

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

Genesis – Living in Redemptive Grace

Sermon Series

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01 May 2022

Genesis 2:4-25

Man's Chief End

People seem to have many different purposes in life – whether to work, to do well, to get rich, to become famous, to care for others or the world, and so on and so forth. Have you thought about what your purpose in life is? What do you think about this?

STUDY

Genesis 2:3-25 brings us to a closer look at the creation of mankind and God's purpose for mankind.

Read Genesis 2:4-7.

1. At the beginning of creation, God formed man from dust and breathed into him the breath of life – this underscores the fact that mankind is not divine in any way, and is entirely dependent on God for life. What does this tell you about what God intended the relationship between mankind and God to be like?

Dig Deeper

Consider vv.4-6. What role do these verses place in Gen 2:4-25?

Read Genesis 2:8-17. God provided for the man (Adam), placing him in God's own garden (vv.8, 15), amid great abundance and beauty.

2. The garden of Eden is God's place, which was seen as the source of all life on earth through the rivers going out to the four corners of the earth. What does it mean for the garden of Eden to be God's place, and for Adam to be placed in the garden of Eden "to work it and take care of it"?

Dig Deeper

How is the garden of Eden described in vv.8-9? What does this tell you about God's provision for Adam?

The garden of Eden is God's place, "sacred space" – how does "sacred space" change as the Biblical narrative continues? And how does man's role change with it? (Consider the garden of Eden, the Temple of Solomon, the 2nd Temple built in Ezra-Nehemiah's time, and the extent of Acts 1:8, as well as Rev 21:18, 22:1-2)

3. What instructions were Adam given in vv.16-17? Given these instructions, would you consider God a generous God or a stingy one?

Why does eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil result in death for Adam? (Consider that the tree of life was not restricted in vv.16-17, and the exile which resulted in Gen 3:23-24)

Why do you think God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden even though it would result in death?

Read Genesis 2:18-25. Everything in Genesis 1:3-2:3 is pronounced to be good, and so far in Genesis 2:4-17 everything has been implied to be good. However, God pronounces that “It is not good for the man to be alone.” God intentionally brings Adam through a whole process to finally identify Eve as his helper and companion.

4. Why is it “not good for the man to be alone”? What would be needed for the man’s helper?

Dig Deeper

God intentionally makes Adam go through the whole process of naming all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. Why was this necessary?

5. The woman was created by God from Adam’s side (rib), with Adam recognising her equality to him in flesh and bone, and declaring their unity. What does this tell you about God’s intention for relationships between man and woman? (Consider also Genesis 1:27.)

In v.23 Adam names his helper “woman” and himself as “man” – the English reflects a similar wordplay in Hebrew which identifies Adam and Eve as belonging to the same category. What does this tell us about the importance of women and about their purpose?

6. Why do you think that the man and the woman felt no shame even though they were naked?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

7. Genesis 2:4-25 is parallel to Genesis 1:3-2:3. Both are creation accounts of this world, while focusing on different aspects of creation.
- (a) What similarities and differences do you see in the two accounts?
- (b) In Genesis 2:4-25, God is repeatedly referred to as the LORD God – “LORD” is how our English Bibles translate God’s personal name of YHWH. Genesis 1:3-2:3 does not use this name at all. What impact does this have for how you understand God’s creation and purpose for mankind?
8. We started with the different purposes that people may have for their own lives today. How do these match up against God’s purpose for mankind?

APPLICATION

9. We are created to be God’s stewards on earth and entirely dependent on God. What does this look like in our everyday life? How do our work and our studies contribute to God’s purpose for mankind?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Pray and Share:** Ask God to show each of us how our daily roles are part of His purpose for mankind as His stewards, caring for His creation where He dwells. In the next small group meeting, share with each other what God has revealed to you as you prayed about this.

PRAY FOR ORPC – SMALL GROUPS

- Pray that the Discipleship and Community Building initiative launched by the ORPC leadership would be effective in putting in place a framework for intentional church-wide discipleship and community building focusing on the small groups (SGs).
- Pray that all pastors, elders, deacons, SG leaders, and ministry leaders involved in the leaders' discipleship groups and connect groups will set aside time to be part of this effort to support the spiritual growth and pastoral care of our members through SGs.

