

Small Group Guide: The Gospel from Genesis to the Cross



Link to Message: <https://youtu.be/Kf4HsUla1yQ>

Summary:

In Genesis 3, we uncover the roots of human sin and the profound remedy God provides. The story of Adam and Eve's fall reveals how easily we can be led astray by pride and the desire to be 'like God.' We see how our attempts to cover our shame through our own efforts are ultimately futile. Yet, in this moment of failure, God's love shines through. He provides the first prophecy of the Messiah and covers Adam and Eve with animal skins - a powerful foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice. This narrative reminds us that our works can never erase our guilt, but innocence can replace it. As we reflect on this, we're challenged to consider: Where in our lives are we trying to cover our shame through our own efforts? How can we more fully embrace the covering of righteousness that God offers us through Christ?

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. The fall of humanity in Genesis 3 introduces sin, shame, and separation from God.
2. Human efforts to cover sin and shame (like Adam and Eve's fig leaves) are insufficient.
3. God provides the first picture of the gospel by clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins, foreshadowing Christ's sacrifice.
4. Jesus' death on the cross fulfills the prophecy of crushing the serpent's head and provides the only way to restore our relationship with God.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the sermon's explanation of Genesis 3 change or deepen your understanding of the fall of humanity?
2. The sermon mentions that Eve added to God's command by saying they couldn't even touch the fruit. How might we sometimes add unnecessary rules to our faith, and what are the potential consequences?
3. Discuss the significance of Adam and Eve hiding from God after their sin. How do we sometimes try to hide from God when we feel guilty?
4. The sermon states, "Your works don't help you." How does this challenge common misconceptions about earning God's favor?
5. What parallels do you see between God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross?
6. How does understanding the phrase "It is finished" (Tetelestai) impact your view of Christ's work on the cross?
7. In what ways does this sermon help you better understand the connection between the Old and New Testaments?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, reflect on areas in your life where you might be trying to "cover" your shame or guilt with your own efforts. Bring these to God in prayer, acknowledging your need for His covering.
2. Choose a verse or passage from the sermon (e.g., Genesis 3:15, John 19:30) to memorize and meditate on throughout the week.
3. Share the gospel with someone this week, using the imagery of God clothing Adam and Eve as a starting point to explain Christ's sacrifice.
4. Examine your life for any "fig leaf" behaviors - attempts to appear righteous on your own. Ask God to help you rely more fully on His grace.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His plan of redemption from the very beginning. Express gratitude for Jesus' finished work on the cross and ask for help in living in the freedom and assurance of His sacrifice.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: The Promise of Redemption

Reading: Genesis 3:1-15

Devotional:

As we reflect on the fall of humanity, we see the immediate consequences of sin - shame, blame, and separation from God. Yet even in this dark moment, God's love shines through with the first promise of a Savior. The prophecy of the woman's offspring crushing the serpent's head reminds us that God's plan for redemption was set in motion from the very beginning. Today, consider how sin has affected your relationship with God and others. How does knowing that God had a plan for redemption from the start give you hope? Pray for a renewed sense of God's love and forgiveness in your life.

Day 2: The Covering of Grace

Reading: Genesis 3:21; Romans 5:12-21

Devotional:

God's provision of animal skins to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness foreshadows the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. Our own efforts to cover our shame and guilt (like Adam and Eve's fig leaves) are insufficient. Only God's grace, through the sacrifice of the innocent, can truly cover our sin. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be trying to earn God's favor through your own efforts. How can you more fully embrace God's free gift of grace today? Thank God for His unmerited favor and ask for help to rest in His finished work.

Day 3: The Longing for Paradise Lost

Reading: Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 22:1-5

Devotional:

The expulsion from Eden represents humanity's separation from God's perfect presence. Yet, this separation was an act of mercy, preventing eternal existence in a fallen state. Our hearts long for the paradise we lost, but through Christ, we have the hope of a greater paradise to come. Consider the ways you experience the effects of living in a fallen world. How does the promise of eternal life with God in the New Jerusalem encourage you? Pray for patience and perseverance as you await the fulfillment of God's promises.

Day 4: The Suffering Servant

Reading: Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 27:27-44

Devotional:

The prophecy of Isaiah and its fulfillment in Jesus' crucifixion reveal the depth of God's love. The innocent Son of God bore our sins, taking the punishment we deserved. As you read about Christ's suffering, reflect on the personal nature of His sacrifice. He endured this for you. How does this deepen your appreciation for the cross? Take time to thank Jesus for His willingness to suffer on your behalf and ask for grace to live in light of this incredible love.

Day 5: It Is Finished

Reading: John 19:28-30; Hebrews 10:11-18

Devotional:

Jesus' declaration "It is finished" (Tetelestai) on the cross signifies the complete payment for our sins. No more sacrifices are needed; no more work is required. The debt has been paid in full. This truth should bring immense relief and joy to our hearts. Reflect on areas where you might still be striving to earn God's favor or forgiveness. How can you more fully rest in the finished work of Christ? Pray for a deeper understanding of what Christ accomplished on the cross and for the Holy Spirit to help you live in the freedom of God's complete forgiveness.

The Suffering Servant

A moment that is simultaneously the most important, yet puzzling.
Gruesome and violent, yet loving. Cold and lonely, yet the warmest of invitations.

The eternal one stepped into time; Infiniti entered into the finite
And even more puzzling nailed to a cross.

History divided by His entrance into the world.
An entrance that is both miraculous and wonderous, while also devastatingly sad
Born outside among the livestock and placed in a manger, a food trough.

Yes, the infinite became an infant;
And while still an infant escaped a genocide squarely aimed at Him.
Humble beginnings for the Son of God.

A beginning emblematic of the next 33 years
Living in poverty and enduring the prejudice from having settled in Nazareth in the Galilean
region.

As the miraculous radiated from the Son of Man throughout Judea and Samaria
even one who would become a follower, Nathanael, asks “can anything good come from
Nazareth?”

Unwilling to see the good in the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, and
the demons cast out...

Jesus goes to multiple trials
the Sanhedrin breaks their own rules to condemn the innocent.
Sent before the courts of gentiles in front of Herod and twice before Pontius Pilate.

Unironically, letting the criminal Barabbas go free while sentencing the innocent Christ to death.

A blood thirsty crowd unsatisfied with a brutal 39 lash scourging screams

“Crucify Him, Crucify Him”

The height of injustice.

The one without sin falsely accused, and sentenced to the ultimate punishment.

Tortured by the method and device from which we derive the word excruciating.

God on a Cross...

Not aloof or distant from the evils or suffering of this world, But rather an active participant

Having been born and lived in poverty,

Surviving attempted murder,

Enduring prejudice,

Mocked, ridiculed, and beaten; falsely accused

And in the most painful way...tortured...

In all His immeasurable wisdom He let everyone know it was coming.

Not just that it was coming, but, why it was coming.

Because He is the good shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep...