God reclaims ownership by paying an exorbitant price for what was already his (Kapic & Borger, loc 1,111).

V26 - The gospel reshapes us into the image of God that he created me to be: Colossians 3:10 "and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Arcing:</th><th>Passage: Genesis 1:26-27</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Main: God makes mankind AND gives them dominion over all the earth.</td><td colspan="3">Idea: God speaks. What does he say?</td><td>[26] Then God said,</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Explain: God says two things:</td><td colspan="2">Series 1: Let's make man in our image.</td><td>"Let us make man in our image,
after our likeness.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Series 2: Let's give them dominion over creation.</td><td>Idea: where do the creeping things creep?</td><td>And let them have dominion
over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the heavens
and over the livestock
and over all the earth
and over every creeping thing</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explain: answer - on earth.</td><td>that creeps on the earth."</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">Inference: these three sentences are chiastic in structure (see Figure 1). It is the first poem in Scripture. It is the summary of v26.</td><td>Series</td><td>[A] [27] So God created man in his own image,</td></tr>
<tr><td>Series</td><td>[X] in the image of God he created him;</td></tr>
<tr><td>Series</td><td>[A] male and female he created them.</td></tr>
</table>

4. God calls his male and female to meaningful work as vice-regents.

Sermon: The Creation Mandate

Pastor Ryan, 2/19/23 - Intro: Why are we here? Is it money, experiences, and material things? Why then are many rich miserable? We were created to show how special God is, to image him forth by enjoying him.

HEADLINE: GOD'S FIRST INTERACTION WITH MAN IS TO BLESS.

I. The creation mandate is from God. A. Be fruitful and multiply is not only procreation but building culture and industry and order. B. We rule over creation as his vice-regents with kindness and gentleness, not exploitation. This is given to all people everywhere not just believers, and it is still in effect after the fall.

II. It is not too late - two challenges to live the mandate: A. Look for ways to be fruitful and multiply. Having kids proclaims your hope in him and obedience. How are you building culture and finding beauty and creating order and thriving in business. Hebrews 2 quotes Psalm 8 which summarizes the creation mandate. It makes the point that Jesus fulfills the mandate in the Great Commission, bringing gospel hope and healing to all areas of creation as the first Adam failed to do. head of this mandate multiplying disciples and filling the earth with his good news everywhere. B. Look for ways to have dominion over creation and figure out ways to use it to bless others. That is business. There is no meaningless work in changing diapers or feeding cattle or spreading manure or being in business or making a home beautiful. It is done for God.

Notes & Quotes:

V28 - God blesses us with himself as his first act; he is the God who gives: "At its highest, it is God turning full-face to the recipient [of. Nu. 6:24-26) in self-giving (Acts 3:26)" (Kidner p52).

V28-30 - Colossians 1 uses Genesis language to show Jesus as the second Adam fulfilling the command to image the glory of God across the face of the earth, **and** he is remaking us in that image: Colossians 1: 6, 10 alludes to Genesis 1:28-30: 5b Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, [6] which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth… [10] so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God: "I have argued elsewhere that Gen. 1:26–28 was a mandate to Adam to reflect God's image (the following extended discussion on Gen. 1:26–28 and its use elsewhere in the OT is based on a larger study in Beale 2004: 81–121 and secondary sources cited there). This reflection was implicitly ontological and explicitly functional. God created Adam and Eve with the internal equipment (e.g., moral, spiritual, volitional, and rational attributes) to be able functionally to "subdue," "rule," and "fill" the entire earth with the presence and glory of God. The very notion of being in God's "image" likely included reflecting the divine glory, since God himself was essentially a glorious being (for an underscoring of the Adamic role to glorify God, see Ps. 8; see also the use of Ps. 8:2 in Matt. 21:15–16). Being in God's "image" also suggested that Adam was God's "son," just as when Adam's son was born, Adam was said be the "father of [a son] in his own likeness, according to his image" (Gen. 5:3). Part of "ruling and subduing" certainly was to "be fruitful and multiply and fill" the earth with actual physical children who would join Adam in reflecting God's image and join him in his kingly dominion over the earth. Thus, Adam and Eve and their progeny were to be vice-regents who were to act as God's obedient children, reflecting God's ultimate glorious kingship over the earth. Even already in Gen. 1–3, and relevant for Col. 1:6, 10, it is apparent that obedience to God's word was crucial to carrying out the task of Gen. 1:26, 28 (and disobedience to it led to their failure; cf. Gen. 2:16–17; 3:2–4, where there are three examples of Eve's apparent misquotation of the divine word in Gen. 2 [on which, see Ross 1988: 133–35]). Likely included in carrying out the mandate was to defeat and rule over the evil serpent partly by remembering and trusting in God's word of command in 2:16–17 (note the emphasis on God "said" or "saying" with reference to 2:16; 3:1b, 3). Nevertheless, the serpent ended up ruling over Adam and Eve by deceiving them with his deceptive word" (Beale p843).

V28 - subdue and have dominion: "These are military terms--first conquer, and then rule (science then technology)... This Twofold commission to subdue and have dominion, to conquer and rule, embraces all

productive human activities. Science and technology, research and development, theory and application, study and practice, and so forth, are various ways of expressing these two concepts" (Morris p76-77).

V30 - The material world is still good, giving reason for thanks, and will be restored: "Old and New Testament alike endorse this in their call to a thankful acceptance of things material (e.g.,., Ps. 104:24; 1 Tim. 4:3-5) as both from and for God" Kidner p53). .

Arcing:	Passage: Genesis 1:28-31
Series 2: God blesses Adam and Eve (Series 1 in Gen. 1:26-27, God made them in His image).	[28] And God blessed them.
Series 3: God calls them to meaningful work as vice-regents of all creation. This is the Creation Mandate that the Great Commission refurbishes (Matt 28).	And God said to them,
	"[You] Be A. fruitful and multiply and fill the earth B. and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing
	that moves on the earth."
Series 4: God gives food to mankind and animals.	[29] And God said,
	"[You] Behold,
	I have given you every plant yielding seed
	that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit.
	You shall have them for food.
	[30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth,
	everything that has the breath of life,
	I have given every green plant for food."
	And it was so.
Series 5: God said what he made is VERY good.	[31] And God saw everything
	that he had made,
	and [you] behold,
	it was very good.
Series 6: Day six is complete.	And there was evening
	and there was morning, the sixth day.

5. God demonstrates rest and delight, and he gives rest and delight.

Sermon: The Seventh Day

Pastor Ryan, 2/26/23 - Intro: In the firework show over Louisville, Kentucky, Thunder over Louisville, it's one of the nations largest, and the final three minute climax is called gargantuan. In similar fashion, what we learn about the seventh day of creation is the same pinnacle and lead-up, climax and pinnacle.

HEADLINE: GOD RESTED AND DELIGHTED, SO CAN WE IN HIM.

Of the six days of creation, the creation of man in God image is the climax from the text. And the pinnacle of the creation week is the seventh day. The word for rest indicates that God ceased from his creative work and found delight. There are two lessons to highlight from this passage about what we learn about rest:

1. We need rest: The command for Sabbath rest in Exodus 20 is based on Genesis chapter 2. It is command #4 in the 10 Commandments. When God rested, he didn't take a nap, but he did two things: he ceased from his work and delighted over it. Sabbath rest is the charge to trust that God will provide and not to rely solely on yourself. It is a reminder of our finitude. It is a declaration of our faith and trust in God, as sustainer and provider and Infinite Being. We look to him for this refreshment of body and soul. True Sabbath rest means that we rest from our labors, and we delight in all of God's work of creation and re-creation. Colossians 2 would argue that the Sabbath was a shadow and the substance was fulfilled in Christ, but the pattern still remains for us to follow.

2. We need Jesus. Hebrews 4:1-10 is quoting liberally from this passage in Genesis. It is making the point for our need for Jesus. Salvation is his creative work, and we rest from our work of trying to create our own righteousness with sin covered and rest in Christ's finished work, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. In Matthew Jesus says, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Jesus is our rest. He is our righteousness. We act this out in remembrance by resting on Sunday.

Notes & Quotes:

V1-3 - God provides and gives real rest and shalom, infinitely: "God's finished task is sealed in the words he rested (v2, 3; literally 'ceased'; from Sabat, the root of 'sabbath). It is the rest of achievement, not inactivity, for He nurtures what He creates. We may compare [this 7th day rest] to the symbolism of Jesus 'seated' after His finished redemption (Heb. 8:1; 10:12), to dispense its benefits. Hebrews 8:[1] Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven… Hebrews 10:[12] But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God [the rest of achievement, not inactivity].

Our Lord based His own constructive use of the sabbath on this understanding of the divine rest [rest of achievement, not inactivity] ('My Father is working still', John 5:17, RSV), and His double-edged saying in Mark 2:27, 28 preserves the pattern of gift ('God blessed', RSV, ESV) and claim ('and hallowed', RSV, 'made', ESV) implicit in Genesis 2:3. John 5:[16] And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. [17] But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." Mark 2:[27] And he said to them, [GIFT] "The Sabbath was made for man, [CLAIM] not man for the Sabbath. [28] [CLAIM] So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

Characteristically [Jesus] went to 'the beginning' [creation account] for His teaching. Mark 10:[6] But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female'.

But God's rest was pregnant with more than the gift of the sabbath: it is still big with promise for the believer, who is summoned to share it (Heb. 3:7 - 4:11). Hebrews 4:[8] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. [9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. As G. von Rad has well said: 'The declaration mounts, as it were, to the place of God himself and testifies that with the living God there is rest…'

Even more, that God has 'blessed', 'sanctified' this rest (Genesis 2:3) means that the author does not consider it as something for God alone but as a concern of the world. The way is being prepared, therefore, for the final, saving good. The formula that rounded off each of the six days with the onset of evening and morning is noticeably absent, as if to imply the infinite perspective" [i.e. rest continues] (Kidner p53).

V3 - Honor the Sabbath because we are dependent on him: "Although this could easily become a second book, I have decided to focus on four key ideas here: Embrace the rhythms and seasons of life Recognize vulnerability Express lament, cultivate gratitude Rest: honor sleep and sabbath…Third, rest: It is finished. The day is done, so lay it at the feet of God. You don't need to do anything else today. But more importantly, your sins are covered, so rest in that assurance. Do not let them taunt you or linger in your head and heart: Jesus declared, "It is finished." Be confident that his mercies will be new yet again tomorrow morning when you rise, no matter what uncertainties you face and what weaknesses you feel… You get a whole day of rest and worship. What if I told you this is not a luxury, but a fundamental aspect of how God made you?"[6]

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Arcing:</th><th>Passage: Genesis 2:1-3</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Inference:

Because of the Tribune's creative work of the universe filled (1:1-1:31), He is finished which results in the gift of sabbath-rest for all.</td><td rowspan="5">Action: God finishes the universe, finishes his work, and rests.</td><td colspan="2">Series 1: finished (verb)</td><td>[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,
and all the host of them.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Series 2: finished (verb)</td><td>Idea</td><td>[2] And on the seventh day God finished his work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explain</td><td>that he had done,</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Series 3: rested (verb)</td><td>Idea</td><td>and he rested on the seventh day from all his work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explain</td><td>that he had done.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Result of these 3 action verbs: God creates a Sabbath rest for all because he rests from good, completed work.</td><td colspan="2">Main: WHY did God bless and make holy Sundays?</td><td>[3] So God
blessed the seventh day [GIFT]
and made it holy, [CLAIM]</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Ground: because he could rest that his work was perfectly complete.</td><td>Idea</td><td>because on it God rested from all his work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explain</td><td>that he had done in creation.</td></tr>
</table>

Notes: Repeated words - "He had done" is used 3x here to explain WHO did all this work. God is the one who did all this work clearly. The work was finished and the work was his.

[6] Kapic, Kelly, You're Only Human, Brazos Press, Ada, Michigan, 2022, various Kindle locations 4,591

Break - Business for the glory of God: Work was blessed BEFORE the fall.

When does worship start? Worship starts at 8am Monday not Sunday. Sunday is not the only or main day we worship. Growing up I thought there was a false dichotomy between choosing to worship God or choosing the secondary work of going to work. One of the chief "splinters" in my mind that changed this thinking, ironically, was at the pastors' conference, when alone in the hotel hot tub between sessions I read the new booklet I just purchased at the bookstore, Business for the Glory of God, by Wayne Grudem. The opening line is: "IS BUSINESS BASICALLY good or evil?" I barely got past that line for quite a while, and that question still focuses my thoughts on work like none other: Is business neutral at its core or mainly evil or is it actually good and a tool for good designed by God? I still remember today being shocked to read this, AND then he goes on to argue that business is not even NEUTRAL? It is good. What?



Castello di Amorosa, Napa Valley, February 2023

What did I falsely believe about business that made me run from studying business as a major?

I chose Wheaton College to get a Bachelor of Arts degree. I chose Political Science as a major because of one professor, Dr. Ashley Woodiwiss, who taught me to read, to think, to argue, and then to write all that down. I was inspired. However, I had already taken Business as a major off the table. Why? In reflecting on this years later while in banking which I love, I journaled four reasons, four things I falsely believed about business:

1. Pursuing business studies was a vailed attempt at hiding your real greed. I wanted to do something worthwhile and not be around greed all day. I had only one category of work outside the church - it is to be done with selfishness. The truth is that work is good. It is designed by God before the fall even to be good. It was his idea. Even after the fall work is good and the gospel even is transforming that. Greed is real and a real temptation, but that does not negate the original design and essence of work being a tool for good. Wayne Grudem in his book Business for the Glory of God had a profound impact on me 20 years ago. The premise and opening of the book affirms this: work is not evil nor is it even neutral, but work is designed by God for good and his glory.

2. Riches from business were only good when given in large portions to the church's work: The only moral reason or purpose of profits were to fund ministry. I did not think anyone pursued business with a good conscience but if they ended up in business then it was only "good" work if they gave the bulk of their money to the church. It was a "necessary-evil" argument. I now see that there are many benefits as to WHY work and what makes work fundamentally good is not having a Bible study there weekly or sharing your faith [though these certainly can be good], but that fundamentally work is ordained and blessed by God.

3. People in business were in second-tier work beneath full-time ministry and blue collar work was third-tier: The jobs in business were for people who did not have the gifts of teaching God's word effectively. What I have now come to see is that there are all kinds of work, in and outside the church, and whatever God calls you to and gifts you with to do is equal valued work before God, even though the world values it with different hourly amounts. God got his hands dirty in creation and worked.

4. Net Worth (Equity on the balance sheet) is THE scorecard for those who played in this game, and I would never really win or beat others from Wheaton. Now I see that net worth on the balance sheet has nothing to do with your value or worth as an image bearer of God. It IS a powerful tool by which we can do good and grow our business whether it is running your family's bills and "home business" or a full fledged corporation. Net equity on the balance sheet is how companies build. It is what is leveraged for more revenue opportunities. It is NOT a reflection of my value even though that is the broken way that most of the world looks at it. Therefore, work in business is not better because you beat others; it is good work because God built work to be good and all work has this intrinsic value before God.



Here are some quotes and verses cited in <u>Every Good Endeavor</u> by Tim Keller that have helped expand my thinking from these four false-narratives:

- Luther and Calvin studied work: "The faith and work resurgence is like a stream with many headwaters. "When we work, we are, as those in the Lutheran tradition often put it, the "fingers of God," the agents of his providential love for others... Calvin: the 'Reformed view, the purpose of work is to create a culture that honors God and enables people to thrive.'"

- Work is good and not a curse: God delighted to work in creation. As image bearers, he calls us to meaningful work in the same way. "There is no better starting point for a meaningful work life than a firm grasp of this balanced work and rest theology." Genesis 1 - God works, he delights in work, he calls us to work, work is not a curse but is good. The 6:1 work ratio is exactly opposite of what the world prizes which is either 7:0 or 0:7; God calling us to work is an invitation to freedom.

- "Luther writes: 'God could easily give you grain and fruit without your plowing and planting, but he does not want to do so.' And so we see what Luther means by God's vocation. Not only are the most modest jobs—like plowing a field or digging a ditch—the 'masks' through which God cares for us, but so are the most basic social roles and tasks, such as voting, participating in public institutions, and being a father or mother... 'God milks the cows through the vocation of the milk maids.'"

- Work as basic need: "Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul. Without meaningful work we sense significant inner loss and emptiness. People who are cut off from work because of physical or other reasons quickly discover how much they need work to thrive emotionally, physically, and spiritually."

