

The Story of the Word | Genesis 1-3

Good morning church, go ahead and grab your Bibles and open to the first page, Genesis chapter 1.

We will camp out in Genesis 1-3 for the morning as we look at the Story of the Word.

What I want to do is look at 5 main elements of God's word that we see here at the very beginning of the Bible.

I want to highlight these 5 things we see the word of God do then and point to why and how it matters today.

These 5 elements in a lot of ways help shape and frame the story of the whole Bible and really the story of all who worship and follow Jesus.

So let me pray for us and we will jump in.

Pray.

Intro

One of the most powerful forces in the world is words. Words change things.

Just thinking of our country did you know there are only 1,458 words in the Declaration of Independence. The official document that gave birth to the country we live in today.

Then the Constitution, not including the Bill of Rights only has 4,543 words in it. My manuscript for this sermon this morning has just shy of that.

Another document that changed our country, the Emancipation Proclamation that brought freedom from slavery only has 719 words.

These are just a few examples of how words have shaped our very country.

As we jump into our text this morning we will see how the story of God's word shapes the whole Bible and our lives.

The Word that Creates

As we open the first pages of the biblical story we are introduced to the main character, God. And we are told pretty quickly that he is responsible for the creation of all the heavens and the earth.

But just in verse 3 we are told how he created it, by his very word. Genesis 1:3 says, “**And God said, “Let there be light.”**”

And we see this pattern happen over and over again as you read through the first pages of the story.

Verse 6, verse 9, verse 11, verse 14, verse 20, verse 24, and lastly verse 26.

In all these verses there is a pattern of God saying something and something being created.

So our introduction to God, the main character in the story, is that he can create stuff that did not previously exist by simply saying it should.

Powerful

Seeing that his word creates like this we see that his word is powerful.

This type of creation that he does is what scholars call creation ex nihilo, meaning from nothing.

Mankind, we are created in God’s image and are creative in all types of ways. Technology, art, businesses, and on and on.

But we can only create with the raw materials we have been given from God, but God can literally call things into being that never existed before.

He has the ability to make reality, and he did in making the reality that we live in.

Purposed

This powerful word is the word that created our world, but God’s powerful word is also purposeful.

First this is seen in the systematic way God goes about calling things into existence. He is very

intentional about putting things together in creation through the Genesis story.

In the first 3 days of creation God creates the areas where the rest of his creation will dwell.

Day 1 he creates light and darkness, then on day 4 he fills the time of light and dark with the two lights we know as the sun and the moon to rule the time of day and night.

Day 2 he creates the areas of air and sea, then on day 5 he fills those areas with birds and fish.

Day 3 he makes the land and the plants, then he fills the land with animals and Adam and Eve who use the plants for food.

We are able to see how God' word is not only powerful, it is also purposeful as well.

All of his creative use of his word has purpose and meaning to it all.

Application

We see God's word as powerful and purposed at the beginning of our story here in Genesis 1, but we also see God's word today as powerful and purposed when his word recreates our lives through salvation.

What I mean is that God's word still proves powerful and purposeful in the recreating of our lives as we hear the good news of Jesus and turn and follow Him.

Augustine's Conversion

One story that shows both God's powerful word and purposeful word is the story of the conversion of Augustine.

Augustine was one of the most influential theologians in church history. He was the leader of the Christian church in north Africa in the late 300s.

He wrote over 22 volumes on theology, but one book he wrote was called Confession, which actually contains his testimony of coming to follow Jesus.

Before coming to follow Jesus he was known for being quite the partier and one who gave into any and every fleshly desire he wanted.

But right before Augustine comes to submit to Jesus he has a time where he struggles between coming to Jesus and fulfilling his fleshly desires.

He feels a warfare of two wills going on inside him and he is with a friend trying to see what to do next. And he explains how God used his powerful and purposeful word to bring him to salvation.

“I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl (I know not which) – coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again. ‘Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it.’”

Augustine goes back to where he left his friend, opens up the Scriptures and sees [Romans 13:13](#) – a passage that says,

“Let us walk with decency, as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy.”

After reading the passage he explains,

“I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away,”

In the story of Augustine or maybe even in the story of your own life, you see how God used his powerful word to recreate your own life for his purposes in this world and he is still doing it today.

Next, we see that the word not only creates, but it also commands.

The Word that Commands | Gen 1:28-30;2:15

Continuing with our story after we see the word create, we next see the word command.

Provision

The first place we see this is God's commands related to provision.

