



Genesis – Sin/Covenant

Big Idea:

THE origin story.

GROUP DISCUSSION

The Genesis story tells us that God created everything and when he looks back on creation and humanity, he calls it very good. In Genesis 2:16-17 it says, “And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.””

Discuss

What insights do you have about the freedom offered to the man Adam here in Genesis?

If everything is very good, then what difficulty does this introduction of a restriction create?

GROUP READING

- Read Genesis 3:1-7. Twice out loud, in different versions of the Bible – everyone listens.
- What are some significant observations you have about this text? What stood out? What didn't you like? What was confusing?
- What does this reveal about who we are?

Discuss

What do you see as the difference between sin and a mistake?

It is not common to hear people discuss their sins in our culture or admit to them. Mistakes on the other hand are something people often are more willing to discuss. Why is that?

Sin is when we don't trust God's way as the best way.

Where do you see Adam and Eve not trusting God in the passage?

What desires possibly lie behind their lack of trust, or lack of willingness to trust?

The Root of Temptation is to seize authority from God or to redefine good and evil based on

- the voice in your head
- the feelings in your heart
- and the opinions of others

Based on your past experience is this list accurate? If so how?

Sin always has a consequence. During the teaching these four consequences were listed.

1. Deep shame
2. Estrangement from God
3. Alienation from one another
4. Disorientation with created world

Covenant

Most of us are used to the idea of two parties coming together and with an agreement in our world we call that a contract. If one of the parties does not live up to their side of the agreement the agreement is nullified, and one side may even face penalties for not living up to their end. The Bible does not use the language of contract, it uses the language of covenant.

Genesis 12:1-3 The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I

will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

Later in chapter 15 of Genesis Abram is asking God how his promise is going to work out. God does not give him all the details, instead he asks Abram to perform a covenant ceremony. In the ancient world a covenant between two parties would be sealed by both parties sacrificing animals cutting them in half and laying them out to show how valuable this agreement. It was to say if I break this agreement, you can make me like these animals. They would then walk between the animals through the blood.

In Genesis 15:17 we read “After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses.”

We see the presence of God passing through the animals. You never read that Abram also passed through the halves of the carcasses.

Discuss

What do you think God is trying to instill in Abram by being the only one to walk through the blood?

How do you see this covenant being different than a contract?

There is a repeated emphasis on God not forgetting his covenant through the rest of the Bible. We see this in places like Jeremiah 31:31-34

“The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant... I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

Malachi 3:1

“Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming.”

Mark and the rest of the gospel writers make a point that Jesus is the fulfillment and a better covenant from God to us.

Mark 1:1-4 “This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: “Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’ ” This messenger was John the Baptist.”

Discuss

What does God creating out of nothing tell us about him? How do you see that being different than an artist creating?

From these passages on covenants what are some significant observations you have? What stands out? What didn’t you like or what was confusing?

Individual Action

Based on what God is teaching in what we read today, what should I do? Reflect for a minute or two and develop an action statement. Put it in the form, “I Will _____”. Make it concrete, simple, and achievable. Share it with the group.

As a Group

- Share your “I Will” statements with each other.
- Remember God does not give up on His covenants

Pray together as a group

On your own for next week

Read Deuteronomy chapters 28-30