- Work as your worship: “Also, work is also one of the ways we discover who we are, because it is through work that we come to understand our distinct abilities and gifts, a major component in our identities. So author Dorothy Sayers could write, “What is the Christian understanding of work?. . . [It] is that work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is, or it should be, the full expression of the worker’s faculties . . . the medium in which he offers himself to God.”
- Work Becomes Selfish: The Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 shows that mankind wants to make a name for themselves apart from their identity with God. It becomes about making a name for ourselves beyond the name we have been given by God as his child. “One of the reasons work is both fruitless and pointless is the powerful inclination of the human heart to make work, and its attendant benefits, the main basis of one’s meaning and identity. When this happens, work is no longer a way to create and bring out the wonders of the created order, as Calvin would say, or to be an instrument of God’s providence, serving the basic needs of our neighbor, as Luther would say. Instead it becomes a way to distinguish myself from my neighbor, to show the world and prove to myself that I’m special.”
- There is a way to have freedom from the “work under the work”: “For many of us, being productive and doing becomes . . . an attempt at redemption. That is, through our work, we try to build our worth, security, and meaning… Many people are trying to get a sense of self through productivity and success—but that burns them out. For others the motivation is to bring home a paycheck so they can enjoy ‘real life’—but that makes work into a pointless grind. These motivations are what we could call the ‘work beneath the work.’ And they are what make work so physically and emotionally exhausting in the end.”
- Luke 5:11 - “Now they had an identity and significance untethered to their job or financial status. So they could walk away from it (if that was called for), or pick it up again, or approach it in a different way from before. They had a new freedom both from their work and in their work.”



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- We have a new rhythm of rest: “All of us are haunted by the work under the work—that need to prove and save ourselves, to gain a sense of worth and identity… The sabbath celebrates our design… Sabbath is therefore a declaration of our freedom. It means you are not a slave—not to your culture’s expectations, your family’s hopes, your medical school’s demands, not even to your own insecurities.”
- “When Jesus calls all people to himself, he says he knows we are ‘weary and burdened’ and that we need ‘rest.’ But Jesus’s cure for our weariness is a ‘burden’ (verse 30) and even a ‘yoke’ (verse 29)! The yoke or harness put on a beast of burden was a symbol of slavery and grinding toil. How could this be a solution to the problem of deep weariness? Jesus says that it is his yoke and burden—and it is the only one that is light. Why? ‘For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls’ (verse

29). He is the only boss who will not drive you into the ground, the only audience that does not need your best performance in order to be satisfied with you. Why is this? Because his work for you is finished."

Lightbulb Moments - the four main items that STRUCK me as new/renewed from this book:

1. God created progressively and calls us to build culture the same way: God certainly had the power to create everything on one day - why didn't he? Why didn't he name the animals but call Adam to that work instead? He showed us how to multiply and build culture from the raw materials he made just like he did progressively each day of creation. That is our job description. We are culture-building 102 times over, leaders creating places for the team to thrive in and outside the bank.

2. Fear culture doesn't just underperform but is wrong: Paul makes a case in Ephesians 6 that bosses are to treat workers with dignity and as equals not promoting fear. Holding someone accountable can be done but not in a belittling way as a tyrant. A culture including laughter where people look forward to work outperforms and is what the vocation of culture making is all about.



3. We move from working "to get" to working from "overflow": "Since we already have in Christ the things other people work for—salvation, self-worth, a good conscience, and peace—now we may work simply to love God and our neighbors." How do we seek salvation in our work? Or peace? Etc. How do we seek salvation in the Bible? Or peace? Where is it found?

4. Our work lasts: We work for the Lord in response to his calling and gifting for his glory. We are the "mask of God" to cause people to thrive. Our work is not in vain - Nigel's leaf really exists on the other side. God calls us to walk in specific good works for us to fulfill as his "poetry".

B. THE PROBATION AND FALL OF MAN (2:4 - 3:24)

1. Adam gives account of creation from inside the Garden.

Sermon: The Designer

Pastor Ryan, 3/5/23 - Intro: We do all in light of the designer who made all things.

HEADLINE: THE GREAT DESIGNER GIVES LIFE IN ABUNDANCE - SHALOM.

1. The context: This is the same creation account with two different emphasis, helicopter view in chapter 1 and the creation of man in chapter 2. The plants created in chapter 2 emphasis the use for man and does snot contradict chapter 1. This matters because its a common place to discredit the authority of the Bible on seemingly contradictory elements.

2. Three facts about the designer: A. God gives us life v5-7. B. God gives us real bodies and places us in real places v8-14. C. God generously and lavishly supplies for his people. After sin ruined it all, in Christ we see this same generosity lavishly poured on us and restoring all things to himself.

Notes & Quotes:

V4 - The creation story is told again, from Adam's viewpoint. It is a change in emphasis: "The second chapter of Genesis describes in greater detail certain of the events of the sixth day of creation, especially of the formation of the first man and woman. It does not in any respect contradict the account in the first chapter, but instead is complementary to it. The vocabularies in the two chapters are somewhat different, reflecting the different emphases as well as the human authorship of the second chapter. The section from Genesis 2:46 through Genesis 5:1 was probably written originally by Adam himself, as discussed previously, and in effect represents his own perspective on the creation and the first events of human history" (Morris p83). "Man is now the pivot of the story, as in chapter 1 he was the climax. Everything is told in terms of him: even the primeval waste is shown awaiting him (25b), and the narrative works outwards from man himself to man's environment (garden, trees, river, beasts and birds) in logical as against chronological order, to reveal the world as we are meant to see it: a place expressly prepared for our delight and discipline. It is misleading to call this a second creation account, for it hastens to localize the scene, passing straight from the world at large to a garden.... in the east; all that follows is played out on this narrow stage" (Kidner p.58).

V9 - the importance of the tree is in its direction to man from God: "In the context, however, the emphasis falls on the prohibition rather than the properties of the tree. It is shown to us as forbidden. It is idle to ask what it might mean in itself; this was Eve's error. As it stood, prohibited, it presented the alternative to discipleship: to be self-made, wresting one's knowledge, satisfactions and values from the created world in defiance of the Creator (cf. 3:6). Even more

Speak, O Lord

V1. Speak, O Lord, as we come to You/ To receive the food of your Holy Word. / Take Your Truth, plant it deep in us;/ Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today/ In our acts of love and our deeds of faith. / Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us/ All Your purposes for Your glory.

V2. Teach us, Lord, full obedience, / Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes/ In the radiance of Your purity. / Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see/ Your majestic love and authority. / Words of pow'r that can never fail / Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

V3. Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;/ Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us. / Truths unchanged from the dawn of time/ That will echo down through eternity. / And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,/ And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us. / Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built / And the earth is filled with Your glory.

instructive is the outcome of the experiment; see on 3:7. In all this the tree plays its part in the opportunity it offers, rather than the qualities it possesses; like a door whose name announces only what lies beyond it" (Kidner p55).

Notes:	Passage: Genesis 2:4-14
The poem summarizes creation.	[4] These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.
God makes all.	[5] When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up —for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, [6] and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— [7] then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. [8] And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. [9] And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
God waters the earth.	[10] A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. [11] The name of the **first** is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. [12] And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. [13] The name of the **second** river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. [14] And the name of the **third** river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the **fourth** river is the Euphrates.

2. God calls man to work and joyfully be dependent upon Him.

Sermon: Before the Storm

Pastor Ryan, 3/12/23 - Intro: The Joplin Missouri tornado is the worst so far in U.S. history. The pictures of the town of what it looked like before shown next to that same place shown after the tornado, gave both a sharp contrast to what happened and also a path how to rebuild.

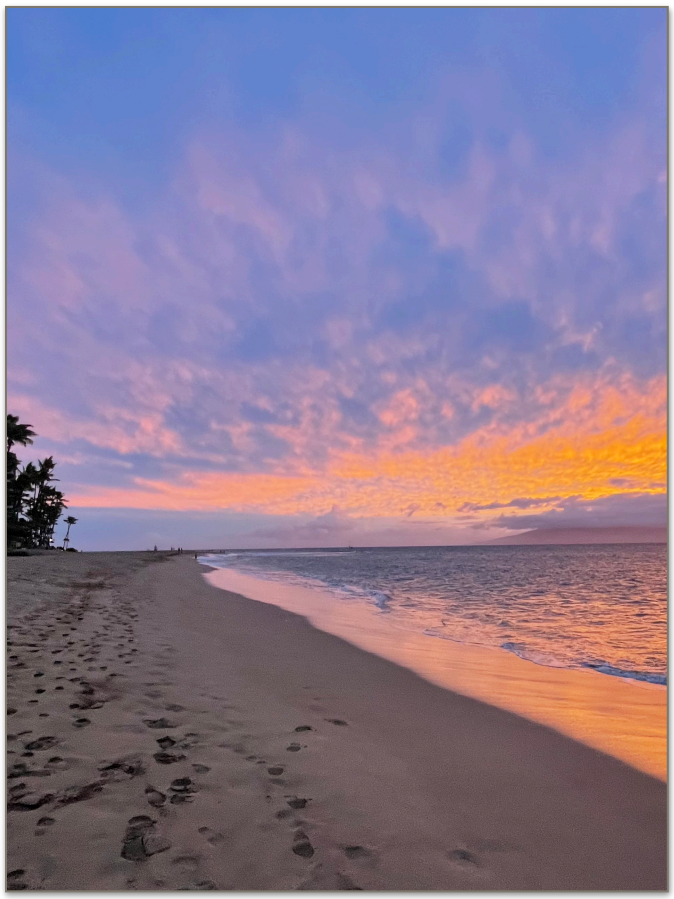
HEADLINE: WHERE ADAM FAILED TO TRUST GOD, JESUS DID PERFECTLY.

1. Work is part of God's good design. No matter our work, Adam like us, are working for God. We work for him. All good work is done for him. We are not built to relax six days and work one. We are called to work. You work matters because of who you are doing it for. We should assume that work will be part of the new heavens and earth.

2. Leaning to trust God is also part of God's good design. Do not miss the generosity of God in this passage and all of Genesis. God does not tell them why they shouldn't eat. It was about trusting him. That is part of his design for us. In another garden - the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was tempted to not trust the Father either but said, 'your will not my will be done." And where Adam failed in his garden to trust God about the tree, Christ succeeded. Whereas Adam ate of the tree and died and so we die, Christ obeyed on another tree so we can live. His perfect obedience and trust on God counts for us.

Notes & Quotes:

<u>V15 - Work was not a result of the fall but a calling of blessing before it</u>: "Moses now adds, that the earth was given to man, with this condition, that he should occupy himself in its cultivation. Whence it follows, that men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not to lie down in inactivity and idleness. This labour, truly, was pleasant, and full of delight, entirely exempt from all trouble and weariness" (Calvin p125). "It is noteworthy that, even in the perfect world as God made it, work was necessary for man's good. The ideal world is not one of idleness and frolic, but one of serious activity and service. Even in the new earth to come, after sin and the curse have been completely re-moved, Scripture says that 'his servants shall serve him' (Revelation 22:3)" (Morris p92).



<u>V16 - We are made dependent on God, even trusting him for right and wrong - dependence IS the Promised Land</u>: "Moses now teaches, that man was the governor of the world, with this exception, that he should, nevertheless, be subject to God. A law is imposed upon him in token of his subjection; for it would have made no difference to God, if he had eaten indiscriminately of any fruit he pleased. Therefore, the prohibition of one tree was a test of obedience" (Calvin p125-126).

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V17 - Would Adam have gone the way of Enoch had he not sinned? "'Before the Fall, between Adam and death, which is part of his natural lot as an dement in his human heritage, there stands the Living God; His presence is sufficient to ward death off. The translation of Enoch, 'that he should not see death' (Heb. II:5), perhaps illustrates what God had prepared for man" (Kidner p65). "His earthly life truly would have been temporal; yet he would have passed into heaven without death, and without injury" (Calvin p124).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Arcing:</th><th>Passage: Genesis 2:15-17</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Series: Work is part of God's good design.</td><td>[15] The LORD God
took the man
and put him in the garden of Eden
to work it
and keep it.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Series: Learning to trust God is also part of God's good design.</td><td rowspan="2">Positive</td><td colspan="2">Idea</td><td>[16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying,</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Explain</td><td>"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Negative</td><td colspan="2">Main</td><td>[17] but
of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
you shall not eat,</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Ground</td><td>Action</td><td>for in the day that you eat of it</td></tr>
<tr><td>Result</td><td>you shall surely die."</td></tr>
</table>

We Will Feast in the House of Zion

Chorus: We will feast in the house of Zion / We will sing with our hearts restored. / "He has done great things," we will say together. / We will feast and weep no more.

V1. We will not be burned by the fire./ He is the LORD our God. / We are not consumed, by the flood, / Upheld, protected, gathered up. / Chorus:

V2. In the dark of night, before the dawn,/ My soul, be not afraid. / For the promised morning, oh, how long?/ Oh God of Jacob, be my strength! / Chorus:

V3. Every vow we've broken and betrayed,/ You are the Faithful One. / And from the garden to the grave,/ Bind us together, bring shalom. / Chorus:

Written by Sandra McCracken

3. God makes male and female image bearers, equal and different.

Sermon: The Beautiful Design

Pastor Ryan, 3/19/23 - Intro: God is the one who gave Eve to Adam, someone his opposite in unity.

HEADLINE: GOD PROVIDES BOTH ABUNDANTLY AND RELATIONALLY.

1. God created male and female. Our identity in Christ is deeper than our gender.

2. God gave unique talents and roles and giftings to each male and female. Leaders can be gentle and helpers can be strong.

3. God is abundant. This is about God providing. After calling all of creation “good”, God said this is NOT good that relational being Adam has no community.

Notes & Quotes:

V18 - We are relational beings mean to give our lives away in love: “The naming of the animals, a scene which portrays man as monarch of all he surveys, poignantly reveals him as a social being, made for fellowship, not power: he will not live until he loves, giving himself away (24) to another on his own level. So the woman is presented wholly as his partner and counterpart; nothing is yet said of her as child bearer. She is valued for herself alone… [T]he sexes are complementary: the true partnership is expounded by the terms that are used (a helper fit for him, 18,20, RSV ; literally a help as opposite him"” (Kidner p65).



V18 - Eve was different and completed the work better: “‘In all the animal kingdom, there could not be found a "helper like him.’ He alone, of all creatures, was really alone. And that was not good! Before God could declare His creation "finished" and "very good," this all-important deficiency must be eliminated. God would provide such a helper and companion for Adam, one "like" him, and yet different, perfectly complementing him and completing God's work” (Morris p98).

V21 - Rib shows equality: “[This] Hebrew word [translated ‘rib’ here] appears thirty-five times in the Old Testament and this is the only time it has been rendered ‘rib.’ Most of the time (in at least twenty of its occurrences) it means simply ‘side.’ The thought evidently is to stress that woman was made neither from Adam's head (suggesting superiority to him) nor from his feet (suggesting inferiority), but from his side, indicating equality and companionship" (Morris p100).

V22 - Eve is not made from the dust like Adam, for unity and fellowship: “something was taken from Adam, in order that he might embrace, with greater benevolence, a part of himself. He lost, therefore, one of his ribs; but, instead of it, a far richer reward was granted him, since he obtained a faithful associate of life; for he now saw himself, who had before been imperfect, rendered complete in his wife. And in this we see a true resemblance of our union with the Son of God; for he became weak that he might have members of his body endued with strength” (Calvin p133).

Arcing:		**Passage: Genesis 2:18-23**
Action: God made a helper fit for Adam.		[18] Then the LORD God said,
		“It is not good that the man should be alone;
		I will make him a helper fit for him.”
Negative / CONTRAST: Out of the ground God made every animal and Adam.	Positive: Adam names the creation.	[19] Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what
		he would call them.
		And whatever the man called every living creature,
		that was its name.
		[20] The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.
	Negative: But creation was not good / complete.	But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.
Positive / CONTRAST: not out of the ground BUT out of Adam God made Eve.		[21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
		and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
		[22] And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man
		he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
Result: Adam worshipped God in poetry.		[23] Then the man said,
		“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
		she shall be called Woman,
		because she was taken out of Man.”

4. God establishes the foundations of marriage.

Sermon: The Lesser and the Greater

Pastor Ryan, 3/26/23 - Eric & Jodi in Vegas at Bellagio with Grace for FNBO; Intro: As we have seen from the beginning, with God as designer, his goal is not to limit our freedom, but to maximize our joy. It is God, not man who built marriage and set its parameters. Ryans goal is not to shrink from any passage of the Bible, nor to carelessly offend, but in deep love teach what the Designer has said for our joy, and flourishing, and thriving.

HEADLINE: MARRIAGE IS PART OF GOD'S GOOD DESIGNS FOR THRIVING AND BLESSING BEFORE THE FALL.

There are three truths about marriage we see in this passage:

1. Marriage is God's good idea. In Matthew, Jesus quotes, this passage that a man shall leave his, father and mother, and cleave to his wife saying this is a direct quote from God. Marriage is not a human construct, but God's idea. It is part of God's good designs before the fall, and it is not a Plan B after the fall. In Genesis 1, we see the character of God as a lavish gift giver who loves to bless his creation, especially his image bearers.

2. God has a particular design for marriage.

A. Marriage is designed to be between one man and one woman. The heroes of the faith in the Old Testament who had multiple wives are never commended by Scripture as being something good. It is never painted in a good light, and it always ends badly for each of them and their families.

B. A man leaves his father and mother, and that is no longer his primary relationship, but it is his wife's. There is disfunction and sin when either husband or wife to not leave or cleave and / or either parent does not let go. The design for primary relationship is not father-son but husband-wife.

C. Marriage is designed to be a one flesh union. It is the intermingling of body and soul. You become one flesh, the intermingling of souls in this one flesh union. This is why sexual union outside of the lifelong-covenant of marriage is so destructive. There is permanent soul intermingling with sexual union whether there is lifelong, donating of self to another in the bond of covenant making or not.

3. Marriage is a shadow. It is a living parable to help us understand God's love for his church. It is the lesser marriage that points to the greater marriage that culminates at the marriage supper of the lamb. That is also why Jesus was single and completely satisfied and content and at peace and thriving without being married. He was looking forward to the ultimate marriage one day, he and his people. It is also why there is no marriage in heaven, because the shadow gives away to the substance. It is also why marriages explode and crumble under the weight of worship if we believe that "you complete me." Our spouse is not our satisfaction and meaning in life. That is reserved for the ultimate groom, Christ to me and all his people.

Application: Embrace and be thankful in God's thriving abundance in marriage. Repent of where you have not held to God's vision of marriage in your own marriage. Be satisfied with Christ and yearn for his marriage supper of the lamb one day.

Notes & Quotes:

<u>V25 - Ease between husband and wife is a FRUIT of perfect love for one another</u>: "…the union of the two in marriage is to be an exclusive (a man leaves..., 24, RSV), permanent (... and cleaves), God-sealed bond

(one flesh: cf. Mk. 10:8f. Christ quotes this passage then explains, ‘so they are no longer two but one flesh’); for 'God himself, like a father of the bride, leads the woman to the man' (G. von Rad). Fourthly, there is, in God's true pattern, perfect ease between them (25). But it is the fruit of perfect love, which has no alloy of greed, distrust or dishonor; it was understandably an immediate casualty of the Fall, and the chapter ends with a pointed reminder of our vanished concord” (Kidner p66).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Arcing:</th><th>Passage: Genesis 2:24-25</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Inference: Because she is my intimate community (v18-23), man will leave and cleave, and be intertwined souls with no shame.</td><td>Progression:</td><td>Action: Leave and cleave.</td><td>[24] Therefore a man shall
leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife,</td></tr>
<tr><td>Progression:</td><td>Result: intertwined souls</td><td>and they shall become one flesh.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Progression:</td><td>[25] And the man and his wife
were both naked
and were not ashamed.</td></tr>
</table>

Before The Throne Of God Above

V1. Before the throne of God above / I have a strong, a perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is "Love" / Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands / My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands / No tongue can bid me thence depart.
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

V2. When Satan tempts me to despair / And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there / Who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died / My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied / To look on him and pardon me.
To look on him and pardon me.

V3. Behold him there! the risen Lamb / My perfect, spotless Righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM / The King of glory and of grace!
One with Himself I cannot die / My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high / With Christ, my Savior and my God
With Christ, my Savior and my God.

Written by Charitie Lees Smith (1841–1923)

5. Creation unravels: Sin enters the world, and the cosmos break.

Sermon: Know Your Opponent

Pastor Ryan, 4/1/23 - Intro: The come from behind Husker v Ohio game in 2011 had a turning point of a forced turnover. Here is the turning point of all of Scripture: Adam and Eve give into Satan's lies.

HEADLINE: WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT? WHAT MOVED EVERYTHING FROM GOOD TO BROKEN?

1. The context: The book of revelation confirms that this serpent is taken by Satan. What does the servant say? He never tells Adam or Eve to eat the fruit. He sows seeds of doubt and plays with words.

2. What are the tactics that the serpent used here and still uses today? What are his tactics?

A. Satan undermines the reliability of God's word v1. Did God actually say? B. Satan undermines God's trustworthiness v4. Can God be trusted? Even if he did say, can he really keep his word? He is calling a God a lier. The half-truth here is that Adam actually lives to be 900 years old, but he has a spiritual death immediately and physical death eventually. He is questioning God's promises. "God won't really punish sin" is the lie. C. Satan undermines the goodness of God v5. God is holing out on you. He is not really for you. His plan is not to our favor. Those are the lies in this tactic. In contrast to "God seeing each day of creation as good", here Eve declares what she says is good in v6. Satan promises freedom and delivers destruction.

3. How do we counteract these tactics? A. Know the word. Compared to Gen. 2:16-17, Eve misses key points of what God said. She leaves out God's generosity. She shortens the name of the tree, etc. Jesus as the second-Adam did this perfectly from Scripture when he was likewise temped by Satan in a hungry desert vs a fulfilling garden. B. Recall the faithfulness of God to keep his promises. C. Meditate on the goodness of God. How do we know that God is good, and he is for us? Look no further than the cross, Romans 8:32 - God did not spare his own son, so he gives us all! Satan is defeated in the desert, at the cross, and at the tomb. Look to Jesus that we might find the joy of following God and victory of Satan's lies.

Arcing:	Passage: Genesis 3:1-7
Satan Argument #1: undermining Satan questions God's reliability of what he has said.	[1] 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'?"
Eve's Argument #1: She gives a weak defense of God.	[2] And the woman said to the serpent,
	"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,
	[3] but God said,
	'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree
	that is in the midst of the garden,

(Continued)		neither shall you touch it,
		lest you die.'"
Satan Argument #2: Satan argues that God won't keep his word and WHY? because he is holding out on you.	Main	[4] But the serpent said to the woman,
		"You will not surely die.
	Ground	[5] For God knows that
		when you eat of it
		your eyes will be opened,
		and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
Inference: Therefore Adam and Eve succumb to temptation and sin. Sin's FOUR Actions and THREE Results	Action 1 (Idea)	[6] So when the woman saw that
	Explain 1	the tree was good for food,
	Explain 2	and that it was a delight to the eyes,
	Explain 3	and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,
	Action 2	she took of its fruit and ate,
	Action 3	and she also gave some to her husband
	(Explain)	who was with her,
	Action 4	and he ate.
	Result 1	[7] Then the eyes of both were opened,
	Result 2	and they knew that
	(Explain)	they were naked.
	Result 3	And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Notes & Quotes:

V1 - Rather than the actual type of tree, the importance was in man striving to make meaning and life apart from the Creator. "It does not make the trees magical (for the Old Testament has no room for blind forces, only for the acts of God), but rather sacramental, in the broad sense of the word, in that they are the physical means of a spiritual transaction. The fruit, not in its own right, but as appointed to a function and carrying a word from God, confronts man with God's will, particular and explicit, and gives man a decisive Yes or No to say with his whole being… In the context, however, the emphasis falls on the prohibition rather than the properties of the tree. It is shown to us as forbidden. It is idle to ask what it might mean in itself; this was Eve's error. As it stood, prohibited, it presented the alternative to discipleship: to be self-made, wresting

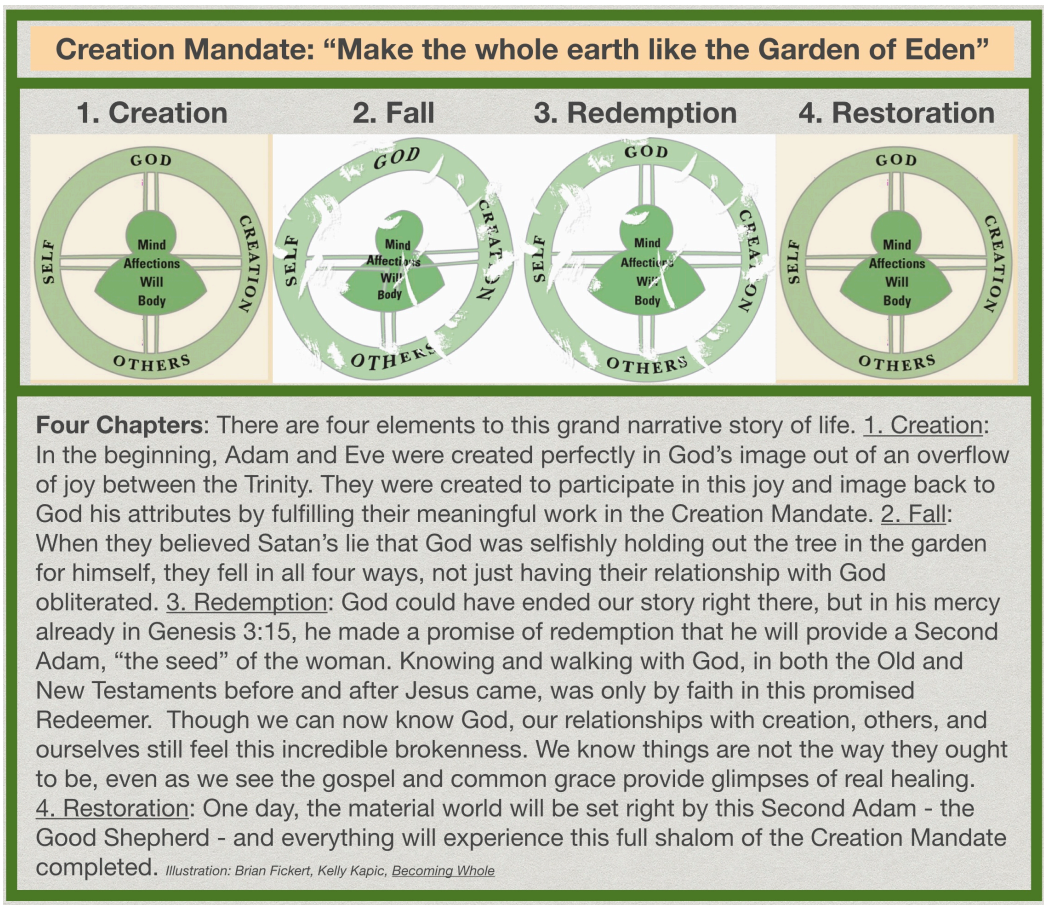
one's knowledge, satisfactions and values from the created world in defiance of the Creator (Of. 3:6). Even more instructive is the outcome of the experiment; see on 3:7. In all this the tree plays its part in the opportunity it offers, rather than the qualities it possesses; like a door whose name announces only what lies beyond it" (Kidner p62-63).

V1 - Creation groans for the revealing of the sons of God, adopted now, one day fully restored in God's image, Romans 8: "In this chapter, Moses explains, that man, after he had been deceived by Satan, revolted from his Maker, became entirely changed, and so degenerate, that the image of God, in which he had been formed, was obliterated. He then declares, that the whole world, which had been created for the sake of man, fell together with him from its primary original; and that, in this way, much of its native excellence was destroyed" (Calvin p139). The restoration is coming from this brokenness.

V5 - It is a bold lie to say the finite can be infinite: "It is a lie, of course, that she is going to be like God because experiential knowledge of evil is not what makes God God. God is God because he is infinite, the non-de-pendent one. No created being will ever be able to be like him in this. Even in the area of knowledge, what Satan has said is a lie because God is infinite and knows all the possibilities, and he is not bound by limitedness. We, how-ever, with all our knowledge are still bound by limitedness and always will be. So what Satan has said is a half truth but a total lie" (Schaefer p82).

V6 - As better than Eve, Jesus now says "take and eat" at communion: "She took . .. and ate: so simple the act, so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before 'take and eat' become verbs of salvation" (Kidner p68).

V7 - Eyes opened means we see but distorted and grotesque: "The serpent's promise of eyes . .. opened came true in its fashion (and cf. 22) but it was a grotesque anticlimax to the dream of enlightenment. Man saw the familiar world and spoilt it now in the seeing, projecting evil on to innocence (cf. Titus1:15) and reacting to good with shame and flight. His new consciousness of good and evil was both like and unlike the divine knowledge (3:22), differing from it and from innocence as a sick man's aching awareness of his body differs both from the insight of the physician and the unconcern of the man in health… God's way is forward, for when the body is redeemed (Rom. 8:23) and love is perfect we shall be not back in Eden but clothed with glory (2 Cor. 5:4)" (Kidner p69).





Castello di Amorosa Winery (above), Del Dotto Estate Winery & Caves (inset), Napa Valley, California, February 2023

6. Instead of ending it all, the merciful Counsellor pursues sinners.

Sermon: The Immediate Aftermath

Pastor Ryan, 4/16/23 - Intro: There are both long-term effects of the cosmos, being broken because of sin, and there are immediate effects in the garden right after sin. Here we see the unfolding of both.

HEADLINE: SIN BRINGS DEATH AND RELATIONAL DISCONTINUITY.

The big idea question: what then is our response to sin?

1. We need to take our sin seriously. This was not murder but unbelief, and abhorrent before the holy God.

2. Our natural tendency is to shift blame to others, so fight that. When God asked, where are you, that you is singular, and he's looking for Adam. Use Kidner quote here as well in order of responsibility. The number one pattern in Counseling through broken relationships is one or both parties, refusing to stop the blame game and own up to all that they did wrong.

3. God pursues lost sinners. Instead of dropping the hammer justice, God asked for open, ended questions beginning with where are you. In genesis, chapter 1 and two in the creation account, God is referred to as Elohim, creator, God. But in chapter 2 and three, he is referred to as Yahweh Elohim, the personal name of God, who keeps his covenant. In the temptation with Eve Satan does not use the word Yahweh, nor does Eve. But it is here again in chapter 3 that Yahweh is being used as he pursues got as he pursues man saying that he is not finished with Mann yet. He still pursues sinners as the personal Covenant keeping God.

Notes & Quotes:

V6ff - All sin is first a sin of unbelief so the Great Counsellor addresses that: "The flow is from the internal to the external; the sin began in the thought-world and flowed outward. The sin was, therefore, committed in that moment she believed Satan instead of God. At this point the whole matter was decided. Nonetheless, a history is involved, for first she believed Satan, then she ate, and then she gave the fruit to Adam" (Schafer p85).

V8-13 - Outline and logical flow: God proactively seeks Adam and Eve in their Five Actions and Five Results in his six-step progressive conversation.



Sliver Oak Vineyards, Napa Valley, February 2023

V8 - The wonder and beauty of the garden was walking with God: "[walking in] the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (v. 8). This is the verse we have used in our previous studies to indicate the wonder of the open communication which God had with man. In the garden in the cool (or the wind) of the day, there was open fellowship, open communion-open propositional communication between God and man before the Fall. But now that which was his wonder and his joy, the fulfillment of his need, an infinite, personal reference point with whom he could have communion and communication became the reason for his fear. He was going to meet God face to face! Once man had shaken his fist in the face of God, what had been so wonderful became a just reason for fear, because God was really there" (Schafer p92).

V9 - God pursues man as the Great Counsellor to draw us out vs. Adam to cry out for the rocks to crush him and hide him from God's presence

(Rev 6:16): "God's first word to fallen man has all the marks of grace. It is a question, since to help him He must draw rather than drive him out of hiding. Only a voice penetrates his concealment" (Kidner p70).

Arcing:				Passage: Genesis 3:8-13
Progressive	Negative: They hid.		Action	[8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,
			Result	and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
	Positive: God pursues, calls, and speaks words to them.		Idea	[9] But the LORD God called to the man and said to him,
			Explain	"Where are you?"
Progressive	Idea			[10] And he said,
	Explain	Main	Action	"I heard the sound of you in the garden,
			Result	and I was afraid,
		Ground	Action	because I was naked,
			Result	and I hid myself."
Progressive	Idea			[11] He said,
	Explain	Idea	Idea	"Who told you that
			Explain	you were naked?
		Explain	Idea	Have you eaten of the tree of which
			Explain	I commanded you not to eat?"
Progressive	Idea			[12] The man said,
	Explain: Adam blames God, "if you would not have made this woman for me, I would not have ate."		Action	"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree,
			Result	and I ate."
Progressive	Idea			[13] Then the LORD God said to the woman,
	Explain		Idea	"What is this
			Explain	that you have done?"
Progressive	Idea			The woman said,
	Explain		Action	"The serpent deceived me,
			Result	and I ate."

7. The Gospel comes on the scene in real hope.

Sermon: The Bad News and the Good News

Pastor Ryan, 4/23/23 - Intro: Are you wired to want to hear good news or bad news first? Here is the story.

HEADLINE: LIFE IS BROKEN, IT HAS DEATH, BUT THE SEED WILL RESTORE ALL.

Bad news 1: Life on this broken planet is going to be difficult. God's judgment does not mainly go to snakes in general but Satan. "Belly and dust" is humiliation in ancient times. Enmity is between Satan and people. There is war between him and those who desire to follow God (2 Tim 3, Eph 6). Eve will have immense pain in childbirth now, and relational complications will spring forth, i.e. contrary to your husband. For Adam, work is good, but it is now hard, fruitless, and nothing is productive in the same way anymore.