08, 15 May 2022

Genesis 3

Man's Chief Problem and its Consequence

All of us have gone through varied punishments throughout our lives (whether at home, at school, at work), and some of us have also given punishments. What kind of punishments do you think are the most effective, and why?

STUDY

In Genesis 3 we see the disobedience of Adam, Eve, and the serpent, as well as the punishment that God pronounces upon them.

Read Genesis 3:1-7. The serpent was a creature that was viewed as unclean by Israelites (consider Lev 11 and Deut 14) and seen as opposed to creation in the Ancient Near East where Israel was located. Here, we find the serpent talking to the woman in the Garden of Eden.

1. What did the serpent do/say? Do we see the same tactics being used today to tempt Christians into sin? (Consider also Jas 1:14-15)

2. The tree being referred to by both the serpent and the woman is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What is "the knowledge of good and evil"? Why is it wrong to want to have "the knowledge of good and evil"? (Consider also Jas 1:5.)

Dig Deeper

Compare Gen 3:2 to Gen 2:16-17. What is different in the woman's report of God's instructions? What does that teach us about the nature of temptation?

What is the serpent accusing God of in Gen 3:4-5?

Does this mean that we are not allowed to wrestle with questions about God and His commands in the Bible?

Consider how God is referred to in this text, and compare it to how God is referred to in Gen 2:4-25. What does this difference tell you about the relationship between man and God?

How does our view of God – whether YHWH indicating a covenant relationship, or Elohim indicating an impersonal relationship – affect our obedience to God?

Read Genesis 3:8-13. After disobeying God, the man and the woman avoided God, despite their close personal relationship with Him (note the return of the name “Lord God”).

3. What was Adam’s excuse for hiding from God? What was the true reason?

4. God questions both the man and the woman about what has happened, and they give slightly different accounts. What strikes you most about the man and the woman’s responses to God’s questioning?

Dig Deeper

Why do you think God asked the man and the woman about what they had done? Did God really not know what had happened? Was this a situation that went out of God’s control?

Read Genesis 3:14-19. Here God pronounces the first judgement of sin in the history of the world.

5. What judgements did God pronounce on the serpent, the woman, and the man?

Dig Deeper

In what ways were the judgements appropriate for the serpent, the woman, and the man?

Read Genesis 3:20-24. After judgement has been pronounced, a new stage in the history of creation begins.

6. Compare Gen 3:20-24 to Gen 2:4-25. What are the differences between the first beginning of mankind with this second start?

	Gen 2:4-25	Gen 3:20-24
Place		
Access to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil		
Adam gave name(s) to		

Dig Deeper

What is the significance of Adam naming Eve in v.20? (Consider Gen 2:19-20)

God prevents the man and the woman from living forever. How does this match up with God’s goodness? Also, what does this tell you about the relative truth of the serpent’s statement in Gen 3:4?

7. From a creation that was declared good, to one that is now broken in many ways because of sin – yet in this episode, God shows that His character is both just and merciful. In what ways do you see God’s justice and his mercy in these five verses?

Consider God’s provision of clothing for Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21, and consider also what Paul says in Romans 13:14. How are these two similar?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

8. Gen 3 chronicles the first broken relationships in the history of creation. In what ways do we see sin damaging relationships here in Genesis 3 and today?
- (a) Between man and creation

 - (b) Between man and woman

 - (c) Between man and God
9. Despite the broken relationships, there is still hope. What signs of hope do we see in Genesis 3? How does this encourage us today?

APPLICATION

10. God shows grace and mercy in his treatment of the erring couple, but also displays resolute justice. What does this teach us about God’s view of sin and His treatment of it? How can we hold to God’s grace without excusing our sin, and to His holiness without hindering intimacy with Him?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Reflect, Share, and Pray:** What area of your life are you most prone to doubt God in? Share with your group what these areas are and why you are reluctant to trust God fully in these. Pray for the strength to trust God in these areas.

PRAY FOR ORPC – SMALL GROUPS

- Pray for grace, patience, and understanding among all involved as we implement changes to the way we have done SG meetings, putting the spiritual needs of the church and others around us over our own needs and preferences.
- Pray for God's grace and love as deeper fellowships and discipleship relationships are built between the pastors/elders and the SG leaders.
- Pray for new groups to be formed, new SG leaders to be called, and for every SG member to grow in Christ, taking the next step in their individual discipleship journey.