Genesis 1:28-31 says,

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth 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.”** And God said, **“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. 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.*

In this passage we see God has blessed them and then gives them commands for provision.

“Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over” are commands that God gives Adam and Eve to provide for them a

family, food, and a blessed life in this amazing creation God has given them.

We see God's word commands, but these commands are not harsh, they are commands that bring life and flourishing.

Prohibit

But we also see a command that prohibits.

Genesis 2:15-17 says,

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

From this passage we see that God's word gives both commands to do some things and also to not do some things.

Here we have one prohibition that God gives Adam, don't eat of this one particular tree.

Adam had an unlimited amount of possibilities to obey God, to please him, and to live according to God's desire and design.

He only had one possibility of disobeying.

But the point I want you to see here is the overall purpose of this prohibition. It's in verse 17. "For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Even in God's command to prohibit they are still to bring provision, blessing, and life to us.

Children Illustration

If you have children you have given these same commands before in a sense.

Just this past week we took ours kids, our 4 year old Madi and 1 year old Micah to the huge playground at the children's museum.

Just in that trip I and Amber probably gave 100 or more commands.

Put your shoes on, get in the truck, buckle up, leave your brother alone, hop out of the truck, drink some water, put your shoes on, eat your snacks, don't do that, do this, and on and on we can go.

But all those commands we have to do something or not do something was so they would have a great time.

We wanted to bless them with a fun day at a huge playground, we wanted them to be provided for, and all our commands were to that end.

This is how God's word through commands works in our lives. The bible isn't a list of do and don'ts.

God's commands lead us to life, blessings, and flourishing. His commands have done this since the beginning of creation and still do this today.

There are great blessings in following the commands of God in his word.

The Word Questioned | Genesis 3:1-7

Although there are great blessings in obeying God's commands, we see in Genesis 3:1-7 that God's Word is questioned.

Genesis 3:1-7 says,

“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’?” And the woman said to the serpent, **“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”** But the serpent said to the woman, **“You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the**

eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

Doubt

The first problem we see here in this passage where God's word is questioned comes from the serpent's ability to cause doubt.

You see it in verse 1, **Did God actually say...**

This is the first time God's word has been questioned, but you can see the purpose of the questioning. To cause doubt and confusion.

When the serpent ask if the question, Did God actually say, he asks it in a negative sense, and even twists what God actually said.

He asks,

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’?”

But Eve corrects the serpent by explaining that God said they could eat of all the trees in the garden except for one in the midst of the garden.

But she also adds a restriction, “neither shall you touch it.” Which shows that Eve is now confused as to what God said.

Lies

Then we see the serpent use this doubt and confusion to blatantly lie to Eve.

He lies to her in three main ways.

First, he lies about the consequences of disobeying God’s commands. He says, “But the serpent said to the woman, “**You will not surely die.**” This is directly against what God told them.

Secondly, he lies about them being like God. In verse 5 he says, “**For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**”

The lie here is that Adam and Eve are already like God, they were made in His image. They were without sin and had been given perfect dominion and rule over God’s creation.

Satan’s lie through the serpent is that God is holding out on them, that if they take this one thing they are commanded not to, then they will get something they don’t have.

Lastly, the third lie is that they would know good and evil. But instead of them knowing good and evil, the act of disobeying God’s commands make them the source of good and evil.

Before Genesis 3, Adam and Eve never experienced evil, curse, brokenness, or sin. But in disobeying God’s commands they move from having God as the source of what is good and evil and allow themselves to pick what is good and evil.

We see what these lies do.

The questioning of God's word leads to doubting God's word, which then leads to believing lies about God and his word.

And these lies, when we believe them, cause chaos and havoc in our lives.

War of the Worlds¹

You might have heard of the book which is now a movie called the War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells.

Before it was a movie starring Tom Cruise it was first a radio program on the Mercury Theatre on the Air show directed by Orson Wells in October of 1938.

Many of you know this story, but the plot of the story is an alien invasion of the United States where alien ship land all over the US.

Well when it was produced on the radio show many people listening to it could not distinguish if what was being said was a show for entertainment or a real live news.

Many people believed it was true and happening in real time. People were so convinced that people fled cities, they took refuge in churches, pregnant women went into labor early, looting broke out, and some people even took their own lives.

There is even a story about a woman in Indianapolis running into a church prayer meeting telling everyone the world had come to an end that they might as well go home to die.

Now we might hear a story like this and think how gullible those people must have been. How could they get so swept up in something that wasn't true.