Bad news 2: Death is now inevitable. Adam was not supposed to die, but, when sin entered, death entered (Romans 5). Death is now a part of life. It is evil, broken, hard, producing grief and deep loss.

Good news: We have hope that one day the effects of the fall will be reversed. V15 the offspring of Eve will crush the head of the serpent, Satan, and overcome evil. That is the Seed, Christ. God rightly pronounces this righteous judgment and this boundless mercy of the promise of the Seed. Isaiah 55 says that instead of the thorn bush, the cypress will come up. This brokenness will not just end but be undone. The restoration is coming, the full reversal of the Fall. And, for now in the midst of this brokenness, we have him, and we are his.

Notes & Quotes:

V14-Snakes always slithered, and in this curse Satan does not get a question from the Great Counsellor like Adam and Eve did in the previous section: [This is not a] "Just So Story on how the serpent lost its legs? - an interest belied by the tragic context, but that the crawling is henceforth symbolic (cf. Is. 65:25) - just as in Genesis 9:13 a new significance, not new existence, will be decreed for the rainbow" (Kidner p70).

All Sufficient Merit

V1. All sufficient merit shining like the sun
A fortune I inherit by no work I have done
My righteousness I forfeit at my Savior's cross
Where all sufficient merit did what I could not

V4. All sufficient merit, firm in life and death
The joy of my salvation shall be my final breath
And when I stand accepted before the throne of God
I'll gaze upon my Jesus and thank Him for the cross
Yes I'll thank You for the cross

Song recorded by Shane & Shane

V15-We see the first gospel hope - salvation for God's name **and** man's need: "There is good New Testament authority for seeing here the protevangelium, the first glimmer of the gospel. Remarkably, it makes its début as a sentence passed on the enemy (cf. Col. 2:15), not a direct promise to man, for redemption is about God's rule as much as about man's need (of. Ezk. 36:22, 'not ... for your sake...). The prospect of struggle, suffering and human triumph is clear enough, but only the New Testament will unmask the figure of Satan behind the serpent (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:9; 20:2), and show how significant was the passing over of Adam for the woman and her seed (cf. Mt. 1:23; Gal. 4:4; ?1 Tim. 2:15)" (Kidner p70-71).

V14-19 - For what sin do these consequences punish? Murder? Adultery? No, unbelief. The root of every sin is unbelief, unbelief in the promises of God (John Piper quote): "What was the sin of both of them? The opinion of some of the ancients, that they were allured by intemperance of appetite, is puerile. For when there was such an abundance of the choicest fruits, what daintiness could there be about one particular kind? Augustine is more correct, who says, that pride was the beginning of all evils, and that by pride the human race was ruined. Yet a fuller definition of the sin may be drawn from the kind of temptation which Moses

describes. For first the woman is led away from the word of God by the wiles of Satan, through unbelief" (Calvin p152).

V14 - The Great Counsellor from 3:8 leads to repentance like a physician to heal, not so for Satan: "He does not interrogate the serpent as he had done the man and the woman [3:8-13]; because, in the animal itself there was no sense of sin, and because, to the devil he would hold out no hope of pardon. He might truly, by his own authority, have pronounced sentence against Adam and Eve, though unheard. Why then does he call them to undergo examination, except that he has a care for their salvation This doctrine is to be applied to our benefit. There would be no need of any trial of the cause, or of any solemn form of judgment, in order to condemn us; wherefore, while God insists upon extorting a confession from us, he acts rather as a physician than as a judge. There is the same reason why the Lord, before he imposes punishment on man, begins with the serpent. For corrective punishments as we shall see are of a different kind, and are inflicted with the design of leading us to repentance; but in this there is nothing of the sort" (Calvin p165).

Notes:	Passage: Genesis 3:14-18
The gospel hope comes during the curse of Satan. Salvation is about God's name and glory and not just man being saved from sin.	[14] 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. [15] 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."
Marriage relationship is strained and turned upside down: "'To love and to cherish' becomes 'To desire and to dominate'" (Kidner p71).	[16] To the woman he 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."

Consequences for man: “Thorns . . . and thistles are eloquent signs of nature untamed and encroaching” (Kidner p72);	[17] 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; [18] thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. [19] 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.”

8. Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, but they leave in hope.

Sermon: Justice and Mercy

Pastor Ryan, 4/30/23 - Intro: The book of Genesis is about revealing who God is, and it is not a scientific account to answer all our questions. So, who is God? What can we learn about him in this section?

HEADLINE: GOD IS BOTH JUST, AND HE IS THE JUSTIFIER OF THE UNGODLY.

1. God is just: He is good and right in all his work, and he never unjustly punishes sin.

2. God is merciful: Instead of striking them down immediately, he pursues them with questions of grace, which he does not do to the serpent Satan. He clothes them with animal clothes.

3. God is both just and merciful at the same time: He is both just and the one who justifies the ungodly by his son’s work. We are justified from our sin by substitution. Our sin is punished on another, and his life of righteousness is given to us in mercy. - Romans 3:28ff.

Notes & Quotes:

V24 - We now walk with God behind the sword that Jesus took for us: That is why the temple vail was torn in two, the veil behind which was the cherubim, the ones with the swords in this verse. “Every detail of this verse, with its flame and sword and the turning every way, actively excludes the sinner. His way back is more than hard, it is resisted: he cannot save himself. The cherubim, God's multiform and awesome throne bearers in Ezekiel's visions (Of. Ezek. 1:5 with Ezek. 10:15), are seen elsewhere as symbolic guardians of the holy of holies, their forms embroidered on the veil that barred access to it, and modeled above the ark (Ex. 36:35; 37:7-9). At the death of Christ this veil was rent in two (Mt. 27:51) and the way to God thrown open (Heb. 10:19-22) in fact as well as symbol.” (Kidner p72-73).

Arcing:			Passage: Genesis 3:20-24
Progressive: Adam names Eve and shows he believes the promise of Christ somehow in 3:15 in hope.	Action		[20] The man called his wife's name Eve,
	Purpose		because she was the mother of all living.
Progressive: God covers them.	Series		[21] And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
Progressive: God states their distorted view now of good and evil.	Idea		[22] Then the LORD God said,
	Explain		"Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.
Progressive: Then God sends them out of the garden.	Main		Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"
	Inference	Main	[23] therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground
		Locative	from which he was taken.
Progressive: Then God drives them out.			[24] He drove out the man,
Progressive: Then in mercy God keeps them from re-entering without Christ to not immediately die or live forever in their broken state.	Action		and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword
	Result		that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.



The Westin, Maui, Kaanapali Beach 2023

9. Now what? After Eden God continues to draw near to us.

Sermon: God Came Near - summary sermon after the Genesis study

Pastor Jim, 5/7/23 - Intro: The book of Genesis is about revealing who God is, and it is not a scientific account to answer all our questions. So, who is God? What can we learn about him in this section?

HEADLINE: GOD AGAIN NOW WALKS WITH HIS OWN IN THE COOL OF THE DAY.

1. In the rest of the Old Testament we see God drawing near to his own. Genesis 28 - Jacob: In response to a liar and coward, God reveals himself to Jacob at Bethel, moving in to stay. Exodus 24-25 - Moses: Moses goes up on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights meeting God's presence. God wants to tabernacle with them in the desert and reveals these plans to Moses how to do that. In chapter 33 God hides Moses in the cleft of the rock to see God's glory from the back. The cloud covers the tent, no longer just on the mountain. But separation is still there so that not even Moses cannot come in the tabernacle.

2. In Jesus, God comes even closer and fulfills the Old Testament. John 1 - the Word, Jesus, took on flesh and "tabernacled" among us. He is the image of God where the fullness of the deity dwells bodily. There is no veil that is needed to hide this glory. In John 1:50-52 Jesus says he is the greater Bethel where Jacob saw the stairway to heaven. Instead of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, Jesus says it is he that is doing this as the Son of Man - close to God with no hinderances. In Matthew 17 we read the mount of transfiguration. Just like in Exodus with Moses we have glory on a mountain. Jesus is removing the hindrances and lets his disciples see God in more glory and not be destroyed.

3. How do we respond to this good news of God coming close to us? Draw near to him. There is nothing more satisfying than to be found in him. We are motivated to come because He is coming to us, satisfies us, delights us as rich food, it is like taking a walk with him as Adam and Eve would do in the cool of the garden. He wants to hear from you. God is the one speaking in Isaiah 55:1-3:

[1] "**Come**, everyone who thirsts, / **come** to the waters;

and he who has no money, / **come**, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk / without money and without price.

[2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,

and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and **eat** what is good, / and **delight** yourselves in rich food.

[3] **Incline** your ear, and come to me; / **hear**, that your soul may live;

and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, / my steadfast, sure love for David.

One day it will be fully restored in a new, material world. Revelation 21:[2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God [the tabernacle] is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.



Fawn haven, first of Spring 2023

Summary Sermon - Genesis 1-3: Pastor Tim Keller

Sermon: Paradise in Crisis - Gospel in Life Podcast

Pastor Tim, January 11, 2009 - Intro: “The Bible is not a series of disconnected stories, each one with a little moral for how to live, but it’s actually primarily a single story about what went wrong with the human race and what will put it right.” Passage Genesis 3:1-7.

HEADLINE: WE PUT OURSELVES ON HIS TREE; HE PUT HIMSELF ON OURS TO PROVE HE IS GOOD.

1. The sneer: We lose God not through argument but through atmosphere. It is an attitude not an argument. Also, there is serpentine humor that deflates the other person, and there is good humor that builds others up and encourages them. That’s not serpentine humor.

2.The lie: If you obey God, you will miss out. He will keep you down and hold you down and hold you back if you obey. Satan does not deny the existence of God or the law or command of God. But he denies the goodness of God. This is the lie. In the core of each of us this lie still remains, and that is the only reason why temptation has any efficacy at all.

3. The tree: Sin is an act of the will. Look beyond the rules to not put yourself in God’s place. Why was eating of the tree not in the 10 Commandments? Because behind every law in God’s world is the recognition that we are not God. We did not make all this, and we are not in charge to do things any way we would like. Dependent image bearers as vice regents over the earth is our calling. At the root of all sin and anxiety and bitterness is that we put ourselves in God’s seat. We are afraid he is going to mess it up and not get this world done the way that we think it ought to be done.



Sliver Oak Vineyards, Napa Valley, February 2023

4. The call: We are hiders. Its our nature to hide, and its God’s nature to seek. He is a great counselor. God seeking us out in love was ultimately seen in sending the Lord Jesus Christ, who undid all the work and the lies of the devil.

God told Adam and Eve, “Obey me about the tree, and you will live.” Jesus was in another garden, the garden of Gethsemane, that was very dark in contrast. God told him, “Obey me about the tree or the cross, and you will be crushed.” The tree in the garden was us putting ourselves where God is, and the tree on Golgotha is God putting himself on the tree that we belong. To the degree that you believe that, is the degree that you will know and feel the love of God, and not believe the lie that he is against you.

[outline for the rest of the book of Genesis from Kidner]

C. MAN UNDER SIN AND DEATH (4:1 - 6:8)

D. THE WORLD UNDER JUDGMENT (6:9 - 8:14)

E. RENEWAL AND REPEOPLING (8:15 - 10:32)

F. END AND BEGINNING: BABEL AND CANAAN (11:1-32)

II. THE CHOSEN FAMILY (chapters 12-50)

A. ABRAM UNDER CALL AND PROMISE (chapters 12-20)

B. ISAAC AND THE FURTHER TESTS OF FAITH (chapters 21-26)

C. JACOB AND THE EMERGENCE OF ISRAEL (chapters 27-36)

D. JOSEPH AND THE MIGRATION TO EGYPT (chapters 37-50)



The Hyatt, Maui, Kaanapali Beach 2023

Appendix: the Arcing one-pager

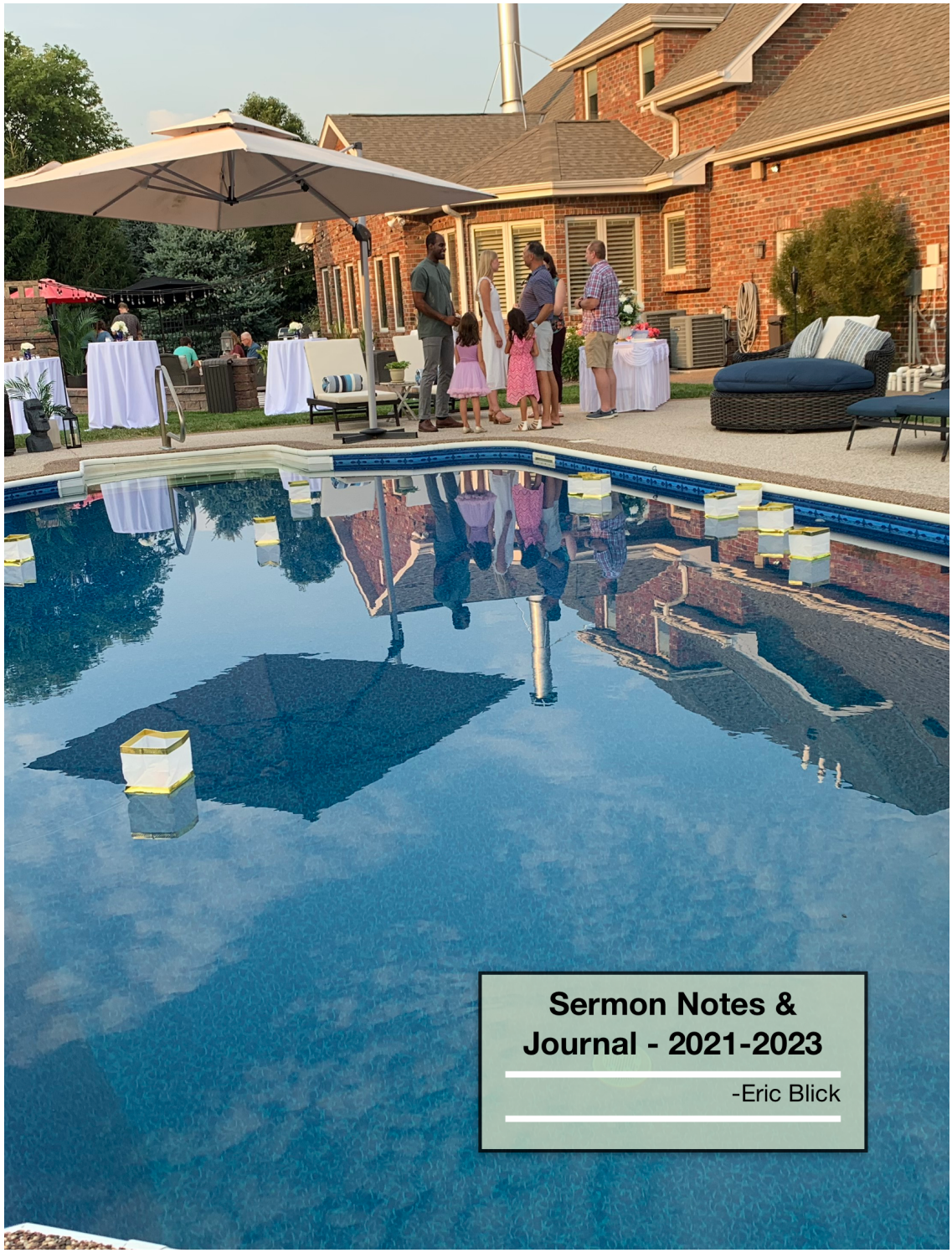
The summary of 18 ways two thoughts can connect.[7]

Name	Definition	Key Words	Example 1
1. Series	Each proposition makes its own independent contribution to a whole - Main clauses are **COEXISTING**	And, moreover, furthermore, likewise, neither, nor, etc.	(**series**) The sun will be darkened, (**series**) And the moon will not give its light, (**series**) And the stars will fall from heaven, (**series**) And the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Mt. 24:29
2. Progression	Like series, but each proposition is a further step toward a climax - Main clauses are **CLIMAXING**	Then, and moreover, furthermore, etc.	(**progression**) Those whom he predestined he also called; (**progression**) And those whom he called he also justified; (**progression**) And those whom he justified, he also glorified." Rom 8:30
3. Alternative	Each proposition expresses a different possibility arising from a situation. Main clauses are **CONTRASTING**	Or, but, while, on the other hand, etc.	(**alternative**) Some were convinced (**alternative**) While others disbelieved. Acts 28:24
4. Action - Manner	The statement of an action, and then a more precise statement which indicates the way or manner in which this action is carried out	**In that, by, etc.** (in Greek it is the adverbial participle of means that distinguishes this from Idea – Explanation)	(**action**-main clause) God has not left himself without a witness (**manner**-subordinate clause) In that he gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons. Acts 28:24
5. Comparison	The relationship between statements expressing an action clearer **by showing what it is like.**	Even as, as…so, like just as	(**comparison**) As my Father has sent me, (**main** clause) So I send you. John 20:21
6. Negative - Positive	The relationship between two alternatives, on of which is denied so that the other is enforced - contrasting statements	Not…but	**(-)** (**main** clause) Do not be foolish, **(+) (adversative** clause) But understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph 5:17
7. Idea - Explanation	The relationship between an original statement and one clarifying its meaning (may only clarify one word from the main clause)	That is	(**idea**–main clause) Jacob supplanted me these two times; (**explanation**) He took away my birthright and (explanation) now he has taken away my blessing. Gen 27:36
8. Question – Answer	Statement of question and answer to that question	Look for the question mark	(**question**) What does Scripture say**?** (**answer**-main clause) Abraham believed God… Rom 4:3

