

LESSON 3 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 3: DAY 1

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.” - Romans 5:18

This week’s memory verse is about understanding how Jesus fits into the context of Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden. Paul, the writer of the book of Romans, puts it straightforward here. According to your memory verse above, through the first sin of Adam, all of our lives were condemned. Sin can now be found in all of our hearts, even those of us who look like we’ve never had a bad thought in our lives.

Thankfully, in the same way that one man’s sin was passed down to all of humanity, another man’s righteousness has offered salvation to all. Do you see the correlation? What Adam broke, Jesus fixed! Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the entire world is invited back into a relationship with God.

Today, memorize Romans 5:18.

This week, try using the same “5 – 5 – 5” method we used last week. Here it is again, in case you need it:

FIRST, read the verses five times. On the last couple of times, read it slowly and out loud, if possible. Focus on the words.

NEXT, write the verses five times. Some people find it helpful to say the words out loud as you write them. On the last few times, see if you can write the verses without looking at them.

FINALLY, see if you can say the verses out loud five times without looking at your Bible or the page you’ve written the verses on. (Even if it takes more than five times, stick with it until you can.)

"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.'"

- Genesis 3:17-18

Consequences. They're interesting if you think about them. Sometimes we love consequences. The consequence of eating well and exercising is good health. The consequence of studying for a test is a good grade (usually). But other times, consequences are something we really can't stand. Like when we're going 12 miles over the speed limit as we pass a police officer. Or when we treat a friend poorly and they end their friendship with us. Consequences can be good or bad.

Read Genesis 3:16-19.

This passage is a list of the consequences pronounced by God Himself. Can you imagine standing in front of God and having Him say these things to you? Imagine realizing that the beautiful relationship God had set in motion was altered because of what you did. It's not enough that God caught Adam and Eve sinning. Their sin had consequences.

Our sin has consequences today, too. Sure, if you come to faith in Christ and are saved from your sins, you can enjoy the forgiveness of God and have hope in eternal life with Him. (You share in the eternal life that Jesus bought for you on the cross. You're forgiven.) But that doesn't mean that when you sin, all consequences go away. Your sin can still hurt others and you. It can have long-term effects. Even the most seemingly insignificant sins can harden our hearts to God's voice. That's why we're called to fight against sin.

Something To Think About. . .

- What are some natural consequences to sin that you see in your life today?
- Ask God for direction when sin seems too big to overcome. Do not expect the temptation to go away, but instead, seek God's counsel on how to resist. If it is a sin with potentially life-threatening consequences, ask a trusted adult to pray with you and help you as well.

“And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.” - Genesis 3:21

Yesterday’s devotion talked about the consequences of sin. But we want to go a little further in today’s devotions to look at the cost of sin.

Read Genesis 3:20-24.

What do these verses show God doing for Adam and Eve? As part of the punishment for their sin, God kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden. And because He loved them, He didn’t send them out naked. What did He do? He made clothes from the skins of animals.

But ask yourself this question: Where did God get the animal skins? Certainly, God could have produced them out of thin air. After all, He’s God. But most people who study these things believe this isn’t what happened. Most people think that what we see here is the first instance where sin earned death. Most people believe God killed an animal from the Garden to make clothes for Adam and Eve.

In Romans 6:23, Paul says that the punishment for all sin is death. So, what we see here is, in a sense, an animal paying for Adam and Eve’s sin. This wouldn’t be a stretch for God. In His mercy, He set up the sacrificial system so that His people could sacrifice an animal to pay for their sins instead of dying for them themselves. And the sacrificial system points to Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice, who would once-and-for-all pay the price for people’s sins.

Something To Think About. . .

- Sin is costly. It costs us dearly. This is why we should fall on our knees in prayer and praise Jesus for removing from us our sin debt. If you have come to faith in Christ, you have been given a new life that begins with a restored relationship between you and God. Thank God today for this gift. It’s the most important gift you’ve ever been given!

LESSON 3 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 3: DAY 4

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.’”

- Genesis 4:6-7

Our worst decisions are often made when we’re upset or angry. Think about it: you don’t usually say something you regret when you’re having a great day. You’re more prone to rebel against God when you’re upset or when things aren’t going the way you want them to, right?

Read Genesis 4:1-16.

There is a big difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel, and if you don’t read carefully, you might miss it. God likely favored Abel’s offering because Cain’s was given from past success—food (leftovers) he had after the harvest. Abel’s offering was risky because he was cutting into his future profits by offering the firstborn of his flock. In short, Cain played it safe, but Abel showed that he trusted God.

This angered Cain because he wanted the favor he saw being given to Abel (you might call that jealousy). When Cain was angry, he had a choice, and God made that choice clear to him: “...sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4:7). Of course, there were many steps and decisions that went into Cain murdering his brother. But it all began with him losing control over his own anger and jealousy.

God knows that anger and frustration help us pile one sin on top of another, and by the time it’s done, we have no way to fix it.

Something To Think About. . .

- What is a choice you’ve made or something you’ve done that you wish you could take back? What led you to make that choice?
- In the end (verse 15), God still protected Cain, even as he suffered the consequence of killing his brother. What does that tell us about God?

“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” - Genesis 6:5

Read Genesis 6:5-8.

Think for a minute about whether the description of the people in Genesis 6 fits with the popular belief in our culture that people are generally good, even if they make a few mistakes. From God’s point of view, the people in Genesis 6, and people in general, aren’t basically good people who sometimes make a mistake.

For God, it isn’t about degrees of goodness or badness. It is more about righteousness and holiness. Both of these words essentially mean that you are “like God,” who is righteous and holy. The only things that can be in the presence of God and survive are the things that are “like Him”, which essentially means that the moment you become unholy or unrighteous, you are no longer like God (who is without sin). It only takes one act of sin to make you unholy, unrighteous, and ultimately unfit to be in the presence of God.

God’s attitude toward sin is not flippant, and He does not take our sins lightly. Sin keeps us from having a relationship with God; He does not want that. In Genesis 6:5-8, God describes how He feels about humankind’s rebellion using human terms. God declared His creation to be “very good,” but humans rebelled against Him, resulting in a broken world. In this passage, we see that sin was not something that the people of Earth were fighting against or repenting of; it was something they embraced as a community! They exchanged a relationship with the world’s Creator for fleeting pleasures of the here and now.

Something To Think About. . .

- When you think about your own sin, do you think of your wrong choices more as casual mistakes, or outright rebellion against God? Why?
- Think about the separation that sin causes between you and God. Knowing that Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection are the only solution to this separation, how does that impact your view of Him?