22, 29 May 2022

Genesis 4:1-6:8

God's Grace Given to Men

Do you think mankind has gotten better or worse since God created mankind? Why?

STUDY

Genesis 4:1-6:8 tells us the story of mankind's development after the Fall and the exile from the Garden of Eden.

Read Genesis 4.

1. Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the LORD, but God accepted Abel's and rejected Cain's. What were the differences between the two offerings that led to Cain's offering being rejected? (Consider also Heb 11:4, and 1 John 3:11-12.)
2. Cain responded to God's rejection of his offering with anger. In his anger, he gave in to temptation and killed Abel. God questions Cain about what he has done, much like He questioned Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:9-13). What do you notice in Cain's response, compared to Adam and Eve's response?
3. God pronounces judgement on Cain but also protects him from being punished beyond God's judgement. Five generations later, Cain's descendant Lamech compares himself to Cain and declares a similar protection. Do you think Lamech's comparison is valid? Why or why not?

Dig Deeper

Why do you think God warned Cain about sin when Cain reacted with anger at being rejected? Is anger always sin?

Consider God's judgement of Cain and compare it to God's judgement of Adam (Gen 3:17-19). In what ways are the two related?

Cain's line is most famous for producing Lamech who killed a young man for injuring him, yet Lamech's children were recognised in this text as the fathers of those who live in tents and raise livestock, those who play the harp and he flute, and among them was the first to forge bronze and iron. What does this tell you about how God works?

Read Genesis 5:1-6:8.

4. Genesis 5:1 begins by stating that this is the written account of Adam's line, before a very brief recap of God's creation of mankind in God's image and under God's sovereignty and blessing. It then continues with the line of Seth, excluding Cain entirely from Adam's line. In Genesis 5:3, Seth is described as a son in Adam's likeness and image. How does this explain why it is through Seth rather than Cain that Adam's line is counted?

5. Long life and children were seen as evidence of God's blessing in the Ancient Near East. What is the text implicitly saying about Cain's line versus Seth's line?

6. The narration of Seth's line pauses at Noah's life and stays with Noah until Genesis 9:29. This tells us that Noah is a very important figure. What does Noah's name mean, and why was this significant? Consider how the world was described in Genesis 6:1-4, as well as God's evaluation of the earth in Genesis 6:5.

Dig Deeper

Cain and Seth are both sons of Adam – in what way(s) does Cain reflect Adam, and in what way(s) does Seth reflect Adam? What does this teach us about God's sovereignty and mercy?

In this section of text, a descriptive formula is repeated for every person mentioned. What do you think is this descriptive formula? Are there any exceptions to this?

Cain's line and Seth's line have several mirrored names. Lamech is one of the repeated names. What are the differences between Lamech from Cain's line and Lamech from Seth's line?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

7. Describe the development of mankind from Adam to Noah, as well as the development of mankind's relationship with God.

8. Today we often speak of mankind's progression – in what ways have we progressed, and how has this impacted our relationship with God? Compare this to how mankind's development and relationship to God was chronicled in Genesis 5:1-6:8.

APPLICATION

9. Have we ever reacted like Cain when his offering was rejected by God? What happened then, what was driving your reaction, and what sin was crouching at your door?
10. Seth's line is described as particularly fertile – everyone seems to have had “other sons and daughters” – and yet only Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. Consider what this says about the difficulty of both raising godly children, and of being godly. Share your reflections with your group.
11. Reflect on the promises and faithfulness of God as you make connections between Gen 3:15 to Gen 12, and ultimately to Jesus Christ (Matt 1:1). How does this challenge your view of God and his plan of salvation?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Share and Pray:** Share with each other your struggles with sin and feelings of rejection, as well as your struggles with raising godly children (if applicable). Pray for each other in these areas.

PRAY FOR ORPC – SMALL GROUPS

- Pray for SG members to prioritise SG meetings, whether virtual or in-person, and to see their participation as a vital part of their spiritual growth journey as believers.
- Pray that every SG member will study God's Word faithfully, encourage each other to apply God's Word in every part of their lives and reach out with the gospel to the lost.