[7] Schreiner, Thomas, R. Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, Michigan, Baker Publishing Group, 2011

Name	Definition	Key Words	Example 1
9. Ground	The relationship between a statement and the argument or reason for the statement (supporting proposition FOLLOWS)	For, because, since, etc. (In Ground, the conclusion comes first)	(**main** clause) Blessed are the poor in spirit, (**ground**) For there is the kingdom of God Matt 5:3
10. Inference	The relationship between a statement and the argument or reason for the statement (supporting proposition PRECEEDS)	Therefore, wherefore, consequently, accordingly, etc. (In Inference, the conclusion comes second)	(**main** clause) The end of all things is at hand, (**inference**) Therefore be sensible and sober in prayer. 1 Pet 4:7
11. Action - Result	The relationship between an action and a consequence or result which accompanies that action	So that, that, with the result that	(**action**) There arose a great storm in the sea, (**result**) so that the boat was being swamped by the waves. Matt 8:24
12. Action - Purpose	The relationship between an action and the one that is intended to come as a result.	In order that, so that, that, with a view to, to the end that, lest	(**action**) Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand (**purpose**) That he may lift you up. 1 Pet 5:6
13. Conditional (if-then)	This is like Action-Result except that the existence of the action is only potential	If…then, provided that, except	(**if**-conditional clause) If you are led by the spirit, (**then**-main clause) You are not under the law. Gal 5:18
14. Temporal	The relationship between the main proposition and the occasion when it can occur	When, whenever, after, before	(**temporal** clause) When you fast, (**main** clause) Do not look gloomy. (Matt. 6:16)
15. Locative	The relationship between a proposition and the place where it can be true	Where, wherever	(**locative**) Where two or three are gathered together in my name, (**main** clause) there I am in their midst (Matt 18:20)
16. Bilateral	A bilateral proposition supports two other propositions, one preceding and one following	Same conjunctions as Ground and Inference	(**main**) Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, (**bilateral** phrase) For you will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. (**main** clause) Let the peoples praise you, O God. Ps 67:4-5
17. Concessive	The relationship between a main clause and a contrary statement	Although…yet, although, yet, nevertheless, but however	(**concessive**) Although he was a Son, (**main** clause) he learned obedience from what he suffered. Heb 5:8
18. Situation - Response	The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another		(**situation**) How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, (**response**) And you would not. Matt 23:37

Various Sermon Notes & Journal Entries: 2021-2023



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Dallas, Texas - Frisco Polka trip, Groezingers, 2021

THEREFORE…HOPE

PASTOR LIBIN ABRAHAM, BENT TREE CHURCH, 10/3/21

Verse by verse: It has been said that the Christian life starts with the "therefore."

The therefore points to God is keeping our inheritance and he is keeping us for this inheritance.

Religion says we obey God to get right. The gospel says because we have already been made right we have joy. Religion is spelled DO, and the gospel is spelled DONE.

The first imperative is set your hope. Is his return glorious or an intrusion into your plans? Grace "to be brought to you" is a present participle, meaning, it is grace already being brought to you now and then. It is spilling over in the present. The box of grace is already open, following into the now, fully shown one day when we see him.

The second imperative is do not be conformed to disorders loves but instead be holy. Is God demanding an impossibility? Because we have the standard of God fulfilled by Christ who is in us, we are holy. So if we are already holy, why commanded to be holy? Like marriage that begins with an event of being one, you become more acting like one over time. Become in your conduct who you already are in your identity. Holiness is not holier than thou, instead it is an invitation into the very dance and relationship with God.

Two motivations for holiness: a. Looking forward - the judgment seat of Christ v17. Our judgment will be a celebration for what our union with Christ produced celebrating him. B. Looking backward - the death and precious spilt blood of Jesus and his resurrection and ascension v18-21.

1 Peter 1:13-21

[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [20] He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you [21] who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

3



Veterans Bridge, Chattanooga, TN morning run with Justine

"CHILDREN AND THE COVENANT" - STEVE PERKINS, FATHER OF ELDER CHRIS PERKINS, RESTORATION SOUTHSIDE 11/7/21

Intro: People are bringing their infants to Jesus. This ties to the covenant of God from the OT.

1. Why where people bringing Children to Jesus? So he could touch them, for Jesus to do what no other person could do for them. The disciples blocked these parents and kids from coming.

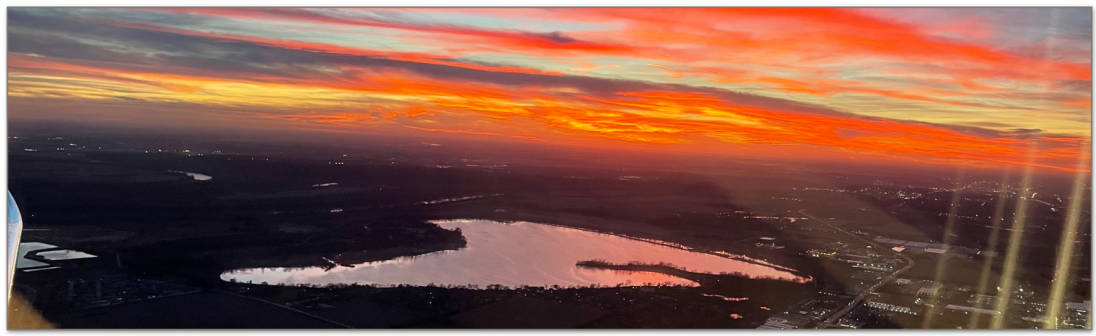
2. Why was Jesus indignant? These little ones were being treated as insignificant. They were made by God. The parents were in the covenant with God and these kids belonged to him. Cult worship with sexual and unwanted babies were then sacrificed to Molech, and God's anger recounted in the OT on this is because Israelites are doing this to his children.

3. What does it mean to come and receive the kingdom of God as a child? It is covenant language. It is like Abraham's miracle baby Isaac at 8 days old brought his brokenness and demerit and God brings grace and mercy. Salvation is all of grace always.

4. What does it mean that Jesus blessed them? We are all children and called as such in 1 Peter 1-2.

Arcing:		**Passage: Mark 10:13-16**
Positive	Action	[13] And they were bringing children to him
	Purpose	that he might touch them,
	Result	and the disciples rebuked them.
Negative	Temporal	[14] But when Jesus saw it,
	Main	he was indignant and said to them,
	Positive	"Let the children come to me;
	Negative	do not hinder them,
Ground		for to such belongs the kingdom of God.
Action	Idea	[15] Truly, I say to you,
	Explain	whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."
Result		[16] And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

4



Sunset over Omaha from IL, 12/1/2021 from 2,000 feet

ADVENT SERIES 2021:

FOUR SONGS IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE THAT SHOWS THE HOPE IN THIS SEASON.

Pastor Ryan Miller, 12-12-21 - The Big Idea: In studying this Christmas story through four songs, gives us hope for our lives today and hope for tomorrow.

Part 1: The Song of Mary

1. Mary reflects on the reality that she needs to be saved. In vs46-49 she reflects on all that God has done for her.

2. Mary ponders God's activity. He exalts the humble but takes down the proud vs 50-53. He helps those who trust him and know their weakness and submit to his reign and rule. Vs 54-55 God helps Israel, his people.

3. How can we apply this?

A. Recognize our own helplessness.

B. Respond in gratitude and praise. She does not first say SHE is awesome. She responds in praise and worship and focus on who God is. List out the many blessings we have now: saved from the guilt from our sin, thriving work, counsel and compassion, and the list goes on.

Part 1: The Song of Mary - Luke 1:46-55

[46] And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

[47] and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

[48] for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

[49] for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

____

[50] And his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

[51] He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

[52] he has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

[53] he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

[54] He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

[55] as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

Part 2: The Song of Zechariah - Luke 1:67-79

[67] And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

[68] "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

C. Respond to the world in a completely unique, up-side-down way. The great reversal is coming. The humble who fear God will be raised up, don't chase after the American dream chase after Jesus. Store up treasure in heaven. Make a name not for ourselves but for God.

Part 2: The Song of Zechariah

Pastor Ryan Miller, 12-12-21 - The big idea: Zechariah says Christ fulfills all the OT, and that is good news for us today.

1. This language is to point us to the OT promises that the Messiah would come and rescue, Vs69-75. Jesus is the fulfillment of these promises.

2. Zechariah says his song John the Baptist will relate to Jesus this king as a servant, Vs76-79. Malachi 3:1 he says that my son is that one. Therefore, the OT is not irrelevant.

3. How is this relevant today to me?

A. God keeps his promises. He has covenant keeping ways. God is not like us: he speaks and acts and fulfills. In all things he is working together for good for his own, he is returning to rescue, he is the counselor, he comforts perfectly, etc. There was a long gap from the promised messiah to when he came so be encouraged and wait well now for his second coming where he sets all things right.

B. It helps us to see God's character. WHY does he keep his promises? His character and tender mercies vs76-78. He is not a cosmic-kill-joy but

for he has visited and redeemed his people

[69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David,

[70] as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

[71] that we should be saved from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us;

[72] to show the mercy promised to our fathers

and to remember his holy covenant,

[73] the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

[74] that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

[75] in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

_____

[76] And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,



Waynesville, NC, Max Patch Mountain, Dec 2021

pursuing you in love and mercy. His heart is overflowing with mercy - that is who he is.

C. Jesus is the fulfillment of the coming Messiah. Therefore, we should live for him. How can we not but live for this messiah who leaving riches became poor so that we might be rich in him?

[77] to give knowledge of salvation to his people

in the forgiveness of their sins,

[78] because of the tender mercy of our God,

whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

[79] to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Part 3: The Song of the Angels

Pastor Ryan Miller, 12-19-21

Intro: The Queen of England in 1870's got to see the first telephone. It was astounding. Today, we tend to lose our wonder overtime and now routine. This is our danger too with the familiarity of Jesus taking on flesh and dwelling among us. THAT is astounding!

The big idea: The brith of Christ is GREAT news - the angels were captivated with the shepherds.

Key question: WHY is the good news such good news?

1. Because of the substance of the news v10-11. It is a person - a baby, the savior, and he is the messiah who is Lord God. It is not just to be acknowledged but applied personally to me. I need a savior, and I have one now. He is the wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, and prince of peace. He is Savior, Christ, Lord - all three.

2. Because of the scope of the news v12-14. This is good news to all people everywhere. It for the lowly, working-class, not highly honored shepherds. V10 says this joy will be for all people not just Israel but Gentiles too. The benefits apply to those who believe but this good news goes out everywhere to all. No matter who you are or what you have done, you are never part of a group too far gone. Repent. He is waiting with open arms.

3. Because of its affects v10. The gospel is for joy and brings peace. Peace outside and inside, that is included and a grounding element of human thriving. His peace is for those whom he is pleased. Peace for these people is peace WITH God. It is also peace that comes from God, resting in his good character and fatherly sovereignty. Isaiah 26:[3] You keep him in perfect peace / whose mind is stayed on you, / because he trusts in you. / [4] Trust in the LORD forever, / for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock." When you go through trials with this peace, it is the work of the Spirit, BECAUSE, the son has come. We have reason for peace and hope and knowledge to fight for joy. This gospel is, "I bring you good news of great joy."



A drive home from work on Hwy 36, Dec 2021

Part 3: The Song of the Angels - Luke 2:8-14

[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. [10] And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Part 4: The Song of Simeon - Luke 2:22-38

[22] And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord [23] (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") [24] and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

Part 4: The Song of Simeon

Pastor Jim Moore, 12-26-21

Intro: The song of Simeon is still sung today, unlike any songs that Jim has or has not written as was told him in a Waffle House by some well-meaning Christians years ago.

The big idea: By faith and led by the Spirit, we truly see and thereby worship.

I. Who is Simeon?

A. He is a righteous and devout man. He is layman that is not a Pharisee or any title. B. He is waiting for he consolation of Israel - hope, comfort and encouragement that comes through deliverance. C. The Holy Spirit is upon him even before Pentecost. D. It was revealed to him that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. Was he looking for a grown man, or how did he know it would be fulfilled in an eight day old boy? The Holy Spirit showed him, like we still need today to have a supernatural work in us to see Jesus for who he is. The result of seeing is singing and worship.

II. What does he sing?

A. God's promises though they can seem slow will always be fulfilled. B. Salvation is for all peoples, and it is in this Christ child. It is light that describes this Christ coming. John 1 says the light overcame the darkness and was sent into it. This light is directed everywhere, including the Gentiles. It is for all to see and believe. C. This is glory to Israel. There was glory with distance when the people of God saw God's glory on the mountain top and sent Moses. This is the same that we see in the glory filling the temple in the Old Testament. But here we see the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, in this eight day old baby. God has come to be NEAR his people.

III. What can we take away from his song?

A. He was Holy Spirit directed. How much are we dependent upon the Holy Spirit? B. The Lord is always worth waiting on since he is always faithful to his promises and his word. C. Let us be all about Jesus. Wait for him. Look for Him. Be caught up in looking at Him and be laser-focused. There is a second coming full of expectant hope. D. We should be joyfully all about Jesus. This light of Christ now goes out through his people, and it produces joy: Acts 13:[48] And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

[25] Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26] And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27] And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, [28] he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

[29] "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
[30] for my eyes have seen your salvation
[31] that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
[32] a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel."

[33] And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. [34] And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed [35] (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."



Christmas 2021



Karen's "she-shack" in Fremont, NE

TRUSTING GOD IN THE TRIALS OF LIFE

PASTOR JIM, E-FREE, 1/16/22

Intro: This is the "hip-pocket" sermon Jim had prepared for 2.5 years while Dawson, Pastor Ryan's son had severe health struggles ready to preach for Ryan at moments notice. 2 Samuel 13-18 is the context story for the impetus for King David writing this Psalm.

Passage Flow: v1-2 shows there is physical danger and spiritual danger v2 to doubt God's goodness to David. Doubts about God often arise when facing physical battles. Admit the brokenness of the trail.

V3 "but you" moves David's focus on the truths about God vs the lies and danger of the enemy. He faces shame from all around but God IS his glory. The confidence in v4 is based on the truth in v3 over the lies in v2. That is how we lament. We preach to ourselves what we know to be true about God.

V5-6 are the results of remembering and trusting God: peace, laying down to sleep over stress and anxiety. V6 David overcomes fear - not because the enemy has moved away because they are still here,

Psalm 3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

[1] O LORD, how many are my foes!

Many are rising against me;

[2] many are saying of my soul,

"There is no salvation for him in God." Selah

[3] But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,

my glory, and the lifter of my head.

[4] I cried aloud to the LORD,

and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah

[5] I lay down and slept;

I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.

[6] I will not be afraid of many thousands of people

who have set themselves against me all around.

[7] Arise, O LORD!

Save me, O my God!

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;

you break the teeth of the wicked.

[8] Salvation belongs to the LORD;

your blessing be on your people! Selah

Context: 2 Samuel 15:[30] But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went.

but God is a bigger shield. When God gets bigger to us our trials get smaller, the size they actually are.

V7-8 David calls God to strike down the enemies. And he declares God's salvation and blessing with certainty as if it has already happened.

In John 18 Jesus passes over this same geography in Kidron. David crosses over the Kidron valley to save his life and flee his trial. Jesus crosses over the Kidron Valley right into his trial of his death. This is so that our trial will not overcome us because in Jesus's trial he ultimately claimed us. Therefore, we can be even more confident than David since we have seen this. God DID save us by breaking the teeth of all our true enemies in his death so that, like David who saw this, was not forsaken in his trial to death.



Berlin Cathedral with Turner 2/20/22

"SHARPER THEN A TWO-EDGED SWORD"

TURNER'S BIRTHDAY

2/20/22

Intro: The war ax is a terrible battle weapon.

The Big Idea: In the hand of God, the sword of his word is a tool of grace and efficacy.

