

Christ Community Covenant Church
Beginnings: Finding our Story in God's Story
Genesis 1:1-4 – 4:26
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 10, 2016

Finding our Story in God's Story

There is a lot going on in Genesis. In the first 4 chapters of Genesis alone we have quite a list of literary and theological highlights:

The story of creation: This lets us know that God is creative and the world is designed for His purposes and that we are the created.

The creation of Sabbath: We rest because God rested. God didn't rest because he had strained his back trying to lift a large boulder during the creation. This might be as you or I might stop and admire a piece of creation, He rested to admire his work. Sabbath is designed like that for us as well. It is a day of rest, not for rest's sake but so that we can slow down, consider what God has done during the week and admire it and consider how we too participate in the story of God's love and mercy this past week. The Sabbath is not designed for the NFL - sorry sports fans. It is designed that we might consider God's creative handiwork during the week. It is part of seeing our story in God's story.

God created humanity: Woman is created from the side of man so that there would be equity and dignity for each gender. He is God and we are not! We learn that man and woman are made in the likeness of God and that we are the apex of this creation account. We were declared very good. We were created Holy but now we are - not.

We learned that God has an adversary: The serpent is introduced early in the story of God. A created being like us in having free will and we discover that this serpent has fixed his purposes against God.

We learn that God is willing and able to judge sin and evil.

And we learned that from the beginning of human history, **humans have been killing others because of envy and jealousy.** Clearly the wages of sin is indeed death. We are going to look at three great deep truths this morning, beginning with being made in God's image:

1. Made in His Image

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them.

I think this is interesting. The Son of God incarnate was made in the image of God. We know this because the evil one has blinded the eyes of so many to this reality:

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

And now we find that not just Christ is the Image of God we too are created in the image of God. We are unique to creation as image bearers of God, creatures yet with a special relationship. Being made in the image of God does not imply that we are a physical image of Him. We know that God is spirit and we are not. We would be wrong to assume that God looks like us. It is an artistic tendency to anthropomorphize God. Rather, being made in God's image means we are Spiritual beings, we are Moral beings, we are

Rational beings, we are Social beings. We are being made to have a special relationship with the creator that no other created thing enjoys. Like God, many would argue that we too are Trinitarian composed of a Body, Soul and Spirit yet one being.

As we shall see, humanity is so fallen that the image presented now does not in fact represent God anymore. We have besmeared the image, even betrayed the image of God but we are offered in Christ a chance to return to our former place of intimacy with God; Ephesians 4:24 invites us

“To put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Here is our application today - Because we are all made in God's image we no longer have any right to look down on or besmear another person.

We love “Loving the unlovely”

Because we are all image bearers, we are compelled to love even the so called unlovely. That is in quotes as there are no unlovely image bearers of God's character and Kingdom. This does not mean that all ideas that come from humanity are of God or that every culture or invention that humans create or sustain is of God. Secondly let's look at the ordinance of marriage:

2. The Ordinance of Marriage

Genesis 2:22-24

But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

This account forms the social constructs that God established from the get-go for the definition and covenant nature of marriage. It can be summarized easy for remembering like this:

Leave, Weave, Cleave

We are to **leave** our parents and start our own home. This is not so much about where you live physically, but established that a new family has been formed with a fresh system of authority. We **weave** our lives into one fabric, and that fabric is not intended to be divided ever again, it becomes permanent and unbreakable. We **cleave** – we cling to this reality. It is interesting that childbearing is not one of the character traits. It may become a wonderful by product, but having children or not does not define marriage. You can also see that established by this account is that marriage is to be Hetero and Monogamous. This means that all other forms of relationships that are culturally formed by humanity are not God's best and do not have the same ending to the 'story' as the ending to God's story.

Marriage: So much more than meets the eye

Marriage, found here created by God, is made in the image of God as well – the relationship and intimacy of the Trinity is meant to be on display in marriage. The husband and wife and the presence of the Holy Spirit creates the trinity of marriage just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit the Trinity of the Godhead. The Godhead is in a perfect loving relationship and marriage is the image of this divine value of relationships. We are designed to be naked and unashamed before God and naked and unashamed before our fellow human. It is just that we aren't – we are fallen and so intimacy is broken, with all the tragic ramifications to our souls and to society.

Intimacy and Covenant – “They go together like a horse and carriage”

Intimacy is the direct result of Leave Weave Cleave and that is true in marriage and that is true of our relationship with Christ. If we leave all other gods, allow God to weave our story into His we will become inseparable. Nothing can ever snatch you from the hand of the Father. Your life is hidden with God in Christ, never to be abandoned or forsaken. And then there is the living picture of marriage as the image of the relationship between Christ and His Church. Paul helps us understand about this in Ephesians. . .