But in a very similar way the exact same thing happens with us and the lies from our flesh and from Satan that we believe.

Just like Eve we believe lies about God's goodness, provision, and grace toward us. We

¹ Adapted from John Mark Comer. *Live No Lies*.

believe He owes us more than he has blessed us with.

Application

And this process of questioning, doubting, and believing lies still continues today.

It is this process that happens every time we sin in our lives.

No matter the sin, this is the process Satan has been using since the beginning.

So returning to the previous point, if obeying God's word in commands brings provision and life, then we can see from this point that questioning God's clear word and disobeying it brings death.

The Word Judges | Genesis 3:8-19

And that is what we see right after the questioning of God's word, The Word Judges.

Man & Woman

We see that judgment comes to the man and woman for disobeying God's command.

First in Genesis 3:16 judgment comes to the woman. "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."

We see the judgment given is connected to the commands God gives for provision. The wife is to be a helpmate to the man and be fruitful and multiply.

Now multiplying, having more children, will be painful and instead of being a helpmate for her husband, she will want to lead and her husband follow. This is what is meant by "Your desire will be contrary to your husband."

Then in verse 19 we see the man's judgment, "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.”

In the same way as the woman, the man was to keep and work the garden and cultivate it, but now that command will become difficult as well.

And God keeps his word, that one day they will die, they will become dust again. But in God’s mercy that judgment does not come immediately.

All Creation

And the reason his work will be difficult is we see that not only are Adam and Eve judged, but also all of creation.

Genesis 3:17-18 says,

“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; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.”

So the perfect creation God made has now been judged and cursed because those who were given rule and dominion did not protect it and disobeyed the one who gave it to them.

Application

What this point does is show us that God keeps his word. He told them if you eat of this tree, if you disobey this one command then death will come.

And sure enough, God keeps his word. But also in keeping his word in judgment he is also very gracious.

The Word Promises | Genesis 3:15 & 3:21

God’s grace is seen through God’s promises even in the midst of judgment. In Genesis 3:15 we see the Word promises, the word promises a person.

A Person

Genesis 3:15 says,

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.”

God promises that there will be enmity or hostility between the serpent, this agent of Satan in the garden and the offspring of the woman.

He then points to a future battle where the serpent will bruise his heel but the offspring will bruise his head.

Most scholars call this promise in Genesis 3:15 the protoevangelion. Or more simply, the first gospel. It is the first mention that someone will come to defeat the work of the serpent.

And as followers of Jesus today we know that person to be God's Son, Jesus Christ.

So all the way from the beginning, God did not intend to leave us in our sin and judgment. He promised all the way back in Genesis 3:15 he would send a person.

A Sacrifice

And this person he would send would be a sacrifice for us to cover our rebellion and sin against God.

Genesis 3:21 actually points to this as well. It says, “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”

If you go back in the story right after Adam and Eve sin, they try to hide from God and even try to cover themselves up with fig leaves.

They are ashamed and need covering, but instead of God letting them continue to use fig leaves he makes a covering for them.

They are garments of skin, meaning some animal of some sort gave its life to cover their shame.

This gracious act of God in the garden is a foreshadowing of when Jesus, the word made flesh, comes to cover our shame and sin and take on our judgment.

And God's word that made this promise all the way back in the garden we know has come to fruition. And he still makes that promise today.

That there is someone who has come to destroy the works of Satan, take our judgment in our place and cover our sin and shame. And he offers that to all of us today.

Conclusion

As we finish our time looking at the story of God's Word I wanted to give you a few points to take home.

First, allow God's word to continue to recreate your life. Get into God's word until it gets into you.

Second, remember that God's commands lead to provision, they lead to life, they lead to blessings and flourishing. It is good for you to obey God's commands.

Third, God is the creator of all things, including us, so he knows best how we are to live with him

in this world. Question God's word all you want to understand it, but don't question God's word as if you know better.

Fourth, God's word is serious and he keeps it. When God says he will judge, he will judge. When God calls us not to do something, he means it and he will keep his Word.

Lastly, cling to the promises of God in this word.

He has promised us life, salvation, power, grace, mercy, and most importantly his presence in the world today through his Spirit and in the world to come in a new heaven and new earth.

Invitation

If you are someone who needs prayer this morning or who wants to talk about what it means to follow Jesus.

To make God's promises of forgiveness and grace personal a couple of pastors will be down

front at the end of our service and we would love to talk with you.

Also, if you have questions about FBC, again we will be down here to get you connected.

Let me pray for us and we will sing.