Berlin Cathedral's Bishop Julius Bolschult was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp north of Berlin for his work in the church. He died. And our shame for the German Protestant church not saving this man, not speaking up against the Reich as we should have. The word of God is sharper and reveals this shame and sin to us.

How good the word of God will not leave us alone but goes with us and is living and active. It will change us.

Hebrews 4:11-13

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest,
so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.
[12] For the word of God is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow,
and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
[13] And no creature is hidden from his sight,
but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him
to whom we must give account.

10



Barnetts in town for Easter 2022

ONE POWERFUL DEATH - GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

PASTOR JIM, E-FREE, 4/15/22

Intro: You can still visit Lenin's tomb almost 100 years later and see him through the glass, but he is still dead with no power. Jesus died, resurrected and has true power alive at the right hand of God.

Three powerful acts take place when Jesus dies:

1. Temple veil was torn in half from top to bottom. Only 1x/year could the high priest go behind the vail on behalf of the people. It always represents separation not access. It was 4" thick and 30' high. Hebrews 10 says this death of Jesus gave us access to God. Jesus is the meeting place between God and man, no longer the temple.

2. The earth shook, rocks split, saints who died walked around alive. This shows that there is great power of God on display around the death and resurrection of Jesus. Behold, he is making all things new. This is the reversal of the fall.

3. The hardened centurion soldier believes this is God's son. He saw the darkness over the land in the middle of the day.

Passage Matthew 27:50-54

[50] And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

[52] The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,

[53] and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

[54] When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Hebrews 10:19

[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

[21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

[22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

He heard Jesus forgive the thief and offer paradise. He saw God forsake Jesus. He had a front row seat. He was filled with reverent amazement, moved to worship in this moment. Truly, or 'most certainly' this was the Son of God. With no Jewish background, this hardened soldier believes. By staying on the cross, he was seen to be 'most certainly' the Son of God.

Application: A. Jesus wants you to come and draw near to God. B. Jesus has the power to do great things - at his death in his weakest moment he saves. C. Jesus has the ability to save anyone. The criminal on the cross on death row and the battle hardened centurion, both are pursued and saved.



Two Sections Twice, Salem Cemetery, Oakland, NE

AN EMPTY TOMB AND A LIVING HOPE, RYAN, E-FREE, 4/17/22, WITH WITH BARNETTS, MOM AND DAD, TSI TSI, JODI, TURNER, MERCEDES, GRACE, CAMERON, LYLE, MERRITT AND DANIKA, CHEYNEY, SADIE, AND ME.

Three facts of the resurrection:

1. Jesus physically and bodily resurrected from the dead. "See my hands and feet and let me eat broiled fish." We will have this glorious resurrection body someday guaranteed as well.

2. It was a fulfillment of OT. See quote below how Luke uses this.

3. Forgiveness of sins is possible now v47.

How do we respond?

1. In light of the Jesus' resurrection you must make a decision about who Jesus is. CS Lewis said his claims either made him a liar, lunatic, or Son of God.

2. We should live on mission v45-48. Like the apostles and these gathered we proclaim. V49 we need the HS to understand the good news and also be able to proclaim it.

3. It should be one of wonder, joy and worship. V41 can be translated into "this seems to good to be true." How amazing is it that Jesus IS alive and still alive! He is both God and savior

Passage: Luke 24:36-53

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still **disbelieved for joy** and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 **And** behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they **worshiped** him and returned to Jerusalem with great **joy**, 53 and were **continually** in the temple blessing God.

to be worshipped not only admired. That is the ground of our joy in this broken world. Pilot loses, unable to guard the tomb effectively.

Notes & Quotes: 1. In his writings Luke uses much of the OT to ground this in vs46: "The statement in 24:46, that Jesus' death fulfills Scripture, is supported by references to OT passages in other parts of the Gospel of Luke; see the references to Ps. 118:22 (Luke 20:17), Isa. 53:12 (Luke 22:37), Ps. 31:5 (Luke 23:46), and Ps. 22:7, 18; 69:21 (Luke 23:34–36) (NT Use of the Old, Beale p401)."

2. There is the irony of humility of how Jesus sends them: "Whereas the Jews expected the nations to come from "outside" to Jerusalem as the center of the world, Jesus tells his disciples that they will begin in Jerusalem and then move out to the nations" (NT Use of the Old, Beale p401).

Okoboji 2022: Abide in Christ

Pastor Dave VanKley, Sunday, 7/31/22 morning sermon

John 15:1-4 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. [2] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

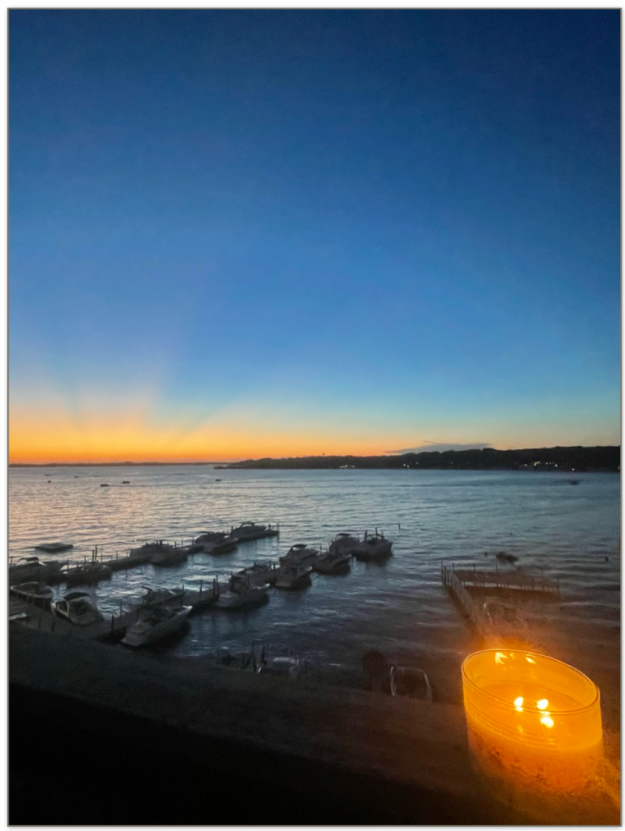
John Newton wrote a hymn about the good uncomfortable grace of abiding in Him:"These inward trials I employ / From self and pride to set thee free / And break thy schemes of earthly joy / That thou mayest seek thy all in me, / That thou mayest seek thy all in me."

Morning Bible Hour: What if Christ was Serious about… the Church. Skie Jethani

The Big Idea: There are fixed points of characteristics of the church that Christ has set forth. Do we know then and how are we doing as a local church?

Intro: The context of the early church was not the corporation like it often is in America, but rather the household which was an extended family. In Rome the household included parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, servants and others tied to the economical structure of this family. That is the structure most used to describe the early church.

What should our church look like



in this context that God calls us?

What is the church - four options that define the church: a. It's a building, b. An event, "I went to church service, c. Organization and 501c3 and org chart of workers, d. A community living in union with Jesus Christ with each other. The summary of the week follows the main outline of his book:

Section 1 - The Family Reunion.

Section 2 - The family table - communion

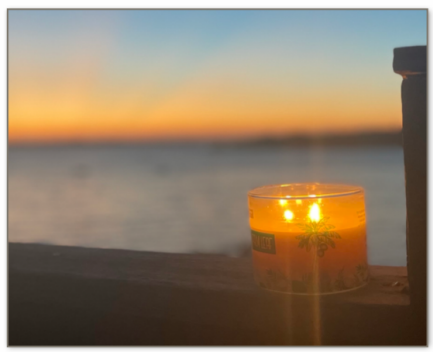
Section 3 - The family gathering

Section 4 - The family business work and mission in the world

Section 5 - The family servants - who is working and how are they leading?







Day 1/ Section 1 - The Family Reunion

Luke 6:12-19

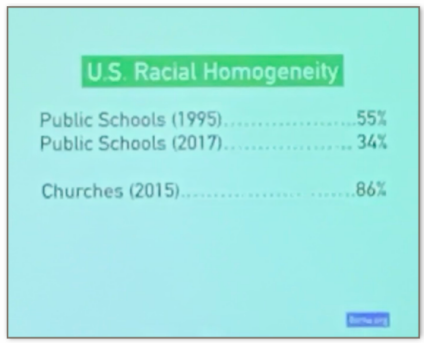
Jesus calls these 12 disciples to himself not to an idea or a cause. That is what unites us - Christ though we are radically different and should be. These are a diverse group of disciples. Matthew was a modern day globalist, elitist who followed power and would sell his soul for a buck. Also Simon also called Judas the Zealot was in today's term a nationalist. It was his country above all and okayed the use of violence the get it protected or advanced. Jesus says, you two call each other brothers now. They could not have been more polar opposites.

Fuller seminary's study asked what was common of growing churches world-wide. They found homogeneous churches grew most rapidly. This because a prescription then for many mega churches. "Birds of a feather worship together" (see Figure 1).

The divisions in society is not meant to be reflected in our churches where that division worships together. It is meant to transform the culture and its divisions by being filled with people you formerly hated (see Figure 2). "We finally found a church who is fearful of the same things we are and dislikes the same groups of people." - comic quote. The most important value in the early church was not comfort or rapid growth but unity in Christ. We are not united by our race or ethnic backgrounds or interests or business, etc.

One of the reasons why we do not think in these terms is that we have hyper-individualized our faith. The church is seen as a nice add-on but I only need Jesus. Augustine said that God is not your father if the church is not your mother. 1 Corinthians 3 says you are the temple of God. This you is plural and does not refer to not getting tattoos but you all collectively believers in Corinth are the temple of God. It is more than a personal faith. It is a communal faith. It is an essential part of our thriving faith.

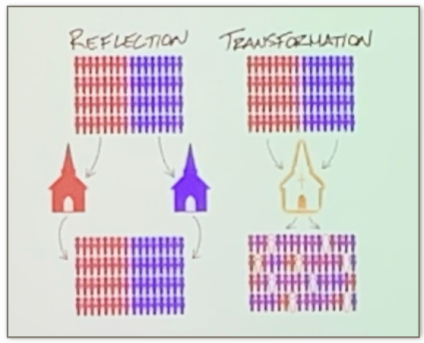
Figure 1



Section 2 - The family table - communion

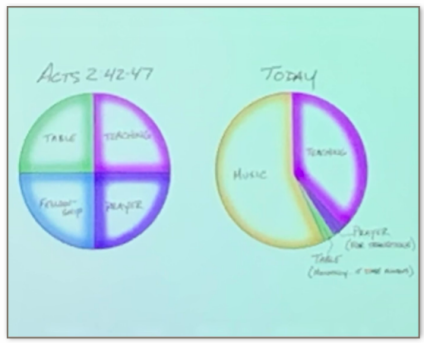
The one thing in common with the early church who had no buildings, full-time pastors, met in homes, etc. is the priority of the communion table. In the American evangelical "low-church" experience the pie chart of time spent is different today (see Figure 3).

Figure 2



The Big Idea: Communion does not have the same importance and focus in many places as Christ taught it to be.

Figure 3



1. Communion is the New Covenant symbol. Luke 22:14-20 - And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. [15] And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [16] For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." [17] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. [18] For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." [19] And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [20] And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

There are many connections between covenant or promises and symbols. God saying to Noah he will never flood the earth again is symbolized in the rainbow. Circumcision is the symbol of God promising dependents without number. Freedom from slavery and in your own land is symbolized with the Sabbath. Union with God and others is symbolized in

Figure 4

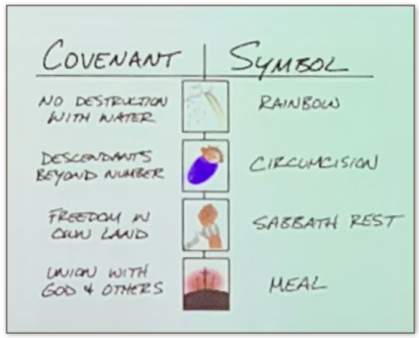


Figure 5

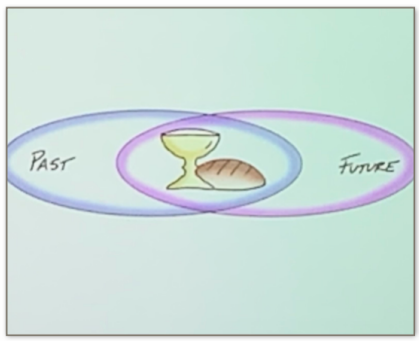


Figure 6



communion (Figure 4). In Ephesians 2 Paul says that the order of reconciliation symbolized in the table is first reconciled to one another then corporately to God. Remembrance is not merely recto collection but bringing forward the power of the liberating power of God over the Egyptians which is really about freedom on Christ over our real enemy of sin and death. All the power of that sacrifice is present with you and it is means of grace to us in a powerful way. It bring together the past, present, and future and binds them all together (Figure 5).

2. What happens when we remove the Table from the center piece of our worship? What fills the vacuum? Culturally we gather in community around coffee and caffeine and sugar. We need something else to gather around for a sense of connection when the Table, whose purpose that is, is under emphasized. Though coffee is not wrong it is not community in the same way diverse Jew / Gentile was reconciled and symbolized over sharing the Table together. Starbucks is consumer based, what drink do I want? Communion table is not my table and I do not get to chose the bread or type of drink or who I sit with (Figure 6).

What is the "unworthy manner" to take communion according to 1 Corinthians 11:27-30? It is not some personal sin in my life I have not found yet. Read the rest of the chapter. The rich were gathering for a feast on Sunday and they did not share the table with the poor believers but gave them leftovers. If you are hungry eat first, waif the for the poor to show up, come to the table together as equals before the Lord reconciled to God and others by the cross in the same way. It is not about personal purity but corporate unity.

Not welcoming everyone can replace the table. The table is a source of social justice and reconciliation. After the Civil War, Robert Lee would not take communion with the black man who entered his church. That was not communion.

Pastors can replace the table with themselves. Preaching time can replace the time for the meal. In many places the main way seen to experience God's grace is through the

pastor, the one with the microphone. Preaching can become a sacrament. All churches are sacramental, but where do we believe God's presence can be found? In the cult of personality to grow churches, have we made the preacher a sacrament (Figure 7)? Studies have shown that narcissistic people are hired more often at "low church" / non-liturgical churches and fail often.

Figure 7

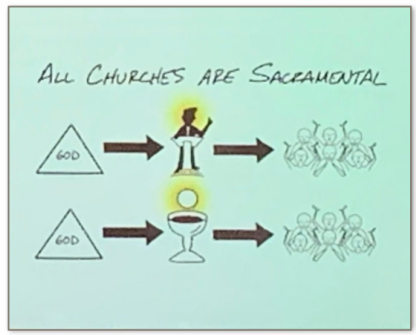


Figure 8

Section 3 - The family gathering

A. We do not gather to be permanently transformed, rather we are transformed by the Spirit inside out. We do not gather like Old Testament believers who aim to go up the mountain to get the presence of God. It declined on Moses which is why he veiled his face over time. In John 4 Jesus meets the woman at the well and says that it is not climbing a mountain that transforms but the indwelling spirit as we worship with no veil, in truth, nothing to hide. 2 Corinthians 3 beholding Jesus by the Holy Spirit is how we transform not climbing a mountain to have a worship experience together.

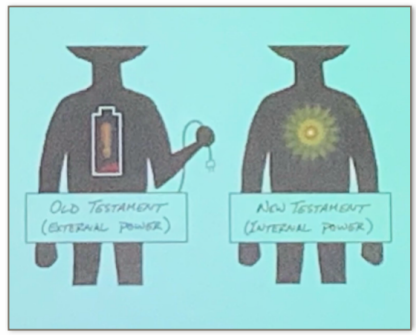


Figure 9

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us is where worship is and we don't have to put a veil on that. It is ever increasing. The Lord desires worshippers in Spirit and truth, those honest with no veil. I can tell the truth about myself as the Lord in me is making me more holy today than yesterday and next year than last year. He is faithfully at work in me.

Power from the outside can attract people and grow churches. But that is not the power of the New Testament (Figure 8). Christians looking to be transformed by external power or worship experiences are like the dead Christmas tree we water and put fruit-like ornaments on them but has not real life from within (Figure 9).

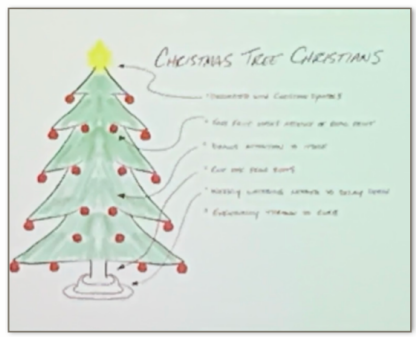


Figure 10

B. How does this differ from how pagans gather? The reason to gather was to win God's favor. It is transactional. The worshipper tries to manipulate God or their god (Figure 10). But real worship is not transactional it is adorational.

