

Seven Words to Life
What Went Wrong?
 (Second Word: **Fall**)
Genesis 3 & Romans 5:12-21

We are attempting to create a Christian worldview; to see, interpret and live in the world as God sees it. We're going to find out from this text that seeing life from God's perspective is the only way that leads to health and life.

Last week we saw that a good and great God created everything. His goal for you and me, for the entire cosmos is Shalom; peace and rest in him.

My hope is that the Holy Spirit will take that truth and plant it deep in your soul so that it will grow beauty and hope in the midst of any sorrow you endure.

Picture: "OK image"

We need this picture of reality deeply imbedded in our hearts because the world is not okay and a lot of what happens in it is not okay.

Our first two words are *Creation* and *Fall*.

How did God's good world go wrong? The answer is in Genesis 3.

The Genesis account of creation can't be a myth because all of redemption; what we believe about Jesus and the future, is rooted in Genesis 1-3.

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22)

"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

If Adam wasn't real, Jesus isn't real.
 If sin isn't real, salvation isn't real.

Understanding and believing in the Fall is essential because it not only explains the world as it is but redemption as well.

First: The Big 'Apple' of Doom. Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:1-7

Remember two things:

- a) The Bible is written during absolute monarchies. There is no vote on the tree.
- b) God always and only commands what is in our best interests

Why did God not want them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It is best to know the difference between good and evil. Yes...but, in eating of the tree, Adam and Eve didn't simply gain the knowledge of what is good and evil. Their act determined what is good and evil.

- a) God said eating of the tree is evil
- b) Adam and Eve ate of the tree
- c) A&E, not God, determine what is good and evil

Adam and Eve weren't just law-breakers but law-makers

Adam and Eve defined God's definition of morality for their own perspective on right and wrong.

Herein lies our curse. As finite creatures, we do not know what is best for us. We need an external, omnipotent reference point to determine good and evil. Otherwise, as in the case of Adam and Eve, we choose what is evil, thinking it is good.

The nature of sin is independence. This makes it hard on our dual citizenship as Christian Americans. Our country is founded on the ideal of independence, but Christianity is a dependent worldview. We not only have to fight our nature but our education, mindset, etc.

ILL - The Fall means that when you look at your children in exasperation and say, "What is wrong with you people?" you already know the answer.

ILL - The Fall means that when you look in the mirror in exasperation and say, "What is wrong with me?" you already know the answer.

Second: The Brokenness of Relationships. 3:8-12, 16, 17-18, 22-23; 4:8

God exists in an eternal community to which we were invited. But we chose self over that fellowship. This means the primary result of the Fall is broken relationships.

- a) Adam and Eve cover themselves in the loss of complete intimacy. 7
- b) They hide from God. 8
- c) Adam accuses Eve. 12
- d) Eve accuses the serpent. 13b
- e) Eve bears children in pain. 16a
- f) Adam and Eve each seek superiority. 16b
 - This desire to rule your husband comes from the Fall
 - This harshness you may exercise comes from the Fall
- g) The ground is cursed because of Adam. 17
- h) Adam and Eve are separated from God. 23-24a

Satan was wrong.

Obedience = Life
Disobedience = Death

"...in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

NOTE: In our modern world, we are trying to undo 'male' and 'female' as distinct image bearers. To do so harms us personally and corporately. We need men. We need women. We need men to be them men God designed them to be and women to be the women God designed them to be. In reality, you can change the way you look, the way you feel and act, but you can't fundamentally change your gender. And myriad people are now stepping forward to speak about the terrible consequences of attempting to do so.

But when God told Adam and Eve they would die when they ate of the forbidden fruit, and they didn't immediately die physical, they must have thought, "God away with that" and so do we. But no one gets away with trying to undo what God has done.

The very day they ate that fruit, they were separated from God and endured spiritual death. It was then only a matter of time before physical death followed. Just like God teaches us in nature, we plant in one season and harvest in the next season.

GOSPEL: If you are here without Christ, you are spiritually dead. You look like us. You talk like us. You can even act like us. But you are not us. And it is only a matter of time before you die physically and then die forever spiritually.

**Born Once. Die Twice.
Born Twice. Die Once.**

God's punishment perfectly fits the crime Adam and Eve committed. They turned away from God and God let them endure the repercussion of a choice about which he had forewarned them.

NOTE – This is a biblical truth. The end will be like the beginning. In the beginning, Adam and Eve wanted independence from God, and they got it. In the end, the person who wants to go to heaven, goes to heaven. The person who wants to go to hell, goes to hell. Just like the beginning, in the end, every person gets what they want.

God isn't finished detailing the devastating effects of the Fall.

Sin is wrong not only because it offends God, but it also harms what God has made. Sin is anti-shalom in a way that is amazingly regenerative, spreading like a plague or contagion. Scripture speaks of it as a river that branches out or an evil tree that yields corrupt fruit. The equally amazing thing about sin is that it always kills its host.

".. sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:15).

And there is no such thing as a closed system wherein sin will affect only its host. Let's watch it ricochet down the generations in Genesis.....

Genesis 4:8 – *"And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him."*

Genesis 5:1 – *"This is the book of the generations of Adam...v 5...and he died...v 8...and he died...v 11...and he died...v 14...and he died, etc. for the rest of the chapter.*

Just as sin was passed from Adam to Cain, so the effects of sin, death passed from Adam to all his heirs. For all the euphemisms we put in the place of the word 'death,' we still die.

Genesis 6 – Generations of people die but the effects of sin are still very much alive.

Genesis 6:5 – *"...the wickedness of man was great in the earth...every intention of the thought of his heart was only evil continually..."*

As a result, God sends a flood that undoes the second day of creation (1:6). The separation of the waters that occurred on day one of creation is reversed (7:11-12 & 17-20). The chaos of 'unform' returned to the earth and instead of life, death occurred (7:21-23a).

Note: The flood is a picture of judgement, but the ark is a picture of salvation.

The flood subsides in ch 8 and in ch 9, Noah's family multiplies. But instead of obeying the original creation mandate to fill the earth, people attempt to build a kingdom against God's kingdom at Babel (10). The end result is that God confuses their language so that people who were once divided from God are now divided from each other and our differences only create greater schism between nations and individuals.

(NOTE: God redeems this confusion of languages in Acts 2 where every foreign person in Jerusalem listening to the preaching of the apostles can understand what is being said and as a result of hearing and accepting Christ (Ro 10) the nations of the world can unify around God.)

The perfect creation that God had established is now nothing but a distant dream. The pattern of the kingdom has been destroyed by sin. Human beings are no longer God's people by nature; we have turned away from him. We no longer live in his place; we have been banished from the garden. And we reject his rule and live as if we ruled the world. God continues to reign, but he reigns in judgement. As a result, we do not enjoy God's blessings but instead face his curse. It is all so sad. A perfect world has been destroyed by human rebellion.
Vaughn Roberts in *God's Big Picture*

Third: Let's Make It Personal

Romans 5:12 - *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...(15)... many died through one man's trespass...(16b)... the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation...(17a)... because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man...(18)... one trespassed to condemnation for all men...*

Just like you bear your father's hands or your mother's cheeks, you bear Adam's sin.

Psalm 51:5 - *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Romans 3:10-12 – *"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*

We are all sinners. You are a sinner. You are separated from God and under his judgement, the effects of which you daily endure but as well, will ultimately endure in eternal separation from God.

Your problem is not your family history.
Your problem is not the environment in which you grew up.
Your problem is not the hard knocks you've endured in life.
Your problem is not your parents or your siblings.
Your problem is not your lack of education.
Your problem is not your bad habits.
Your problem is not the people you hang around.
Your problem is not the lack of opportunity you've been given.
Your problem is not a cruel, cruel, unfair world.
Your problem is not your mental, physical or emotional disabilities.
Your problem is nothing outside of you.
Your problem is you.
You are a sinner.