Ephesians 5: 31-33

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

What is not lost on the reader is that, according to God, the ordinance of marriage is a divine creation, specifically designed to help us understand God and his purposes. It happens to be good for humanity as well. But when we begin to mess with this institution as God intended it to be with sex before and outside of marriage, divorce gone crazy with serial marriages, with polygamy and other marriage forms, we are now messing with the nature of our understanding of God, His nature and His purposes.

Finally we must address one last reality of these early chapters of Genesis: The so called “Fall.” It is a very famous account. Perhaps as famous as any childhood story ever told.
(Dave summaries)

3. “The Fall”

Genesis 3:9-13

But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?”



6th scene, of Michelangelo’s Creation series found in the Sistine Chapel of Rome. This is entitled “The Fall and Expulsion”

How bad is the fall? It’s bad, very bad . . .

Our modern thinkers would have us believe that it’s not so bad. They might say, “*We are slowly evolving forward; we are improving, step by step as all advancing forms of life will. We take steps back but we should have hope.*” People, they say, *are basically good.* I would ask what is the hope based on? WW1? WW2? The Vietnam War? Iraq War? These are just our wars, what about Cambodia and Serbia and Northern Africa and the Middle East? China and Japan and the Ukraine and Russia? Which of these thousands of years of hatred and bloodshed suggest that we are improving? How do Paris and Brussels and NYC make us think we are improving? Another might suggest that we are simply sick. These sins are simply sicknesses of mind and heart and emotions and with the proper medications and counseling we can heal these manifestations. Again, help me understand.

No the consequences of choosing to be like God, eating of the tree that we might know good and evil, are devastating. The tragedy of human existence is suffering, mounting starvation in a planet of plenty,

injustice and human trafficking, indifference, and hatred and the unending pursuit of self-satisfaction more than mars our image, it defines it!

We are dead to God, at war with him with a final judgement that ends in our separation from him forever. We are no longer holy but are instead tragically fallen. Our eyes were opened to a carnal knowledge that is indeed like God, as the serpent suggested we would be, in that we do now in fact know 'Good and Evil.' I guess I would like to go back to when all we knew was good. This carnal knowledge destroys our physical bodies and saturates us in shame, guilt and self-loathing. We think we are pretty good when in fact, none of us, no not one, has met the standard of holiness - we have all fallen short. We are all hopelessly lost and even the earth is cursed in some mysterious way by our pride and jealousies. It is common in our culture to minimize sin, even to write it from our vocabulary. It is a reality still very much alive in God's lexicon and in our lives and relationships.

At the fall, evil was unleashed and it began to increase on one of those multiplications mathematical curves.

Evil Unleashed and Multiplied

Genesis 4:23-24

Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:

I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Lamech is referencing the Genesis 4:15 notice of God's judgment on those who would harm Cain (7 fold). Lamech takes it to the next sinful extraction – "If someone hurts me, I will kill them. If God's judgments was seven fold mine will be ten times worse!" "The fall is bad, very bad . . .

Want to go home? I would not leave you here. God does not leave you here. In His story and in your story there is hope. Even in the Genesis account there is the promise of redemption

The Promise of Redemption

We find this promise embedded in a strange little verse that Paul later refers to. It is Genesis 3:15:

Genesis 3:15

"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."

At first glance it looks like this is a prediction that snakes will be biting our heels and we will be stomping on their heads. But it is much bigger than this rendering. When God states that there will be enmity, between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed, it typifies the unending conflict between all that represents the forces of evil on the one hand, and all that represents the true and high call of humankind on the other. Upon this warring state, the God Jehovah has set His seal from the very beginning. He has ordained it. There will be war between every form of evil and the children of man. This verse has been called the *Proto-Evangelium*. The first or '*proto*' – good news or '*evangelium*.' Theologians see in the words, "thou shalt bruise his heel," a prediction of the sufferings, the victory of the Crucified and Risen Son of Man over the forces of sin and death. The victory of the Cross contains the final resolution of the conflict between Mankind and the Evil of the garden. Even at the darkest hour of humankind, when we, for our own good, are being chased out of the garden and removed from fellowship with God, there is the promise of redemption.

Paul refers to this proto-evangelium in his letter to the church in Rome;

Romans 16:19-22

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The Fall is no longer our story – Our story is the Cross. Remember Paul, the transformed Saul, said in his letter to the church in Corinth “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). Our story is a story of redemption and we must never forget that. Our story is the story of the table of the Lord. Our story is the story of everlasting sins forgiven everlastingly. Our story is God’s story of establishing the church eternal and then claiming us for one of its adherents. Our story is the Story not of death and judgement but our story is one of Light and Life and Love.

Now I must ask you, “Which is your story? Is the Fall still your story or is your Story indeed the Cross? Everything from Genesis 3 is God’s story of redeeming a people for himself, each word pointing to the Son of God dying on a cross for the ransom of the lost world. Pray with me.