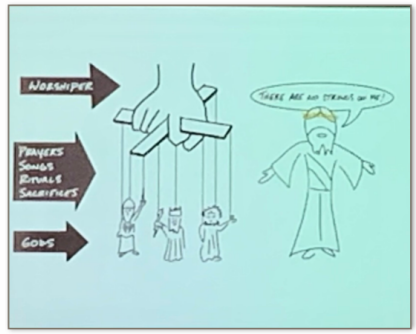


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Figure 11

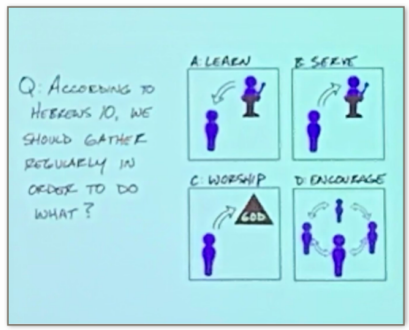
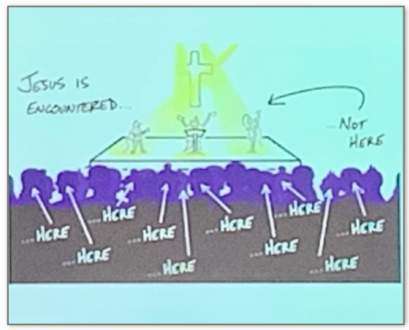


Figure 12



C. How does our culture view gatherings? The gatherings are entertainment and the worshipper is a spectator watching the actors perform. Hebrews 10:23-25 says the reason we gather is not mainly to learn or be taught or even to worship but says we meet to spur one another on to love and good deeds. I gather because I need them. I have something to contribute not just listen or be an audience (Figure 11). I do think Piper is right to say "Missions exists because worship does not" to say that this IS our primary purpose in life and gathering to worship God by enjoying him. But I do like Skie's emphasis on Hebrews 10 that Sunday gatherings are communal in nature not a spectator sport.

John the Baptist asks Jesus from prison if he is the One in Luke 7:18-23. John, you are in a dark, horrible place and cannot see the restoration of God, you are not condemned for your doubts but you his disciples tell John what you have seen and encourage him. That is why we gather. Some will be in a dark place and need our brothers and sisters to see God and explain his goodness and help carry your burden. In our best gatherings that is what preaching and singing is supposed to be, the reminder of God's goodness from generations past. We encounter God through his Spirit and presence in one another (Figure 12).

D. Why gather on Sunday not Saturday? The resurrection is the reason. Why did he rise on Sunday? Creation began on Sunday the first day of the week. The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of the new heavens and new earth. This is the mark of new creation. The real liberation from the slavery of sin happened on Easter Sunday and that is why we rest.

Section 4 - The family business: the work and mission of the church in the world

Intro: Every corporation has a mission statement. The church today has many of its mission statements put on a sign in the parking lot or posted in the church unlike most every church in Europe.

The Big Idea: The church's mission statement is not a work or task but a person - Jesus.

The text: Peter says Jesus is the Messiah, the prophesied savior, the Son of God. "Matthew 16:18-19 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. [19] I will give you the keys of

Figure 13

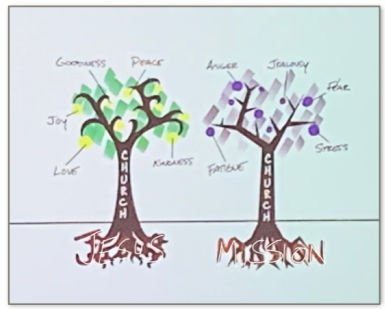


Figure 14

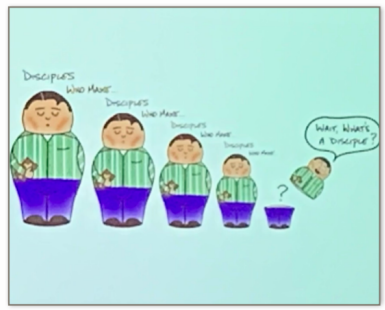
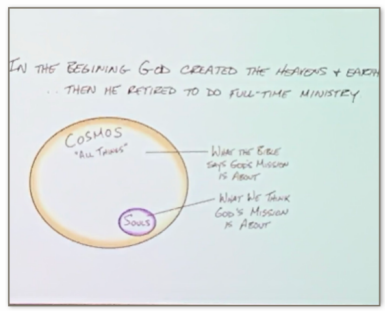


Figure 15



the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." I Cor 3:10-11 the foundation of this temple is Jesus himself. Ephesians 2:20-21 the church is built on the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

The foundation of the church is not a task or a mission or a work, but rather it is a person, namely, Jesus Christ himself. What unites us as a church is not a mission but Jesus Christ. Do we really practice that as our chief belief? The mission of taking the gospel to the lost around the world is good but can be made an idol. It is important but not the most important thing. The ultimate thing is Christ. Idolatry is "task over person" here, namely, Jesus Christ. Tim Keller has said, "An idol is usually a good thing that we make ultimate."

In the midst of your sin, how does God view you? Do we believe that God is disappointed with us, do we think how can God use us or how can I be missionally effective, etc.? Or in the midst of my sin God loves me. The core message these Wheaton College students of godly parents with two decades in Evangelicalism had internalized is that God wants to use me and my worth and value is how much I am used by God's mission. This is the bitter fruit when we replace Jesus with the mission of the church instead as ultimate. Jesus is ultimate (Figure 13).

What is the work of the church? Most people go to Matthew 28:19 "go and make disciples." But have we defined what a disciple is? It is not Russian dolls embedded (Figure 14). The verse goes on to say a disciples is one who obeys all that God commanded. Colossians 1:19-20 says that Christ's message is not reconciliation just of souls to God but EVERYTHING to God, doing what the first Adam failed to do (Figure 15).

God's mission is bigger than what we normally think, and it is all done in and by his Son. Making a disciple is not about making the church better, it is part of the Cosmos restored. Therefore the work of the new disciple is not to exit his life and do only church work or church socialization but bring the presence of God to where they are. 1 Corinthians 7:24 So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him

Figure 16

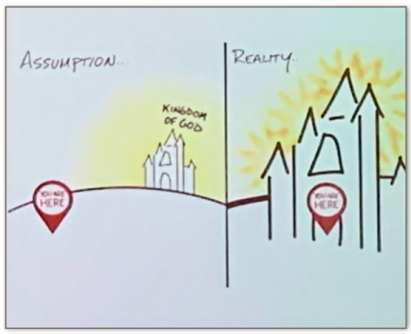


Figure 17

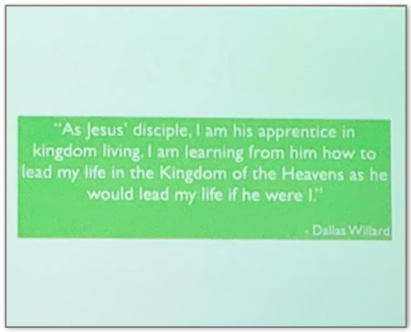


Figure 18

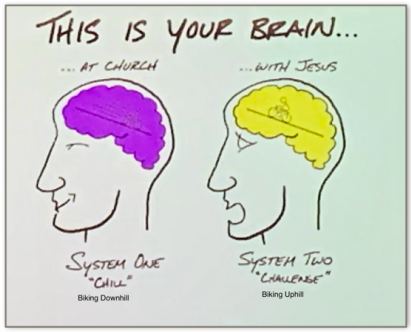
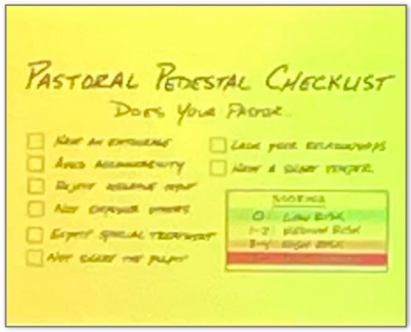


Figure 19



remain with God. The kingdom can't possibly working at McDonalds but I have to manifest the kingdom in the church. What does it mean for me to obey Jesus where I already am (Figure 16)? I am not proclaiming or manifesting the kingdom in the church where I assume that happens, but where I am today, to the vocation to which God has called me. What does it mean for me to be a faithful disciple manifesting the kingdom in the bank? There is a list of five main reasons here on the blog and leading well series.

Our task is not to get more people to join and serve within the 4 walls of the church, it is what today would it look like if Jesus obeyed all God's commandments as a banker, a teacher, in the health profession, etc. We are citizens of God's kingdom now (Figure 17). Autopilot in a plane or Tesla moves your brain to comfort where we are not pushed to grow. The community of Christ with him as the Mission is where we are pushed to grow (Figure 18).

Section 5 - The family servants - who is working and how are they leading?

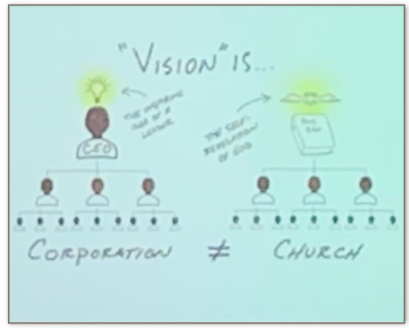
Intro: Have we put the pastor on a pedestal (Figure 19)? Signs that he may be a celebrity pastor is the checklist.

The big idea: The pastor is not a CEO in a corporation but a servant leader in a family.

A. What vision is the church to go after from the pastor? Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, / but blessed is he who keeps the law. This does not mean a vision statement like a corporation but rather the people receiving the revealed word of God. It is God's vision not the CEO's vision of the church which is not a corporation (Figure 20).

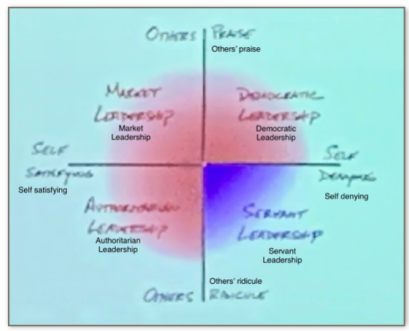
B. What is the proper vision of leadership in the church? Servant leadership. John 13:3-8 is where Jesus washes the disciples feet. Why is Peter so upset with Jesus for washing his feet? Today we think servant leadership is those with honorable roles doing menial

Figure 20



tasks for which we think higher of them. Though those tasks are good, that is not why Peter was upset. What the world thinks of my rabbi Jesus is what they will think of me. It is the same as the patriarch view, what the world thought of my dad they think of me. When Jesus takes on the role of a servant or slave to wash their feet, Peter was trying to protect his own reputation. Jesus here is deconstructing the arrogance of his own apostles who are even lower than him. Servant leadership is someone who is normally honored taking on a role for which they will be ridicules. It is the surrendering of one's own desires and reputation (Figure 21).

Figure 21



C. What is the function of leaders in this church community? Ephesians 4 says Jesus came to earth like a military campaign who conquered everything. He is taking the spoils as gifts to give to his people. What are the gifts? He has given the church spiritual leaders to equip his people for his cosmic work to restore all things not just save souls - "the work of ministry." It does not mean that pastors teach us to do church work ministry. They shepherd us to be equipped to serve Jesus where he planted us, where he called us in our vocation from him.

Figure 22



Ephesians 4:11-12 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ…

Most pastors until the last century or so were bi-vocational. After spending the week working along side and with the flock and knowing their lives and addictions and lives they could open the word for them Sunday morning to speak into their lives and be of help. Now with pastors as CEOs in large buildings, they don't know as well what the flock is doing daily and know the sheep. If the pastor is the shepherd not the CEO he is to know the lives of his people and how they connect to life in the world and help equip them. These become "Vampire" Churches (Figure 22).

What America needs to heal its divisions and unrest is not more Vampire churches. It needs places like in Ephesians 4 where the believers are encouraging one another to

love and good deeds and sent out in the places and vocations and work places God calls each of us to live out the real hope of the gospel and a passion for loving Jesus.

Bryan Clark, Lincoln Berean Church, Monday evening

Ephesians 2 -It is grace that has saved us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins. In order to show the spectacular quality and beauty of his grace for all eternity.

Bryan Clark, Lincoln Berean Church, Tuesday evening

Galatians 3 - Why do we think if we are saved by faith do we then try to sanctify ourselves outside of his grace's main power.

MELISSA SPOELSTRA, Melissa lives in Midlothian, TX with her pastor husband, Sean, and has four adult children. Wednesday evening

Self-medication will not give you the peace and rest and grace that only can be found in Christ.

TED KANG, lead pastor of San Jose Christian Missionary Alliance Church, Thursday and Friday evenings

Hebrews 4 - the sabbath rest is what God provides his people to rest in Jesus' finished work that counts for us.









Coram Deo church Omaha with Justine, Grace and Cameron after Meredith's wedding and after Okoboji 2022



Psalm 42 - speak the promises of God to your soul and listen to yourself less.

I. Spiritual discouragement is normal. What are some of the common causes according to this psalmist?

A. Our sins and unbelief

B. Our circumstances

C. Our enemy v9-10



II. There is a cure.

A. Speak the gospel to your own soul. Lloyd Jones has said of this psalm, don't listen to yourself you must talk to yourself the gospel truths to it.

Preaching to yourself includes raw lament, and it is the prayerful proclamation of God's promises to your soul.

B. Lift your eyes to God. That is where you bring your discouragement. Bring it to the God who cares and listens. He is our help and our salvation.



Lauritzen Gardens, Blake and Meredith's wedding



Will & Justine's House, 2022

WHAT IS IN THE CUP?
PASTOR JAROD, RESTORATION SS, 10/30/22

Intro:The place of pressing, this is where the sweet olive oil smell would rise through immense pressure. Hebrews 5:7 tells of this moment of Jesus' agony as this is not just a bad day. He is peering into the cup and what he sees is horrifying.

I. What is in the cup?

1. The nastiness of sin to the One who has never sinned is in the cup. How about just the sin in the Bible just in Genesis? That is a long list, plus ours. You can peer into the cup, but you can't drink it.

2. There is wrath in the cup. Isaiah 51:22 says when God rightly pours out wrath on someone it makes them stagger. If Jesus did not drink it down to its dregs with no left overs means that God is not angry with us or passive aggressive for us in our brokenness and humanity and limits and sins.

II. What do we see?

1. We see the horror of being abandoned by his Father and his best friends. He is abandoned so we would not be.

2. Jesus fulfills Genesis 3:16 in this garden in crushing the snake. Obey me about the tree and you will live says God to the first Adam; obey me about the tree and you will die God says to the second Adam - to save all.

3. We see the shame. John Mark the author of the story whose family's home gets to have the last supper is the naked one here. Adam and Eve are naked after their sin. Jesus dies naked and alone so he could cloth us with real righteousness over shame.

4. We see the empty cup. "Father, WHY have you forsaken me", is what says Jesus on the cross. He forsook Jesus to restore fellowship with me and his creation. You gave us your seat at the table. You took the Fathers glare so that we would always have your smile. The hardest part of faith is believing that God loves you like this.

Mark 14:32-42

[32] And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." [33] And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be **greatly distressed and troubled.** [34] And he said to them, **"My soul is very sorrowful, even to death**. Remain here and watch." [35] And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. [36] And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." [37] And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? [38] Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." [39] And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. [40] And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. [41] And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [42] Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

[43] And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. [44] Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." [45] And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. [46] And they laid hands on him and seized him. [47] But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. [48] And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? [49] Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." [50] And they all left him and fled.

[51] And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, [52] but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

Sermons & Gatherings

12/24/22 - Christmas Eve Service, Pastor Ryan Miller

Intro: There are hints in our culture as to WHY we have Christmas. But what does the story of Jesus' birth say? There are three facts to highlight from the Christmas story:

1. Jesus is Savior v11. This presupposes that we need something from which to be saved. We have earned God's wrath against us. How can it be justly removed?