Lying to yourself about this make bring short-term relief but it puts long-term stress on your heart and all of your relationships.

And until you address your sin, nothing will really change.

IMP: You can address your sins but that doesn't really fix you. You can modify your sins. You can suppress them or express them in respectable ways.

IMP: Christians must be acutely aware of this. We all disguise sin in order to live with it.

- We think small lies help us keep the peace
- Gossip is just a way to share prayer requests
- Anxiety is a mark of a caring parent, spouse or child
- Greed is just the pursuit of happiness

It is human nature to trivialize sin, disguise it and then invite it to live with us.

But the problem is not what you do. The problem is who you are. You live in a state of unbelief toward God and, not trusting God, you become your own god and have to fix everything by any means and any means other than trusting God, is sin. Sin strengthens sin.

What's wrong with you is what's wrong with the world. The Fall. We are all sinners. This explains the world as it is. This explains you as you are. And there is nothing you can do about that (in spite of all the Babels we think up, create and employ).

The only cure is Jesus.

ILL – Jar & Food coloring – We are radically depraved and that is why Jesus is the only cure.

**The bad news is worse than you can imagine.
The good news is better than you can dream.**

You deserve to die on the cross. You deserve to be punished by God. But in the most amazing act of divine love, Jesus exchanged places with you on the cross so that you can exchange places with him in God's favor.

What you need to do right now, where you are sitting, is to acknowledge your sinfulness and ask Jesus to save you. That may incorporate a lot of words or include only a few. But you need to do it now.

Conclusion: (Band comes up)

1 – Christians can talk about sin honestly because we know that Jesus is a great(er/est) Savior.

2 - This is what it means to have a Christian worldview. This is what it means to think like a Christian.

A very good and great God created everything. We messed it all up. But don't stop reading in Genesis 10. The Bible's story doesn't end in death but life, a resurrection life that affects us all.

3 - Genesis is structured around a phrase that appears ten times in the book - "*These are the generations of...*" (ESV) or "*This is the account of...*" (NIV)..."

What is God doing? He's focusing us forward. He's encouraging us not to lose hope as we endure the Fall but to keep looking for the Messiah. When you come to Matthew's genealogy it reaches all the way back to Genesis 1 as evidence of God's faithfulness to keep his word. After all, the Bible is a promise.

Amidst all this fallenness it's easy to forget that the Bible is a promise in which even evil points to and makes us long for God's eternal shalom. Every nightfall precedes a sunrise and in so doing God uses the rhythm of the day to remind us of the light that is to come and to encourage us to hope in it.

4 – Why is this so important?

Acts 10:36 – “..*Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)*...” – and this is why we stand and sing.....

Community Groups

1 – How does the NT teach us that Adam was a real person?

2 – What does it mean for our theology if we make Adam a myth?

3 – What was God's sole prohibition in the Garden?

4 – What did it really mean for Adam and Eve to disobey God?

5 – Work through Genesis 3 and detail how Adam and Eve's relationship broke with each other, God and the world.

6 – Memorize this phrase: *Obedience is life. Disobedience is death.*

7 – Work through Genesis 4-10 and detail how the fall continued to expand and affect the world.

8 – Demonstrate the sinfulness of every person using Romans 5:12-18. Perhaps read Psalm 51:5 and Romans 3:10-12 as well.

9 – Many people don't like the idea that 'Adam made me a sinner.' In reality though, our own sins condemn us, not Adam's. We are born with a sin nature but willingly, freely choose to sin and to enjoy it. We don't die for Adam's sin, but ours. Nonetheless, there is a 'one man in, one man out' bad news, good news aspect to this reality. One man made us sinners. One man makes us righteous. One man condemns us. One man saves us. (Read the whole of Romans 5:12-21). We are thankful one man saves us because we cannot save ourselves.

10 – How do nonChristians and Christians make sins respectable?

11 – What is the only cure for sin and why?

Resources:

(For this sermon)

Not the Way It's Supposed to Be by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

(For the series)

God's Big Picture by Vaughn Roberts

From Creation to New Creation by Tim Chester