

Genesis - Christian Stewart

- There are times in our lives when we look around and things are just a mess!: Family, finances, faith, career, my home, the back seat of my car!
 - Sometimes we got ourselves into it, sometimes it's because of someone else, sometimes its circumstances outside our control.
- We look around and our nation is a mess!
 - People don't care for one another. Families are falling apart. People are struggling: financially, mentally, relationally, spiritually. God has been pushed to the periphery, and self has been put in the center. So, no wonder it's a mess!
- But it's not just us, and it's not just our nation, it's the whole world since just about the beginning: Wars, tragedies, storms that take life, injustice, suffering, poverty, etc. It's a mess!
- But church, I want you to know that even in the middle of the mess, there is good news! And we're going to talk about it today.
- *Beginning of the Book* series intro.
- You need to read the Book of Genesis, Church. It's a GOOD book! There are a lot of reasons to read Genesis, but one GREAT reason, and the reason I want to talk about today is because...

Genesis is a story about how God turns messes into masterpieces.

I don't know about you, but that's a message I need to be reminded of regularly. Life is messy, isn't it? It's true today, and it was true thousands of years ago when Moses wrote Genesis.

See, Moses wrote the book of Genesis for the people of Israel. That means, it was most likely written during the 40 years Israel wandered in the wilderness. - A time of disorientation, a time of confusion, a time of constant change.

- 400 years in slavery in Egypt followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert.
- Israel's nearing the time when they will enter the Promised Land, and they'll settle down, and be a real nation like God had promised! There must have been some sense of fear, uncertainty.
- Genesis comes to the People of Israel at a time when things were a mess.

How it begins: Creation

- Genesis 1:1-2
 - Without form/void/darkness (the world was empty, purposeless, a mess.)
 - But then God gets to work.
 - Light -and the light was Good. Separates light/dark
 - God separates the waters below from the waters above

- God separates water from dry ground. And it was good.
- plants, vegetation, fruit. And it was good.
- Lights in the sky - The sun, moon, and stars. And it was Good.
- Sea creatures, birds in the sky. And it was good.
- Living creatures, livestock, creeping things, beasts of the earth. And God saw that it was Good.
- Mankind...in the image of God...very good.
- The opening chapter of Genesis (written to people living in a MESS) is the story of God taking a cosmic mess and turning it into a cosmic masterpiece.
- That's how Genesis starts! Israel, things are a mess! But look what God has been up to since the beginning! Turning messes into masterpieces!

How it Ends: Joseph - Do you know the Story of Joseph?

- Joseph was the favorite son of his father Jacob.
- Joseph had dreams, suggesting his family would bow before him. (They didn't like that)
- His brothers got fed up with Joseph: And they made a plot to kill him.
- One brother, Reuben, convinced them not to kill him, and just threw him in a pit.
- They sold him to a Caravan of Ishmaelite traders who sold him into slavery in Egypt. (Told their father Jacob he'd been killed by a wild animal.)
 - Joseph's life quickly became a mess. But it doesn't end there.
- He's bought by Potiphar, the captain of the guard in Egypt. He served, and earned Potiphar's trust, and the attention of Potiphar's wife. When he wouldn't sleep with her, she made up a story that he had tried to take advantage of her. And Joseph ends up in prison. (Talk about a mess!)
- Joseph was in prison for over 2 years! But God was with him. Joseph had the ability, with God's help, to interpret dreams. Pharaoh heard, and asked Joseph to interpret a dream that had been troubling him.
 - The interpretation: There would be 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine. Joseph's plan: storehouses, save 1/5 of grain over the 7 years of plenty for the famine.
- 13 years after being brought to Egypt, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of this plan, making him 2nd in command in Egypt.
 - Years of Plenty came, and the years of famine came. And people from all over flocked to Egypt to buy food. One day, Joseph's brothers show up to buy food from Joseph!
 - Skipping a lot of details, but Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, and brings his whole family (including his father) to live with him.

- When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid that he'd try to get revenge for what they had done to him...But listen to what he told them!

Genesis 50:19–20

- Joseph's brothers made his life a mess! But God...used that mess to save not only Joseph's family, but countless other people who would have starved during the famine. Joseph's life serves as proof that God turns messes into masterpieces.

So, the bookends of Genesis tell stories of a God who turns messes into masterpieces (on a cosmic level, and on a personal level). But what about the 34 chapters in between?

What happens in between:

The Fall; Corruption (Genesis 6:5); Noah & the flood; But even after the flood, sin is still present - Noah becomes a drunk, Ham dishonors Noah

The corruption grows until we reach the Tower of Babel.

Abraham/Isaac/Jacob/Patriarchs - It's all a mess!

But, in the midst of the mess, God made promises that things wouldn't always be that way!

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 12:1–3

- Both of these promises point to the one who would come to end the rule of the enemy once and for all! Who would bring a solution to our sin problem! Who would take the chaos, the brokenness, the mess sin caused, and transform it/renew it, and turn it into a masterpiece!
- Church! These promises, all the way back in Genesis are pointing to Jesus, the perfect sacrifice who sets us free from Satan's power/sin/corruption/death, and gives us Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God where there will be no more pain, suffering, tears, death, loss, struggle!
 - Genesis is the story of how God turns messes into Masterpieces! It's a GOOD Book! And you NEED to read it!
- Life in this broken, sinful world is messy! Praise the LORD that he's a God who turns messes into masterpieces!
- He did it in creation! He did it in Joseph's life! And from the fall, he promised to take this messy world and turn it into a masterpiece! Your life is part of that story! I know it's messy! But God turns messes into masterpieces!
 - He can do it with the mess in your marriage, in your family, in your workplace, between you and your kids, a messy friendship, in your finances, health, etc. God can turn it into a masterpiece if you'll trust him with it, church.

| Romans 8:28

Genesis is a story about how God turns messes into masterpieces.

- And because of Jesus, the mess that was created when mankind fell in the garden, the mess that has plagued mankind ever since, the mess that is at the root of all the messes in each of our lives (sin) was dealt with once and for all on the cross of Jesus Christ. Sin HAS BEEN DEFEATED for those who follow Jesus. And one day, Jesus will bring that work to completion when he casts the enemy into the lake of fire and restores all creation back to it's original purpose! It's a promise God made in Genesis.
- If he can clean up THAT mess, church. There's no mess in this world God can't turn into a Masterpiece!