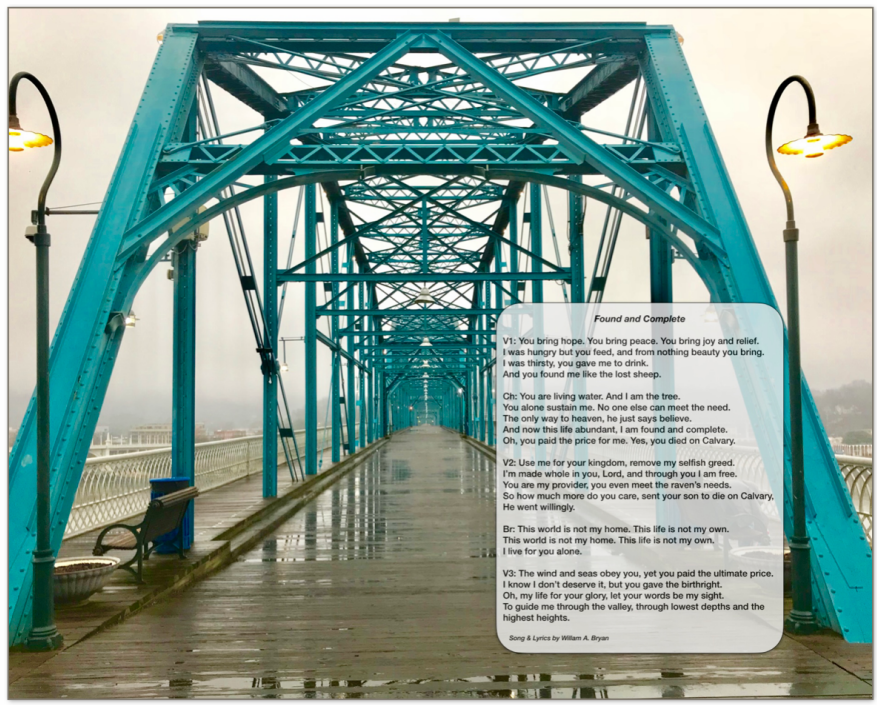
2. Jesus is THE Christ v11. Chris is not his last name but a name for Messiah, the anointed one, the one to whom the Old Testament was anticipating from prophecy.

3. Jesus is Lord v11. In the Old Testament the word for Lord referred to God almighty. That is who is proclaimed here: the baby in the manger is the king of the universe. He is a humble king who chose to enter this way and go to the cross and die.

<u>The Passage: Luke 2:8-14</u>

[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. [10] And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"



E-Free Vision Part 1 of 3 - Gospel: The Gospel Keeps Working - Pastor Jim Moore, 1-1-23

Intro: The next three weeks will cover the three pillars of the vision of the church: gospel, community, and mission.

The Big Idea: The gospel both saves us and keeps going in our lives.

1. The gospel saves people (Titus 3). It is because of the loving kindness of God that we are saved. While we were enemies, he saved us. Our part is 0%. We contribute nothing to our salvation. What is "washing of regeneration" v5? There is a washing by the Spirit that takes place to wash away our guilt and our shame. Regeneration is new birth, not just made better. It has been removed, and it is gone. How are we "renewed by the Holy Spirit" v5? Renewal means that a change is taking place. God is the "he" who is pouring out the "whom" or the Holy Spirit. The trinity is ALL at work to save us: the Father pours the Holy Spirit through Jesus. The gospel is good news (not merely good advice), and gives us the deep hope of eternal life by making us heirs.



Covenant College, Junior Year, 2020

Memory Verse Note: Self-control is choosing the important over the urgent. "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls" (Prov. 25:28). Grace - not fear nor legalism - brings self-control. "Training" means it argues logically with us. Who is this God of grace? Know him. Study and love him.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation for all people,
training us
(-) to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions,
(+) and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

2. The gospel keeps on working and does not stop after we are saved (Titus 2). How is training us? It is the grace of God. "Grace not only saves but undertakes our training", says one commentator. Grace trains us to say "no" to two things and "yes" to three things (see above). The self-controlled life is a fruit of the Spirit's faithful work in our life (Galatians 5). We are to be waiting well with expectant hope for Jesus that changes how we live now - zealous for good works. Jesus is not just our hope but our happy or blessed hope. There is a joy in Jesus that will not disappoint. He gave himself for us in a way that brings us true freedom. He purifies us or sanctifies a powerful work in us to where we being to act more like he acts towards others in ways that accord with who we were originally made to be. Gospel-centered



Salzburg, Austria, January 2020

Memory Verse Note: When did the grace of God appear? When Christ came. Where did Jesus get self-control not to leave the garden of Gethsemane when it was the worst, sweating drops of blood? Heb. 12 for the joy set before him. What joy? Us. We are his "Rachel" (Tim Keller podcast 276 "A Broken Wall").

Titus 2:11-14

waiting for our blessed hope,
the appearing of the glory
of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
who gave himself for us
(-) to redeem us from all lawlessness
(+) and to purify for himself a people
for his own possession
who are zealous for good works.

living is NOT that God saves us but now the least we can do for God is live for him. No, the same gospel that saved me enables me to now obey these command in Scriptures by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. We need the gospel to remember these things, to be dependent on him.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Arcing: Titus 3:4-7</td><td>Headline: He saved us to become heirs.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Action:
He saved us.
Why?</td><td colspan="2">Temporal: When did salvation happen? When goodness and kindness embodied appeared (Jesus).</td><td>[4] But when the <u>goodness</u> and loving <u>kindness</u> of God our Savior <u>appeared</u>,</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Main: HOW did he save us? 1. By his mercy (not our goodness), 2. Washing of regenera-tion, 3. Re-newed by his indwelling Spirit.</td><td>Idea: What are we to know about this Spirit who renews us?</td><td>[5] <u>he saved</u> us,
A(-) not because of works done by us in righteousness,
A(+) but according to his own mercy,
B. by the washing of regeneration
C. and renewal of the Holy Spirit,</td></tr>
<tr><td>Explain: A. He is given not taken. B. He is given in abundance not skimpy. C. He can come in us because Jesus saves.</td><td>[6] whom <u>he poured out</u> on us richly
through Jesus Christ our Savior,</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Purpose: So that we might become heirs.

How are we heirs? As a gift of his grace, we are just-as-if-we've-never-sinned. This accords with hoping in the reality of the Restoration coming of which we are heirs.</td><td>[7] so that
being justified by his grace
<u>we might become</u> heirs
according to the hope of eternal life.</td></tr>
</table>

E-Free Vision Part 2 of 3 - Community: Hebrews 10:24-25, Seth Rehmert, 1-8-23

<u>Intro</u>: The Gospel compels us to live differently. That overflows to different type of community.

<u>The Big Idea</u>: Let us stir up one another to love and good works for God's glory.

<u>1. By considering it.</u> Are we creative on thinking of others not just ourselves and how we can help them build their hope and pleasure in God.

<u>2. By meeting together.</u> How are we engaged in regular fellowship with one another as believers? As a believer you cannot thrive apart from the community of the church.

<u>3. By encouraging one another.</u> Be active in our encouragement of others, which means console, comfort.

<u>4. By recognizing that the Day is drawing near.</u> This is the Day of the Lord, to deliver his people, destroy the wicket, show his kingdom established forever. We are in the final epoch of history. The next phase is Christ coming back and this overlapping kingdom - the already and the not yet - will be completed. We will be in eternity, His kingdom. Matthew 24:42 - Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Arcing:		Passage: Hebrews 10:23-25
Series: We all are to HOLD FAST.	Main: we can hold fast, why?	[23] Let us hold [HOW?] fast [to WHAT?] the confession of our hope [HOW?] without wavering,
	Ground: because HE is the faithful promise-keeper.	[WHY?] for he who promised is faithful.
Series: We all are to STIR UP one another.	Main: How are we do stir up one another to love and good works? Eagerly - the day of the Lord is at hand.	[24] And let us consider [WHAT are we to consider?] how to stir up one another [stir up to WHAT?] A. to love B. and good works, [-] [by NOT doing what is discouraging] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, [this is not theoretical, it is happening] [+] [but by being present with one another] but encouraging one another,
	Comparison: Eagerly as you are closer to his return!	and all the more [WHY do we stir up others increasingly?] as you see [What are we seeing? Are we looking more? More of what?] the Day drawing near.

E-Free Vision Part 3 of 3 - Mission: The Other Great Commission in Luke 24 - Pastor Jim Moore, 1-15-23

Intro: Jim was a "man on a mission" Christmas morning when he had to go out and get a test and see they were pregnant with Joel. He was focused. He was driven. So are we in this greater mission.

The Big Idea: We have been given power for proclaiming the hope of this gospel message.

1. The Might v45, 49: This is the power Jesus knows we need to fulfill this command to expand the gospel around the globe that the first Adam failed in doing. Jesus opens their minds to see how the OT is talking about Jesus, which is what they need to spread the gospel message. Also in v49 they are told that they will receive the Holy Spirit who is powerful to lead us into all truth and courage.

2. The Message v47-48: Jesus suffered not just his hands and feet but bearing our guilt and shame and separation from God (2 Cor 5:8). The resurrection validates the cross because the tomb is empty. The call is for the repentance of sins.

3. The Mission vv47-48: We are called by him to go to all nations not just the friendly ones to our country and others. Unteaches people groups have 42% of people today or 3.5B people still considered unreached with the gospel to be proclaimed from inside of their culture. Unreached/least reached is defined by "An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is

no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance" (Joshua project). This is a big reason why we helped finance the church plant in Lexington, NE for the Spanish speaking church there with Pastor David Santos.

The Passage: Luke 24:44-49 - [44] Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." [45] Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, [46] and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Correction: How to be Giving, Receiving, and Growing from Correction, Proverbs 9:7-9 & 27:6,17, Steve Walters

The big idea: Correction is included in a list of ways to lovingly serve one another.

1. How do we give correction? It is not vindictive but rather you are for them. It is like helping a friend get an infected splinter out for them. It can be like helping in a way as a surgeon of the soul.

2. Receive correction well: Skills in receiving a correction are important too. Let your first words be thankful, and do not defend yourself.

3. Grow from a correction: Even if it is not given well or from someone you want to receive it from, listen and grow from whatever nugget of truth is in there. Our security is in Christ not in what others' think or say about us. So instead of being defensive, bring it to God as a way he may or may not change your path. You are secure in him. Grow. Appreciate those few who have the courage to confront.

The Passages: Proverbs 9:7-9

[7] Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse,
and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.
[8] Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
[9] Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

Proverbs 27:6

[6] Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Proverbs 27:17

[17] Iron sharpens iron,

and one man sharpens another.



The Westin, Kaanapali, Maui, January 2023

Citizen Church, Kapalua, Maui, Pastor Sarah

Intro: This is week 4 of a 4 week series on the God who does not change. Malachi 3:6 “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Deuteronomy 30:14 But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

The word of the year spoken over this church is “obey.” It is for our joy and good.

The big idea: There are certain truths to rely on when we consider this call to obedience.

1. Obedience is within your reach: God’s word is near to you and in you. When he circumcises your heart and causes you to want to obey, you can’t help but find joy in that. Deuteronomy 30:6 - And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

2. Obedience is a choice: We have real, responsible choices, and God is the primary mover and sovereign overall. What will you chose?

3. Obedience requires sacrifice: Abraham does not hesitate to obey God’s word to sacrifice Isaac and goes the very next day. Jesus is the ultimate Isaac who carried wood on his back to the alter, but where Isaac was spared, Jesus is the ram that was sacrificed to atone for our sins. Is comfort something that needs to be sacrificed or our reputation or our work that is showing to be more important than God? This is similar to test of Abraham if his son was more important to him that God or not. Contentment is in him alone.

4. Obedience brings life: Isaac is our heritage. Abraham's obedience is our blessing. He literally brought life to Isaac through this and real life to us bringing us Christ through this lineage.

City Light Church, Omaha, Pastor Chris, 2/5/23 with Grace and Cameron, Luke 12:49-13:9

Intro: Owning weights does not make you strong. You have to use it. Same with Christ's teaching: you have to take it as your own, and do it.

Four things that can keep us from experiencing peace in Christ:

1. Relational division: Jesus will punish sin. He is both Lion and Lamb. His first trip to earth is to take the judgment we deserve for those who believe. The second visit will be to judge those who do not believe. That is this baptism v50.

[49] "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! [50] I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! [51] Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. [52] For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. [53] They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."



The Westin, Kaanapali, Maui, January 2023

2. Distraction: You are worried about a storm, but you are distracted from what really matters. You missed the lead up in the Old Testament saying that the Messiah would come as the suffering-servant and is here.

[54] He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. [55] And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. [56] You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

3. Delaying: Don't say you will settle up with God later. Do it now. Ask for grace. We are all guilty. Repent now.

[57] "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? [58] As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. [59] I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."

4. Denying: Why did these people suffer like this? People are trying to make sense of this brokenness. Don't deny that we are no less guilty than those who just got killed when the building fell. It is not because they were worse people than us that they got killed. Jesus died for the guilty. The church is not filled with better people. We are saved by his mercy and grace as equal sinners as the rest. If you measure your righteousness compared to others or yourself, you are the fruitless tree. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom for three years and these religious people did not repent. They have no fruit and eventually an ax will be laid to this trunk. Its possible to have Christian words but no affections of fruit in your life. That is what Jesus seeks.

[1] There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [2] And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? [3] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. [4] Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? [5] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

[6] And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. [7] And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' [8] And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. [9] Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Good Friday Service, Pastor Jim, 4/7/23

Notes:	Passage: Hebrews 12:2
How do we lay aside and run? Look continually.	[2] looking to Jesus,
Why should we look at him not others? He is founder and perfecter.	the founder [of our faith] and perfecter of our faith,
What did he endure? Pain, our sin past present and future; mocking from others; but the shame had not influence over Jesus. Joy was the key for Jesus to endure the cross and also despise the shame. He was not giddy. He had resolute contentedness and satisfaction. Where is the joy? John 12:23 glorifying the name of God. Trusting God. He said he would rise from the dead. He saw us.	who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
That is how we know he is author and perfecter.	and is seated [no more work to do] at the right hand of the throne of God.
Application: 1. Keep looking at Christ as revealed in the Word being dependent upon your maker and savior. 2. We have real reason for joy in suffering, and he indwells, empowers and comforts us.	



Las Vegas, City of Grace Church, Hillsong satellite, 03-26-23

THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Intro: Last week we love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.

The Big Idea: The second is like it: Love your bother as yourself.

Before Christ accomplished great things in his ministry, God spoke over him, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him."

Our doing always flows from our being. Whoever has believed in Jesus to them he gave the right to be children of God. Out of that, we work. We have been loved. It is settled.

May your generosity demonstrate and prove your love for others - 2 Cor 9:8ff.

God allowed the debt of his people's sin to be transferred to goat to walk out in the wilderness, which is where we get scapegoat. Jesus is the greater scapegoat that we need to carry our sin, our sin of not loving God and others as we ought. Heb 12:1 Jesus takes his blood, not that of goats or bulls, and secures our redemption.

The Passages:

Matthew 22:34-40

[34] But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. [35] And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. [36] "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

1 John 4:19-21

[19] We love because he first loved us. [20] If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Matthew 18:1-4

[1] At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" [2] And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them [3] and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. [4] Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:42-45

[42] And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43] But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. [45] For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."





The big idea: *We are in awe and joy of the God who raised Jesus from the dead.*

Del Dotto Estate, Napa, 2023

NOTES:

Intro: Hear this story as if its the first time you heard it. Sit in wonder and see the detail.

Here are observations from the text: There is irony in the hardened soldiers becoming as dead in fear while they guard with their lives the corpse that has now become alive in power. Women are the first eye-witnesses, whose testimony was not admissible in court, proving another way that this story is not made up.

There are four responses seen here:

1. They respond in fear. Jesus is indeed not like us. He is other than us. He is God.

2. They responded with joy. It is not incommunicado to see fear and joy combined. Psalm 2. Don't miss the joy that is present here - "great" joy. They came to anoint the dead body in unbelief and faith becomes sight.

3. They responded with proclamation. They ran to tell Jesus' disciples. They are running not aimlessly but with a purpose: carry to the news that Jesus is alive and will meet them in Galilee.

4. They responded with worship. They fell down, holding to his feet, and worship.

There are four challenges for us today:

1. Tremble at the supernatural splendor of the resurrection event. There is good fear here.

2. We should rejoice that Jesus is alive.

3. We should be quick to share this good news about Jesus to others.

4. We should worship the risen savior.

He is Not Here - Easter 2023

Matthew 28:1-10 - Pastor Ryan

[1] Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the
first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other
Mary went to see the tomb. [2] And behold, there
was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord
descended from heaven and came and rolled back
the stone and sat on it. [3] His appearance was like
lightning, and his clothing white as snow. [4] And for
fear of him the guards trembled and became like
dead men. [5] But the angel said to the women, "Do
not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who
was crucified. [6] He is not here, for he has risen, as
he said. Come, see the place where he lay. [7] Then
go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen
from the dead, and behold, he is going before you
to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told
you."

[8] So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear
and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

[9] And behold, Jesus met them and said,
"Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his
feet and worshiped him. [10] Then Jesus said to
them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to
go to Galilee, and there they will see me."



Del Dotto Estate, Napa, 2023

Intro: Why do we live like we have returned to the Russian prisons even though we are forgiven and set free?

The Big Idea: There is no record of you having sinned before God because justice is satisfied.

Unlike you and I how we love, God loves perfectly. We tend to hold out love and favor from those who cross us or make us angry or make us uncomfortable, etc.

God will not nor cannot demand a second payment for our sin.

Are you guided by fear or love?

Pastor Mark, Restoration Southside, 4/16/23

Romans 8:1-4

[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

[3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.

By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

[4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.



Craven House, Lookout Mountain, GA





