

Fallen

Genesis 3-5

Did You Know?

Fallenness unfortunately becomes part of the human story, a followup to creation. If we were thinking in story form, this would be the complication part of the story (i.e. Setting, complication, climax, new setting). Fallenness brings a world of pain to the once “very good” creation. It brings sin and decay and death. The fallenness of our world still greatly affects even the new creation Jesus makes in each of us as we become God’s children. But fallenness is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of God’s story of redemption. It’s always darkest before the dawn!

Monday, June 10, 2013

Read: Genesis 3:14-19

Discuss: Here is the three-fold curse of God over the serpent, Eve and then Adam. God did this out of necessity, not out of joy. But He did authorize it. The curse changes the nature of relationships between human and beast. One must wonder if animals could talk before the curse. We know that they once lived in harmony with humans, and that is one of the promises of the new creation! The woman’s life is changed in child birth pains and in wanting to rule over her husband, while the man toils in the ground for little profit. It must have been easier to work the soil before the curse.

Act: How does God’s curse of the fallen creation affect you today? What parts of your life might have been easier or more enjoyable if sin had not happened? Has anything changed since you began your walk with God? Most of the time, we forget that this world is not God’s perfect any more. It should make us want to go home to be with Him and yearn for His new heavens and new earth.

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

Read: Genesis 4:6-16

Discuss: God warns Cain that he has a choice to make, part of the change in the human condition when his parents ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now we have that knowledge and must make moral decisions. Cain could learn to control his anger, or let

sin have its way. The language of dominance in verse 7 is the same as that in the curse for the woman in 3:16. Cain tries to shuck responsibility for his actions. The curse on Cain is more than he can bear, but god protects him with the seal or sign of Cain. This protection is much like the cities of refuge that protected people in Israel (Num 35:6 and following).

Act: How do we respond when we sin today? Probably about the same way, right? We try to push our responsibility on someone else, blame someone else. We have trouble fessing up to our sin because we fear the consequences and punishment. God expects a high standard of refusing sin's temptations. He also expects us to be responsible for what we do. But God still protects us even when we deserve less!

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Read: Judges 2:16-23

Discuss: In the beginning of Judges, we get the basic gyst of the book through what scholars call the "sin cycle." The people are evil in God's sight, then God has compassion on them and raises up a judge to rescue them from their punishment of other nations controlling them. God sets them free through the judge, and they live for Him when the judge rules. But when the judge dies, they return to their sins and become captured by other nations again. This cycle happens in a downward spiral for the whole book, which is the background for demanding a human king in 1 Samuel.

Act: The book of Judges teaches us that we need to be constantly evaluating our lives and actions, as well as our hearts. We cannot let sin dominate us as Cain did, and as the Israelites did. Let's not forget that the people of God, Israel, are the ones falling deeper and deeper into this sin cycle in Judges. Let that be a lesson for us to constantly seek the Holy Spirit's input in our lives!

Thursday, June 13, 2013

Read: Psalm 51:1-19

Discuss: When we get stuck in the sin cycle, the only way out is to call upon God for His forgiveness and turn completely the other way from our sins. This is one of the most helpful psalms for how to repent and ask God's forgiveness of our sins. It goes through the process of understanding what happens when we are separated from God and how God renews us in Him!

Act: Psalm 51 is a great template that is extremely practical for our walk with God. It not only teaches us what happens when we sin, but how to restore our relationship with God. David's prayer can become our prayer when we repent. What ways can you apply part or all of this psalm in your life today?

Friday, June 14, 2013

Read: 1 John 1:5-10

Discuss: John stresses through the motif of light and darkness the expectance of Christians to live a righteous lifestyle. This does not mean that we won't stumble in our race from time to time, but that our stumbling does not become a different race. We stumble, but we do not fall or start living a contrary lifestyle. It is about the course of your life, the direction you are moving toward with every act and decision, not the seldom missteps you might take.

Act: God is so gracious in our stumbling. He doesn't quit on us, even when we miss the mark of His high standards. He forgives us and teaches us His ways, and we obey and walk in them. Without such grace, one sin could keep us from heaven and God's presence. Express your gratitude to God for His lovingkindness and goodness, and for His grace! He walks with us, and when we stumble, He picks us back up!

Saturday, June 15, 2013

Read: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Discuss: The triumphal procession that Paul refers to was a war victory parade. There would be a certain fragrance in the air as the Roman generals would march their spoils of war and the new conquered peoples through the streets of the cities. The people would cheer for them. But Paul turns this image of defeat for the captives and victory for the Romans into an image of how we walk with Christ. We are always victorious when we walk with Him!

Act: What kind of victory do you need today? Have you asked Jesus to give you that victory, or show you what must happen for the victory? Sometimes God has requirements for victory, like when he told Gideon to make his army smaller, or when He told Joshua to walk around the wall. Sometimes His path does not make sense to us, but God knows what He is doing! We must only learn to obey, but we have a hard enough time with that!

Sunday, June 16, 2013

Read: Genesis 6:1-8

Discuss: This passage will whet your appetite for Pastor Jonathan's message about Noah and the Flood. There's some pretty interesting passages in Genesis, and we're going to talk about one of those today!

Act: Consider the message from God for this week and how it applies to you! What do you need to remember? What do you need to change?